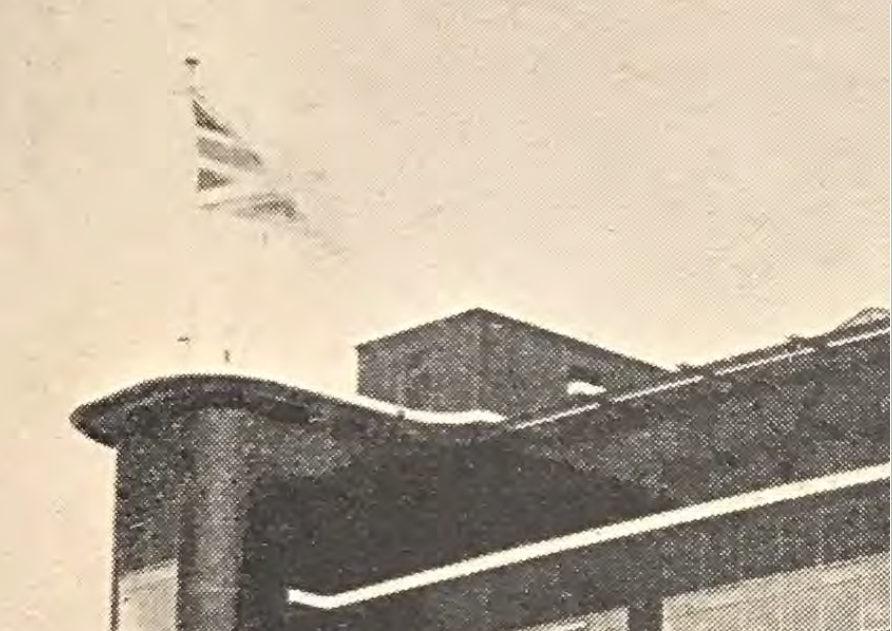




Express Building *Manchester*

Heritage Appraisal



Prepared by



Stephen Levrant Heritage Architecture Ltd

53 Fountain Street, Manchester M2 2AN

0161 247 8335 (Tel)

www.heritagearchitecture.co.uk

DRAFT

Prepared for

Wittington Investments
(Properties) Ltd.

April 2017

Daily Express Building, Manchester - Heritage Appraisal

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REGISTERED OFFICE: 62 BRITISH GROVE, LONDON, W4 2NL.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

This report has been written by Stephen Levrant Heritage Architecture Ltd (SLHA), an architectural practice specialising exclusively in the historic environment.

The purpose of this report is to provide an outline heritage appraisal for the Grade II* Listed Daily Express Building, Great Ancoats Street, Manchester, which was designed in 1935 as a purpose-built newspaper printing works for the Daily Express Newspaper, opening in 1939.

This report outlines the significance and opportunities and constraints of the building, in heritage terms, and should be used to inform any future proposals for reuse/alteration and refurbishment.



Figure 1 – The principal entrance front of the Daily Express Building on Great Ancoats Street.

1.2 Research Methodology

This appraisal is the result of an extensive process which synthesises literature and documentary research, analysis and processing of information, building surveying, and professional judgment.

The documentary research was based upon primary and secondary sources, including maps, drawings and reports.

Surveys of the site and surrounding areas were conducted in February 2017 by visual inspection.

1.3 Structure of the report

Following this introductory section the report is structured as follows:

Section 2 provides a description of the site's location and statutory designation;

Section 3 provides a historical development of the site and building;

Section 4 provides an outline significance appraisal of the existing site;

Section 5 sets out a series of opportunities and constraints; and

Section 6 provides a summary and conclusion.

1.4 Authorship

This report has been prepared by Stephen Levrant Heritage Architecture Ltd., an architectural practice specialising exclusively in the historic cultural environment.

Authors:

Stephen Levrant [RIBA, AA Dip, IHBC, Dip Cons (AA), FRSA] - Principal Architect

Kirsten McKnight [BA (Hons), MA, MSc] – Senior Associate

Lee Hutchings [BSc (Hons)] – Historic Building Consultant

2. THE SITE

2.1 Location and Statutory Designations

The subject site consists of a purpose-built former newspaper printing works. The building was designed by architect Sir Owen Williams for the Daily Express Newspaper Company in 1935, and opened in 1939. The building was extended in a matching style/materials to the north-east by Sir Owen Williams in 1960, with subsequent small additions and alterations which although form part of the Grade II* Listing, are not included as part of this assessment.

The site as a whole (outlined red) is bounded by Henry Street to the north-east, George Leigh Street to the south-east, Great Ancoats Street to the south-west, and Luna Street to the north-west (see Figure 2). This report focuses on the original 1939 building (shaded red) which extended from Great Ancoats Street to Gun Street, which forms the original service road through the site.

The busy multi-lane Great Ancoats Street forms a physical northern boundary between Manchester City centre and the area of Ancoats beyond. The area of Ancoats was until the 1990s a largely derelict and abandoned former industrial area of the city, which played an important role in Manchester's boom as the textile capital of the world during the early 19th Century.



Figure 2 - A view looking north across the Subject Site, showing the location of the Daily Express Building, as a whole, outlined in red, with the original 1936-1939 building (which forms part of this report) shaded red.

Ancoats' steady decline in industry and resident population waned as the early 20th Century progressed, leaving a largely run down and unpopulated district by the 1980s. The area has been the

subject of large scale investment and redevelopment during the last ten years, seeing many of the early mill buildings and canal network being restored and converted to residential uses.

Ancoats is dominated and characterised by its early former mill buildings, largely concentrated to the east of the area. This arrangement is interspersed by small pockets of domestic buildings, such as the recently restored St Peter's Church, which now forms the 'heart' of the area and is used for functions and is the rehearsal/concert space for the Halle orchestra, which is enhanced by the newly formed 'Cutting Room Square', which provides a large open public space.

2.2 Listed Buildings

Statutory listing of buildings means that a building is of special architectural or historic interest and is therefore of heritage significance. Grading of listed buildings reflects their architectural and historic interest; Grade I buildings are of exceptional interest; Grade II* buildings are particularly important buildings of more than special interest; and Grade II buildings are of special interest.

The subject site was Listed Grade II* on the 3rd October 1974, a full list description can be found in Appendix i.

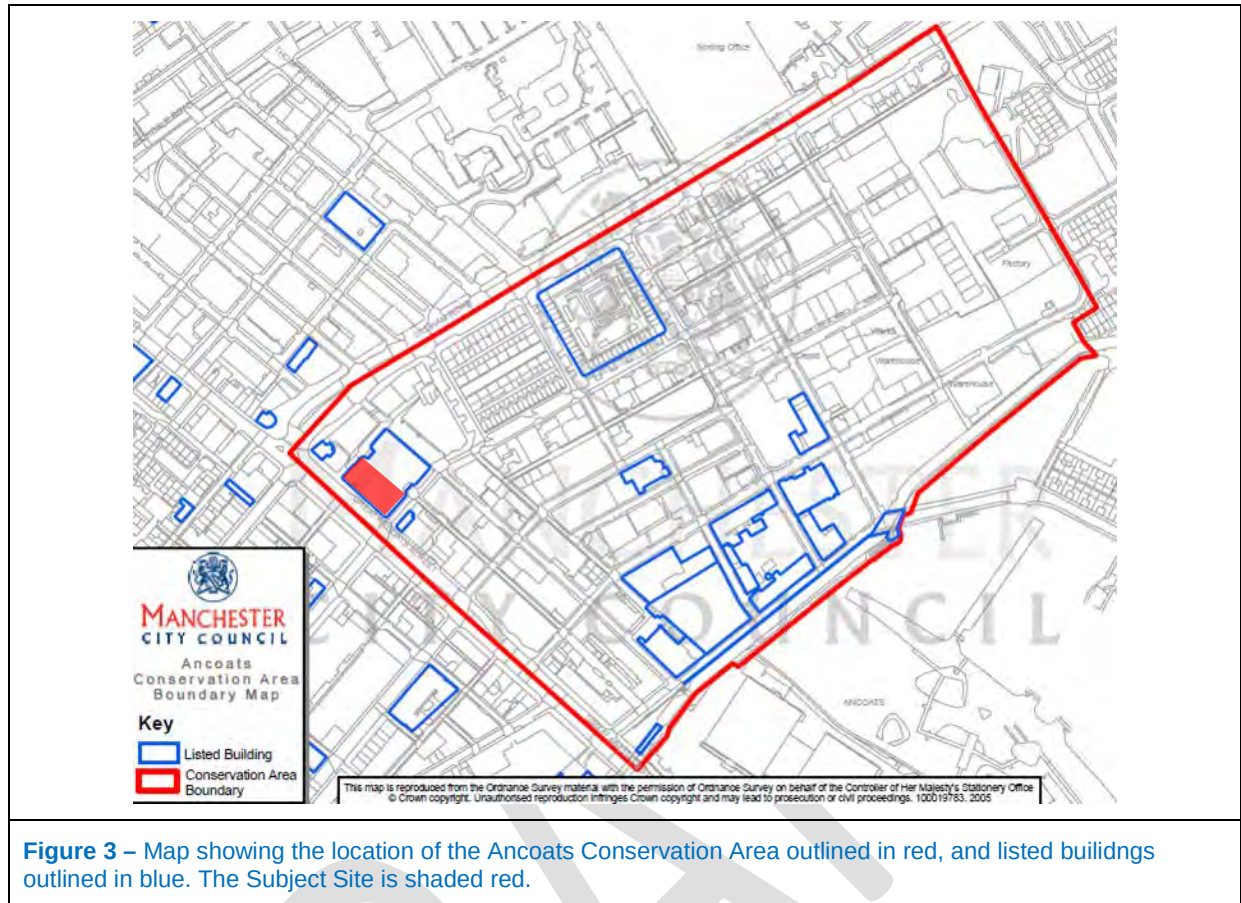
2.3 Conservation Areas

Conservation Areas are designated areas that are deemed to have special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance¹.

The subject site is located on the southern border of the Ancoats conservation area, which lies to the immediate north of the centre of the city centre of Manchester. It was designated in June 1989. Ancoats became a cradle of the Industrial Revolution and has been called "*the world's first industrial suburb*".

The location of the Daily Express Building on Great Ancoats Street forms a visual and physical boundary between the Ancoats Conservation Area to the north-east, and the northern part of Manchester City centre to the south-west (Figure 3).

¹ Section (1) Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area) Act 1990



3. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Introduction

In order to understand the heritage significance of the former newspaper printing works, as a component of the surrounding historic environment, it is first necessary to understand its historical development and the impact it made on the development of this part of the city.

This section of the report analyses and interprets historic maps and primary and secondary information in order to provide a sound evidence base, placing the site in the context of the development of central Manchester.

3.2 Brief Historical Background of the Area

From the late 18th century onwards, Ancoats was a thriving industrial district, interspersed with lower class slum dwellings. The area suffered accelerating economic decline from the 1930s onwards, and almost total depopulation in the years following the Second World War, particularly during the slum clearances of the 1960s.

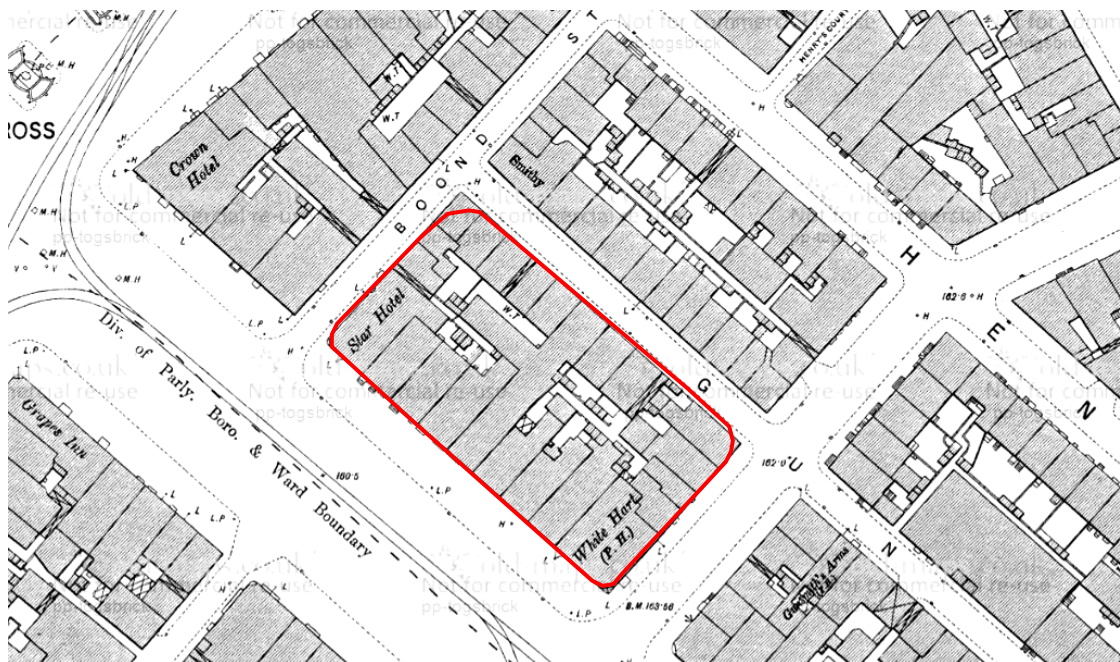
The siting and construction of Manchester's Daily Express Building in the 1930s saw an unusual investment in the waning prosperity of the district. Since the 1990s Ancoats' industrial heritage has been recognised and its proximity to the city centre has led to investment and substantial regeneration.

3.3 Map Regression

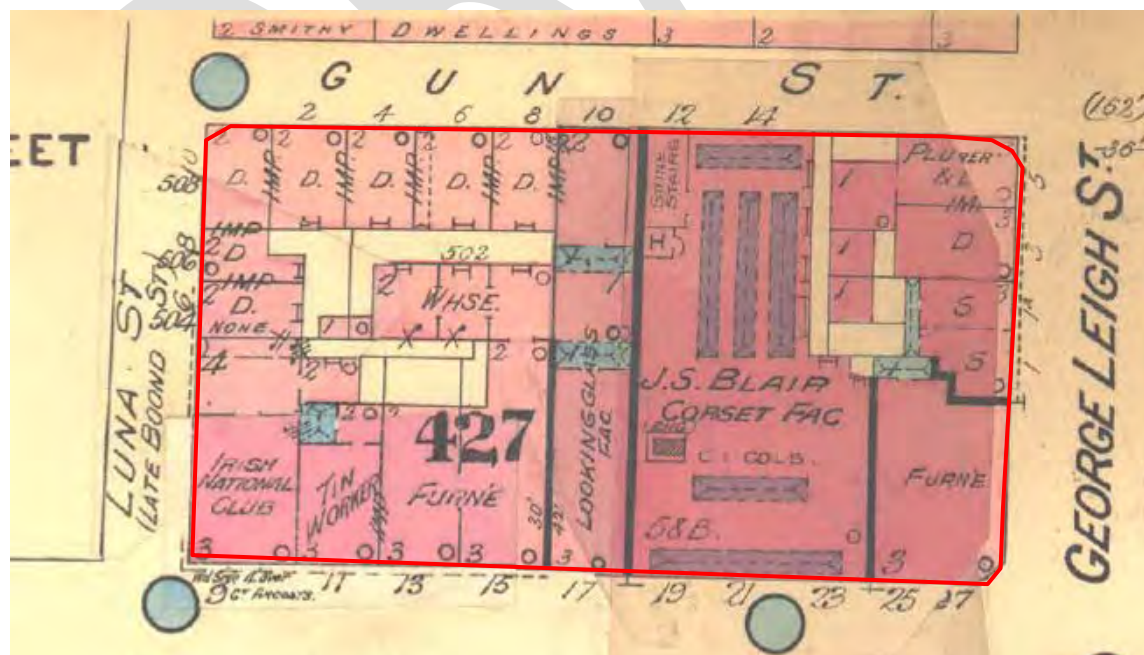


1850 OS – By the mid-19th century the site consists of 25 slum cottages, with a narrow slum court

known as No 1 Court, and 2 public houses; the White Hart on the corner of Great Ancoats Street and George Leigh Street, and The Nelson on the corner of Great Ancoats Street and Boond Street (now Luna Street).



1891 OS – By the early 1890s the site has little changed, but appears that former dwellings have now been taken over for light industry and warehousing as can be seen with the centre residential buildings which are now linked as one factory housing William Edward Syer's looking glass factory. The Nelson Public House is now known as The Star Hotel.



c1899 Goad's Fire Insurance Plan – This fire insurance plan provides a clearer view of the site during the 1890s. The buildings fronting Great Ancoats Street are now a mix of commercial premises and light industry, and includes the Irish National Club at No. 9, which is constructed on the site of the

former Star Public House. The right side of the island block has been substantially reconstructed, with large new factories having been built for the production of corsets by James Simpson Blair in c1898 by Andrews & Butterworth architects, and a factory and warehouse for William Edward Syer's looking glass establishment (mirrors). The rear parts of the site retain 8 early slum dwellings.



1908 OS – By the end of the Edwardian Era the right (east) of the site has been further redeveloped by the extension of the corset factory again by architects Andrews & Butterworth in 1906 to extend their original building eastwards to George Leigh Street. The extended building formed larger premises for James Simpson Blair's Corset makers.

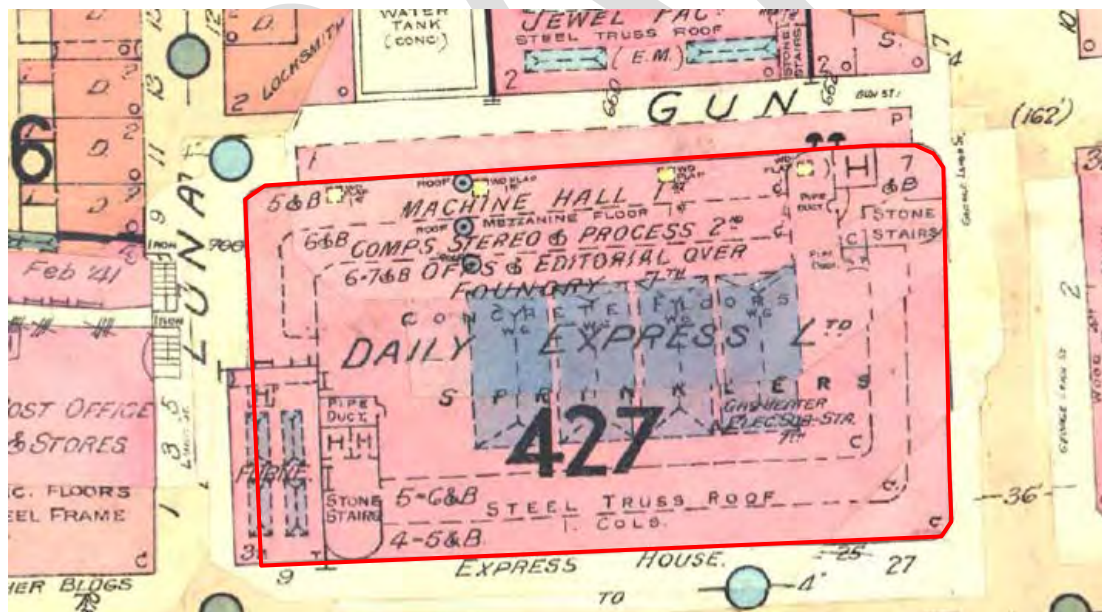


1922 OS – By the early 1920s the site appears to have altered little.

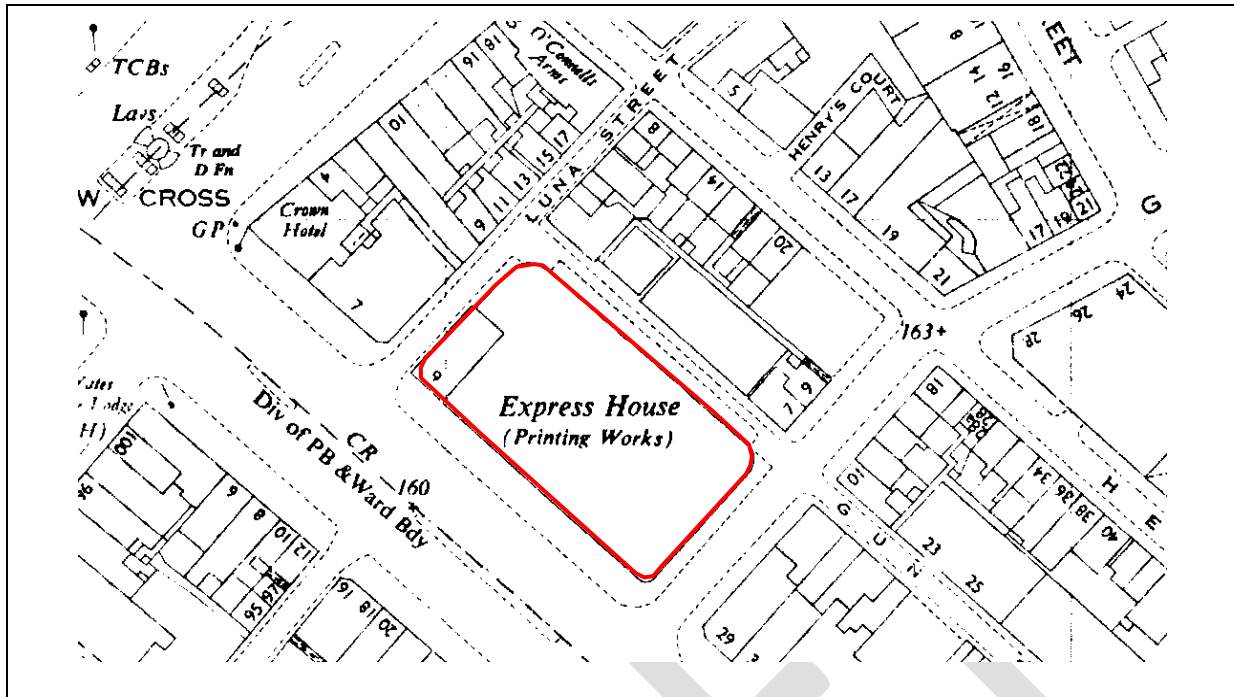


1932-35 OS – By 1932 James Simpson Blair's corset factory and warehouse had been enlarged for the third and final time, with a large extension westwards to Luna Street between 1922 and 1925, doubling the size of the premises, known as J. B. Corset House.

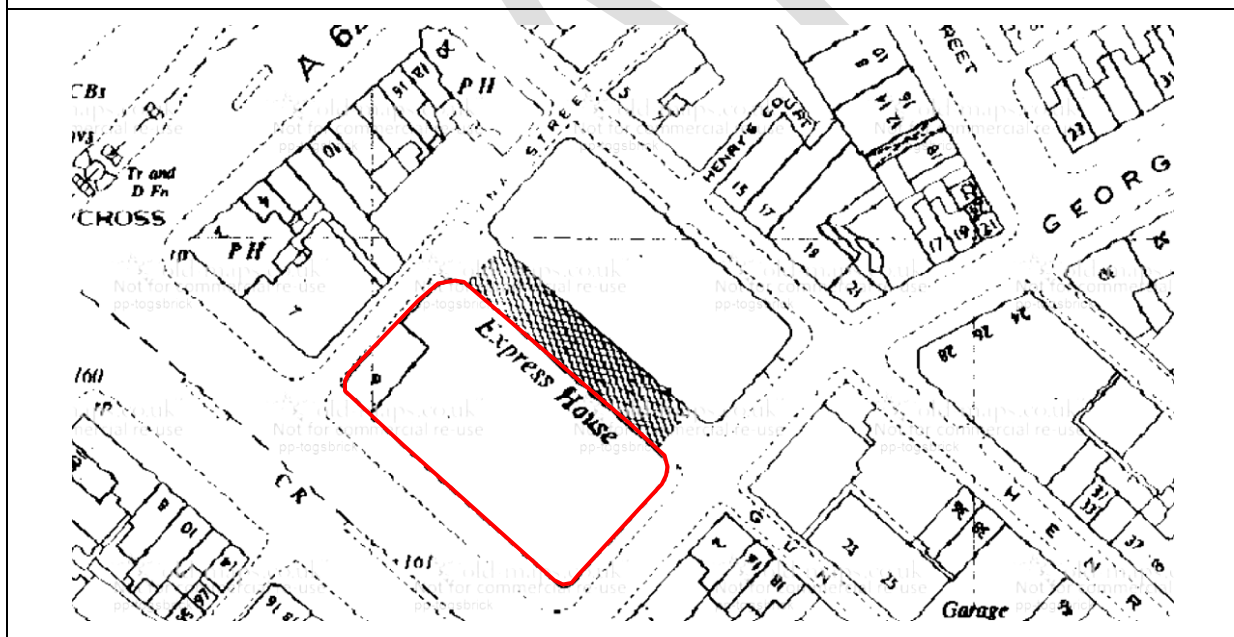
Blair's death in February 1927 saw the newly enlarged corset factory being sold to the Daily Express Newspaper Company for use as their Manchester printing works, and renamed Express House.



1943 Goad Fire Insurance Plan – This plan shows the new Daily Express Building completed, having opened in 1939, and illustrates the complicated form of Sir Owen Williams' new building which encroached onto Gun Street and abutted the existing building on the corner of Luna Street.



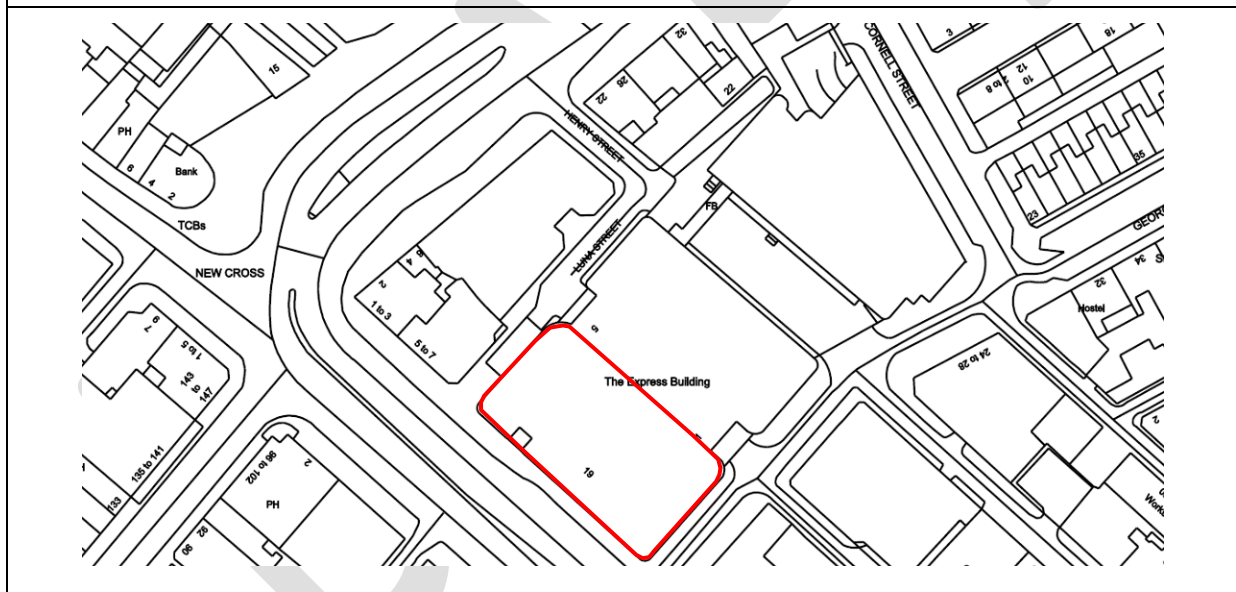
1948 OS – By the end of the 1940s the site remains unaltered, and is now marked as “Express House”.



1965 OS - By 1965 Sir Owen Williams' large new print works extension, constructed in 1960, can be seen to have been completed to the north of the original building, seeing the demolition of many properties between Gun Street and Henry Street. A covered canopy can be seen to now cover Gun Street, which was erected in 1953.



1971 - By 1971 the site remains unaltered.



2004 OS – This 2004 map shows the extension from the original building, across Gun Street to the 1960 building, and the extension to the north west corner (Luna Street) following the demolition of No.9 Great Ancoats Street.

3.4 Historical Development of the Site

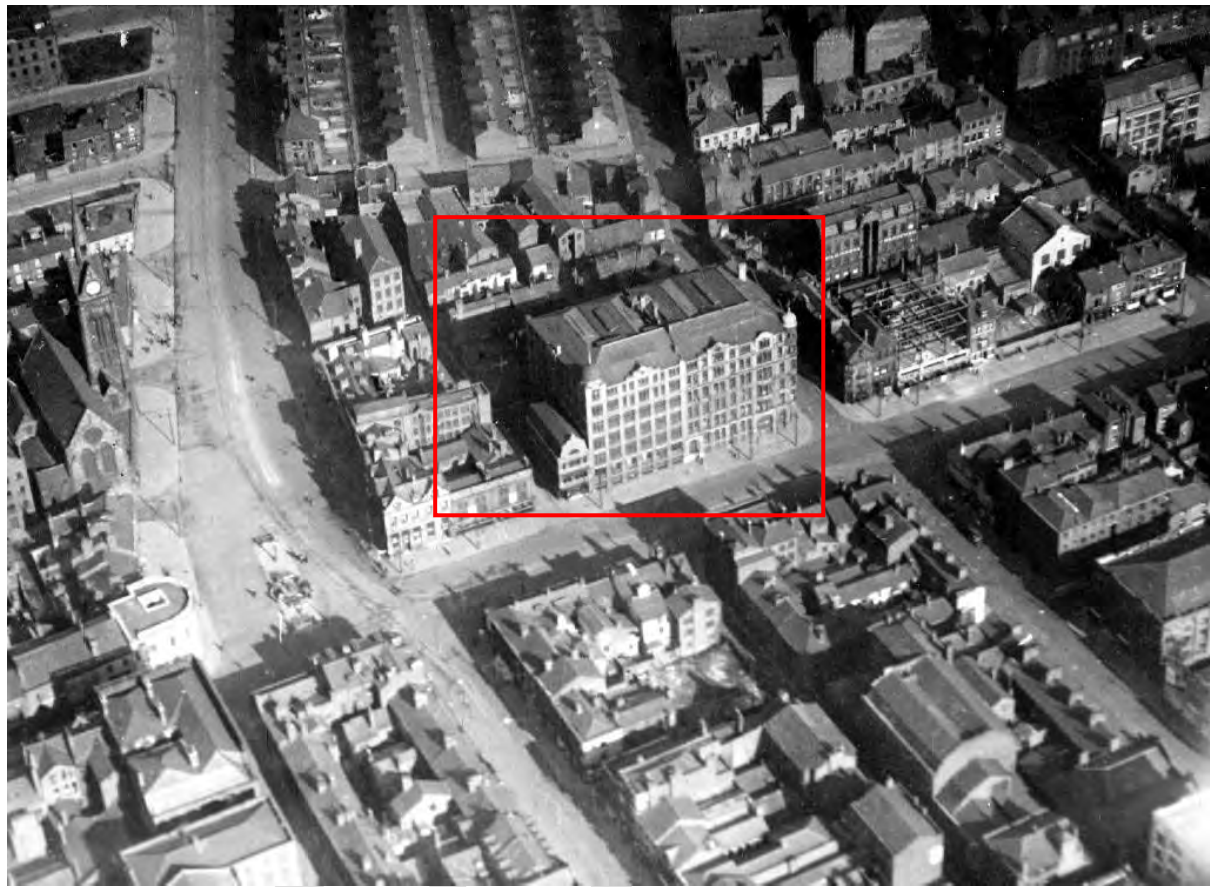


Figure 4: An aerial view looking north across the subject site in 1927, showing James Simpson Blair's corset factory and warehouse forming much of the site. Note the building to the left remained until the 1990s.

The site on which the Daily Express Building was constructed between 1936-9 originally contained 18th century dwellings and slum dwellings. By the late-19th century many of these had been converted or demolished to form light industry, warehousing and commercial premises.

The largest of these companies was James Simpson Blair's corset factory and warehouse, which was constructed in three phases. The first building was constructed in c1898 on Great Ancoats Street which was extended to the east, along George Leigh Street in c1903, and again doubled in size to the west to meet with No, 9 Great Ancoats Street between c1922-5. Following James Blair's death in 1927, the former corset factory was sold to the Daily Express for use as their Manchester printing works.

This move must have always been intended to be short-term, as the Victorian and Edwardian construction and internal layout of cast iron columns of the former corset factory would have proved awkward to run a modern newspaper printing works with large machinery.

In 1931 the first Modernist Daily Express Building was designed on Fleet Street by architects Ellis & Clarke. However, due to his long use and understanding of structural concrete, architect Sir Owen Williams was soon brought in as structural consultant where he reconfigured the designs to accommodate clear spans of over 58 feet in order to accommodate the large modern printing presses required.

The resulting alterations in design is thought to be largely of Williams' design for which the Manchester Daily Express Building (the subject site) and the Glasgow Daily Express Building (1936) both closely followed in terms of construction, design and materials, forming a clearly recognisable and modern architectural design for the Daily Express company.



Figure 5 - c1936 – The former corset factory used by the Daily Express from 1927 following the death of James Simpson Blair, seen here shortly before the first phase of demolition in 1936. Whittaker's cabinet makers can be seen at No. 9 Great Ancoats Street to the left of the block.

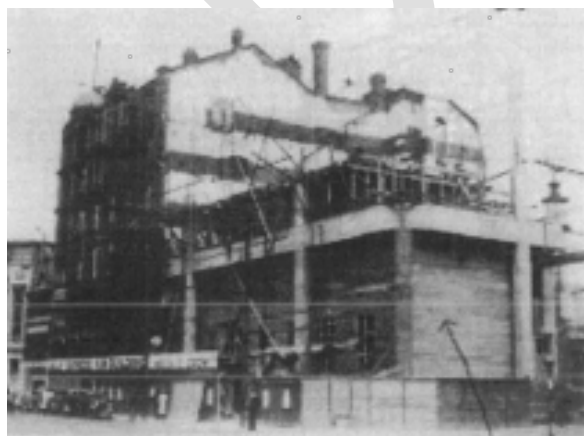


Figure 6 – Section A under construction in July 1936, showing the right side of the corset factory now demolished and the first phase of the new building underway

In November 1935 designs were drawn up by Williams for a new, purpose-built printing works for the Daily Express on Great Ancoats Street, to replace their existing premises on the site. The former corset works, which had been the home of the Daily Express from 1927, was demolished in three phases in order to allow for the uninterrupted and continual newspaper production throughout the demolition and construction process.

By July 1936 the eastern part of the corset factory had been demolished and construction of the new concrete frame was already up to first floor level. In September 1937 the remaining western part of the corset factory had been demolished and the final phase of concrete frame construction started. The new “Express House” was opened in 1939.



Figure 7 – The Great Ancoats Street elevation showing the point in which the new building (right) is completed, awaiting the existing corset factory (left) to be demolished.

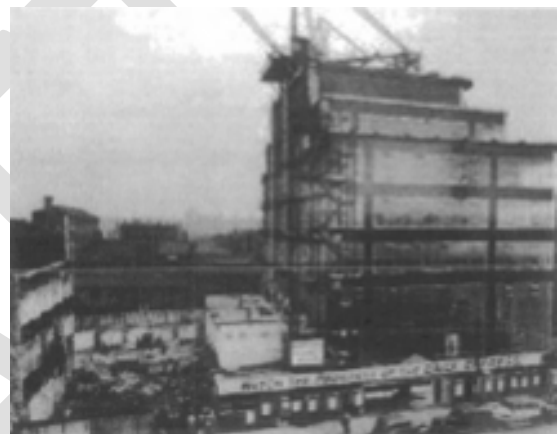


Figure 8 – Section A completed (right) and the last part of former corset warehouse to the left now demolished - September 1937.



Figure 9 - An aerial view looking north across the subject site in 1938, showing the right of the building to be fully completed, whilst the last phase of the left part of the building is still under construction.

The new Daily Express Building was constructed using a reinforced concrete frame with flat-slab concrete floor construction supported on 3ft wide chamfered square concrete columns, each terminating at ceiling level with long splayed cruciform capitals which allowed for the wide 39ft spans between columns.

This form of construction was repeated throughout the building, which diminished in floor area on the top two floors, creating the buildings' distinctive Art Deco stepped profile. The building was finished with a continuous curtain wall of clear and black glass panels made by Pilkington's, set within a metal frame made by Crittal. The areas of black glass were mostly used to conceal the internal concrete frame from view.

The building contained two stair towers, the principal staircase and two elevators on Great Ancoats Street, and a secondary staircase with goods lift on George Leigh Street. Both contained a concrete staircase which used the rounded dimensions of the stair towers to form stylistic curved structures which were finished simply with black and white glazed tiles to the steps and dado part of the walls.



Figure 10 – A view of the Daily Express Newspaper's newly completed "Express House" in 1939, showing the original lettering along the principal elevation. Note No.9 Great Ancoats Street to the left.



Figure 11: The principal elevation of the new building in 1939, showing the original printing presses clearly visible through the clear glazing of the double-height press hall at street level.



Figure 12: The Great Ancoats Street elevation in 1939, showing the retention of No. 9 to the far left.



Figure 13- 1939 – A view looking through at the large printing presses and mezzanine floor through the double-height, plain glass elevation on George Leigh Street.



Figure 14 – 1939 – The side entrance on George Leigh Street, showing the original Daily Express sign above the door, and the original configuration of rounded corner Crittall windows to the toilets on each floor. This configuration was shorted in 1993.

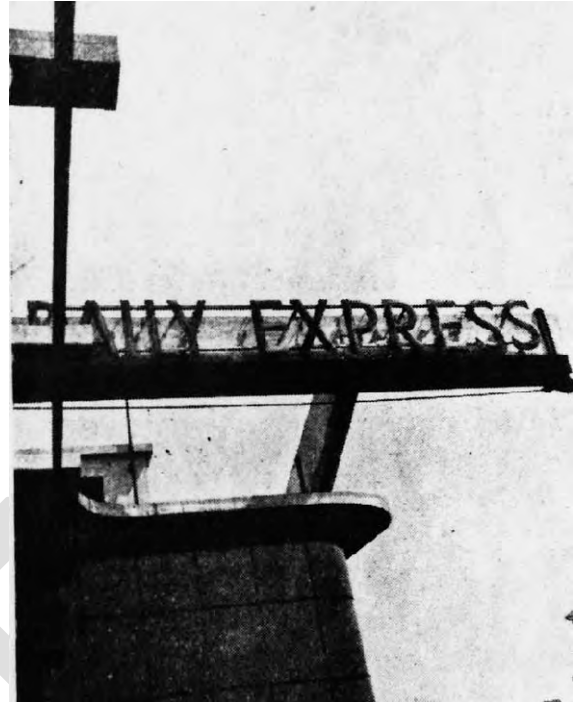


Figure 15 – 1939 – The original electric sign installed upon the concrete jib.



Figure 16 - 1939 – The original main entrance, showing the design of the entrance doors and hand rails.

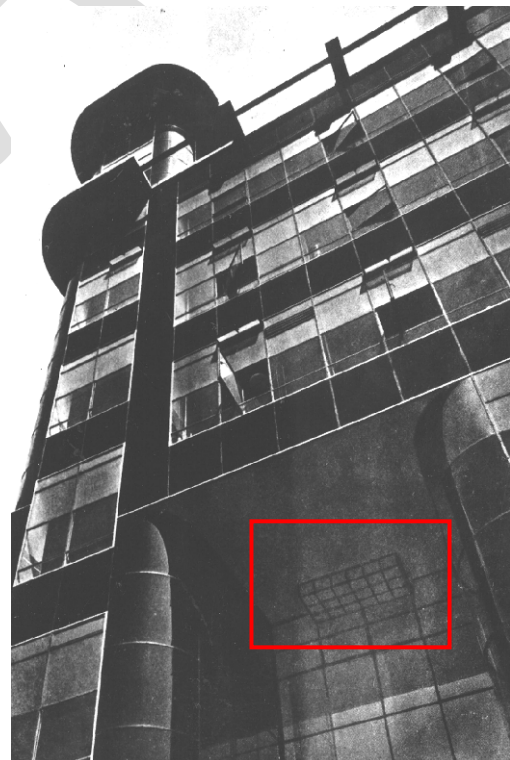


Figure 17- A view looking up into the external entrance, showing the original Modernist light fitting.

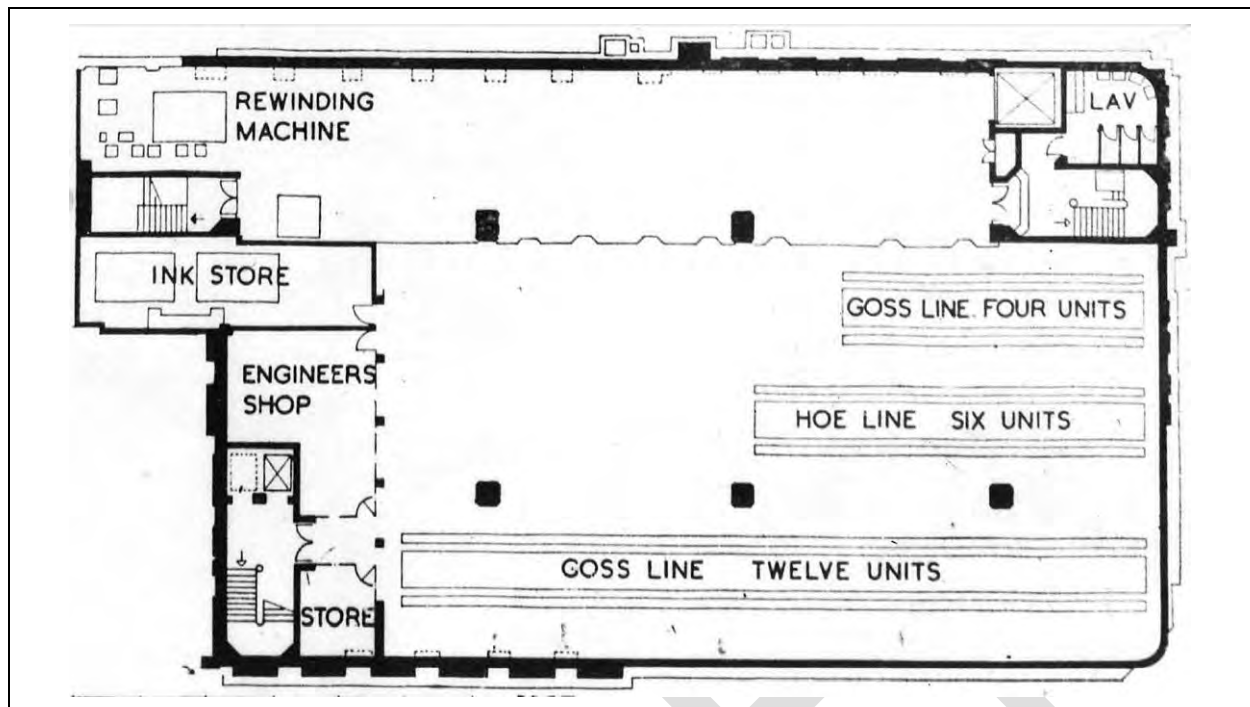


Figure 18 – The 1939 plan of the basement floor, showing the large open-plan floor housing the bases of the newspaper printing presses on the ground floor above.

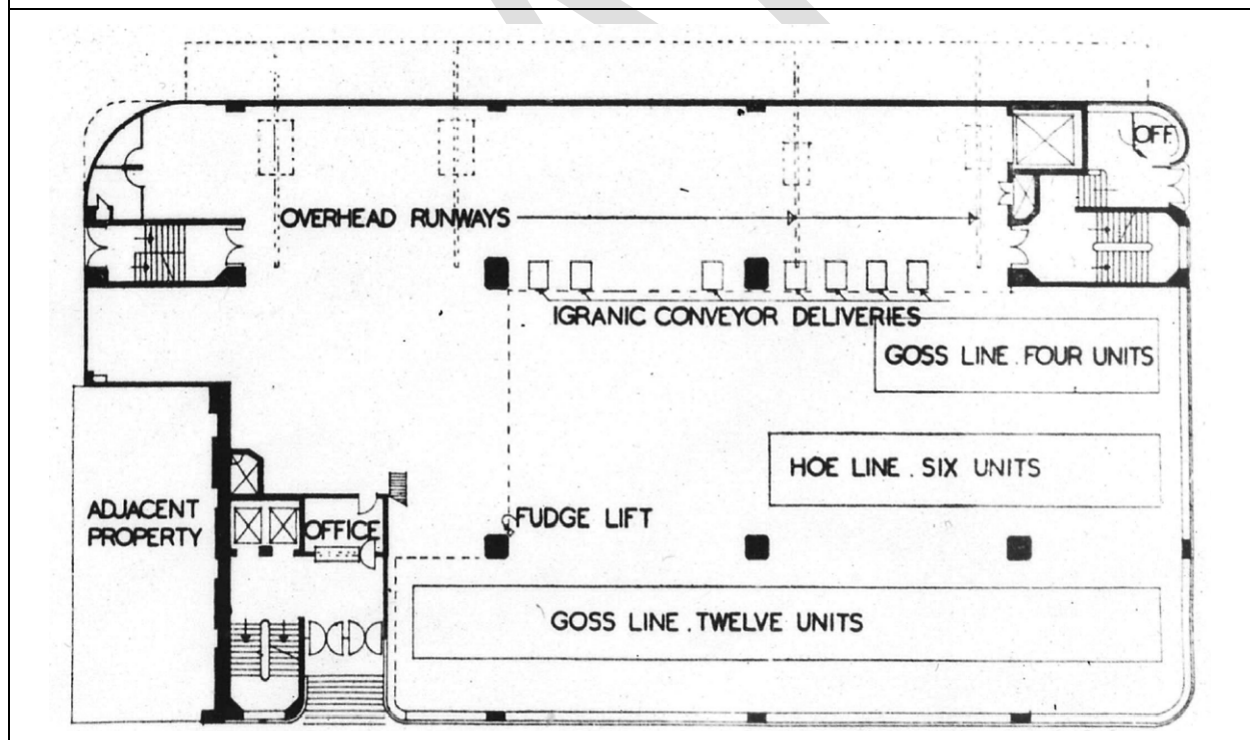


Figure 19 – The 1939 plan of the ground floor, showing the large open-plan floor for the 2 lines of newspaper printing presses, with the small main entrance, staircase and lifts to the left.

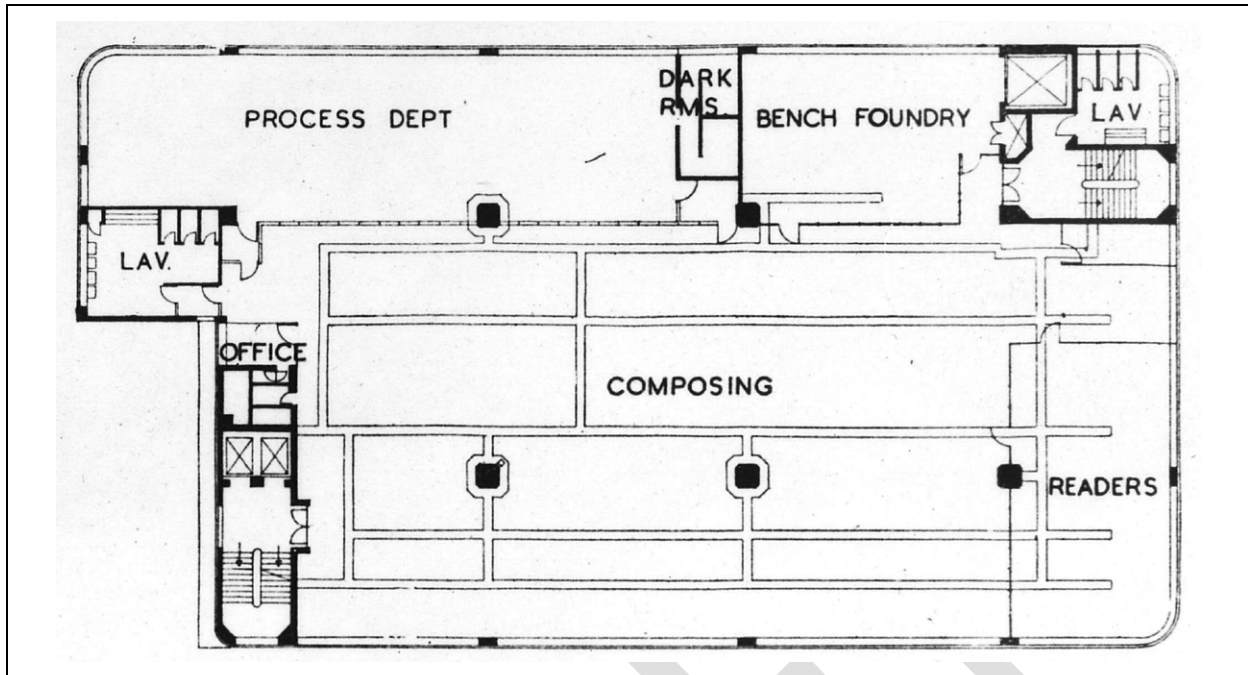


Figure 20 – The 1939 plan of the first floor, showing the large open-plan floor, with Process Department and Bench Foundry to the north, accommodated within Crittal-framed glazed rooms, and the large composing floor to the south.

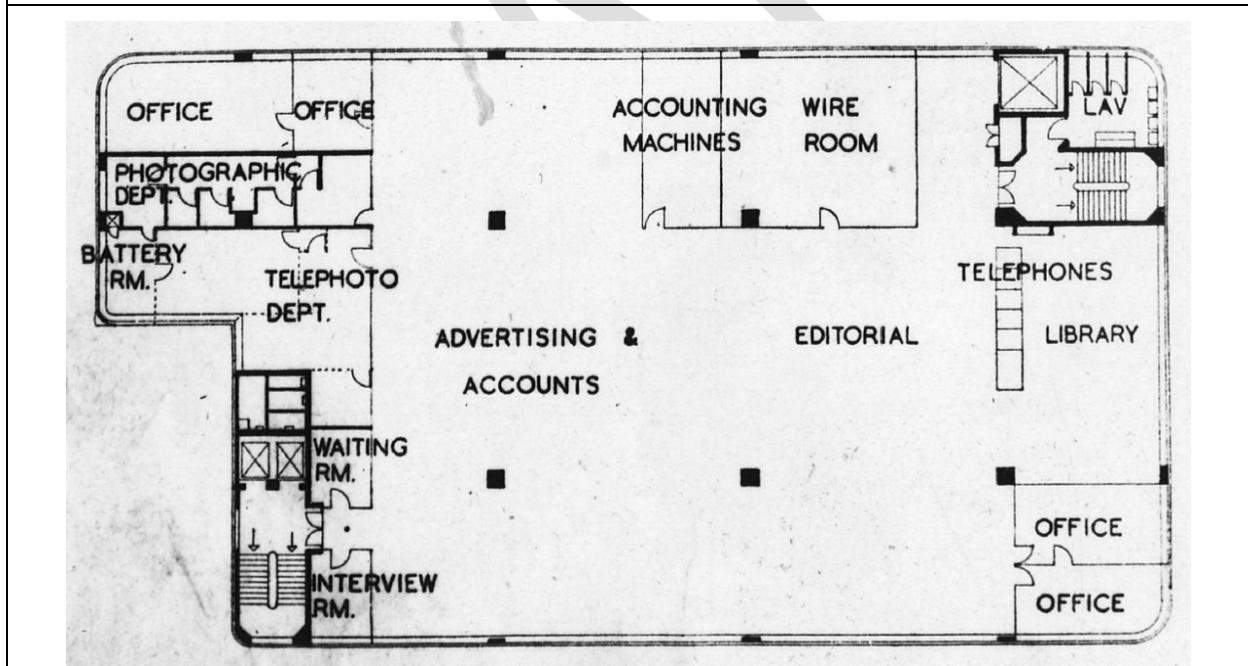


Figure 21 – The 1939 plan of the second floor, showing the large open-plan floor accommodating the advertising, editorial and accounts departments. The Library and telephones are to the south, with and offices to the north and south corners, accommodated within Crittal-framed glazed rooms.

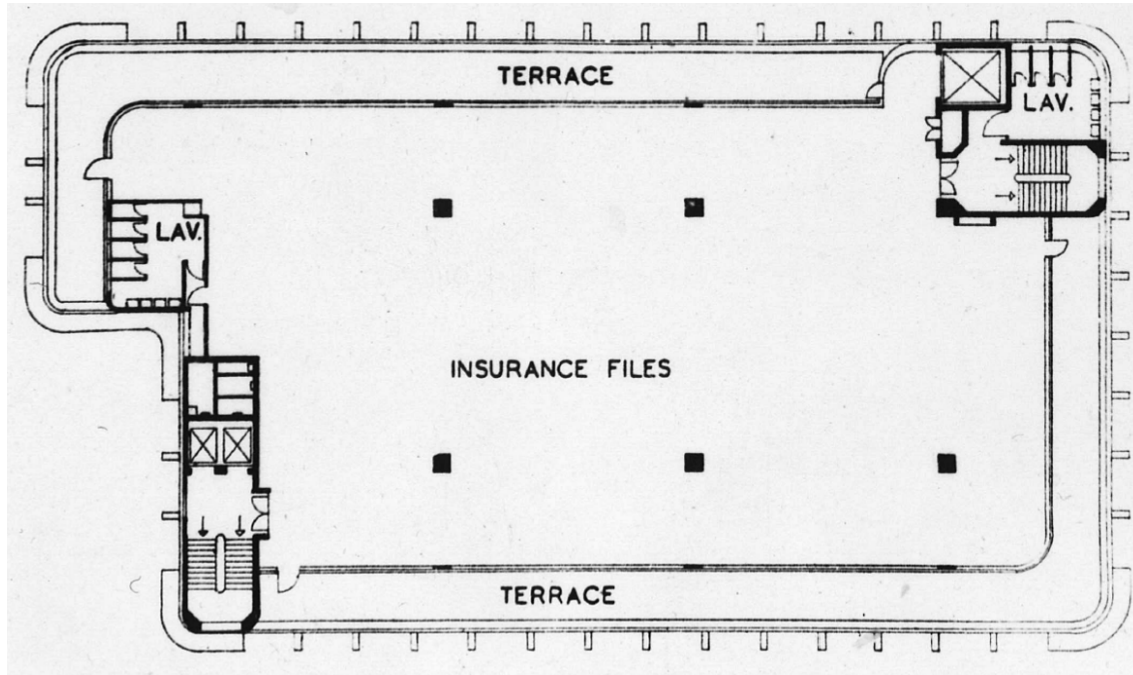


Figure 22 – The 1939 plan of the fourth floor, showing the large open-plan floor housing the insurance files.

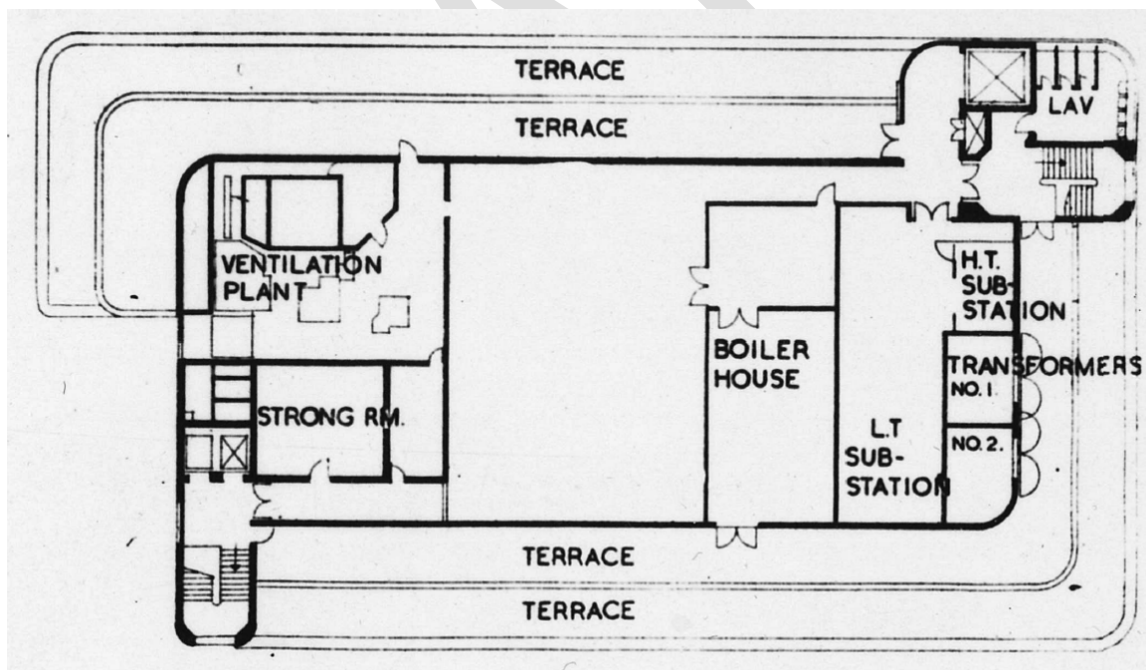


Figure 23 – The 1939 plan of the fifth floor, which was used exclusively for services, including the boiler house, sub-station, transformers and ventilation.

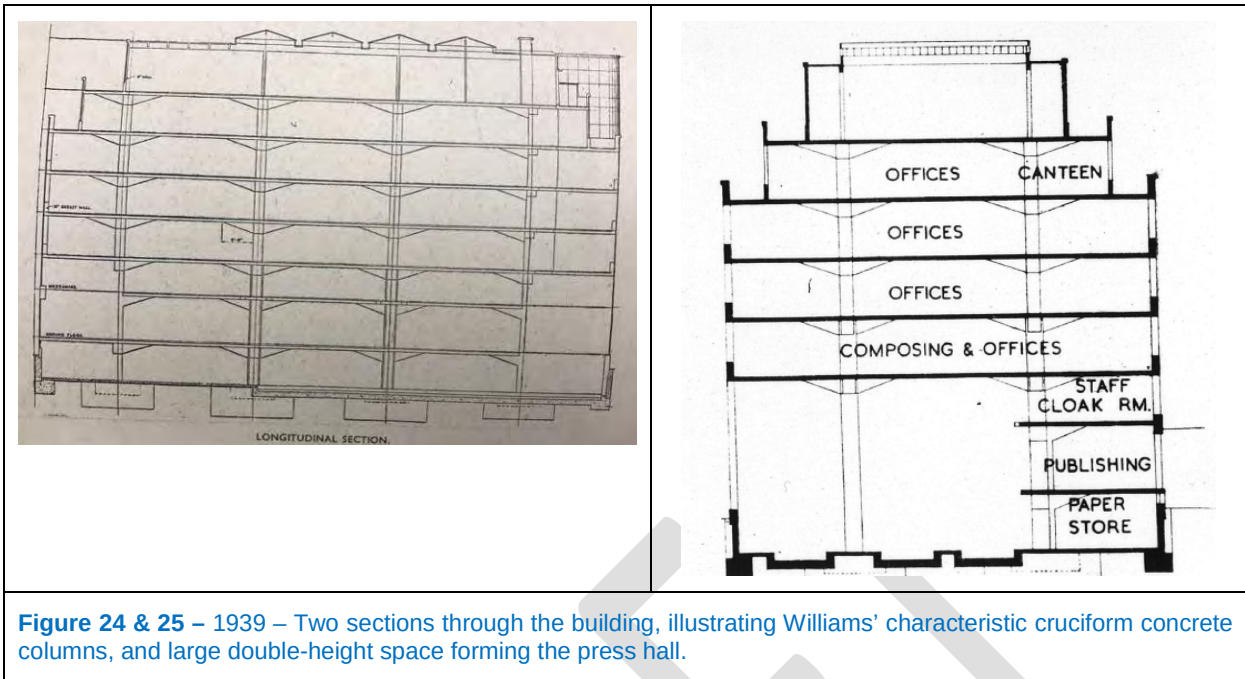




Figure 27 - 1959 – Looking along George Leigh Street towards the rear, Gun Street elevation before the 1960 building was constructed.



Figure 28 – Looking along Great Ancoats Street in 1962, showing that No 9 was already occupied by the Daily Express.



Figure 29 - 1958 – A closer view of the Gun Street elevation, showing the site before the 1960 building was erected.



Figure 30 - 1939 – A view of the main staircase on Great Ancoats Street, showing the original black and white glazed tiles to the steps, and tiling to the walls.

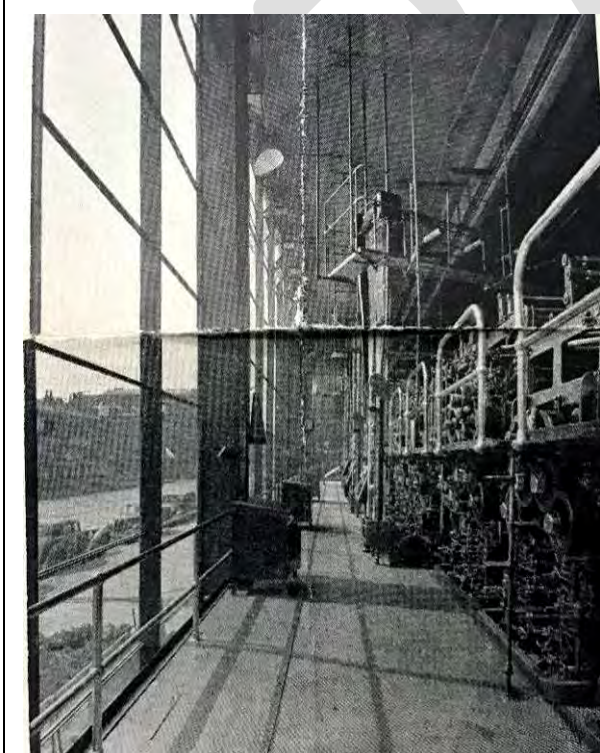


Figure 31 - 1939 – Looking along the length of the Great Ancoats Street aspect of the press hall.



Figure 32 - 1939 – A view looking through the press hall towards Great Ancoats Street, showing the large printing presses.

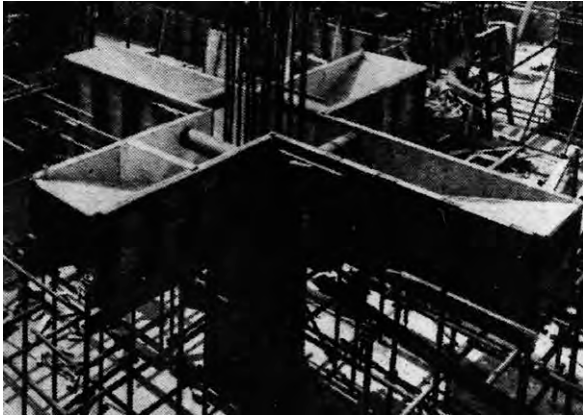


Figure 33 - Forming one of the many concrete cruciform "caps" to each column. Note the pipes used to create holes for services.



Figure 34 - Demolition works to the internal floors in February 1994, showing the exposed original column.

A special type of flooring was employed in most of the building, which was devised by Williams. This took the form of 3ft sections of plywood with a lino finish, which were screwed individually onto batons.

Due to the ever-changing requirements of the internal floors of the building, this system allowed for portioned offices and cabling points to be altered through any section being able to be easily lifted and new electric/telephone cabling to be re-laid or altered to any point in the floor.



Figure 35 - One of the open-plan floors during demolition works in January 1994 showing the remains of Sir Owen Williams 3ft ply/lino floor tiles and service cavities beneath the flooring.

Internally the concrete was painted throughout with an off-white to ceilings and upper parts of walls, with either a blue-black or grey to the lower parts. The entire press hall was decorated in blue-black paint due to the high risk of ink from the printing presses spoiling the paintwork.

In the Builder, 1936, the uses for each floor were noted as being; Basement – Occupied by the bases of the ground floor presses in the press hall and for the storage of ink and paper. Ground – Main press hall, foundry and publicity room. Mezzanine – Switch room and locker room. First – The composing room, process department and bench foundry. Second – Editorial and commercial. Third – Stationary stores, circulation department and welfare area including cloakrooms, dining room and kitchen. Fourth – Filing department, emergency paper store. Fifth – All services, including transformers, boiler house and ventilation plant.

The original entrance on Great Ancoats Street, unlike Williams' original Daily Express Building in London (1932) was unusually plain and functional in its size, design and decoration.

A new larger loading way canopy was erected along Gun Street in 1953, and in 1960 a large new printing works extension was designed by Sir Owen Williams in matching materials and style.

In 1974 the 1960 extension was extended with new floor levels added. In 1978 2 floors were constructed on top of the 1960 building, and three floors over the covered Gun Street canopy.



Figure 36 - The 1953 glazed roof over Gun Street in May 1962, showing the newly completed 1960 extension to the right.



Figure 37 – A general view of an office floor in the early 1960s, showing the concrete cruciform columns and glazed metal-framed internal office partitions.



Figure 38 – 1986 – A floor in the building during its final years as a print works.



Figure 39 – 1986 – An open-plan office floor showing the subsequent c1970s suspended ceilings.



Figure 40 – 1990 – The front elevation as seen the year following the closure of the print works.



Figure 41 – 1990 – The Great Ancoats Street elevation showing the original 1930s curtain walling.

Production of newspapers finished on site in 1989, and the building lay vacant until it was refurbished and extended to form general office accommodation by Michael Hype and Associates starting in 1992. Works carried out included the removal of all existing suspended ceilings and their replacement, the removal of all original tiled finishes to the staircase halls and toilets, and their replacement with modern tiling.

More advanced alterations included the insertion of the mezzanine floor to form a new first floor level, the extension and redesign of the entrance hall and reception, and the removal and replacement of all original glazed curtain walling.

The most substantial parts of the proposed works were the demolition of No. 9 Great Ancoats Street and its replacement with a matching, seamless 6-storey extension from the northern side of the Daily Express Building to meet with Luna Street, and the construction of a large internal light well to the north elevation of the building, which required sections of concrete floor to be removed.

In 1998 reflective solar film was added to the internal face of all glazing. In 2000 the 1960 building was converted into office accommodation on the ground, mezzanine and first floors, with apartments on the second and third floors and car parking/ramp to basement.



Figure 42 - Erection of ground floor and second floor steelwork, April 1994.



Figure 43 – Erection of new steelwork to fifth and sixth floors of the extension, June 1994.



Figure 44 – New curtain walling nearing completion, March 1995.



Figure 45 – The newly completed exterior of the building, May 1995.

In 2010 the main entrance and reception of the original Daily Express Building was redesigned, opening out and refurbishing the altered 1993 scheme.

3.5 The Architect



Figure 46 – Sir Owen Williams pictured in the 1960s.

Sir Owen Williams (1890-1969) was a British engineer and architect, known for a number of important Modernist and Art Deco buildings during the 1920s and 1930s, as well as a number of concrete structures and infrastructures, including the Gravelly Hill Interchange or “Spaghetti Junction”, Birmingham, which was his last major work.

Williams studied engineering at London University in 1907, and took a place as engineer and designer with the Trussed Concrete Company in 1912. During the First World War (1914-18) Williams worked on designs for concrete battle ships, and in 1919 he set up his own engineering business as ‘Williams Concrete Structures’.

Williams became the chief consulting civil engineer to the British Empire Exhibition of 1927, which included several modernist concrete buildings including the now demolished original Wembley Stadium. Williams’ experience and experimentation in concrete engineering and design saw this aspect of his work forming the major part of many of his future architectural projects, where his futuristic and inventive structural concrete frames largely took precedent over external glazing and cladding.

The calculations and achievement of wide support-less spans within many of his buildings was achieved through the use of imaginative and unique concrete column design, which became his trademark, among which he employed in the Daily Express Building, Manchester, the Boots Dry and Wet Goods Factories, Nottinghamshire and the Pioneer Health Centre, Peckham. His later works largely focused on road infrastructure including structural concrete designs for the new M1 Motorway in the 1950s/60s

Williams’ designs for the London and Glasgow Daily Express Buildings were designed by Ellis and Clark, with Williams taking on the role of engineer, rather than architect. The Daily Express Building in Manchester was the only Daily Express Building entirely designed by Williams.

Key buildings designed by Sir Owen Williams



Figure 47 - Boots Packed Dry Goods Factory, 1931, Grade I.



Figure 48 – Boots Packed Dry Goods Factory, 1938. Grade I.



Figure 49 - The Dorchester Hotel, London, 1931. Grade II.



Figure 50 – The Pioneer Health Centre, Peckham, 1934-5. Grade II*.



Figure 51 - Palace of Industry building, originally part of the British Empire Exhibition, Wembley, 1924. Unlisted.



Figure 52 - Former Empire Pool, Wembley, 1934. Grade II.



Figure 53 - The London Daily Express Building, 1931-2. Grade II*.



Figure 54 - The Glasgow Daily Express Building, 1936-9. Grade II.

A black and white photograph of a large industrial building with a curved glass facade. The building's structure is composed of a grid of dark vertical and horizontal frames. In the foreground, on the right side, there is a complex, dark mechanical structure, possibly a piece of heavy machinery or a crane, with various pipes, valves, and structural elements. The building's interior or the view through the glass shows a cityscape with other buildings in the background. The overall scene is industrial and architectural.

BUILDING DESCRIPTION

3.6 Building Description



Figure 55 - An aerial view of the site showing the different phases. The red star denotes the original 1936-9 building. The green star denotes the 1992-3 6-storey extension in replacement of No. 9 Great Ancoats Street. The yellow star denotes the 1960 extension with floors added in 1978 and 2001. The purple star denotes the former Gun Street access road, with floors added in 1978.

The external elevations of the building were all originally designed with continuous glazed curtain walling in black and clear Pilkington's glass set within a metal Crittal framework. This curtain wall was removed and replaced with the current system in 1992-3 and follows the original fenestration design and materials almost exactly.

The south-west elevation facing Great Ancoats Street forms the principal elevation of the building, and contains the main entrance to the northern end. The entrance is accessed via a flight of steps, with modern handrails in the same style as the original chrome examples. The original doors have also been replaced with copies of the original designs. Originally a large geometric glass light was positioned above the soffit of the entrance (see Figure 17), which has since been removed.

The area between the staircase and Luna Street, to the left corner of the composition, was constructed in 1992-3, and replaced a small Edwardian three-storey furniture store called Whittaker's. Due to the complete replacement of the original curtain wall system, the replacement extension closely resembles the remainder of the building, and could be mistaken for being an original part of the design.

The top two storeys are stepped back, allowing for a dramatic original concrete window cleaning gantry to extend over the elevation. The location of the main staircase extends the full height of the building, and thus appears to be tower-like towards the top.

The ground floor and former mezzanine floors have now been separated to provide a first floor level, however the replacement glazing system respects the original double-height spatial arrangement in this area. The concrete plinth and concrete around the entrance is original, however exposure to the atmosphere has seen its original smooth finish having deteriorated to expose the aggregate within.

The south-east elevation on George Leigh Street continues the same replacement curtain walling, and retains the original secondary entrance and staircase. At roof level, the original concrete jib arm is retained extending from the roof. Originally this would have contained the electric lettering 'Daily Express'. The original curved corner leading into Gun Street is still extant, however subsequent extensions and insertions of floors has concealed much of the Gun Street elevation from view. This part of the building is in separate ownership and is not assessed as part of this report.

The north-west elevation on Luna Street continues the same replacement curtain walling as seen on the other elevations. The northern aspect of this elevation forms a part of the original 1930s building, however the location of the 1900s Whittaker's furniture store in the south-west corner dates to 1992-3. The car part ramp was also added at this time. The concrete plinth and corner surround details are original.



Figure 56 – 1939 – A view of the newly completed Daily Express Building on Great Ancoats Street, then known as “Express House”.



Figure 57 - The same view as seen in 2016, showing the 1992-3 extension to the left (outlined red) and the 1993 replacement glazed curtain walling, and solar film (added in 1998).



Figure 58 – A view looking south-west along George Leigh Street in 1959, showing the original buildings which were demolished to allow for the construction of the 1960 extension.



Figure 59 – Looking along George Leigh Street in May 1961, showing Williams' extension to the printing works underway.



Figure 60 - A view looking north-west along Henry Street in 1962, showing the newly completed (1960) extension to the rear of the Daily Express Building, also designed by Sir Owen Williams.



Figure 61 – The newly completed extension as seen in May 1962.

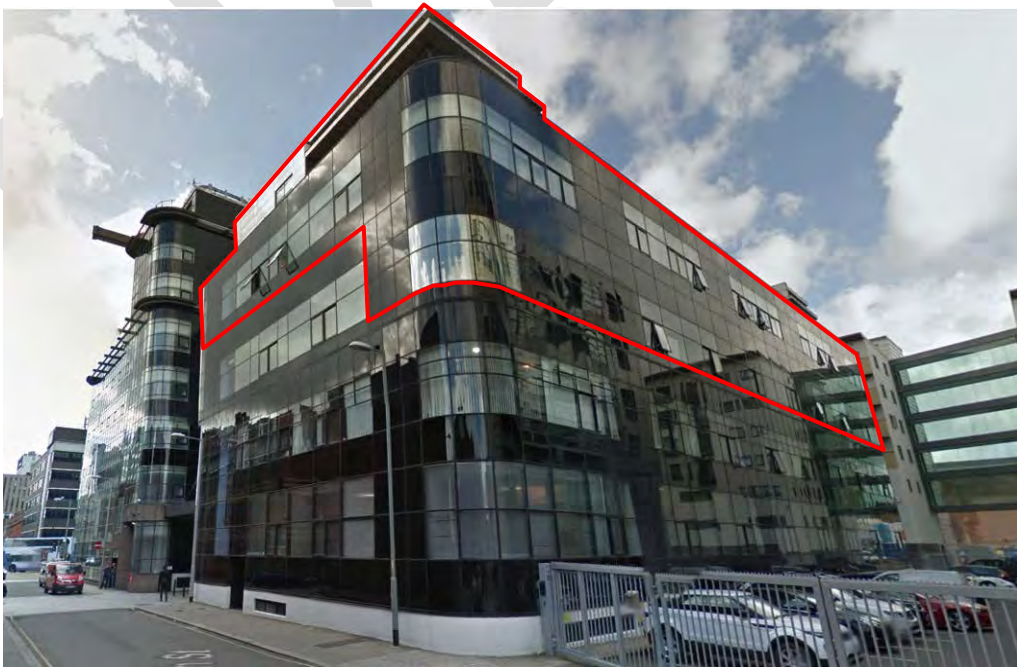


Figure 62 - A similar view looking at Sir Owen William's 1960 extension in 2016, showing the subsequent 1978 extension outlined in red. The 2001 addition of two floors is out of view.



Figure 63 – A view of George Leigh Street in 2017, showing the 1960 extension.



Figure 64 - Looking north along Luna Street in 1962, showing the newly completed extension to the right.



Figure 65 - Looking north along Luna Street in 2016.



Figure 66 - A view of the original principal entrance into the building in 1939.

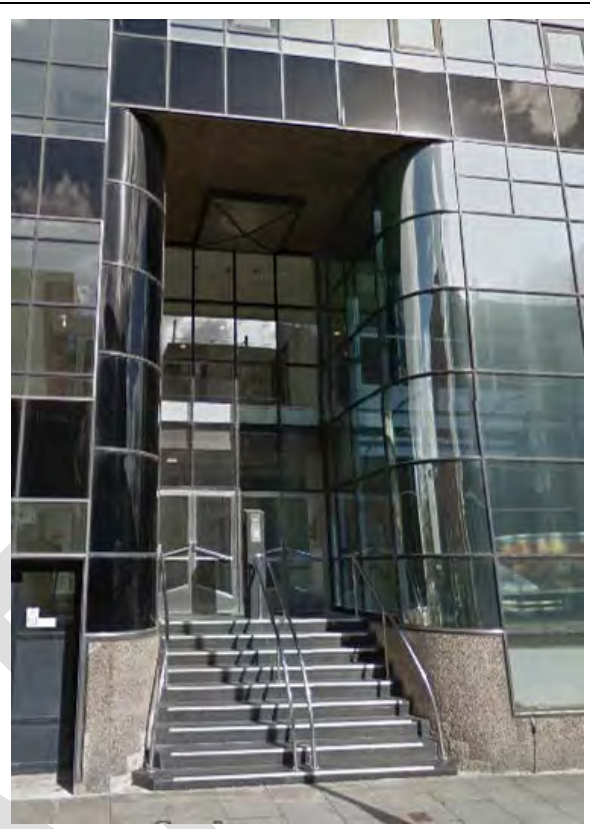


Figure 67 - The main entrance as seen in 2017, showing the shadows of the original black tiled borders. Note the 1993 light which replaces the Modernist light fitting formed of 18 cubes of glass and metal framing.



Figure 68 - Looking into Gun Street, showing the original glazed canopy in 1939, replaced in 1953.

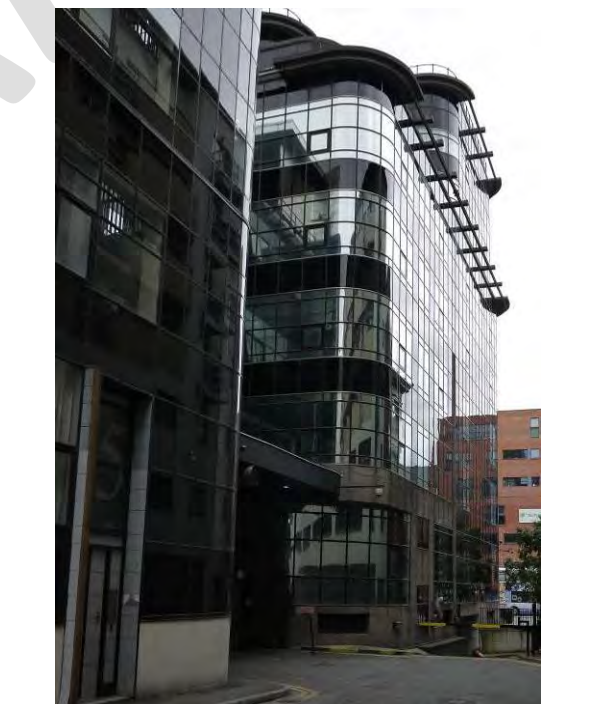


Figure 69 - The same view as seen in 2017, showing the modern car park ramp to the basement.

3.7 Interior of the Daily Express Building

Internally, the ground to fourth floors are of largely similar planform and design, with a large open-plan office space from Great Ancoats Street to Gun Street, and a large modern glazed internal light well to the centre of the Gun Street elevation. To the north-east corner of each floor is the original secondary staircase, with a now altered circulation route. To the south-west corner is the original main staircase, also retained, and now extended on each floor to accommodate toilets to each floor.

The top two floors diminish in size. The top floor retains its higher ceiling height, which would originally have accommodated the plant, transformers and ventilation for the building. This floor would have been purely functional in its design and decoration, and does not contain Williams' characteristic concrete columns or continual glazed windows.

The basement floor now contains a car park, converted from the former printing press and store rooms in 1992-3.

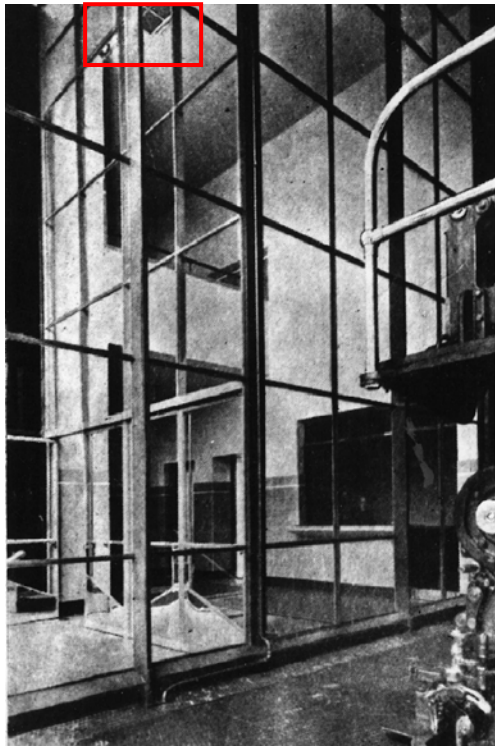


Figure 70 – Looking north along the Great Ancoats Street elevation of the former press hall in 1939, showing the whole of the original entrance hall through the clear glazing (outlined red).



Figure 71 – The same view as seen in 2017, showing the extended 1990s mezzanine floor.

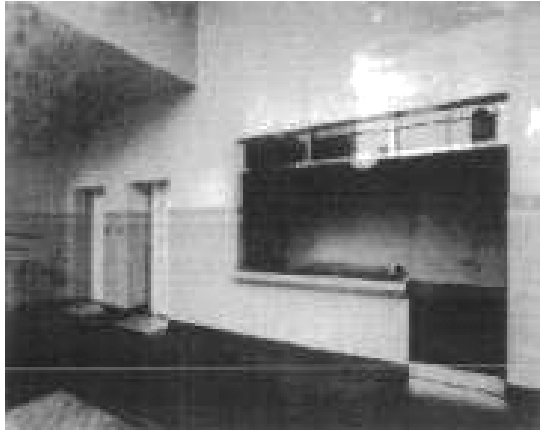


Figure 72 - 1939 – The original entrance hall, reception kiosk and elevators. Note the simple, plain decoration.



Figure 73 – The newly finished reception in 1995.



Figure 74 – The redesigned 2010 reception and lifts as seen in 2017. Compare this view to the original view from the same location in 1939 (Figure 72).



Figure 75 – 2017 - In contrast, the entrance hall and reception of the original Daily Express Building in Fleet Street, London, showing the elaborate, high quality design/ decoration.

The two original staircases remain, but were altered in 1992-5 with the addition of varnished timber to the top of the concrete balustrade, and the removal and replacement of the original glazed tiles to dado level. The original black and white tiles to each step remain and are now covered with modern carpet. Each landing of the staircases originally had a small geometric ceiling light, similar to the larger example originally installed externally, above the principal entrance.

The location of the two small elevators to the principal staircase remain extant, whilst each landing now extends though into the 1992-4 extension at each floor level.

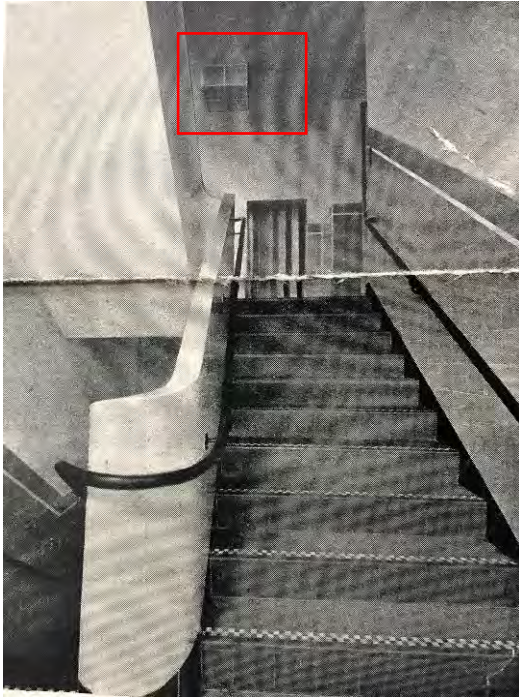


Figure 76 - The principal stairs in 1939, note the original black and white tiled steps, which are now covered with carpet. Note the original wall tiles and Art Deco light fitting circled red.



Figure 77 - The same view in 2017, showing the re-tiled walls, new timber banister and carpeted floors. It appears that the metal handrails are the originals.



Figure 78 – The staircase in the first Daily Express in Fleet Street, London in 1932. Note the similar curved concrete design.



Figure 79 – One of the principal stair treads uncovered to expose the original 1930s black and white tiles (compare with Figure 79).



Figure 80 – The main staircase before finishing, as seen in June 1937.



Figure 81 – The main staircase following its completion and finishing 1939.



Figure 82 – 5th to 6th floor re-tiling of main staircase January 1995.

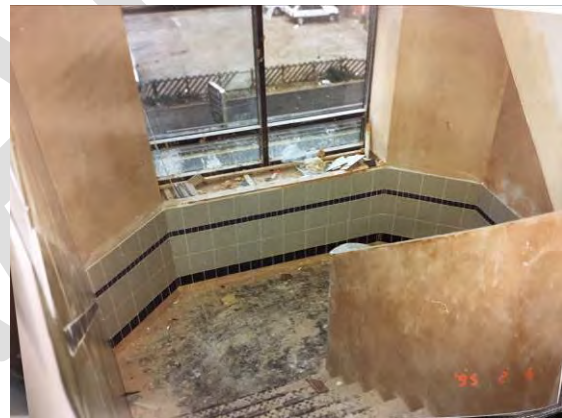


Figure 83 – Tiling the secondary staircase.



Figure 84 - An office view in 1939. Note the exposed concrete columns and ceiling, with pendant lights.



Figure 85 -.Looking across the first floor from the north.

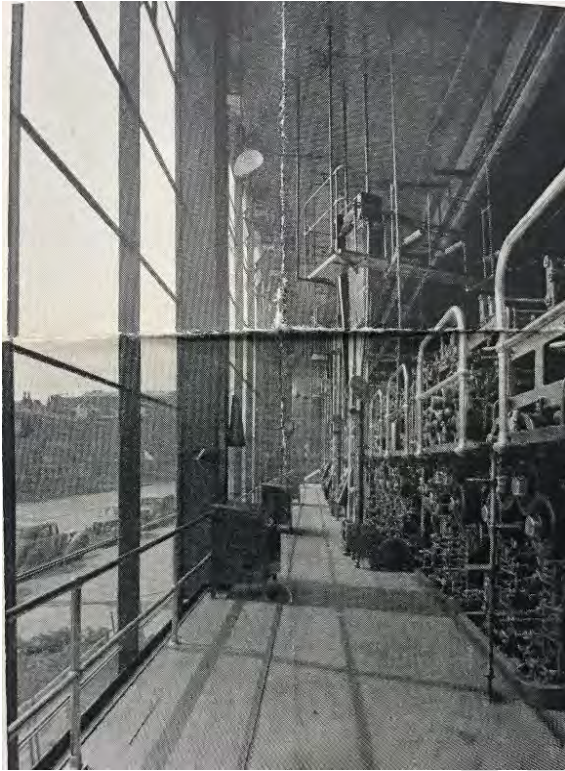


Figure 86 - Looking north-westerly along the ground floor of the press hall in 1939, showing the original double-height space



Figure 87 - A view taken from the same position looking along in the opposite (south-easterly) direction, showing the 1992-3 replacement curtain walling and extended mezzanine floor.

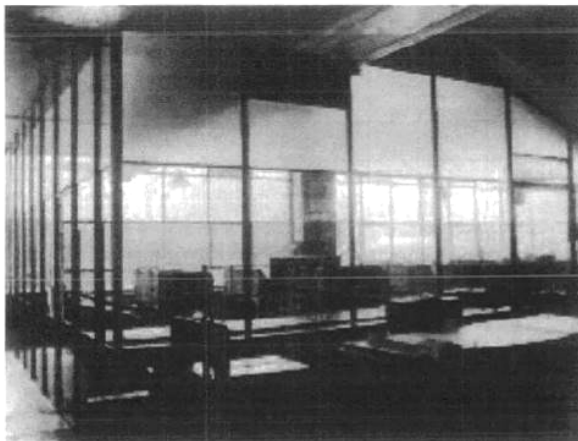


Figure 88 - An internal office floor view of one of the several Crittal glazed offices.



Figure 89 - Removing all internal fixtures/fittings and structures in January 1994, showing one of the original Crittal glazed offices.



**SIGNIFICANCE
ASSESSMENT**

4. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

4.1 Introduction

The assessment of significance accords with the requirements of the NPPF and uses Historic England's methodology outlined in its 2008 document, "*Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance*".

The key criteria for listing are special historic or architectural interest. Consequently, in order to determine the significance of a certain component of a heritage asset the sum of its architectural, historic, artistic or archaeological value needs to be disaggregated and determined.

Consequently, the designated heritage asset's significance is determined by an analysis of the relevant aspects of the following:

Evidential Value – *this relates to the potential of the place to yield primary evidence about past human activity;*

Historical Value – *relevant to ways in which the present can be connected through a place to past people, events and aspects of life;*

Aesthetic Value – *focusing on the ways in which sensory and intellectual stimulation is derived from the place;*

Communal Value – *relating to the meaning the subject site has for the people of Manchester and the collective experience of memory it holds.*

The analysis of the significance allows for an assessment of the current integrity and authenticity of the building. This has been used to inform and justify their capacity for change. The focus is on providing necessary and proportional amount of information.

The assessment of the significance is based on both desktop research and on-site visual surveys.

High significance relates to those parts or elements of the structure deemed to be of particularly special interest. These components are fundamental to the understanding of the architectural design concept, and play a major role in reflecting their evidential, historic, aesthetic or communal values.

Considerable significance relates to those components of the structure deemed to be of special interest. They are important to the understanding of the architectural design concept, and play a considerable role in reflecting the buildings' evidential, historic, aesthetic or communal values.

Low significance relates to those components of the structure deemed to be of more modest interest. They provide a minor contribution to the understanding of the architectural design concept and a modest role in revealing the buildings' evidential, historic, aesthetic or communal values.

None/Detrimental features and elements that do not contain any special interest. These can detract from the significance of the building and maybe evidence of poor craftsmanship or ad-hoc refurbishments.

4.2 Statement of significance

The special architectural and historic interest of the Daily Express Building is recognised by its Grade II* Listed designation, however there is the need to assess the building in order to determine what special interest the building yields in heritage terms.

- The building was built by the renowned Modernist architect Sir Owen Williams as a purpose-built newspaper printing works in a purely futuristic Modernist style.
- The building forms one of three similar printing works designed by Williams for the Daily Express, which still survive in London and Glasgow; The Manchester Daily Express Building is considered to be more architecturally advanced to that of the Glasgow and London counterparts, although internally the building was originally designed in a utilitarian and functional style, in contrast to its earlier counterpart on Fleet Street in London.
- In 1969, architectural historian Sir Nikolaus Pevsner described the building as being *“the best Manchester building of between the wars”*.
- Historically the Daily Express Newspaper was an important business in Manchester, and was only one of three in England from the 1920s to the 1980s.
- The building retains much of its original open-plan planform, and original structural concrete frame/floors and cruciform columns which are of high significance.
- The internal spaces were substantially altered and refurbished between 1992-5, and insertions from this date are of no significance.
- Although the original curtain wall system was replaced in 1992-3, the design and materials of the replacement glazing system is almost identical in its design and materials and continues the original design closely, and thus considered to be of high significance.
- The building retains few original internal fixtures and fittings except for the two original concrete staircases and cruciform columns, which are all of high significance.
- The original black and white tiling to both stair cores appears to survive beneath modern carpet and as one of the few remaining original elements of decorative scheme, this is considered to be of high significance.
- The building forms a unique concrete structure incorporating Williams characteristic ‘cruciform’ columns, which are a key part of the design and structure of the building, which can be seen in many other buildings he designed during this period, and are of high significance.
- Due to the substantial alterations and refurbishments in 1992-5, the significance of the building largely focuses on the remaining completeness of its structural design, planform and unique futuristic Modernist design/Art Deco style.
- The building has high streetscape value.

- The heritage values that the building yields are primarily related to its associative connection to its architect: Sir Owen Williams, and the unique and advanced structural frame and unusual Modernist design.
- **Considerable Evidential value** The building is an important and unusual building type of a 1930s printing works, and was designed with interiors, decorations and fixtures/fittings which were purely functional, and although substantial alterations have taken place during the 1990s, including extension, rebuilding, replacement of curtain-walling and the total refurbishment of the building, these have not entirely impacted on the understanding of the building's original design or circulation/planform.
- **High Historical value** is derived from the Modernist/Art Deco design of the building, and its use of modern materials to create a unique example of this style and date that was not rivalled in Manchester, as well as through the associative links to the renowned Modernist architect and concrete engineer Sir Owen Williams.

The building forms one of three similarly designed printing works designed for the Daily Express by Sir Owen Williams during the 1930s in London, and Glasgow, with the Manchester example being thought to be the only one entirely designed by him.

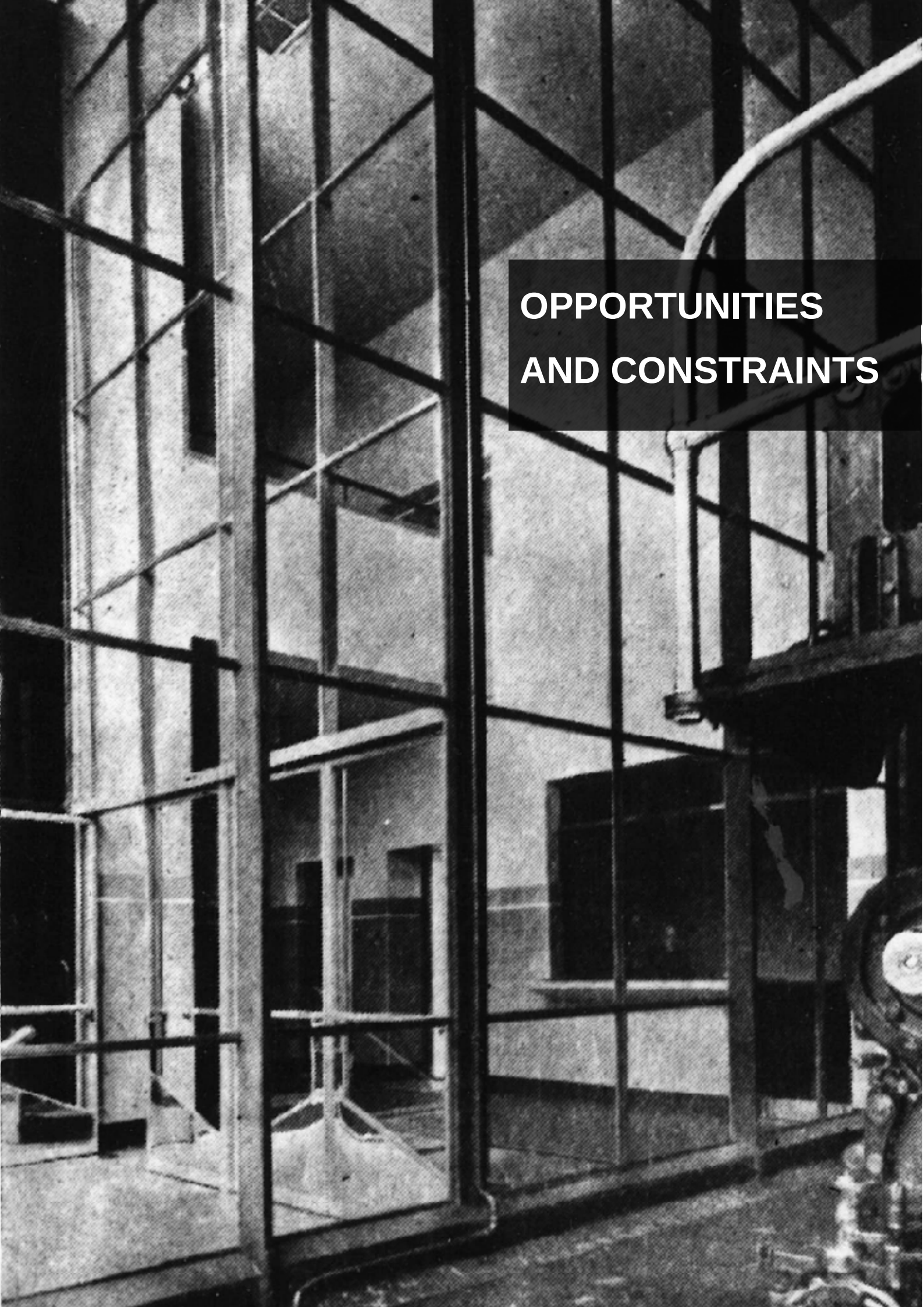
- **High Aesthetic value** is derived from the conscious design of the building including, which uses a futuristic Modernist/Art Deco style, incorporating many finely designed and artistic detailing. This includes the strong and clear architectural composition, form, proportions and massing, and the use and exploitation of modern materials such as Crittal metal-framed windows, structural concrete, continual curtain walling in clear and black glass, and remaining internal features such as the original concrete staircases and tiling.

The survival of the structural concrete frame, which was advanced for the period, allowing for wide open spans for the accommodation of modern printing presses, along with the two remaining original concrete stair cores (now altered) and key elements of the original planform and structure of the building.

The building is located in a position which commands medium-range/long-range views of its principal elevations, and is enjoyed as a component of the historic streetscape.

- **Considerable Communal value** is derived from the fact the building was home to a long-running and large employer of local workers. Communal value is also yielded by the original design intent to position the double-height press hall on Great Ancoats Street and George Leigh Street so as to allow for the public to witness the many large newspaper presses in active use day and night.

The building was also originally designed with several large, sometimes electrically-lit signs around its perimeter, which would have been seen for some distance and would have formed local focal points.



OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

5. OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

5.1 Introduction

Due to the statutory designation of the Daily Express Building, it is recognised that any future refurbishment scheme will need to be seen to both enhance, and reveal the heritage values of the building.

The following **opportunities and constraints** were thus identified to determine how any future development of the building could be addressed without compromise to the significance of the listed building.

- Although the glazed curtain wall system around the entire building was installed in the early 1990s, it is a close reproduction of the original fenestration design/materials and should not be altered in terms of materials, glass colours or fenestration pattern. Some small areas of the glazing is different to the original design and could be altered to reflect this, which includes the 1990s extension to the area to the west of the building.
- The large open-plan spaces to each floor of the building are reminiscent to the original planform of the building; however each floor would originally have had a number of partitioned rooms/departments and offices using slim Crittal metal-framed glazed partitioned and doors. There is scope for any introduction of new partitioned rooms to follow this historic precedent and reintroduce metal-framed glazed screens.
- The internal lightwell was inserted in the early 1990s and is of no significance and could be altered/removed.
- The first floor mezzanine floor was extended in the early 1990s and is of no heritage significance. The former press hall was originally one large, double-height space. There is scope for the reintroduction of the rooms' original spatial qualities.
- The top floor originally housed all the plant within the building, and as such was a low quality space with few window openings. This floor is of low significance. There is scope for the reintroduction of the original glazed roofs and the insertion of new window openings.
- Conservation repairs will be required for any damaged areas of external and internal concrete.
- The two original staircases within the building remain. Except for the internal concrete frame, the staircases are the only internal building elements to be retained from the original design and as such are of high significance.

- The two original staircases underwent alteration in the 1990s, including the inside face of the staircases being applied with rough Artex, the simple shaped concrete balustrading having varnished pine applied above, the original tiled wall surfaces retiled, and the original tiled landings and steps being covered with carpet. As the tiling to the landings and steps are the only remaining internal decorative scheme remaining in the building, these should be uncovered, repaired and included in any future scheme.
- The main entrance from Great Ancoats Street was enlarged and its double-height spatial qualities were lessened by the insertion of a first floor walkway. There is scope for the enhancement of the space by reintroducing height into the space and a decorative scheme which derives from the buildings original design qualities and style.
- The original external entrance from Great Ancoats Street contains a replica of the original doors, which although are modern replacements, should not be altered in terms of design or materiality.
- The entrance steps were retiled in the early 1990s and retain the original concrete slab beneath. The original line of the now missing kick tiles is now clearly visible to the concrete either side of the steps; appropriate tiling could be reapplied in these areas.
- The original modernist/Art Deco metal-framed and white opaque glass soffit light above the entrance stairs is now replaced with a 1990s triangular example; this light, which originally also formed part of the entrance hall light also, could be reintroduced.
- The reflective solar film, applied to all glazing in 1998, affects the original aesthetic qualities of the building, which was intended to be transparent and reveal internal activity. This should be removed.
- There is the opportunity to reintroduce signage on the external elevations, in line with the original design.

6. SUMMARY

- The site is a Grade II* Listed building; any proposals for alterations will require Listed Building Consent and or planning permission,
- The Daily Express Building is a unique example of a 1930s Modernist/Art Deco printing works, designed by the renowned architect Sir Owen Williams in 1935,
- The building underwent major alterations and extensions during the 1990s, which removed the majority of original internal and external historic building elements/decorative schemes except for the structural concrete frame and staircases,
- Although replaced in the early 1990s, the exterior curtain-walled elevations of the building, which replaced the original curtain-walling with the same design are of a high significance,
- The exposed concrete structure externally and internally is of high significance,
- The remaining two internal staircase structures are of high significance,
- The remaining original black and white stair tiling to the landings and steps are of high significance,
- Areas of the building have been altered with the insertion of modern walls/doors, which are of no significance,
- The open-plan planform of the former printing works building is of high significance, and should be maintained,
- Any proposed subdivision of these open-plan floors should use the historic precedent of slim metal-framed Crittal glazed partitions,
- There is scope for the comprehensive redecoration of the internal spaces of the building, and the reordering of the internal planform to help reverse the 1990s works; there is the opportunity to reduce the extended 1990s mezzanine floor in order to reintroduce the original double-height space to the former press hall, and to the entrance reception,
- The inserted 1990s lightwell to the rear aspect of the building is of no heritage value and should be altered/removed,
- There is scope to increase natural light on the West side of the principal façade, in keeping with the original rhythm of that of the original East side.
- The reflective solar film applied to all glazing in 1998 should be removed,
- Development of any future proposals should be informed by this appraisal,
- Early pre-application consultation with Manchester City Council's conservation team and Historic England is advisable.

7. APPENDICES

7.1 Appendix i: List description

Name: DAILY EXPRESS BUILDING.

List entry Number: 1218285.

Location: DAILY EXPRESS BUILDING, GREAT ANCOATS STREET

District: Manchester.

Grade: II*.

Date first listed: 03-Oct-1974.

UID: 388153.

SJ8498 GREAT ANCOATS STREET, Ancoats 698-1/17/450 (North East side) 03/10/74 Daily Express Building

II*

Newspaper offices and print works. 1939, by Sir Owen Williams. Steel frame with glazed curtain walling (roof not visible). Approximately rectangular plan parallel to street, with loading bay at rear. Functional style. Six storeys, the 2 top storeys each set back, 5 structural bays, with narrow 7-storey tower at left end; black glass in continuous bands and strips, with clear glazing between, all flush and the corners rounded. High ground floor press shop with full-height clear glazing, recessed entrance next to tower at left end. Cantilevered rail over 3rd floor carried round, another over set-back top floor. Tower has 7 tiered rectangular windows, and cantilevered roof deck with railings. Later addition to rear of rear loading bay, in matching style. Early use of glazed curtain walling. Very similar to its counterpart in Fleet Street, London.

Listing NGR: SJ8474598693.

Stephen Levrant Heritage Architecture Ltd

CONSERVATION ARCHITECTS & HERITAGE CONSULTANTS

62 British Grove, Chiswick, London

020 8748 5501 (Tel)

53 Fountain Street, Manchester, M2 2AN

0161 247 8335 (Tel)

www.heritagearchitecture.co.uk