

Manchester Central Library Seating
Planning and Listed Building Application

Design, Access and Heritage Statement

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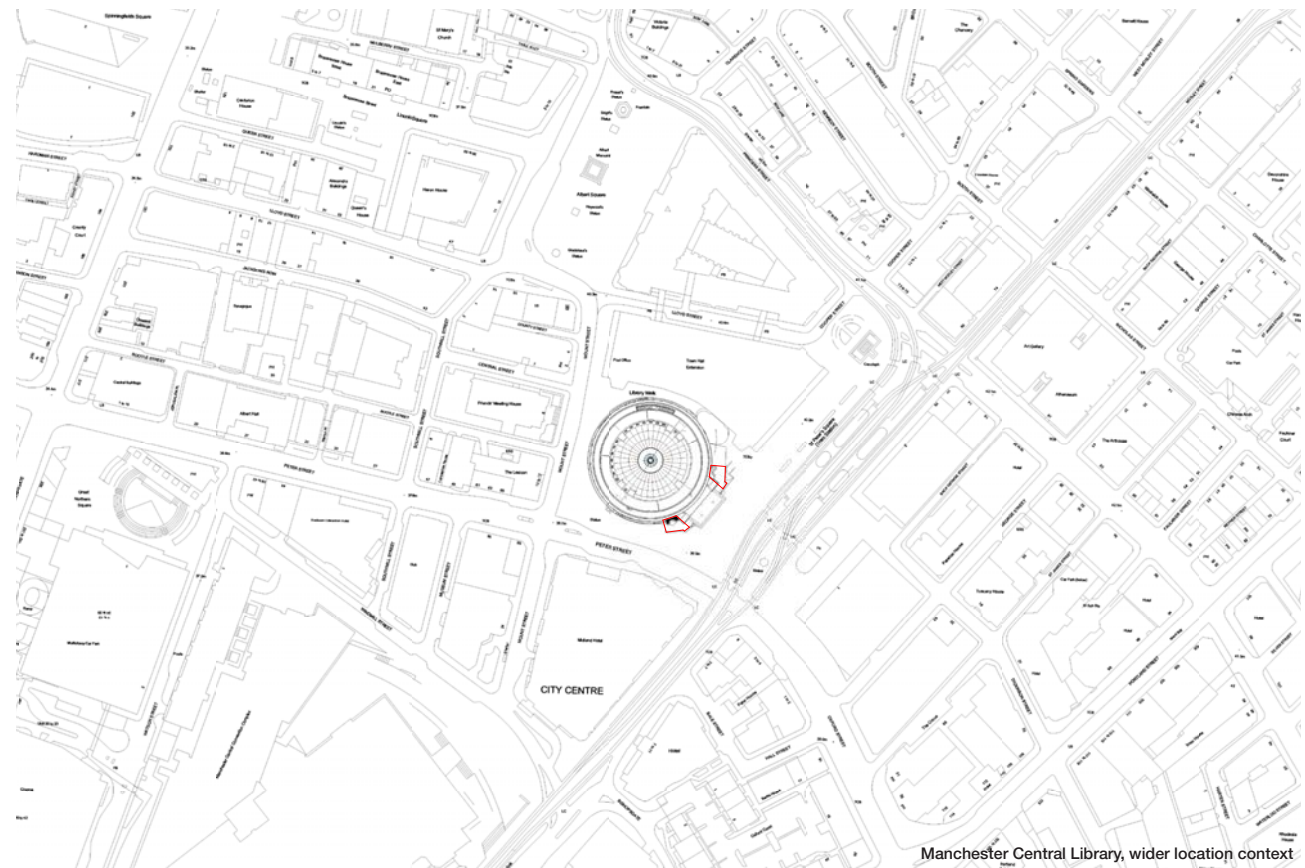
Introduction

This Design, Access and Heritage Statement forms part of the full planning and Listed Building Consent (LBC) application for the refurbishment of the external seating areas attached to the Grade II* listed Manchester Central Library Seating (St Peter's Square, Manchester, M2 5PD).

The listed library includes two attached external seating areas to the south east of the building. The seating areas comprise blockwork and grilles.



Manchester Central Library



Manchester Central Library, wider location context

Planning Policy

National Legislation

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 provides statutory protection for listed buildings and conservation areas. It sets out the principal statutory provisions, which must be considered in the determination of any planning application affecting listed buildings or conservation areas. Statutory protection for archaeological remains is provided by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, as amended by the National Heritage Act 1983 and subsequent amendments. Nationally important sites may be included on the schedule of monuments and are then accorded statutory protection.

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 24 June 2018 and replaces the NPPF published in March 2012. The revised NPPF has since been updated on 19 February 2019 following a technical consultation to redefine deliverable housing. It outlines the Government's planning policies for England with regard to the protection of heritage assets and how these are applied.

Section 16 of the NPPF sets out a series of policies that are a material consideration in the planning process. It is intended to be used in conjunction with local plans. The NPPF states 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. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary (paragraph 189).

Planning Practice Guidance

In 2014, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) issued Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) to support the NPPF. Guidance on conserving and enhancing the historic environment was updated in February 2018. It states that conservation of heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance is a core planning principle. It also requires a flexible and thoughtful approach.

Local Planning Policy

Core Strategy

Policy CC 9: Design and Heritage

Design of new buildings will need to be of the highest standard in terms of appearance and function. The standards and guidance explained in other LDF policies should be the basis for the approach to design, with particular attention to be given to the City Centre context and character.

Development in Manchester City Centre should preserve or enhance the heritage assets that have been identified, including listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled ancient monuments.

The Council will support high density and mixed use development in the City Centre, but developers must recognise the specific design challenges that must be overcome to ensure complementarity of function and form. New development must support the range of uses the Council expects in the City Centre and contribute to a coherent and integrated physical environment.

Policy EN 3: Heritage

Throughout the City, the Council will encourage development that complements and takes advantage of the distinct historic and heritage features of its districts and neighbourhoods, including those of the City Centre.

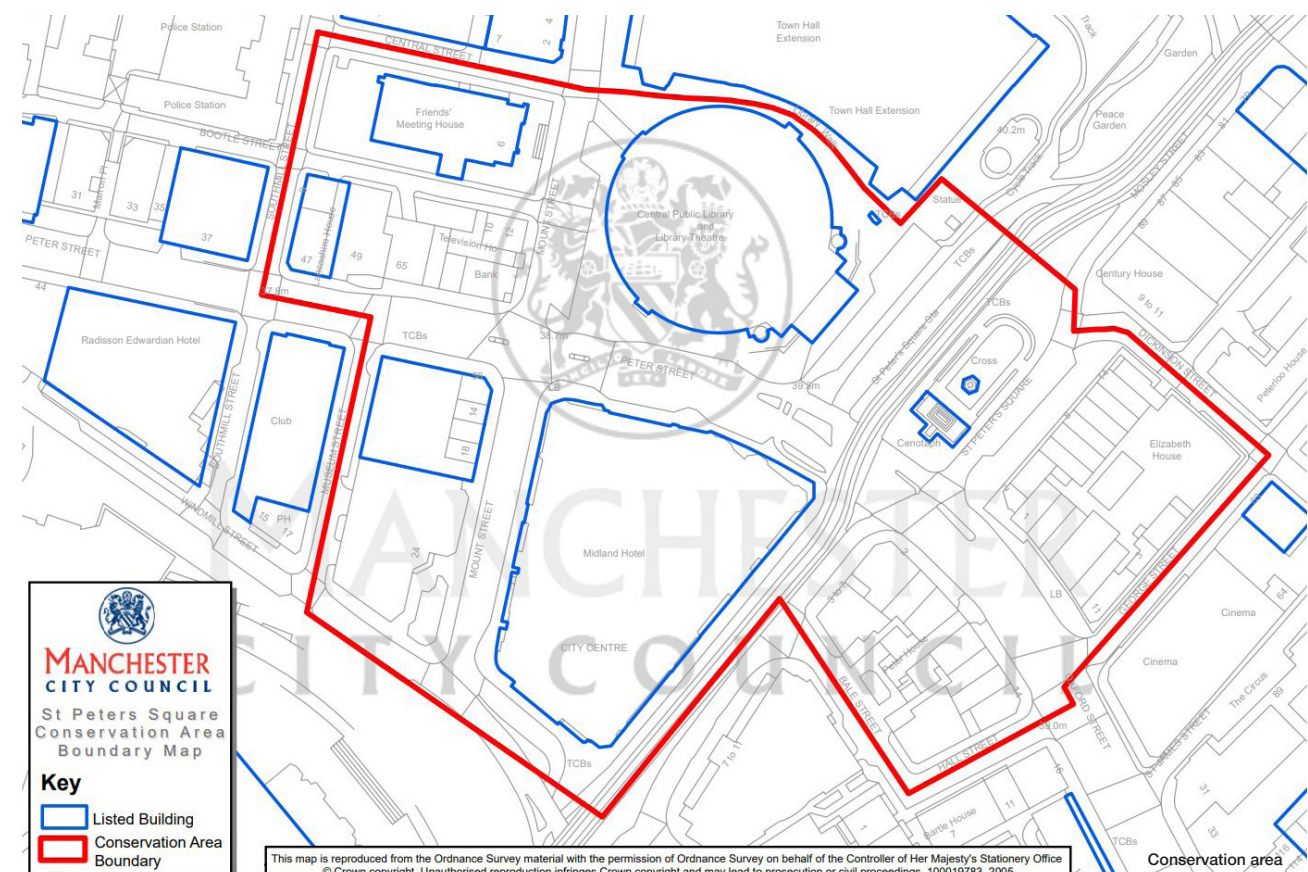
New developments must be designed so as to support the Council in preserving or, where possible, enhancing the historic environment, the character, setting and accessibility of areas and buildings of acknowledged importance, including scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings, registered parks and gardens, conservation areas and archaeological remains.

Proposals which enable the re-use of heritage assets will be encouraged where they are considered consistent with the significance of the heritage asset.

St Peter's Square Conservation Area

St Peter's Square conservation area is situated in Manchester city centre. It is an area which contains a mixture of commercial, cultural and civic buildings. The name derives from St. Peter's Church, which stood in the centre of St Peter's Square from 1788 to 1907.

The conservation area was designated in December 1973 and the boundaries are: Museum Street, Peter Street and Southmill Street (a common boundary with the Deansgate/Peter Street conservation area); Central Street and Library Walk (a common boundary with the Albert Square conservation area); Dickinson Street and George Street (a common boundary with the George Street conservation area); Hall Street, Bale Street, Lower Mosley Street and Windmill Street. The Square is overlooked by the Town Hall Extension, Central Library and the Midland Hotel.

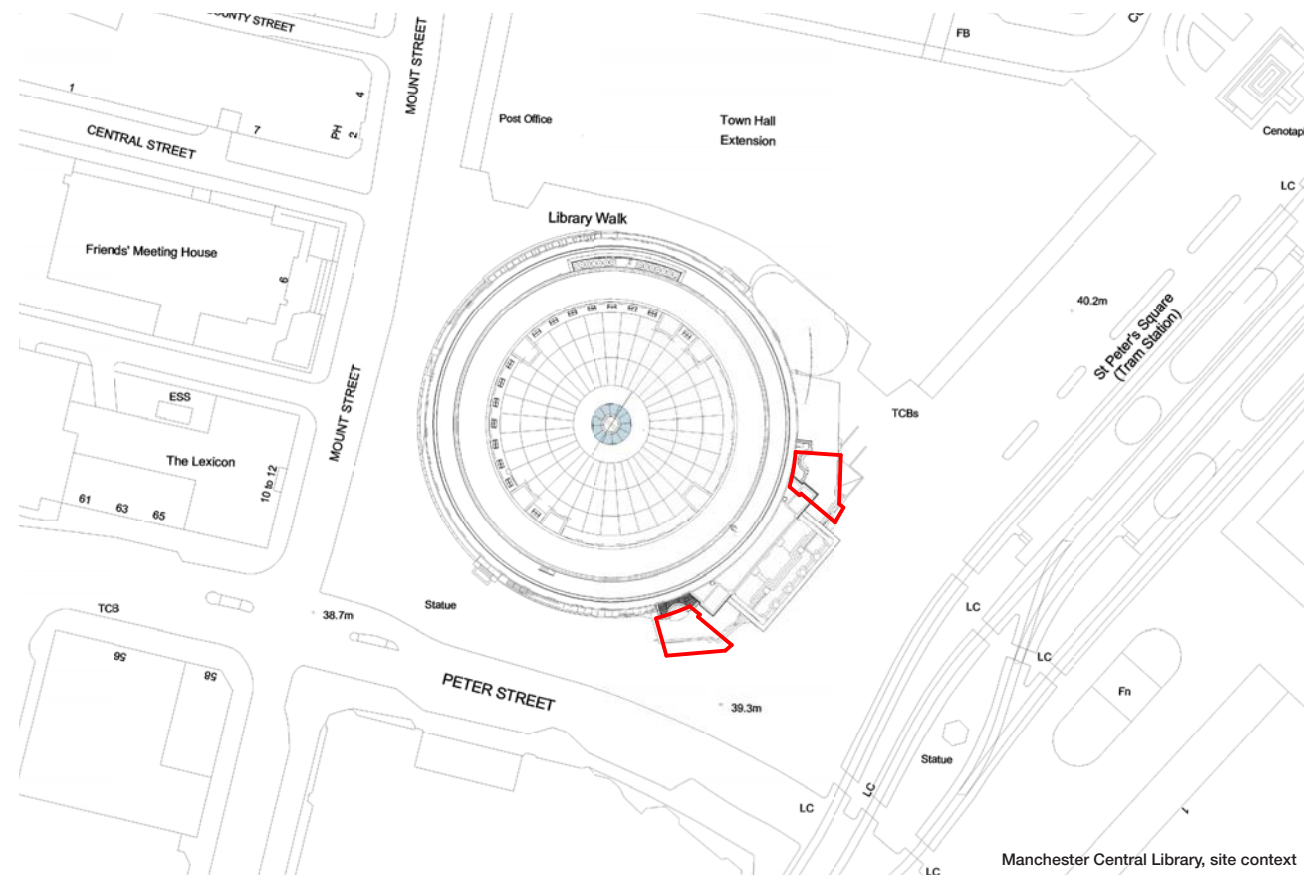


Site Context

Manchester Central Library, built in 1934, is a magnificent grade II* listed building, occupying a prime location in St Peter's Square at the head of both the civic complex and Oxford Road Knowledge Corridor and at the apex of the cultural quarter. It is one of the city's most iconic and well loved buildings and the UK's third most visited library with over one million visitors per year. It is expected that this figure will rise considerably in the future.

St Peter's Square, was recently part of a £185 million redevelopment which saw an extension added to the Town Hall, as well as a redevelopment of the Library Walk and the interior of the Central Library. The new square now consists of a large open space for the public to occupy and a new Metrolink hub. It also includes new planting, trees, benches and cycle racks.

The area surrounding the library's external seating is mostly open. Trees placed around the Square frame the Central Library and the seats attached. Main places for the public to rest are seating within the central area of the new square itself, however members of the public looking to sit closer to the building's entrance itself would most likely choose the external library seating provided. St Peter's Square is seen from both seating areas with an open aspect view.



Manchester Central Library, site context



St Peter's Square

Historic Context

Historic context

The area around St Peter's Square, then known as St Peter's Field, was the site of the 1819 Peterloo Massacre. The name derives from St Peter's Church which was built in 1788-94 where the gardens are today and also gave its name to Peter Street. The church was demolished in 1907 and the Cenotaph replaced it in 1924. In the 1930s, the square was redeveloped around the construction of the Central Library and Town Hall Extension.

In 1852 Manchester became the first authority to establish a rate supported public lending and reference library under the Free Libraries Act. When the Campfield library premises were declared to be unsafe in 1877, the library was moved to the old Town Hall in King Street. For a number of reasons, including the outbreak of World War I, there was no further progress on a new building until 1926, when a competition was held for the design of a central library, along with an extension to the town hall, which was won by E. Vincent Harris (1876-1971), a well respected municipal architect.

E. Vincent Harris' circular design for the library, reminiscent of the Pantheon in Rome, was based on libraries in America. The library's foundation stone was laid on 6 May 1930 by the Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald. The library was officially opened by King George V on 17 July 1934 after he had laid the foundation stone for the Town Hall Extension.

Although the Town Hall Extension and the Central Library are not similar in style they share construction materials and they were designed at the same time, in relation to each other and the existing Town Hall.

A four year project to renovate and refurbish the library commenced in 2010. Central Library re opened on 22 March 2014.

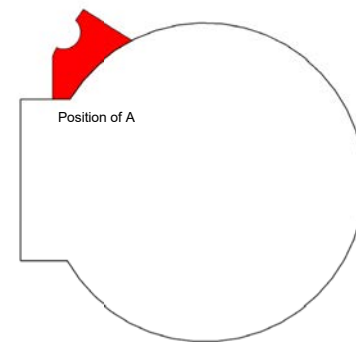


Existing Seating

Seating area A

Seating area A is to the south of the library main entrance. It is constructed in Portland stone and incorporates a low level, semi circular seat with an inscription in the Portland stone. Behind the curved stone seat and low stone wall are external grilles at street level, covering the plant well below. These are attached via steel brackets cast into the stonework of the main library building (refer to the existing drawings submitted with this application). On the south side of seating area A is a redundant metal gate which previously provided access to the plant well, however, stairs no longer exist in this location.

Seating area A can be seen from the far end of St Peters Square, and by the adjacent Midlands Hotel and Peter Street. As the grilles are lower than the stone seating, they are not readily visible from the square. This seating area offers limited views to the square itself, looking across Peter Street to the Midland Hotel. The seating is currently surrounded by barriers preventing public access.



Seating area A



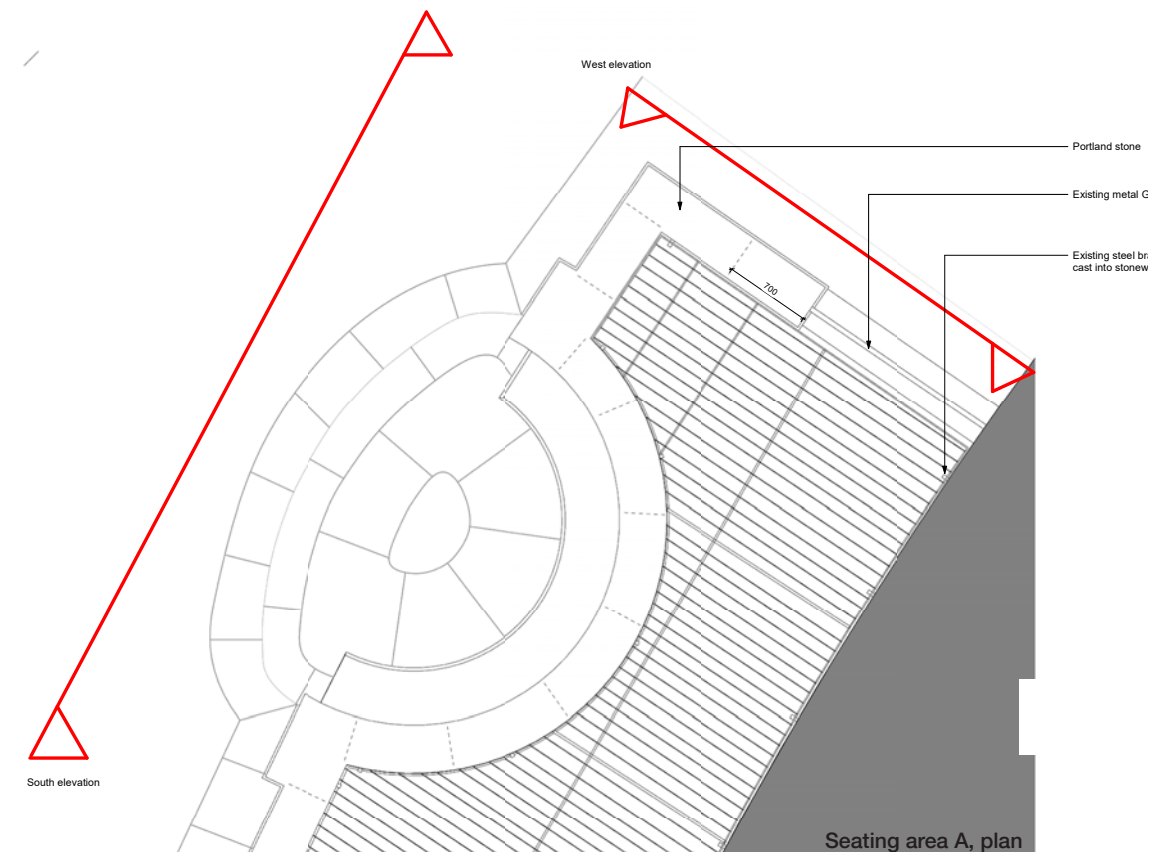
Seating area A



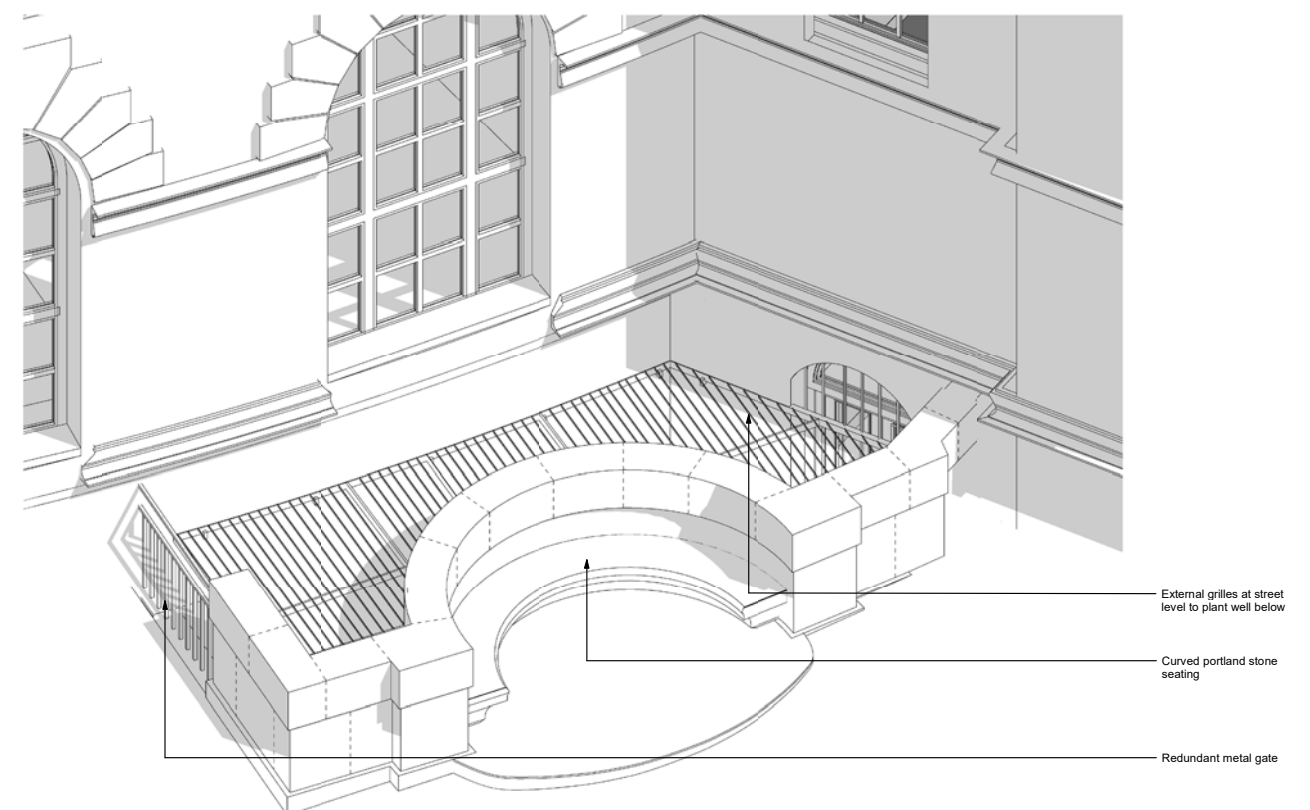
Gate in seating area A



Inscription in seating area A



Seating area A, plan

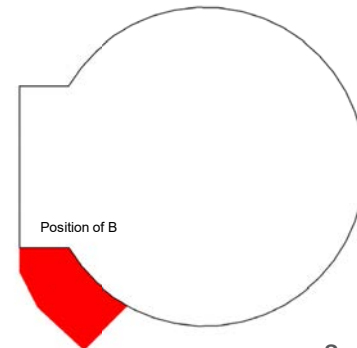


Seating area B

Seating area B is to the north of the library main entrance. It is constructed in Portland stone and incorporates a low level, semi circular seat with an inscription in the Portland stone. Behind the curved stone seat and low stone wall are external grilles at street level, covering the plant well below. The grilles step up to accommodate a redundant spiral stair and platform with balustrade which historically provided access to the plant well (refer to the existing drawings submitted with this application). However, the opening has been infilled with indented Portland stone and so the staircase is inaccessible.

Within the plant well below the seating is steelwork supporting the seating stonework and wall above. Water ingress has damaged the steel work below the seating and caused the area to become structurally unsafe and in need of repair. There is Portland stone on the interior side of the seat at ground floor and plant room level. The plant room also contains a ventilation grille, door and balustrade.

Seating area B is seen from St Peters Square and the tram station. As the grilles are lower than the stone seating, they are not readily visible from the square, apart from the raised section. Views from seating area B show the majority of the square itself as well as planting and the Tram Station. The seating is currently surrounded by barriers preventing public access.



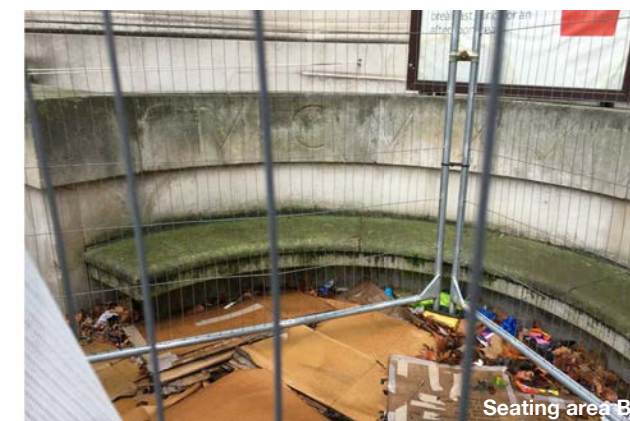
Seating area B



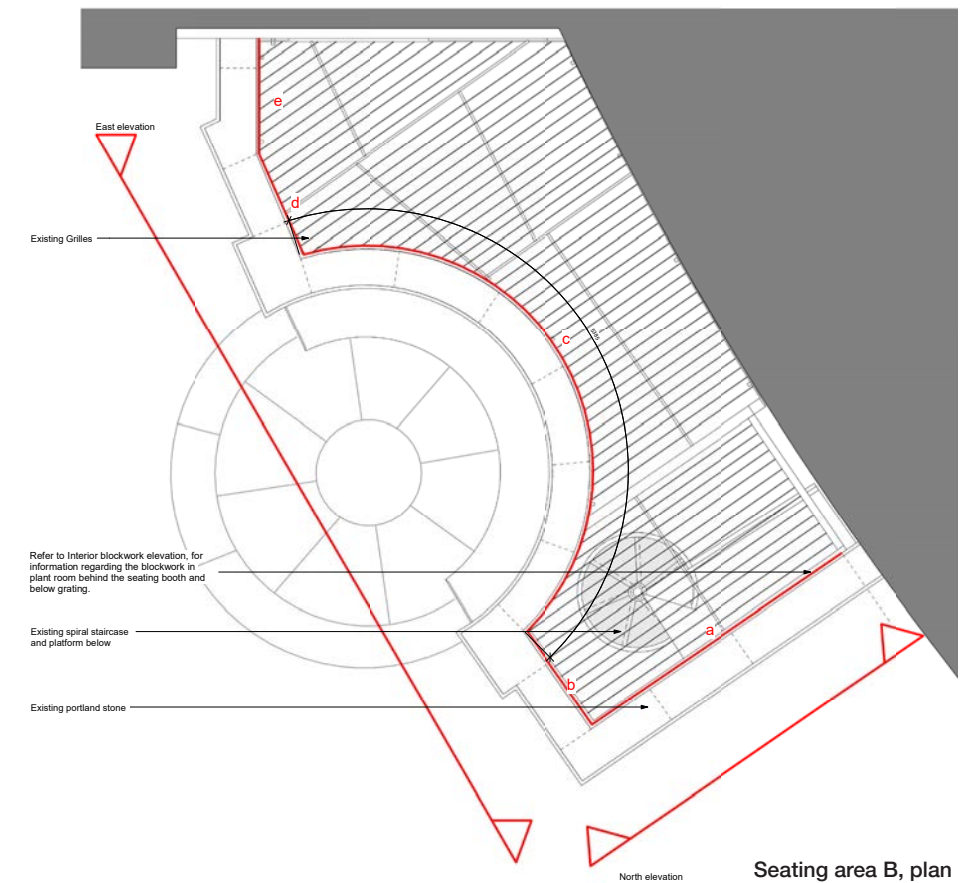
Seating area B



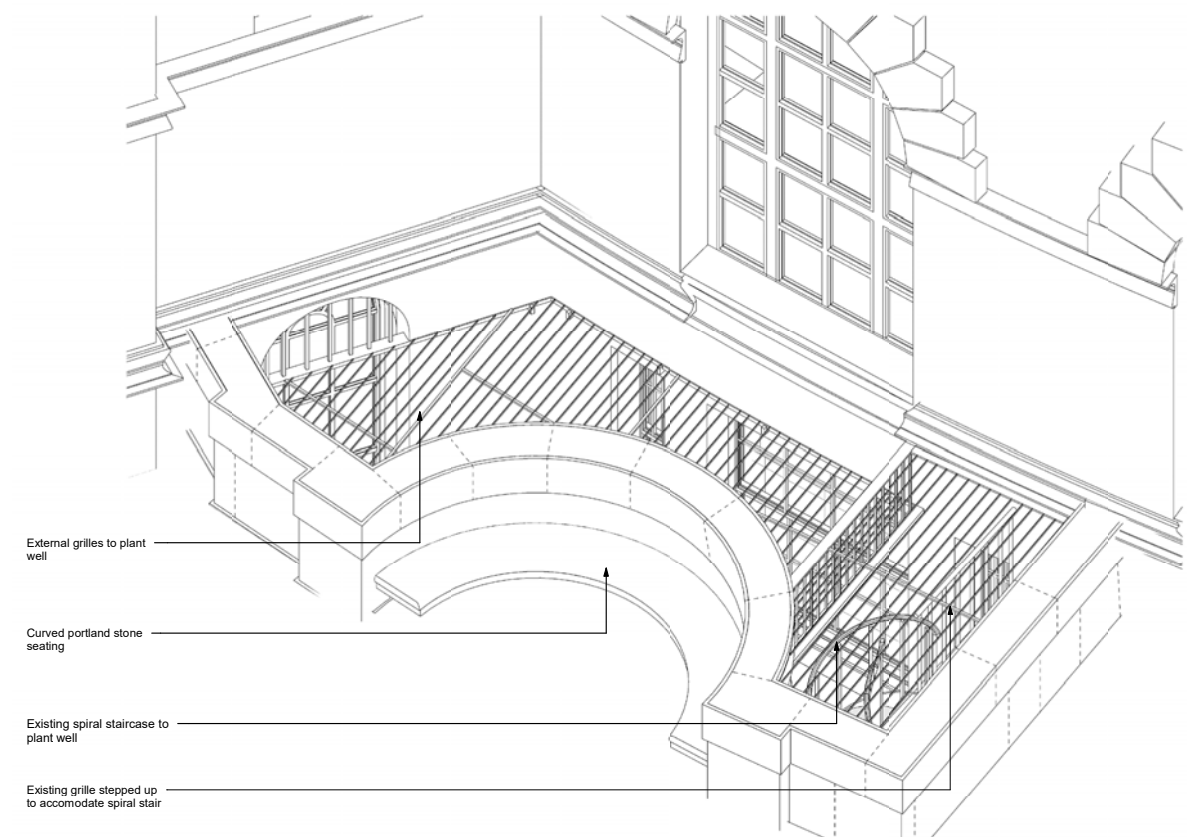
Seating area B



Seating area B



Seating area B, plan



Significance

Manchester Central Library was designed by E. Vincent Harris, a notable municipal architect, giving the library historic associative value. As the first local authority to establish a rate supported public lending and reference library under the Free Libraries Act, the library holds historic value. Communal value is central to the library's significance as a meeting place and resource for large numbers of local people from the library's opening in 1934 to the present day. The building is constructed in Portland stone in the Classical style and has high aesthetic value.

Listing description:

SJ8397NE ST PETER'S SQUARE 698-1/31/408
(West side) 03/10/74 Central Public Library

GV II*

Public library. 1930-4, by Vincent Harris. Portland stone, slate roof with concealed glazed lantern light. Circular plan with rectangular portico on east side. Classical style. Four storeys with basement and attic (surrounding a large central reading room); with a chamfered plinth, rusticated masonry to ground and 1st floors with a Greek-key frieze, a continuous Tuscan colonnaded screen to set-back 2nd and 3rd floors, with a plain frieze, cornice and parapet concealing a low set-back attic storey. The east side (to the square) has a rectangular 2-storey projection with a central 5-bay portico of giant Corinthian columns tetrastyle in antis, with round-headed arches in the returned ends, and entablature with dentilled cornice. Otherwise, the ground floor has tall round-headed windows with keystones, the 1st floor has tall square-headed windows, and the 2nd and 3rd floors have smaller rectangular windows; all these windows with metal-framed small-paned glazing. Interior: domed circular reading room surrounded by giant Tuscan colonnade.

Listing NGR: SJ8386597942

The external seating is situated either side of the grand portico. The photograph from 1932 shows the construction of the library and the form of seating area A to the south of the entrance portico can be seen. Both the main building and the seating areas are constructed in Portland stone.

The seating areas belong to the original concept and design; their materiality and circular and symmetrical design, reflect the main library building, and are a fundamental part of the building typology and contribute to its townscape presence. As part of the original library design, and part of the key east elevation with the entrance portico overlooking St Peter's Square, the external seating areas hold aesthetic and historic value. The seating areas in particular hold communal value, as meeting and dwelling places at the front of the library, next to the main entrance, and through their relationship with the historic St Peter's Square and the surrounding conservation area and heritage assets.

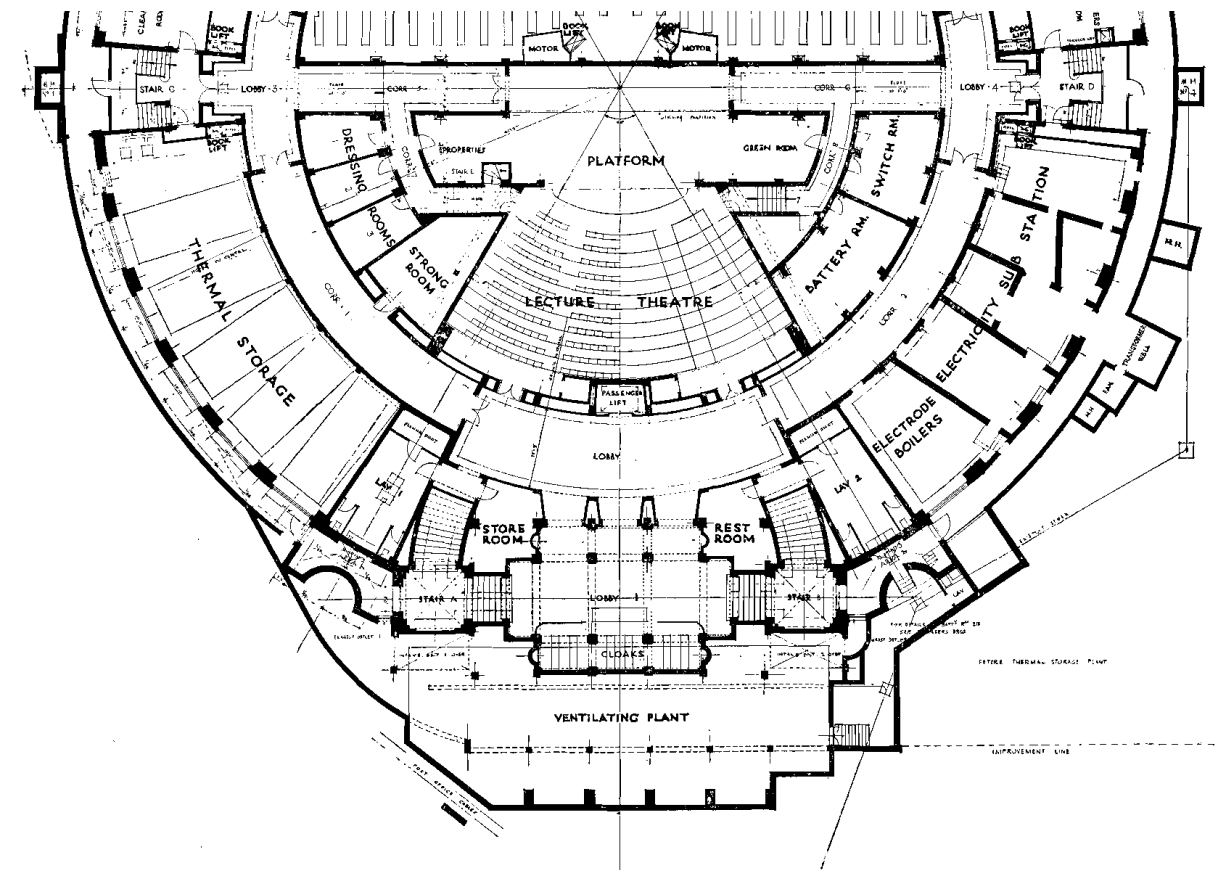
However, the seating is currently inaccessible to the public. Water ingress has damaged the steel work below the seating and caused the area to become structurally unsafe and in need of repair. This detracts from the asset's significance.

The grilles to both seating areas and the gate to seating area A are later additions and not part of the original design of the library. These elements do not have any heritage significance.

The Conservation Strategy for the Central Library identifies that nothing in the Sub-basement is of significance: "The Plant Room below the Portico is accessed via a light well hidden behind a semi-circular stone seat to the south of the Portico at ground level. Fresh air reaches the Plant Room via an identical semi-circular stone seat on the north side of the portico at ground level. None of the plant is original, having been replaced over the years to better serve the needs of the Library Theatre."



Construction of Manchester Central Library, 1932



Proposals

The proposals are to deconstruct the existing stonework to seating area B that is suffering from water ingress in order to secure, repair or replace steelwork as necessary, waterproofing, and rebuild. In both seating areas, the existing grilles will be removed and replaced with new grilles. The grilles will be replaced broadly like for like, at the same level and layout, and there will be little change to the external appearance. The existing gate will be retained in seating area A. In seating area B the spiral stair, platform and balustrade will be retained as existing.

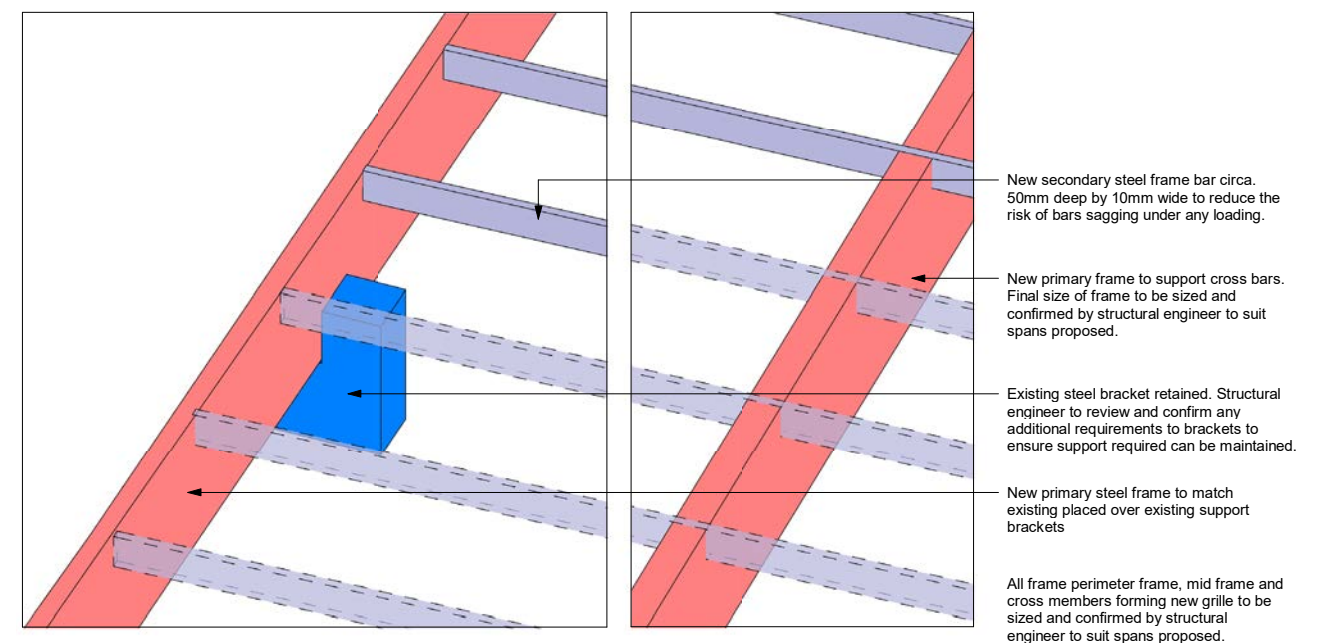
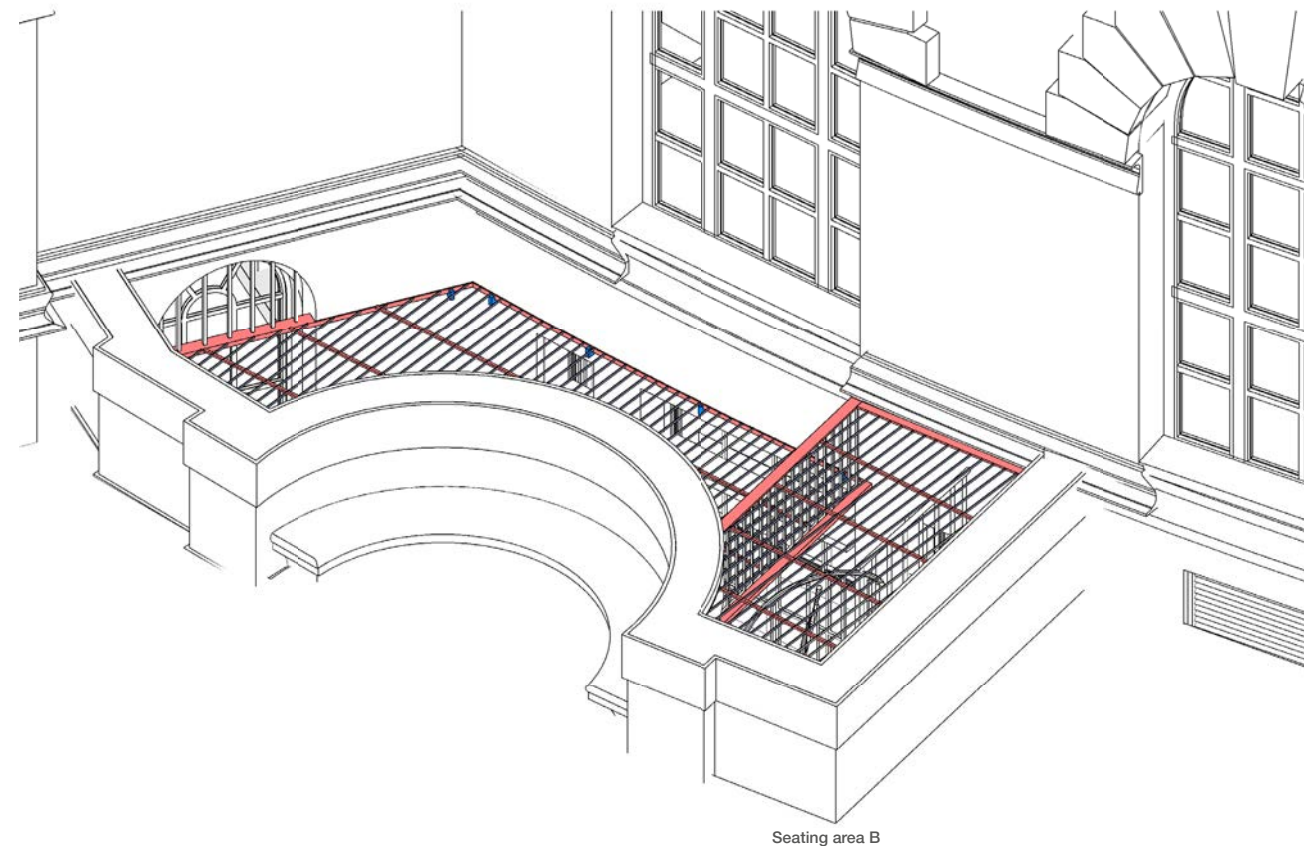
The new grilles will comprise a new primary frame to support cross bars. A new secondary steel frame bar will be circa. 50mm deep by 10mm wide to reduce the risk of bars sagging under any loading which is evident with the existing tubular profile. The existing steel bracket will be retained. There will be a new primary steel frame to match existing placed over the existing support brackets.

The stone wall to Seating area B will dispose of existing core wall material/masonry and rebuild in blockwork with suitable stone wall ties. The stone is to be carefully removed, labelled and elevated and carefully stored. All stone is to be cleaned and made good where required and to be reinstated as per existing location. Existing stone is to be carefully numbered / referenced (with regards to location within the wall), carefully removed and stored. The existing grate is to be removed and replaced. The existing perimeter fixings are to be carefully removed and re-instated once the stone wall is made good and re-constructed. The steelwork below the stone / block wall is to be fully exposed and cleaned / strengthened where required to allow for re-clad of existing stone.

Please refer to the proposed drawings submitted as part of this application.

The following methodology is proposed for the structural works:

- Form site hoardings to approved areas within St Peter's Square around Seating Wells
- Carefully demolish the existing Seating Well gratings - Consideration of lifting the existing whole grille frame and cutting exsitu should be made to mitigate fire risk and aesthetic charring of adjacent masonry
- Visual assessment of existing grille bracketry to ascertain suitability of re use
- Fabricator site survey and commencement of proposed grille fabrication
- Individually reference masonry units forming the the Seating Well Ref B
- Carefully hand disassemble Seating Well Ref B wall back, seat and partial flank walls to expose insitu supporting steel structure level - Masonry units to be stored off site for security and working space purposes
- Individually reference and carefully lift and store off site existing Seating Well flags, break out screed and sub base to expose waterproof membrane / existing slab to the interface of the recently remediated Basement back up generator roof slab
- Undertake Specialist waterproof membrane survey to remedially address existing surface water ingress through adjacent Basement wall. It is recommended that Briggs Amasco, the original and remedial waterproof specialists procured for the St Peter's Square project and Basement back up generator slab
- Structural inspection of exposed steel support structure to determine remedial address (treatment of insitu steelwork or replacement structure)
- Undertake remedial structural steel works
- Commence Seating Well rebuild up to St Peter's Square slab level
- Undertake remedial waterproofing works to exposed slab, basement wall and seating well interface
- Rebuild Seating Well Ref B
- Infill existing access gate to Seating Well Ref A
- Install proposed replacement Seating Well grilles - Consideration of lifting whole frame or adoption of bolted connections be made



Detail of grilles

Heritage Impact Assessment

Repairs to steelwork below seating

Currently, water ingress has damaged the steelwork below the seating and caused the area to become structurally unsafe.

The proposals are a structural inspection of the exposed steel support structure to determine remedial address (treatment of in-situ steelwork or replacement structure). Waterproofing works will be undertaken. Although the steelwork is part of the original fabric of the building, it is not a visible part of the heritage asset and its contribution to significance is through its function. It is currently in very poor condition and repair or replacement is necessary to ensure no further damage to the heritage asset.

Ensuring the structural sustainability and watertightness of this part of the asset will allow its significance to continue to be appreciated in the long term. It will enable views to be opened up again to the seating, enhancing historic and aesthetic values of the asset. Public access to the seating areas will be able to reopen, enhancing the communal value of the asset.

Taking down and rebuilding of stonework

In order to address the structural issues in the steelwork below the seating, it is necessary to take down the stone seating and rebuild it.

Although the existing core wall material / masonry, which is to be disposed of, is part of the original fabric of the building, it is not a visible part of the heritage asset and its contribution to significance is through its function. This will be rebuilt in blockwork with suitable stone wall ties which will perform the intended function of the original design and ensure the structural sustainability of the asset.

The Portland stone contributes to the significance of the seating areas which were constructed as part of the main library, reflecting its design and in the same material. The inscriptions are also a significant feature. It is therefore important that the stonework is reinstated as existing. There will be a temporary adverse impact on the asset's significance whilst the construction works are underway.

In order to ensure the stone is not damaged and is reinstated as existing, the seating area B's wall back, seat and partial flank walls will be carefully disassembled by hand to expose the in-situ supporting steel structure level. The existing stone is to be carefully numbered and referenced, carefully removed and securely stored. The stone walls will be rebuilt and made good following the steelwork repairs. The Portland stone will be repointed and cleaned as necessary. This will protect and enhance the aesthetic and historic value of the asset.

Repairing the seating areas will also increase public access, enhancing the communal value of the asset.

Replacement of grilles

The grilles to both seating areas are later additions and are currently in poor condition.

The proposals are to remove the existing grilles in both seating areas and replace with new grilles. There will be no impact on significance as the grilles will be replaced with new steel grilles of a similar design at the same level and layout, and there will be little change to the external appearance. There will be no impact on views from St Peter's Square, other surrounding heritage assets, or the conservation area.

Impact on the main library building will be minimised by replacing the grilles at the same level as the existing grilles, set below the main facade. It is proposed to lift the existing whole grille frame and cut ex-situ in order to minimise the risk of aesthetic charring of the adjacent masonry. The existing steel bracket will be retained and the new primary steel frame to match existing will be placed over the existing support brackets. The existing perimeter fixings are to be carefully removed and re-instated once the stone wall is made good and re constructed. The replacement of the grilles will enhance the aesthetic value of the asset.

In seating area B the spiral stair, platform and balustrade will be retained as existing and there will be no impact on significance.

Conclusion

The structural repair of seating area B, and replacement of grilles covering the plant well in both seating areas will help to ensure the long term sustainability of the heritage asset. There will be no impact on views from St Peter's Square and the immediate setting of the grade II* library will be enhanced. The repairs will also enable the public to once again access the seating areas as part of the heritage asset. On balance, there is no harm to the grade II* listed Manchester Central Library or the surrounding heritage assets.

Access

There will be no change to access within or surrounding the Library and its seating areas.