GRAEME IVES
HERITAGE PLANNING

Cobbett House Heritage Statement

Manchester Royal Infirmary, Oxford Road, Manchester

Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared on behalf of Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust in respect to an application for Listed Building Consent for alterations to improve access and office accommodation (the 'proposed development') at Cobbett House, Oxford Road, Manchester (the 'application site').

1.2 Cobbett House is a grade II listed building and therefore Manchester City Council, as Local Planning Authority (LPA), has a 'statutory duty' under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses.

1.3 National planning policy in respect to the conservation of the historic environment is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and places the following requirements on applicants:

"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 understanding the potential impact of the proposals on their significance."

1.4 Given the above context Chapter 2 of this Heritage Statement identifies the relevant heritage assets that could be affected by the proposals and Chapter 3 describes their significance, proportionate to the potential impact of the proposed development. Chapter 4 provides an assessment of that potential impact and Chapter 5 makes a series of conclusions with reference to the relevant legislation and policy requirements.

2.0 The Heritage Assets

Introduction

2.1 The NPPF defines a heritage asset as follows:

"A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets and those identified by the local planning authority (including local listing)."

Designated Heritage Assets

2.2 The NPPF confirms that designated heritage assets comprise, World Heritage Sites, scheduled monuments, listed buildings, protected wreck sites, registered parks and gardens, registered battlefields and conservation areas.

2.3 The designated heritage assets that are relevant in considering the proposed development are identified below:

Listed Buildings:

2.4 Listed buildings are designated for their special architectural or historic interest in accordance with the DCMS Principles for Selection of Listed Buildings (2010). The buildings identified in Table 1 are relevant with respect to the proposed development:

Table 1:

Listed Building:	Grade:
Royal Infirmary (Cobbett H, Admin/DRS Res Block, X Ray Teaching Block and Chapel)	II
Former Lodge of Royal Infirmary (now Royal Bank of Scotland), railings and four gate piers)	II

2.5 Several other listed buildings are located within the vicinity of the application site, including the Royal Eye Hospital to the north, St. Mary's Hospital to the south and the Whitworth Gallery on the western side of Oxford Road. However, given that the proposed development relates to the interior of Cobbett House the proposals would not affect the significance of the listed building near to the application site and they have been excluded from this Heritage Statement.

3.0 The Significance of the Heritage Assets

Introduction

3.1 The NPPF defines the significance of a heritage asset as:

"The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence but also from its setting." (NPPF 2012, Annex 2: Glossary)

3.2 With respect to the consideration of 'significance' across a range of heritage asset types Historic England guidance in Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment, Good Practice Advice in Planning: 2 (2015) confirms:

"A variety of terms are used in designation criteria (for example, outstanding universal value for World Heritage Sites, national importance for scheduled monuments and special interest for listed buildings and conservation areas), but all of these refer to a heritage asset's significance."

Listed Buildings

Royal Infirmary (Cobbett H, Admin/DRS Res Block, X Ray Teaching Block and Chapel) (Grade II)

3.3 The Royal Infirmary was list in February 1989 and the list entry describes the building as follows:

"Hospital. 1905-8, by E.T. Hall and John Brooks; partly destroyed by war damage. Blood-red brick with liberal dressings of white limestone; slate roofs. Three long ranges on the same axis, all originally linked by bridges but the junction with the centre and north ranges destroyed; the main range originally U-plan with a central tower but its left wing cut short, and the south range with a tower at the north end. Edwardian Baroque style. Four storeys plus the towers. The main range has channelled rustication to ground floor, false quoins to 1st floor, giant Ionic pilasters to the 2nd and 3rd floors, plain frieze and modillioned cornice; the tower is of stone and projects, and has (inter alia) a pedimented porch and Gibbs surround, coupled windows in the centre and single-light windows at the sides, a segmental open pediment over the centre, and an octagonal turret with concave corners, clockface to the front and oculi to the sides, and a domed roof. Windows with glazing bars in the upper leaves, some coupled and some broken pediments. Two-storey segmental bow window to south wing. Stone link attached to right-hand side of this wing in the form of a semi-circular arched bridge with mask keystone, run-out voussoirs and balustraded parapet, and open passage with Tuscan colonnade. Tower (to which this connects) has 4-stage Baroque turret with square 1st stage and cylindrical upper stages, colonnades, domed roof (etc). Otherwise, both the north and south ranges have 3:5:3 bays, in similar but

simpler style, with (inter alia) giant Ionic colonnades to the upper floors of the centres."

Special Architectural Interest

3.4 The remaining buildings of the Royal Infirmary originally formed the formal frontage of a vast complex that extend back from Oxford Road.

Figure 3.1: The Royal Infirmary complex following the war damage



3.5 Pevsner (Pevsner Architectural Guides Manchester, C. Hartwell, 2001) describes the Royal Infirmary as:

"Vast, and in the Greenwich Baroque style, brick and much Portland stone, on the traditional pavilion plan."

Figure 3.2: The 'Greenwich' reference is apparent in Oxford Road frontage



3.6 The Greenwich-esq comparisons with the original frontage, prior to the war damage, are clear. The symmetrical composition of the three pavilions and powerful roofscape or domes and turrets and vivid contrast of the red brick and white stone detailing created a significant presence on the eastern side of Oxford Road.

3.7 War damage resulted in the loss of the bridge link between the central administrative block and northern pavilion, the northern projecting bay of the central block and tower of the northern pavilion. However, the complex still forms an imposing frontage on Oxford Road.

3.8 The plan form of the complex also includes the former Lodge to the Royal Infirmary, which is now used by the Infirmary again rather

than a bank as it was at the time of listing and is centred on the axis through the central administrative block. The Oxford Road frontage is enclosed by a high railing on a low stone plinth, with four gate piers.

3.9 The site of the vast complex to the rear of the listed frontage block has been redeveloped. The rear stair core to Cobbett House remains, although it has been increased in height, presumably to accommodate the later lift shaft that was inserted within the staircase.

Figure 3.3: The rear service core to Cobbett House with contrasting brickwork and window details above the ashlar string course



3.10 The pedimented entrance porch leads into a draft lobby and entrance foyer with timber panelling and a dentil cornice moulding. The foyer is open on the side of the central spine corridor that extends for the full width of the building, culminating in matching timber staircases to the western and eastern gables.

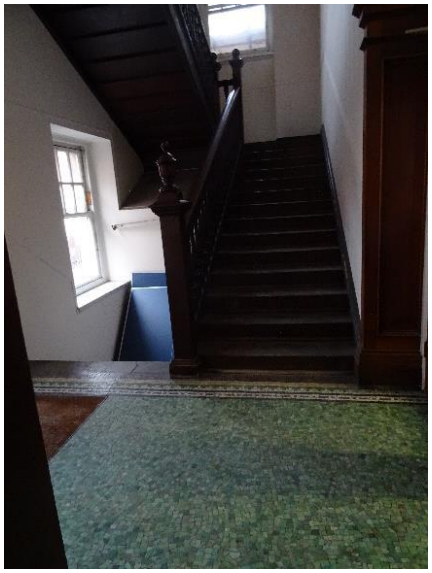
Figure 3.4: The main entrance bay to Cobbett House



Figure 3.5: The entrance foyer



Figure 3.6: The western staircase at ground floor level.



3.11 A short central axis corridor crosses the main spine corridor at right-angles and is notable for the fine mosaic floor.

Figure 3.7: Ground floor axis corridor to rear service core



3.12 The circulation spaces within Cobbett House has a clear vertical hierarchy rising through the building. The ground floor corridors and associated panelling, floor and joinery are clearly designed to be the most prominent part of the interior. The decoration to the upper floors becomes more stripped back and lacks

ornamentation, however distinctions are achieved through details such as the skirtings and dados.

Figure 3.8: Ground floor main corridor



Figure 3.9: Second floor main corridor



Figure 3.10: Third floor main corridor



3.13 The floor plan throughout the building is largely intact. The most significant change relating to the amalgamation of one of the main meeting rooms on the western side of the entrance foyer with the associated ante room. On the eastern side of the entrance foyer the original room plan is complete, with the original principal fire-surround remaining in the Board Room and an original fire place surviving in the attached ante room.

3.14 The rear service core has been subject to previous change, particularly in respect to the construction of the lift shaft that has been inserted into the centre of the stairwell.

3.15 The utilitarian character of the upper floors reinforces the hierarchy of spaces and contrasting functions within the building, however the upper floors contain limited special architectural interest relative to the impressive ground floor.

Figure 3.11: Short flight of steps to third floor axis corridor



Figure 3.12: Fire place to grand floor ante room



Figure 3.13: Fire place to eastern board room



Special Historic Interest

3.16 The Royal Infirmary complex on Oxford Road was constructed to replace a previous hospital erected in Piccadilly Gardens in 1755.

3.17 Oxford Road became a focal point for hospital development with a cluster of facilities including the Royal Eye Hospital and St. Mary's Hospital.

Figure 3.14: The original Royal Infirmary, Piccadilly Gardens



Figure 3.15: The left-hand bay removed following WWII



3.18 The WWII bomb damage and decision not to rebuild the damaged part of the building, despite its importance in relation to the symmetrical plan form of the complex, adds a further layer of historic interest to the application site

3.19 The architect Edwin Thomas Hall also designed hospitals in Leeds and London and was notable for designing the Liberty Store on Regent Street in London.

Former Lodge of Royal Infirmary (Now Royal Bank of Scotland), Railings and Four Pairs of Gatepiers (Grade II)

Summary of Special Architectural and Historic Interest

3.20 The former Lodge was listed partly for its group value with the main hospital complex and the list entry describes it as follows:

"Entrance lodge to Royal Infirmary, now bank, 1905-8, by E.T. Hall and John Brooke; altered. Red brick with extensive dressings of Portland stone. Rectangular plan. Edwardian Baroque style. Two storeys and 3 bays, symmetrical, with high plinth, staggered quoins, central feature, frieze and cornice with creating, all of Portland stone. The centre has wide round-headed archway with raised run-out voussoirs and ripple keystone with mask, and a 2-light sashed window at 1st floor, framed by pairs of Ionic semi-columns which have channelled plinths, blocked shafts, covered niches between the columns each containing a gadrooned bowl-shaped pedestal, and corniced entablatures, the whole surmounted by Royal Arms with lion and unicorn supporters. The outer bays have windows at ground floor with large triple keystones rising into open pediments on scrolled consoles (altered glazing), and sashed windows at 1st

floor with moulded architraves. Rusticated Portland stone gate piers; plain spear-headed railings on low wall."

Figure 3.16: Front elevation of Lodge with gate piers and railings



3.21 The Lodge makes an important contribution to the symmetrical plan of the original hospital complex and contributes to the grandeur of the Oxford Road frontage with a series of gate piers and the associated railings.

3.22 The significance of the former Lodge would not be affected by the proposed internal works to Cobbett House and its special architectural and historic interest is summarised for completeness.

The Contribution of Setting to Significance

3.23 The immediate setting of Cobbett House as part of the Greenwich style frontage of a major Edwardian hospital is fundamental to its significance.

3.24 The plan form has been damaged, to an extent, as a result of WWII bombing, however the ambition of the frontage remains largely intact.

3.25 Cobbett House is experienced within the setting of the associated chapel and lodge, which have considerable group value. The adjoining hospital buildings to the east and west of the Royal Infirmary, although contrasting in architectural style, also add to the group value and setting of Cobbett House.

3.26 The setting to the rear of Cobbett House makes a neutral contribution to its significance, the vast hospital complex has been cleared and the site developed in a piece-meal fashion and the relationship between the grand frontage and more functional complex to the rear has been lost.

4.0 Impact Assessment

Introduction

4.1 The proposed development has been assessed in accordance with the relevant legislation, national and local planning policies.

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

4.2 The 1990 Act incorporates several 'statutory duties' for decision-makers, including the following:

"S.16 (2): In considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority or the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses."

"S. 66: In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses."

4.3 Case law has determined that 'preserve' means 'to do no harm'.

National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

4.4 Paragraph 129 requires LPAs to identify and assess the particular significance of heritage assets which may be affected by the proposals and to take this into account when considering the proposal to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposals.

4.5 Paragraph 131 requires that account is taken of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, the positive contribution that heritage assets can make to sustainable communities and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local distinctiveness.

4.6 Paragraph 132 requires 'great weight' to be given to the conservation of heritage assets and advises that harm can be caused by change within the setting of a heritage asset.

4.7 Paragraphs 133 and 134 provide mechanisms for providing a clear and convincing case and weighing the planning balance in circumstances in which substantial or less than substantial harm would be caused.

4.8 Paragraph 137 encourages LPAs to look for opportunities for new development within the settings of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably.

4.9 In applying the above policies the NPPF defines 'conservation' as

"The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances significance."

Manchester City Council Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2012-2027)

4.10 The Core Strategy was adopted in July 2012 and contains the following policy with respect to 'Heritage':

Policy EN 3:

"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 in 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 assets."

4.11 The City Council also retains a series of extant UDP policies relevant to 'Citywide Development Control', including the following that are relevant to the proposed development:

19. Listed Buildings

"DC19.1 In determining applications for listed building consent or planning applications for development involving or having an impact on buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, the Council will have regard to the desirability of securing the retention, restoration, maintenance and continued use of such buildings and to protecting their general setting. In giving effect to this policy, the Council will:
a) not grant Listed Building Consent for the demolition of a listed building other than in the most exceptional circumstances, and in any case, not unless it is satisfied that every possible effort has been made to continue the present use or to find a suitable alternative use;
b) not permit a change of use of a listed building, where it would have a detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the building;
c) not permit any external or internal alteration to a listed building where, in its opinion, there would be an adverse effect on its architectural or historic character;
d) seek to preserve and enhance the settings of listed buildings by appropriate control over the design of new development in their vicinity, control over the use of adjacent land, and where appropriate, by the preservation of trees and landscape features;

e) permit demolition only where there are approved detailed plans for redevelopment and where there is evidence of a firm building contract;
f) not permit alterations to a listed building which would prevent the future use of any part of the building, in particular upper floors or basements, or where poor maintenance is likely to result."

The Proposed Development

4.12 The proposed development comprises a series of minor alterations to the interior of Cobbett House. The proposals largely relate to the 3rd (top) floor of the building and further de minimis alterations are proposed to a ground floor toilet.

4.13 The proposals comprise the following:

- Creating a narrow glazed partition alongside the existing door to each of the cellular office spaces accessed from the 3rd floor spine corridor.
- Removing the later double fire-doors that interrupt the central spine corridor.
- Replacing two chimney breasts, between offices on the southern side of the spine corridor, with a glazed partition.
- Opening the former snooker room to the spine corridor to create an enhanced circulation / reception space aligned with the central axis corridor.
- Removing later partitions to the south-eastern wing to create a single large office space.
- Replacing the toilets / bathrooms within the rear service core with meetings rooms / work space.
- Replacement of later partitions within a ground floor toilet.

Impact Assessment

4.14 The proposed alterations relate principally to the 3rd floor circulation and office space and are brought forward to update the accommodation for modern office use and also to enhance access.

4.15 The proposals would have a neutral impact on the floorplan and the contribution the floorplan makes to the significance of the building as a whole. The cellular room plan would be retained, with a series of small office spaces accessed from the central spine corridor. The existing pattern of door openings would be retained and the room plan would remain legible.

4.16 A small amount of fabric would be removed, for instance in respect to creating the narrow bays of glazed partitions next to each of the office doors and also to open the former snooker room to the central corridor. However, the proposals would not affect the ability to understand and appreciate the original floorplan and represent a minimal impact on the building following a rigorous option appraisal that considered the potential of creating a more open-plan approach to the new office space.

4.17 Similarly, parts of two chimney breasts would be removed. However, they would be replaced with glazed partitions that would allow the original room plan to be understood.

4.18 A series of later partitions would be removed, included the double doors that currently sever the central corridor. False ceilings would

also be removed to reveal the original proportions of the rooms and expose any surviving cornice mouldings, although decoration was limited in the 3rd floor and parts of the ceilings / roof appear to have been replaced, potential as a result of the bomb damage.

4.19 The 3rd floor is currently underused, with rooms either vacant and in need of refurbishment or used for storage. The proposed development would secure a far more effective and sustainable use of the upper floor of the building.

4.20 Given the above assessment the proposed development is considered to represent a neutral impact on the significance of the listed building.

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

4.21 The 1990 Act requires decision-makers to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their settings or any features of special architectural interest that they may possess. In this context 'preserve' has been established by caselaw to mean 'to do no harm'.

4.22 The assessment of the direct physical impact on the building has concluded that the proposed conversion and refurbishment would have a neutral impact on the special architectural and historic interest of the building.

4.23 The proposals would preserve the special architectural and historic interest of Cobbett House and are therefore assessed to be in accordance with the statutory duty of S. 16 of the 1990 Act.

4.24 The proposals have been informed by a proportionate assessment of heritage significance (NPPF paragraph 128), which will assist the local planning authority to take account the significance of the heritage assets when considering the impact of the proposals.

4.25 The proposed conversion would retain those elements of the building that make a positive contribution to its significance. A series of minor alterations are proposed to the 3rd floor of Cobbett House, however the proposals would not impact on the ability to understand the floorplan of the building or the vertical hierarchy of detailing. A small amount of fabric would be removed, however a series of later adaptations, such as false ceilings and the partitions across the main corridor would also be removed and the building would be brought back into full and beneficial use.

4.26 The proposed development is therefore assessed to be in accordance with the relevant policies of the NPPF, particularly paragraphs 131 and 132.

Manchester City Council Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2012-2027)

4.27 The proposed alterations to Cobbett House would not have an adverse impact on the special architectural or historic interest of the listed building. The aspects of the interior that contribute to its

special interest would be retained and unaffected by the proposed alterations.

4.28 The proposed development is therefore assessed to be in accordance with policy DC 19 of the Development Plan Document.

5.0 Conclusions

5.1 The proposed development would bring forward a series of minor alterations to the 3rd floor of the grade II listed Cobbett House, which forms the central range of the original symmetrical master plan of the Royal Infirmary.

5.2 The building and complex are notable for their ambitious 'Greenwich' style frontage to Oxford Road and the Baroque detailing and composition. The special interest of the building is also derived from the floorplan, which retains most of its symmetry despite the impact of WWII bomb damage, and the interior detailing that imposes a very clear vertical hierarchy of decoration. The detailing of the floor plan, including the board room and ante room, joinery and mosaic floor, contrast with the utilitarian detailing of the 3rd floor.

5.3 The finer spaces and detailing of the ground floor would not be affected by the proposals. The cellular plan form and circulation spaces of the 3rd floor would be retained and the ability to understand the original layout would not be affected. Relatively recent adaptations, such as false ceilings and partitions across the main corridor, would be removed and the building would be brought back into a full and beneficial use.

5.4 The overall impact of the proposed development on the significance of the grade II listed Cobbett House is assessed to be neutral.

5.5 The proposals are therefore in accordance with the relevant statutory duty of Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

5.6 The proposals would sustain and enhance the significance of the identified heritage assets and would therefore be consistent with the requirements of the NPPF and the Manchester City Council Core Strategy and Development Plan Document.