Heritage statement to supplement the application for planning permission for the conversion of the building

PROPOSED ALTERATIONS TO GROUND FLOOR CILL HEIGHTS

33-35 PICCADILLY GARDENS
MANCHESTER

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Location :
33-35 Piccadilly, Manchester

Proposal :
To lower the height of the ground floor window cills to the main front elevation by the removal of existing masonry at plinth level



1.0 INTRODUCTION
33-35 Piccadilly is defined as being a non designated heritage asset located in the Stevenson Square conservation area.
John J. Parkinson - Bailey in his book Manchester - an architectural history, published by Manchester University Press in 2000, describes the building as follows :

Nos. 33-5, Manchester and County Bank Given as Mills and Murgatroyd, 1928(but Mills died 1905, and the other Murgatroyd in 1894, so it must be the son, A Murgatroyd). Grade II. Portland stone. Ionic pilasters on ground floor, with lions guard at on the entablature. Note also the lions' heads on the cornice. Was Imperial Hotel, then home to the BBC, now NatWest Bank.

The Council have since confirmed the building is un-listed.
The Council does not appear to have complied a list of locally listed buildings i.e. building's that will never be listed but have design or historic merit.

The building is also described in the Pevsner Architectural Guides, Manchester edition by Clare Hartwell as follows:
Further along National Westminster Bank c.1930 by J. Hembrow of Mills and Murgatroyd. A nicely austere frontage of Portland stone with stylized Ionic pilasters and a row of solemn lions. Sparing ornament above, culminating in an attic sporting big crouches and a cornice with lion masks. In 1932 The Builder described it, rather extravagantly, as 'one of the newest and most important [buildings] in Manchester '.

2.0 RESEARCH
The National Planning Policy Framework, NPPF, March 2012, Section 12. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment gives guidance to both applicants and the Local Planning Authority, LPA, relating to development within a conservation area.

Paragraph 128 contains the following guidance :
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 on 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. Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

The objective was to research the changes that may have occurred to the building over the years through the different uses either in the form of plans or historic photographs with particular reference to any alterations to the main Piccadilly elevation.

Subsequent enquiries found that the LPA does not hold or manage an Historic Environment Record, HER.
GMAAS - Greater Manchester archeological service do not carry out this function either.
Archive plans are held at the main library on St Peter's Square.
All the catalogue entries for the building were as follows :

Ref: 46535 35 Piccadilly, Manchester 1. Broadcasting House
Alterations to radio and television studios.
26/5/59

Ref: 31748 33 Piccadilly, Manchester M1 1LQ
Internal alts to 5 storey office block/bank
12/12/82

Ref: 32716 33 Piccadilly, Manchester M1 1LQ
Internal alts to 5 storey office block/bank
22/2/83
Ref. 32716
Item 2. Additional structural details for alts. to 5 storey office block/bank
24/2/83
Ref. 32716
Item 3. Revised plans for alts. to 5 storey office block/bank
6/5/83

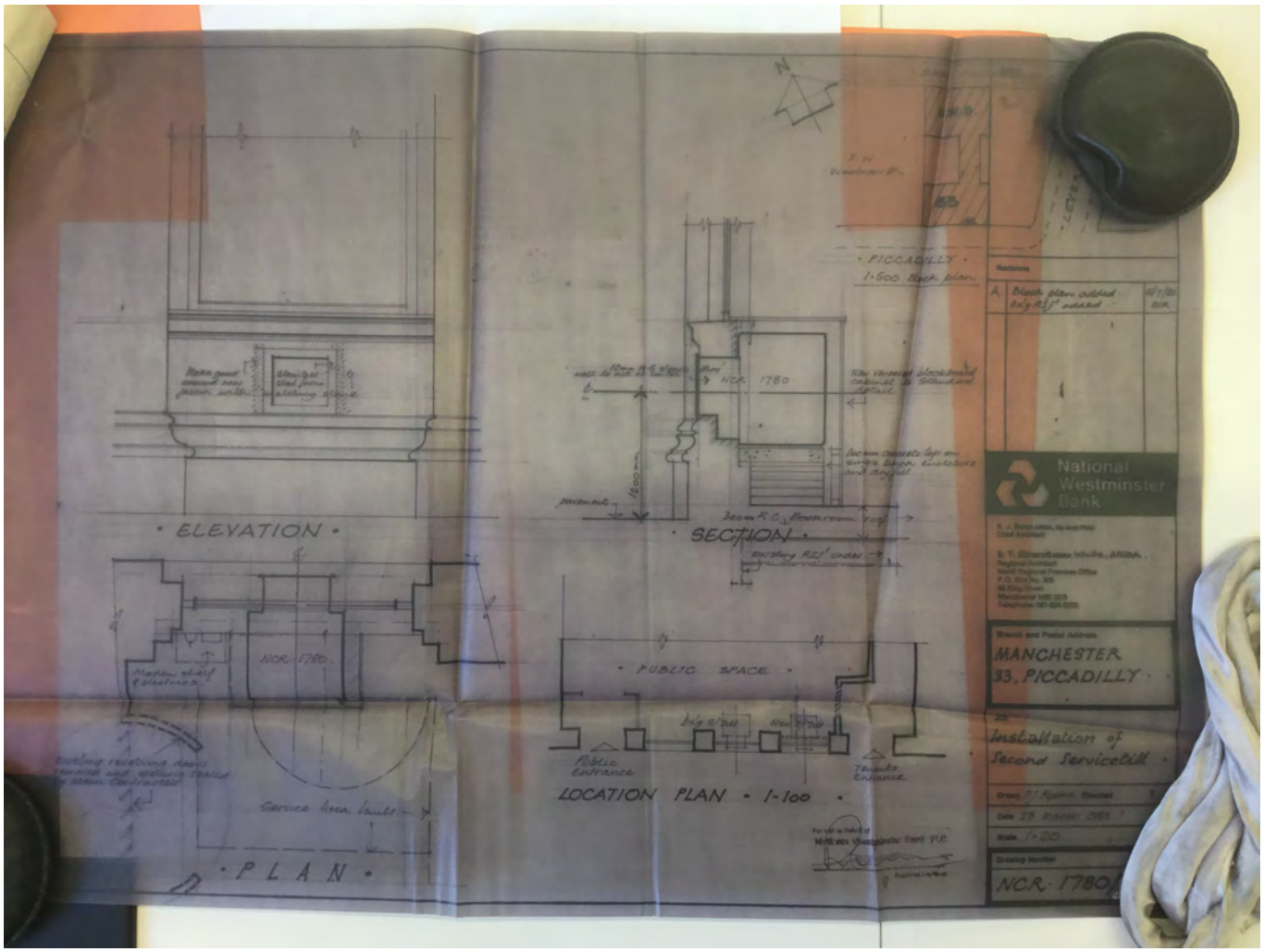
Ref: 34869 33 Piccadilly, Manchester M1 1LQ
Installation of a cash dispenser
7/7/83

Ref: 38203 33 Piccadilly, Manchester M1 1LQ
Alterations to bank
9/3/84

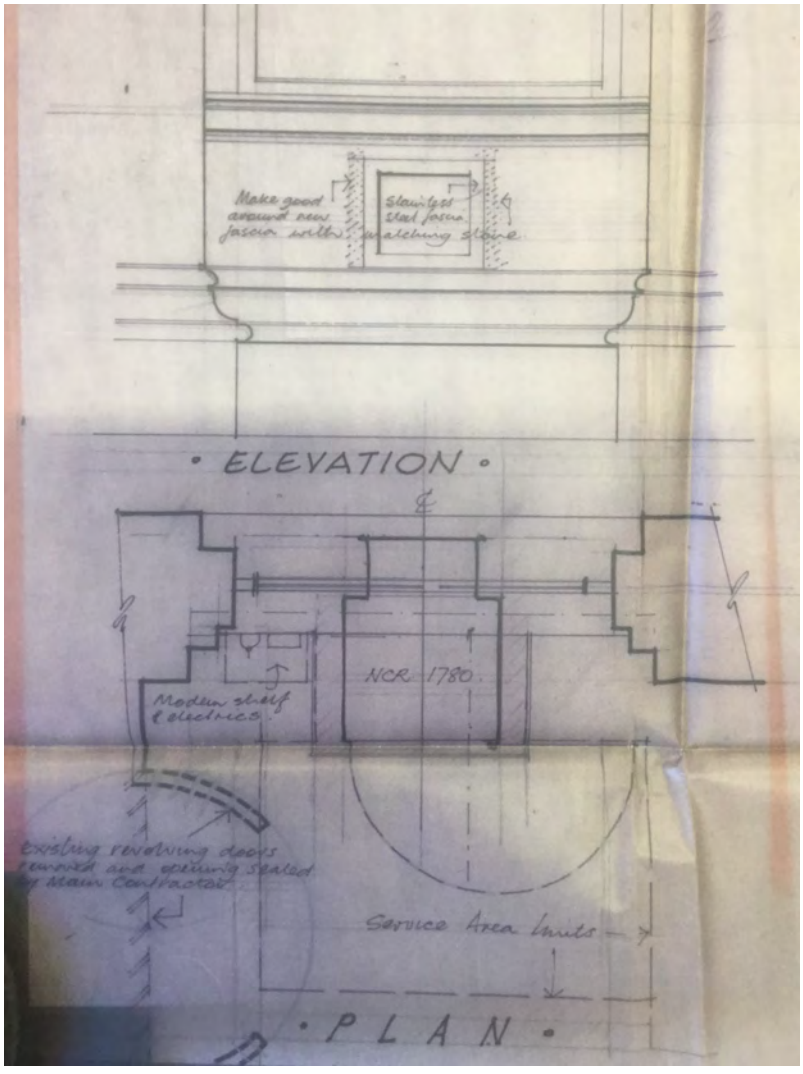
Ref: 85/9743 33 Piccadilly, Manchester M1 1LQ
Alterations at third and fourth floor levels of bank
16/9/88

Ref: 00072/C/8902 33 Piccadilly, Manchester M1 1LQ
Alterations to offices at second floor level to form kitchen and toilets
20/2/89

A request was made to view all seven deposited files of drawings.
It was reported that following a selection process at the time of the recent refurbishment of the building all files have been destroyed except for ref: 34869 installation of a cash dispenser.
The file was subsequently viewed and the contents photographed as overleaf with close up details of the drawing.



ELEVATION
SECTION
PLAN
PICCADILLY
1:500 Block plan
NCR 1780
Modern shelf & electrics
Service Area limits
PUBLIC SPACE
Public Entrance
Tenants Entrance
LOCATION PLAN - 1-100
National Westminster Bank
MANCHESTER
33, PICCADILLY
Installation of Second Servicetill
NCR 1780



Make good around new fascia with
Stainless steel fascia matching stone
ELEVATION
NCR 1780
Modern shelf & electrics
Existing revolving doors removed and opening sealed by Main Contractor
Service Area limits
PLAN

3.0 PROPOSAL
The current proposal, to lower the height of the ground floor window cills to the main front elevation by the removal of existing masonry at plinth level relates to alterations to the main front elevation of the building - this is classed as development, the Consent required is planning permission, granted by the Local Planning Authority under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

NPPF para 131 states :

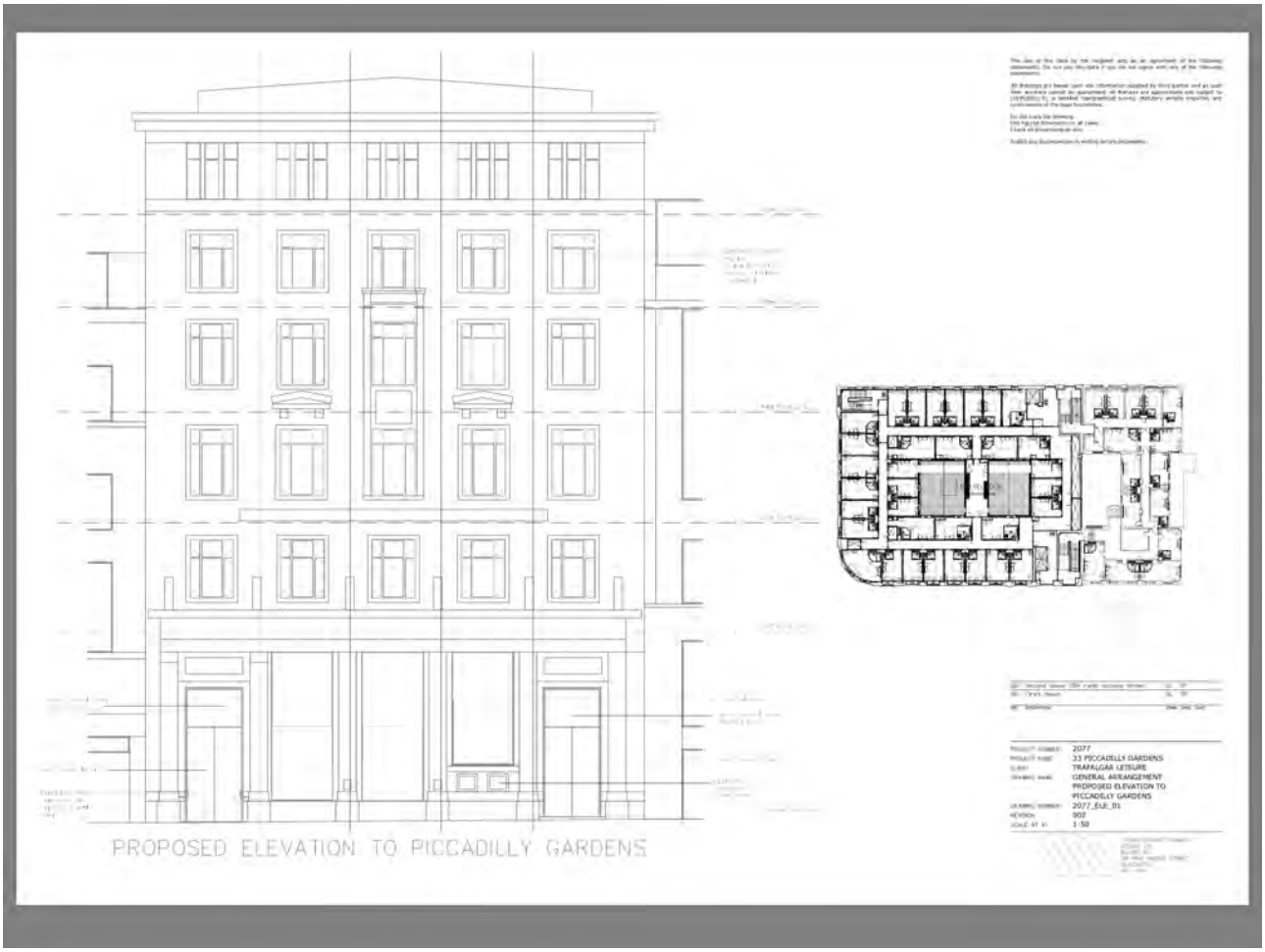
In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

* the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
* the positive contribution that Conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
* the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

As previously stated Nos. 33-35 Piccadilly is an undesignated heritage asset in the Conservation Area, the Town and Country Planning Act seeks to preserve or enhance the character of a conservation area. The guidance contained in para. 131 is noted, in this case, the building has been vacant for two to three years, the ground floor for two years. The proposal is to convert the building to become an hotel, the ground floor to be converted for retail or leisure use. Initial discussions held with prospective end users who may take on the lease of the ground floor have indicated issues relating to the height of the ground floor window cill, approximately 2m above pavement level. The discussions have centred on the lack of a visual connection between the exterior and the interior of the ground floor space potentially making the ground floor un-lettable and so economically unviable.
At an initial meeting held with senior Officers of the Council in 2017, it was indicated that it would be possible to lower the cill height of the ground floor windows, with this understanding the building and potential development has been advanced.

The proposals would involve the removal of the masonry to the level of the stone moulding consistent with the base of the pilasters as shown on the drawing overleaf : Proposed elevation showing the reduction of the cills.

This is considered to be a sensitive approach whilst being consistent with the aims of preserving the overall character of the building.



NPPF Para 134 states :
Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

NPPF para 135 states :
The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

As stated, the building is a non designated heritage asset located in the Conservation Area, the content of para 134 is noted, the proposal is considered to represent less than substantial harm to the overall significance of the asset - the character and appearance of the building will not be substantially harmed.
Para 135 requires a balanced judgement to be made by the LPA as to regarding the alteration which is proposed, it needs to be assessed whether this represents large scale harm to the overall significance of the building - it is believed that it does not represent large scale harm or loss to the significance of the asset. The proposal is sensitively handled whilst enhancing the future use and maintaining the sustainability of the building for the enjoyment of the building users. The reduction of the cills will be seen to enhance

the character of the building by creating an active shopfront this will further enhance the street scene as can be appreciated in the case of the adjacent building (former Woolworth shopfront). The existing frontage of Nos. 33-35 can be said to be dead in terms of enlivening the streetscape, the ground floor cill level is approximately 2m above pavement level, hence there is no possibility of having any visual contact between the interior and exterior. The proposed new use will be for either retail or leisure/restaurant purposes - there is often a preference for people requesting a window seat in a restaurant - this desire can be seen when walking past any restaurant or cafe in an urban setting - this can be seen at the restaurants located in the former Woolworth building.
There are nearby examples of grade II listed buildings where the ground floor cills have been lowered.

4.0 EXAMPLES OF GROUND FLOOR CILL HEIGHTS HAVING BEEN LOWERED

Abode Hotel

Located at 107 Piccadilly, corner of Lena Street, originally built as a packing warehouse and showroom for Sparrow Harwick and Co. dated 1899 and now listed as Grade II. It was converted to an hotel within the last 10 years.


britishlistedbuildings.co.uk

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Listing Text

MANCHESTER

SJ8498SE PICCADILLY
698-1/29/293 (North East side)
03/10/74 No.107

GV II

Cotton manufacturers' showroom and warehouse, now part amusement shop, part showroom. Dated 1899 in gable of right-hand return wall; by Charles Heathcote, probably for Horrocks Crewdson & Co; altered. Iron frame and concrete floors with cladding of red sandstone and red brick, roofs of slate and glass. Rectangular block (linked by gang bridge to rectangular rear block on Lena Street, qv.). Jacobean-baroque style. Basement, 5 storeys and attic, 5 bays; very elaborate design including banded ground floor, string-courses to the upper floors, 3-bay Ionic colonnaded centre at 3rd and 4th floors surmounted by a tall decorated gable and flanked by extruded turrets, and a corbelled corner turret to the right. The 1st bay has a wide round-headed entrance arch with run-out banded surround and ornamented wrought-iron gates, and above this a stepped transomed window with swan-neck pediment and aedicule above lettered "Founded 1848"; otherwise, the ground floor has altered openings, the 1st and 3rd floors have various semicircular and transomed windows, the 2nd and 4th have mullioned windows (those at top floor with blocked mullions); the corner turret rises from a corbel with finely-carved bracket including 2 children displaying a shield; and all the turrets have domed caps. The right-hand

The list description records at the time of listing, 3/10/74, the ground floor openings to the Piccadilly main elevation had been altered - comparing these openings with the unaltered windows on Lena Street - the alterations can be appreciated. Interestingly the alterations were not considered to be so detrimental as to preclude the building from being listed.

The following illustrations are the List Description(part) where the alterations are noted in the text 2nd para. . . 'Founded 1848', otherwise, the ground floor has altered openings, . . . The photographs show the corner of Piccadilly and Lena Street, part of the Piccadilly elevation and close up detail showing the reveals to the altered openings.



Corner of Piccadilly and Lena Street showing lowered cills on Piccadilly and the original detail on Lena Street - note the cill moulding is returned to the window jamb and the inclined patent glazing giving light to the basement level behind the railing on Lena Street.





The scars of these features can be seen in the close up photos of the Piccadilly elevation and openings.
The altered ground floor openings can be appreciated on the main Piccadilly elevation - the building built in the Jacobean - baroque style has its proportions and detailing based on neo-classical architecture where often the ground floor was designed as a taller storey, in this case the rusticated banding gives the building an appearance of being more imposing and more solidity in the street scene - it follows that elements at the ground



floor were often taller and more imposing - the windows and main entrance (see overleaf) were often expressed as a bold statement.

In the case of No.107 Piccadilly now the abode hotel, the creation of taller ground floor windows do not look out of scale or inappropriate in the context of the ground floor storey. The elevation of the ground floor has been handled in a different manner - it is taller, the detailing and proportions are more robust an entablature with cornice has been included to add a visual emphasis to the importance of this part of the building.
The effect will be similar at No. 33-35 where a similar design approach is to be employed.



The Hotel has chosen to locate the reception desk and lobby in this area so providing a visual link between the interior and exterior - seats are located here for guests - the use enlivens the streetscape.



The same design considerations were employed at 33-35 Piccadilly as that at 107 Piccadilly where the ground floor storey height of perhaps twice that of the subsequent floors was used. The result is that the building looks imposing - the ground floor elements

are large - the entrance doors, pilasters, the window heights are very tall. The ground floor cill height can be seen as not relating to the human scale. The use of the entablature with cornice and lion statues helps to convey a sense of grandness. The proposal to lower the existing ground floor cills will not be so detrimental as to compromise the overall design of the main elevation. The overall character of the building will be preserved.
10 Mosley Street built in 1836 as a bank, listed as Grade II in October 1974, and now run as a betting shop for Bet Fred is located just along from Piccadilly Gardens. The list description is as below.

SJ 8498 SW, 698-1/28/235

MANCHESTER, MOSLEY STREET (west side), No. 10

(Formerly listed as: Bradford and Bingley Building Society)

(Previously Listed as: MOSLEY STREET (West side) No. 10 (Even) Williams and Glyns Bank)

03/10/74

GV

II

Former bank, building society office when surveyed. 1836, by Richard Tattershall, for the Manchester and Salford Bank; altered and restored. Sandstone ashlar, slate roof. Rectangular plan at right-angles to street. Classical style. Three storeys and three bays, the ground floor treated as a rusticated plinth and the upper floors as a temple front with giant fluted Corinthian columns, entablature, and dentilled and modillioned cornice and pediment. The ground floor has a square-headed doorway flanked by large rectangular windows with altered glazing, and a frieze with four pairs of triglyphs; the first floor has tall French windows with overlights and corniced architraves, each window with a small wrought-iron balcony, and the second floor has smaller casement windows with moulded architraves. Five-bay left return wall has rusticated ground floor with tall round-headed windows, variously altered windows to the upper floors and a fire-escape close to the front corner. Curved brick rear wall. Interior not inspected.

Listing NGR: SJ8422098290

Selected Sources

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details

National Grid Reference: SJ 84220 98290

Map



The list description refers to the ground floor windows as . . . The ground floor has a square - headed doorway flanked by large rectangular windows with altered glazing . . .

Written in October 1974, this may refer to the fact the original window frames had been removed and later frames installed as the phrase ‘ altered glazing ‘ would suggest reference to frames rather than a reference to a structural alteration.
Clearly the window frames at ground floor level are modern - power coated aluminium square section however on closer inspection there is scarring at the left hand window reveals and at both windows - the stone detailing and workmanship appears to be crude poorly executed - see the following photos.





Left hand window

The infill pieces of stone to the left hand reveal appear crude in the way they are set into their location - the bed joint of the lower stone of the left hand reveal does not match with the original bed-joint of the ashlar coursing - this crudeness would not have occurred when the building was originally built - it is pointed using a cement based mortar.
There is scarring to the reveal of the ashlar stonework which cannot be accounted for.
The first floor windows have metal balconies with a higher window cill behind. There appears to be a mortar repair patch to the lower part of the third ashlar block and a small square section of repair to the cill close to the reveal.
Maybe the ground floor windows had a similar balcony detail with a higher stone cill set behind the front face of the building as the first floor windows, this would offer privacy to the public banking floor at ground floor level ?





Right hand window

The photos show the right hand window - again the stone reveals appear to have new stone where the lower stone on both the left and right reveal appear to be a different shade of stone, particularly the stone to the right reveal - the bed-joint does not correspond to the ashlar bed-joint - the reveal stone is too tall. This crudeness would not have occurred when the building was built.
Interestingly both reveals have the same mortar patch to the lower part of the third ashlar block and maybe there is evidence of a mortar repair to the cill at the right hand reveal though this is not clear.

The evidence of the small mortar patches to the third ashlar blocks to both reveals helps to support the theory that there were once metal balconies at these windows and that there could have been inset stone cills set on a line behind the front face of the building.

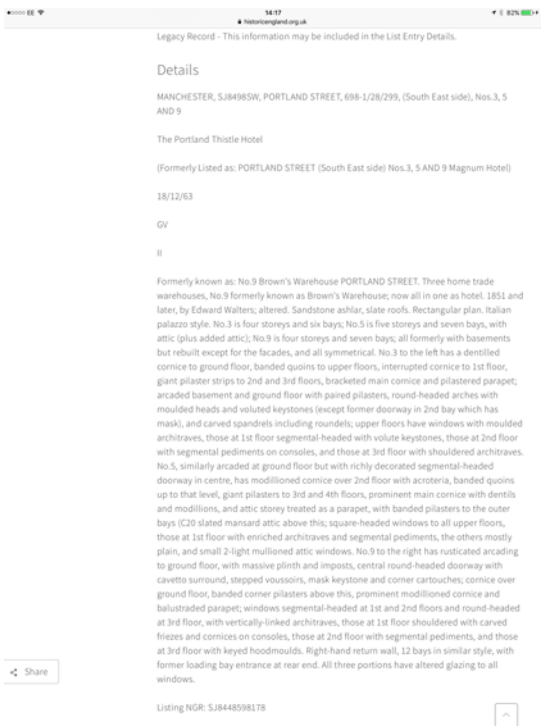


This is a close up photo of the first floor balconies with the stone cill set at a higher level behind than that of the base of the metal balcony feature - here the metal supports are returned to the side architrave of the window rather than interfering with the fluted pilasters.

As with 107 Piccadilly the building was listed acknowledging that there had been alterations to the ground floor glazing - It is felt that perhaps the alterations may have been more than simply changing the frames, from the evidence discussed in the text it is

felt that the ground floor cills have been altered by reducing the height of the cills which did not preclude the building from being listed.

9 Portland Street
This building was listed as grade II on 18 December 1963 as included below:



Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Details

MANCHESTER, SJ8498SW, PORTLAND STREET, 698-1/28/299, (South East side), Nos.3, 5 AND 9

The Portland Thistle Hotel

(Formerly Listed as: PORTLAND STREET (South East side) Nos.3, 5 AND 9 Magnum Hotel)

18/12/63

GV

II

Formerly known as: No.9 Brown's Warehouse PORTLAND STREET. Three home trade warehouses, No.9 formerly known as Brown's Warehouse; now all in one as hotel. 1851 and later, by Edward Walters; altered. Sandstone ashlar, slate roofs. Rectangular plan. Italian palazzo style. No.3 is four storeys and six bays; No.5 is five storeys and seven bays, with attic (plus added attic); No.9 is four storeys and seven bays; all formerly with basements but rebuilt except for the facades, and all symmetrical. No.3 to the left has a dentilled cornice to ground floor, banded quoins to upper floors, interrupted cornice to 1st floor, giant pilaster strips to 2nd and 3rd floors, bracketed main cornice and pilastered parapet; arcaded basement and ground floor with paired pilasters, round-headed arches with moulded heads and voluted keystones (except former doorway in 2nd bay which has mask), and carved spandrels including roundels; upper floors have windows with moulded architraves, those at 1st floor segmental-headed with volute keystones, those at 2nd floor with segmental pediments on consoles, and those at 3rd floor with shouldered architraves. No.5, similarly arcaded at ground floor but with richly decorated segmental-headed doorway in centre, has modillioned cornice over 2nd floor with acroteria, banded quoins up to that level, giant pilasters to 3rd and 4th floors, prominent main cornice with dentils and modillions, and attic storey treated as a parapet, with banded pilasters to the outer bays (C20 slated mansard attic above this; square-headed windows to all upper floors, those at 1st floor with enriched architraves and segmental pediments, the others mostly plain, and small 2-light mullioned attic windows. No.9 to the right has rusticated arcading to ground floor, with massive plinth and imposts, central round-headed doorway with cavetto surround, stepped voussoirs, mask keystone and corner cartouches; cornice over ground floor, banded corner pilasters above this, prominent modillioned cornice and balustraded parapet; windows segmental-headed at 1st and 2nd floors and round-headed at 3rd floor, with vertically-linked architraves, those at 1st floor shouldered with carved friezes and cornices on consoles, those at 2nd floor with segmental pediments, and those at 3rd floor with keyed hoodmoulds. Right-hand return wall, 12 bays in similar style, with former loading bay entrance at rear end. All three portions have altered glazing to all windows.

Share

Listing NGR: SJ8448598178



The building was built originally to be Brown's Warehouse, at the time of listing the building had been converted to be the Portland Thistle Hotel, it is now in commercial use. The photograph above shows a large entrance and is described in the list description as follows . . . *No. 9 to the right has rusticated arcading to ground floor, with massive plinth and imposts, central round-headed doorway with cavetto surround, stepped voussoirs, mask keystone and corner cartouches; cornice over ground floor . . .*
On either side of the central doorway the window has been altered to become a secondary door, maybe this is to meet current fire regulations and means of escape, however the point is that the cills to both windows have been lowered to convert the windows into doors. See photographs below showing the newly formed doors.







This photograph shows the existing cill detail, typical of the adjacent windows.
The lowering of two cills has been been carried out to the window on either side of the original doorway. This has helped to increase the active street frontage and in turn the surveillance between interior and the exterior streetscape.

This is the third example, and in each case - all three are listed building's and located in the close proximity of 33-35 Piccadilly where the Council has given approval to the lowering of the cill height to the ground floor windows of the main front elevation fronting onto the pavement. In the case of this example at 9 Portland Street, the lowering of the cill to ground level is seen to be a subtle alteration that does not represent substantial harm to the character of the listed building, if in the future in each case the works are reversible where the height could be raised and the cills restored to their original design.

5.0 CONCLUSION

Manchester City Council adopted the Manchester Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document in July 2012.

The document supplements the national policies contained in the NPPF.

Policy CC9 within the document is as follows :
Design and Heritage
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.

Policy 8.52 states :
Although the city centre needs to be able to change in order to accommodate growth and the changing requirements of development, it is important that the character of the city centre is recognised as a key determinant of decisions to invest in the area.

It is felt the proposed development accords with the requirements contained in both policies as copied above. The proposal to adapt the height of the ground floor window cills to allow change as stated in policy 8.52, will mean the ground floor space will become economically viable for a prospective end user whether it be for a retail use or leisure/restaurant use, the vitality of the street scene will be greatly increased with an active frontage which must be an objective of the Council as can be seen in the reuse of historic buildings in Piccadilly.

National policy contained in the NPPF has been discussed in the text, to recap,
Para 131 talks about :

* the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation

As stated in the text - the building is an undesignated heritage asset within the conservation area - the proposal will allow for a new viable use to the ground floor which will be seen as an enhancement by providing an active frontage

Para 134 states :
Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use

The building is un designated - the proposal represents less than substantial harm to the overall significance of the elevation of the building within the context of the conservation area.

Para 135 states :
The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

As discussed in the text - it is believed that the development does not represent large scale harm or loss to the significance of the asset. The proposal is sensitively handled whilst enhancing the future use and maintaining the sustainability of the building for the enjoyment of the building users. The greater benefit will be seen to add vitality and the enhancement of the street scene and bring a redundant ground floor space into reuse.

The text then includes examples of three nearby grade II listed buildings where the ground floor cill height of one building, 107 Piccadilly can be clearly seen to have been altered with examples on the return elevation of Lena Street of unaltered openings - the text goes on to say - although crudely handled regarding the removal of a stone cill moulding - the overall character of the main elevation has not been substantially harmed precluding it from being listed. The second example is Betfred at 10 Mosley street where looking at the evidence on site a conclusion has been drawn that the cill level has been lowered - again this has not substantially harmed the character of the main elevation.

The third example at 9 Portland Street demonstrates that the lowering of two cills to ground level is so subtle that the special architectural character of the building is not adversely harmed or affected. No doubt there will be other examples in Manchester and in the Conservation Area where Consent has been granted, with the three examples in mind, it is felt that the proposal would be an acceptable alteration to 33-35 Piccadilly which is un-listed whilst preserving the character of the elevation, the proposals according with national policy and the Council's Core Strategy.

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