TOTAL ARCHITECTURE

Fraser House

36 Charlotte Street, Manchester

Heritage Asset Statement

To support Listed Building Consent application for external cleaning and other works to the exterior fabric

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared to accompany a listed building application for the cleaning of the exterior fabric plus the removal of redundant external fixtures at 36 Charlotte Street (incorporating 42 Portland Street), Manchester, M1 4FD, also known as Fraser House.

1.2 The works that are proposed are part of an ongoing programme of works in advance of an application to refurbish the upper floors of the building and return them to beneficial use. The upper floors 'soft' strip-out previously approved has now been completed and re-roofing works are currently ongoing

1.3 In addition to describing the building and it's significance this report will identify the works that are proposed, provide a justification and reasoning for the works and describe the impact they will have on the historic fabric.

1.4 A visual inspection of the exterior of the building was carried out in summer 2012 in conjunction with Burnaby Stone Care, specialists in cleaning and restoration of historic buildings, who provided advice on appropriate methods of cleaning and other treatments.

1.5 A photographic record of the general condition of the exterior fabric was undertaken in October 2012 and is included in this report under Appendix A. These photographs are intended to be read in conjunction with the description of the proposed works to amplify the reasons why the works are required.

2.0 BUILDING DESCRIPTION

2.1 Fraser House is a five storey brick and stone former textile warehouse in Manchester City Centre that was listed Grade ll in 1974.

2.2 It was constructed in the 'Palazzo' style between 1855 and 1860 and has impressive frontages to Portland Street and Charlotte Street with a plainer façade to the rear (Reyner Street)

2.3 It is one of several warehouses on Charlotte Street designed by Edward Walters, who promoted the application of the 'palazzo' architectural style of Renaissance Italy to Manchester warehouses..

2.4 The listing describes the external appearance and features of the building. The listing text is included below:

Location: 42 Portland St (south side) Manchester, Greater Manchester
Date listed: 03 October 1974
Date of last amendment: 03 October 1974
Grade II, Includes: No.42 Portland Street.

Textile manufacturer's warehouse, now restaurant, gallery, etc. c.1855- 60, by Edward Walters; altered. Red brick in Flemish bond with sandstone dressings (roof not visible). Rectangular plan at right-angles to Charlotte Street, with loading at right-hand side (Reyner Street). Italianate style. Basement and 4 storeys, 3 bays, with rusticated stone plinth, frieze and cornice to ground floor, dentilled sill- bands to the 2nd and 3rd floors, a massive bracketed cornice and a brick parapet with corniced upstands at the corners (probably chimneys).

The ground floor has a large round- headed doorway to the right with moulded surround and enriched architrave with prominent modillioned cornice, 3 square headed windows in the centre and coupled stilted windows to the left; the upper floors have arched windows, those at 1st and 2nd floors grouped 2:3:2 and those at top floor (which are much smaller) grouped 3:5:2, all with moulded stone heads linked by impost bands, and those of the outer bays matching the fenestration of the 5 -bay left side to Portland Street. These windows are coupled and linked by impost bands on all main floors, those at ground floor stilted, those at 1st floor round-headed under semicircular moulded arches with keystones, those at 2nd floor round-headed with coupled heads in matching style; and the 3rd floor has small round- headed triple windows. Right-hand (functional rear) has, inter alia, a full-height loading slot surmounted by a turret, and a loading bay beyond this.



Portland Street & Charlotte Street Elevations

3.0 APPRAISAL OF SIGNIFICANCE

3.1 Before appraising 36 Charlotte Street, it is important to understand the history and development of textile warehouses in nineteenth century Manchester.

The Cotton Industry in Manchester

3.2 The concentration of the cotton industry in Cheshire and Lancashire led to the development of a strong commercial sector in Manchester. Purpose designed merchants warehouses were constructed from c.1825 onwards to sell the textiles being made in the nearby mills. The warehouses were specially designed to market and distribute the cotton cloth and other fabrics produced in the mills. Most mill owners operated a warehouse in Manchester from which to sell their goods.

3.3 The new merchants warehouses were not only use for the storage and trans- shipment of textile goods but also accommodated offices, show rooms and areas for quality control and the preparation and packing of cloth for transport.

3.4 Large windows were the norm for the mid- late nineteenth century warehouses, designed to provide as much natural light as possible in the 'warerooms' where the cloth was displayed to customers. The generous levels of natural light on the upper floors, which usually had greater areas of glazing, allowed these top floors to be used for checking for flaws in weaving and printing. Many warehouses were constructed in Italianate (or palazzo) style with imposing designs as merchants set out to attract prospective clients and vied with each other to create the finest warehouses.

The 'Palazzo' Style Manchester Warehouse

3.5 In Italy, a palazzo is a grand multi-storey building of some architectural ambition that is the headquarters of a family of some renown or of an institution. Historical y, the ground floors of even a great family's palazzo could be trade and domestic offices often open to servants, tradesmen, customers and the public, whilst the smartest floor (the piano nobile) was kept private for the residing family. The palazzo Manchester warehouses were a play on this theme with the groundfloor showroom being the principal trading floor.

3.6 Manchester's mid- late nineteenth century palazzo warehouses, built from about 1839 are one of the architectural gems of its industrial heritage. They used the latest construction methods and materials such as cast iron columns. This structure would commonly be clad with ornate red/ orange brick frontages embellished in stone.
The principal features are rows of regularly proportioned windows to four storeys or more, with a fine entrance to the main wareroom (showroom) where the textiles were displayed for visiting buyers. The top of the building was often marked by a prominent cornice hiding a low slate roof.

3.7 The most detailed frontages usually faced the principal streets while plainer frontages faced onto back streets. Typically the wareroom was accommodated in a raised ground floor above a semi basement. The wareroom interior was generally ornate and reached by a flight of steps. Above the main wareroom were sample rooms (or sample floors) where customers could also view goods. Customers would usually reach the upper floors via a main staircase which extended to the top of the building. The lower floors included the administrative offices and a packing room. The later was the hub of the warehouse and usually in the basement.

3.8 By the mid nineteenth century, so many of Manchester's 'merchant princes' were financing and developing warehouses designed to echo Italian palazzos that the architect Thomas Worthington dubbed Manchester, 'the Florence of the nineteenth century'. Unlike the Italian palazzo where the family lived in the building, the Manchester merchants separated business and home, preferring instead to live in grand new houses built on the edge of the City.

36 Charlotte Street: Likely Original Use

3.9 As per the listed building description above, 36 Charlotte Street has architecturally impressive frontages to Portland Street and Charlotte Street combined with a plainer rear to Reyner Street and a functional interior. It is designed to attract customers. The main wareroom is a raised ground floor with fluted columns and rich decoration. The building has high floor to ceiling heights permitting tall windows and good levels of natural light, meeting the functional requirements for a textile warehouse.

3.10 Home-trade merchants selling to the domestic market often built prominent and architecturally impressive warehouses that operated as a multi-storey wholesale showroom. 36 Charlotte Street is likely to have accommodated such an operation. Each floor may have accommodated a different 'department' that specialised in a certain type of goods. Each floor would have been overseen by a foreman, under whom worked salesmen or assistants. The upper floors would have been used for the least heavy goods and for those that required good natural light for inspection. Heavier goods would have been found on the lower floors. Purchased items would have been sent by hoist down to the basement packing room where they were given a final check, invoiced and packed prior to being dispatched.

The Architect

3.11 Architect Edward Walters designed 36 Charlotte Street. The building was probably constructed between 1855 and 1860. Walters had arrived in Manchester in 1839, probably at the behest of Richard Cobden, merchant MP for Stockport – he was designing a warehouse for him (Harvest House at 16 Mosley Street). 16 Mosley Street displays the beginnings of the palazzo style. This was followed in 1845 by a second warehouse for S. Schwabe at 46-54 Mosely Street. In these buildings Walters initiated the application of the Italian 'palazzo' style to Manchester warehouses.

3.12 Walters designed one of the best concentrations of palazzo style warehouses in Manchester in Charlotte Street between 1855 and 1860. These included 36 Charlotte Street, 34 Charlotte Street, 14-16 Charlotte Street and 10 Charlotte Street. This group shows the variations that are possible within the Italianate theme. No. 34 is the simplest and No.10 the most ornate.
All are built in good quality brick with five storeys over a basement, the level of ornamentation and detailing would have depended on the purse of the client.

4.0 DESCRIPTION AND APPRAISAL OF WORKS

4.1 This section should be read in conjunction with the photographic record included as Appendix A.

4.2 The works covered in this application are part of an ongoing programme of refurbishment, which has previously included the 'soft' strip out of the upper floors in preparation for refurbishment and works to reinstate and repair the roof coverings and leadwork.

4.3 The building is currently covered in scaffolding in order to carry out the roofing works and this has allowed access to the exterior fabric to enable a detailed inspection of the exterior brickwork and stonework. It is the intention of the applicant to carry out remaining works to the exterior fabric whilst the scaffolding is in place as the dismantling and erection of scaffolding attracts significant cost. On completion of the exterior works the scaffolding will be removed and works will concentrate on the interior fitting out, which will be subject to a future application.

4.4 This application, therefore, is intended to complete the works to the exterior fabric of the building in preparation for works on the interior fitting out. However, there are elements of the exterior fabric for which proposed works will be dependent on the final use and arrangement of the interior space and, consequently, these works can not be determined at this stage and have been excluded from this application.

4.5 The works to the fabric not included in this application include the following;

Windows
The treatment to the windows will be dependent on the functional requirements to be achieved, which in turn will be dependent on the final use of the upper floors. If the upper floors fit-out involves a change of use then more stringent performance will be required to meet current Building Regulations standards than if there is no change of use. The proposed use of the upper floors has not yet been determined as the owners are reviewing the options available and the implications of each.

Entrance doors
Whilst works to the stone surround and cast iron lintel to the loading bay entrances on Portland Street and Reyner Street are included in this applications, works to the doors themselves are not. Also excluded are any works to the entrance from Charlotte Street. Once the use of the upper floors is determined a comprehensive review of the entrance arrangements will be carried out in order to address the issue of inclusive access, which the building currently lacks, and this may involve modifications to the entrance doors. These works will be included in a future application.

Hoistway to Reyner Street
The elevation to Reyner Street includes the former hoistway featuring timber cladding and timber doors at each level. Running the full height of the hoistway is an operational extract duct serving the restaurants on the lower floors. Proposals for the treatment of this area will again be dependent on the arrangement of the interior fit out and until this has been determined works can not be identified.

Railings
The cast iron railings to the street level windows to Charlotte Street and Portland Street are all in place and in good condition and therefore no works are proposed. A cast iron grating to one window on Reyner Street is intended to be refurbished as part of this application but other street level windows on this rear elevation are infilled with brickwork and do not require railings.

4.6 The works to the exterior fabric that are included in this application are not intended to 'restore' the building but are concerned with enhancing the quality of the fine brick and stone detailing and removing some of the ad-hoc 'clutter' that has accumulated over many years, which again will enhance and reveal the quality of the existing historic fabric.

4.7 The existing building has suffered from a general lack of maintenance over a relatively prolonged period. Whilst the ground level has been in continuous use as restaurant space, the upper floors have been empty for many years since their last use as office space, which has led to a general lack of attention and a 'tired' appearance that this application is intended to address.

4.8 The proposals for the external fabric can be broken down into the following elements

Cleaning
As the photographs show, the brickwork and stonework is generally in sound condition but is let down by significant build up of soot particles due to atmospheric pollution. This is particularly evident on the deep dentilled cornices and detail areas around the windows and detracts from the quality of the detailing.

The elevation to Reyner Street has particularly suffered from a build up of atmospheric pollution as this street is very narrow and has historically been used by service vehicles accessing the rear of properties on Portland Street and Faulkner Street.

In addition to the discolouration caused by atmospheric pollution there are areas of soiling caused by defective rainwater goods and gutters that have resulted in growths of organic material and staining of brickwork and stonework. Leadwork and gutters are being fully refurbished as part of the roofing works and so the cause of this staining has been addressed.

There is also paint to be removed, particularly the noticeable graffiti to the parapet level brick and stonework but also at ground floor level to the rustic stone base.

Although all the exterior fabric suffers from soiling to some degree the extent and type of it is patchy and inconsistent. To clean some areas and not others would result in a 'patchwork quilt' appearance, which we believe would detract from the inherent quality of the building and it's historic setting.

It is not the intention to make the building look 'like new' but to give all the stonework and brickwork a very light clean to gently remove the worst of the surface soiling and to reveal the fine detailing whilst retaining some of the patina of age.

The stone is to be cleaned using a DOFF superheated water system with an operating pressure of 50psi, a water flow rate of 2 litres/min and an operating temperature of 160°C. This method is used to avoid damage to the surface of the stone and brick as it utilises only water and not abrasives or chemicals.

Stone Treatment

The stone is generally in sound condition but there are areas where the surface has broken down to become friable and loose. These areas are occasional and mainly restricted to the undersides of the projecting cornices at the base of the parapet and at 3rd floor level and also to the heads of columns to the window reveals i.e. areas that have been subjected to weathering.

In addition to looking unsightly there is a risk of some of this friable surface falling off which, particularly on the overhanging surfaces could cause injury to persons below.

It is the intention to brush these areas with appropriate hand tools (phosphor brushes, etc) to remove the loose surface and take it back to sound stonework. It is not thought that there will be need for any repairs to the stonework and that any loss of surface detail will be small and will form part of the patina of the building.

Removal of redundant items

The items to be removed are essentially contemporary additions that detract from the overall appearance of the building. These include alarm boxes, signage, redundant services, redundant pipework, etc. Their removal will inevitably leave holes where fixings have been removed and the following methods will be used for the variety of situations that may result.

For holes less than 20mm diameter in brickwork the intention would be to fill the hole in new mortar, colour matched to the adjacent brickwork. The intention is not to make this an 'invisible' repair but approximately colour matched to make it discreet.

A similar strategy would be adopted for small holes in stonework. This only applies to the dentil course above upper ground floor which currently has a neon sign fixed to it. The holes to be left here are approximately 10mm in diameter.

Any larger holes in brickwork, including where drainage pipes are removed to the Reyner Street elevation, will be treated by removing the damaged brick and replacing with a reclaimed brick to match, which will then be pointed in new mortar as outlined below. This would be carried out after the cleaning to ensure that an appropriate colour match is achieved.

Cast Iron Treatment
Many cast iron elements are to be retained including the external escape stair and the lintels above loading bays. These elements will be abrasively cleaned to s.a. 2.5 and will be treated with a zinc phosphate primer before being treated with a topcoat to a dark grey colour RAL 7016.

Patch repointing
Whilst the pointing is generally in sound condition there are small areas where this has broken down, mainly due to defective gutters and rainwater goods. This is most evident at parapet level, on the corner turrets at roof level and also around the loading bay entrance off Reyner Street.

The existing mortar appears to be black ash mortar, in which coal ash is mixed with lime and sand, which was very common in buildings of this age in industrial cities. The brickwork is laid with relatively thin mortar beds which are finished with a flush or slightly recessed joint.

The repointing is to be carried out by carefully removing all defective mortar utilising appropriate had tools and repointing in three parts sand, one part lime, one part aggregate mortar. Colour matching to the existing will be achieved by utilising an ash additive as the existing.

The final mix will be determined after the brickwork is cleaned and will be a matter of trial and error to achieve the best match with the existing. The bed joint treatment will be to match the adjacent brickwork.

4.9 We anticipate that all works to the exterior fabric included in this application will be subject to approval of samples on site by Manchester City Council.

5.0 SUMMARY

5.1 The building is a fine example of the 19th century Manchester ‘palazzo’ style warehouse by a prominent architect in the city but currently suffers from a general lack of maintenance that has had a detrimental effect on it’s quality. It is our view that the works proposed in this application will serve to enhance the quality of this asset and that none of the works proposed will have a detrimental effect on the historic fabric.

Appendix A
Photographic Record

Parapet Level


Graffiti on parapet brickwork


Graffiti and vegetation to parapet brickwork


Stonework on corner turret to be cleaned


Corner turret to be cleaned and repointed


Graffiti to be cleaned from parapet


Discolouration of stone to parapet



Graffiti, discoloured stonework and vegetation at parapet level



Corner turret to be cleaned and repointed



Typical stonework soiling to parapet

3rd Floor and Cornice Above



Soiled stonework to underside of top cornice



Soiled stonework to underside of top cornice



Soiled stone and brickwork to cornice and window head



Soiled stone and brickwork to cornice and window head



Discoloured stonework to arched window heads



Discoloured stone and brickwork to arched window heads



Soiled stonework to underside of cornice



Soiled stonework to underside of cornice



Typical friable stone detail to dentil cornice



Friable and soiled stonework to dentil cornice



Soiled stone and brickwork to window heads



Discoloured stonework to cornice

2nd Floor and Cornice Above



Typical lightly soiled stonework details



Soiled stone and brickwork at window head



Typical lightly soiled window reveal



Soiled stone and brickwork to dentil course



Typical soiled top surface to projecting dentil course



Typical soiled top surface to projecting dentil course



Soiled brickwork and stone to be cleaned



Soiled stonework to window head



Soiled stonework to window head and damaged corner



Damaged corner to feature window mullion



Typical lightly soiled stonework



Typical soiling to window heads



Soiled brickwork and stone details



Friable stone surface at base of window mullion



Typical stonework condition



Soiled brickwork area



Soiled stonework and brickwork



Soiled stonework to window head



Minor damage to stone window detail



Minor damage to stone window detail



Soiled stonework



Soiled stonework to window head



Soiled stonework to window head



Friable stonework at base of window mullion

1st Floor & Cornice Above



Typical stonework condition to dentil course



Lightly soiled stonework to window head



Friable stonework at base of window reveal



Typical soiled stonework window detail



Soiled stone and brickwork to dentil course



Discoloured stonework to window head and dentil course



Soiled stonework to dentil course



Soiled stonework to dentil course



Soiled stonework to dentil course



Soiled and friable stonework to window cill



Minor damage to stone window detail



Minor damage to stone window detail

Ground Floor & Cornice Above



Soiled stonework to dentil course



Soiled stonework to dentil course



Soiled stonework to dentil course and window head



Stone quoins to Portland Street loading bay entrance



Neon sign to dentil course to be removed



Soiled stonework to dentil course



Soiled stonework to dentil course



Dentil course above Charlotte Street entrance



Soiled rustic stone piers at street level



Upper ground floor window



Soiled rustic stone piers at street level



Painted stone at street level



Cast Iron head above Portland Street loading bay entrance



Soiled rustic stone piers at street level

Rear Elevation



Infilled openings and damaged railings



Redundant services to be removed



Redundant services to be removed



Area to be cleaned and repointed around loading bay



Cast Iron head to loading bay entrance



Wire screen to be removed