The British Muslim Heritage Centre Manchester

Rear Wall Heritage Statement

AHP Architectural History Practice

British Muslim Heritage Centre, College Road, Manchester

Rear Wall Heritage Statement

Prepared for

British Muslim Heritage Centre

by

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Lancashire Independent College (the Building) was erected in 1840-3, when Whalley Range was being developed as a residential suburb. The architects were Irwin and Chester. The College trained ministers for the Congregational Church, providing further education for Nonconformists. The building was substantially remodelled internally and the central rear wing added to designs by Alfred Waterhouse in 1876-8. An area to the south of the existing grounds was acquired in 1882 for use as cricket and exercise grounds, and this is the probable date of the southern perimeter wall (Thompson, 1893, p. 184). Following use as a hall of residence for Manchester University the building was acquired in 1985 by the GMB, a major trade union, as their national training and conference centre, which closed in 2005. It was subsequently acquired for use as the British Muslim Heritage Centre and conversion for this purpose is in hand.

The building is Grade II* listed, and entrance gates on College Road are Grade II. The site is within Whalley Range conservation area, designated in 1991. The building is set in extensive grounds with the principal landscaped area facing North to College Road. The rear wall runs along Clarendon Road on the South side of the site and returns to form the boundaries of the grounds. This wall was probably put up when the grounds were extended in 1882.

The proposed alteration to the wall involves inserting a gateway near the South-East corner, which has been rebuilt at unknown, probably late 20th century date. The wall is not considered to be of special architectural or historic interest and the proposal is not considered to be damaging to the character and setting of the listed building or the Conservation Area.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Frontispiece. The perimeter wall, Clarendon Road
Fig. 1: OS map, 1848
Fig.2: OS map, 1893
Fig.3: OS map, 1907
Fig.4: Typical section of wall
Fig.5: Opening which has been blocked on Clarendon Road
Fig.6: The wall and door from Clarendon Road
Fig. 7: The same stretch from inside the ground
Fig.8: Junction of old and new work to the perimeter wall.
Fig. 9 Typical street scene opposite the perimeter wall

All photographs by Clare Hartwell.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1. Introduction

The Architectural History Practice Ltd was commissioned by the British Muslim Heritage Centre to produce a Heritage Statement on the rear wall and alterations to it in May 2012. This report should be read in conjunction with plans prepared by Nuneham Courtenay Architecture. This report considers issues of heritage, architecture and history only. It has been prepared by Clare Hartwell, BA MA of the Architectural History Practice.

1.2. Location

The building is situated on the south side of College Road in Whalley Range, approximately two and a half miles from the city centre and the rear wall forms a boundary along part of Clarendon Road South of the building. The address is The British Muslim Heritage Centre, College Road, Manchester, M16 8BP.

1.3. Ownership

The building is in the ownership of the British Muslim Heritage Centre. The local planning authority is Manchester City Council.

1.4. Copyright

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2. UNDERSTANDING

2.1 Historical Background

The Independent College was erected in 1840-3 to the designs of the Manchester architects Irwin & Chester. The institution was formed to train ministers for the Congregational Church and to provide further and higher education for Nonconformists. The building is executed in Gothic Revival style with a contemporary or near-contemporary stone perimeter wall and gateway along the North frontage to College Road. In 1848 Clarendon Road had not been laid out, and the southern part of the college grounds was less extensive than today, as shown on the 1848 OS map.

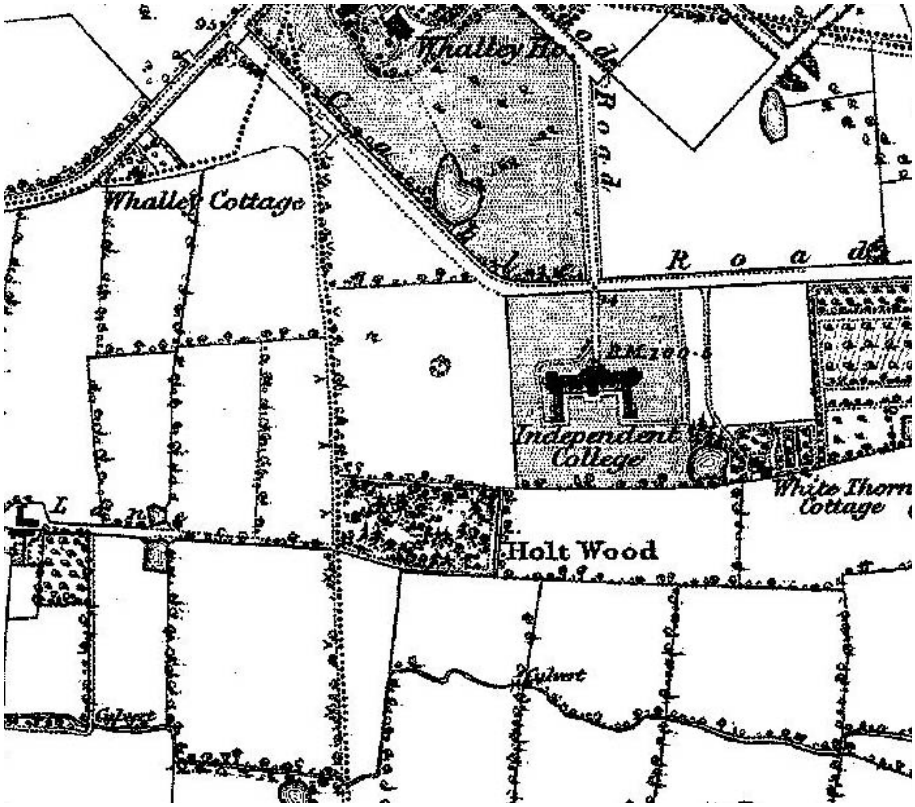


Fig. 1 The College shown on the 1848 OS map (Digital Mapping)

By the mid 1870s rising student numbers prompted the College to enlarge and remodel the accommodation. In 1882 the grounds were extended and the wall was probably built at this time. The OS map of 1893 shows the then extent of the grounds and Clarendon Road.

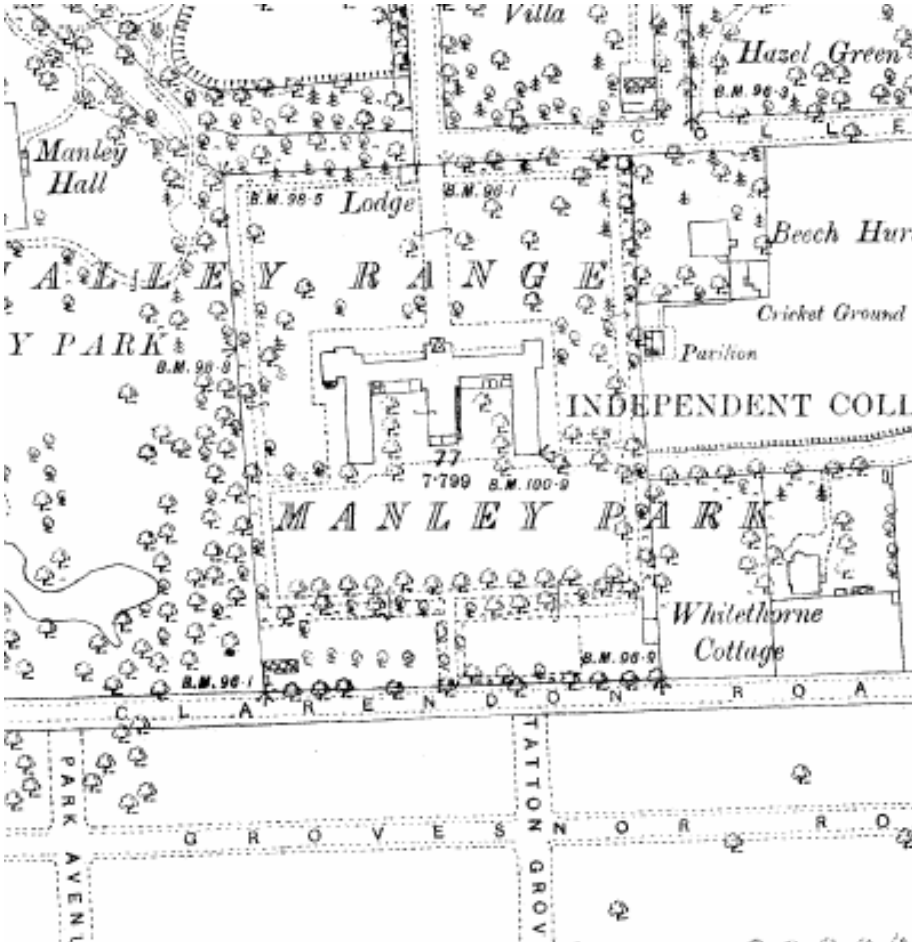


Fig. 2. 1893 OS map, showing the extent of the grounds and Clarendon Road (Digital Mapping)

The southernmost part of the grounds parallel to Clarendon Road are shown divided from the remainder by a tree-lined walkway and both the 1893 and 1907 maps suggest that the area was separate from the main grounds and may have continued as a sports area. Tennis courts existed in this location by the mid 20th century.



Fig. 3 Ordnance Survey Map, 1907 (Digital Mapping)

2.2 Description and date

The southern perimeter wall is of red brick with stone coping (some replaced in concrete) and a pattern of slightly recessed panels with blue engineering brick footings. It is constructed in a mixture of bonds, probably reflecting rebuilding at various times. These include stretcher bond, a cheap method which is weaker than traditional building bonds. Other sections include areas of Flemish garden wall bond and English garden wall bond.



Fig. 4 Typical wall to Clarendon Road

There are several areas where alterations are evident, including an opening of unknown date, which has been blocked, opposite No. 119 Clarendon Road.



Fig. 5 Opening which has been blocked on Clarendon Road

The part of the wall affected by the proposals, towards the South-East corner of the perimeter, has been substantially rebuilt. The new brickwork is obvious at the rear, but towards Clarendon Road it appears that old brickwork was re-used when the back of the wall was faced in newer bricks. A doorway with concrete lintel has been inserted, probably as part of this rebuilding



Fig. 6. The wall and door from Clarendon Road



Fig. 7. The same stretch from inside the grounds

The junction of the older and new work is very obvious from within the grounds.



Fig. 8 Junction of old and new work to the perimeter wall.

It is not known when the various alterations were made, nor exactly when the wall was erected, however the character of the wall and in particular the use of blue engineering brick suggests a date in the late 19th century, consistent with a date in the early 1880s when the grounds were enlarged. The alterations seem to have been made in the later 20th century, but exact dates have not been identified.

3. HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPACT

3.1 The wall and its significance

Assessing significance is a key principle for managing change to heritage assets, and is part of current government policy in the National Planning Policy Framework within which the PPS5 Practice Guide is in force.

The wall is not part of the original design of the building and its perimeter and setting, it is secondary. The wall exhibits design elements, but it is not of architectural importance in terms of design. Its main attribute with regard to the setting and the character of the Conservation Area is its superficial consistency in treatment and materials and the formation of a clearly defined consistent boundary. Closer examination, however, shows several areas where alteration and rebuilding has taken place. The most notable from Clarendon Road is probably the opening which has been blocked using non-matching brick and brick bonding. From the grounds the rebuilding of the South East corner is very obvious. Thus while the wall is significant as a consistent boundary of the site, it is not considered that making an opening in it would damage the character of the setting of the listed building or the Conservation Area.

- The wall is of **medium significance** as a consistent boundary treatment to the site related to extension of the grounds in 1882
- The wall is of **medium-low significance** in terms of its intrinsic architectural and historic interest

- The impact of altering the wall by making an opening in the manner proposed is not considered to be damaging to the structure, the setting of the listed building or the Conservation Area

3.2 Whalley Range Conservation Area

The Conservation Area boundary (see separate pdf) is drawn so that the southern boundary extends to follow the precinct of the former college building very tightly. The setting outside the Conservation Area, South of the college wall, is characterised by mixed housing and shops, mainly of latest 19th or early 20th century and later dates, including some with haphazard signage, roller shutters and other details inconsistent with the character of the Conservation Area itself.



Fig. 9 Typical street scene opposite the perimeter wall

4.0 CONCLUSION

The southern perimeter wall of the former college building is not part of the original design, nor is it of special architectural merit. It was probably built in 1882 and it exhibits signs of alteration, including openings which have been blocked and areas of rebuilding. The consistency of the boundary treatment in terms of materials and design is a feature of the setting of the listed building

and its grounds, however the wall is not particularly prominent in views from the back of the building or the grounds on this side. It is more prominent from Clarendon Road, outside the Conservation Area boundary.

Introducing an opening will not be detrimental to the character and setting of the listed building or the Conservation Area.

The proposals are consistent with advice and policies in PPS5 Practice Guide and AHP supports the proposed scheme.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Unpublished works

John Rylands Library, Manchester, Archives of the Northern Congregational College, formerly the Lancashire Independent College, and of its predecessor and constituent institutions.

OS maps: 1848, 1893 and 1907

Building Appraisal and PPG15 Statement British Muslim Heritage Centre College Road Manchester, AHP, 2008.

Published works

J.Thompson, *Lancashire Independent College, 1843-1893*, 1893

Sources

John Rylands Library, Manchester.

Manchester Central Reference Library.

www.manchester.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Listed Building Description

MANCHESTER COLLEGE ROAD, (South side) Whalley Range
698-1/8/827
03/10/74 - date listed
GMB National College
(Formerly Listed as: COLLEGE ROAD, Whalley Range (South side)
Lancashire Independent College)

GV II*
College for training of Non-Conformist ministers, now Trade Union college. 1840-43, by Irwin and Chester, wings re-built to 3 storeys and hall added in late 1870s; altered. Sandstone ashlar (brick at rear), slate roofs. Elongated E-plan, the main range facing north, with rear wings, that in the centre containing the former chapel or hall. Gothick style. Two storeys raised over a full basement storey, plus central tower, 1:9:3:9:1 windows, symmetrical, the centre and ends breaking forwards. The central entrance block, forming an eye-catching feature, has set-back buttresses (finished as pinnacles), steps up to a moulded Tudor-arched doorway under a shield with angel supporters, a fullheight oriel above with transomed windows of 3 and 2 stages separated by panelling with a clock-face, a pierced parapet and crocketed corner pinnacles, and an octagonal 2-stage lantern with open arcading, gargoyles and pinnacles. The 9-bay side ranges have Tudor-arched arcades to a cloister which runs through the whole and has 2-light mullioned windows to the basement, a string-course over this, large 6-light mullion-and-transom windows to the principal floor with a drip-band stepped over them, 2-light mullioned windows to the top floor, and an embattled parapet. The wings have oriel windows and crow-stepped gables with crocketed corner pinnacles. All windows have geometrical leaded glazing. The rear and rear wings, of brick, have similar transomed windows, those in the hall Tudor-arched and with cusped lights.
Galleried entrance hall; good Gothick decoration to most rooms on the principal floor (including Tudorarched doors, moulded plaster ceilings, fireplaces, etc.
Built to provide higher education for Nonconformists (excluded from the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge until 1871), ante-dating Owens College (1851) with which it jointly established the Victoria University of Manchester in 1880.
Listing NGR: SJ8254394730

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