Great Northern Warehouse, Manchester

Proposed bowling alley and frontage alterations for All Star Lanes: Heritage Statement



AHP Architectural History Practice

April 2012

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Proposed bowling alley and frontage alterations: Heritage Statement

Prepared for

All Star Lanes

by

The Architectural History Practice Limited

April 2012

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PROPOSED BOWLING ALLEY & FRONTAGE ALTERATIONS: HERITAGE STATEMENT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Great Northern Warehouse was built in 1898 as a goods station and warehouse for the Great Northern Railway. The warehouse was listed in 1979. After closure as a warehouse it was underused or vacant until the late 1990s when it was refurbished for mixed uses, with parking on upper floors and leisure on the lower floors. The viaducts and ramps were demolished in 2000, when a large addition, designed by Leslie Jones architects, was built to the south, with new ramps to the car park levels.

The warehouse is a Grade II* listed building, situated just to the south of the Deansgate/Peter conservation area. Other listed buildings in the vicinity include the former train shed of Manchester Central, Grade II*, the Peter Street frontage of the Free Trade Hotel, Grade II* and the Grade II Theatre Royal. Recent buildings in the area include the Manchester Convention Centre by Stephenson Bell, the Hilton Tower by Ian Simpson and the 25-storey Great Northern Tower apartments by Assael Architecture.

The proposed bowling alley will ensure that the historic building is more fully utilised and will create an active frontage. The frontage is important to the public space facing north to Peter Street and its enhancement is important commercially to express the Mall entrance and building occupiers, including the proposed All Star Lanes. The new frontage treatment has been designed by Jeffrey Bell Architects to have a relatively minimal impact on the listed building, which will be kept free of visual clutter to ensure the railway structure continues to be the dominant feature. Internally, the vaulted brick and steel structure will be exposed as much as possible with exposed services and no suspended ceilings. New internal work will be light weight, reversible and scribed around historic features.

In the context of NPPF, the new use and alterations are considered to be appropriate. The scheme strikes the right balance between impact on the significance of the Grade II* building and the benefits of the intervention for the new use. The large scale and robust character of the former warehouse can accommodate the proposed interventions, which have been carefully designed to take account of the listed building. The proposals and All Star Lanes use will enhance the immediate area, including the nearby Deansgate/Peter Street conservation area.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1. Introduction

The Architectural History Practice Ltd was commissioned to produce a PPS5 statement in support of proposals at the Great Northern Warehouse (The Building) in February 2012 by All Star Lanes. The report has been produced to support applications for listed building consent (LBC) and planning permission.

The Great Northern was built as a good station and warehouse in 1898. It was adapted and extended for car park and leisure use in c.2000, designed by Leslie Jones architects. The Building is listed Grade II* and just south of the Deansgate/ Peter Street conservation area.

1.2 Location

The Building is situated east of Deansgate and south of Peter Street; the affected frontage faces north. These streets are part of grid of streets south-west of the Town Hall, on the south side of Manchester city centre.

1.3 Ownership

The Building is in the ownership of Capital & Regional. The local planning authority is Manchester City Council.

1.4. Author and Acknowledgements

This report has been prepared by Marion Barter BA MA IHBC. AHP is grateful to Manchester Libraries for assistance with historic maps.

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2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Great Northern Goods Warehouse

The structure known as the Great Northern Warehouse was built in 1897-98 as a combined goods station and warehouse for the Great Northern Railways. The railway company had been founded in 1846 and developed the east coast main line from Kings Cross to Yorkshire. In Manchester, the relatively late development of a goods terminus was part of the company's expansion in collaboration with the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway.

The 1898 building provided two goods stations on ground and first floor level and three floors of warehousing above. The warehouse was built with a system for transferring goods between different levels and modes of transportation, with external inclined railway tracks between the two station levels and hydraulic haulage connecting all levels to the Manchester & Salford Junction Canal below ground level. This canal was a feeder to the Bridgewater Canal. Outside, a carriage ramp enabled horse-drawn vehicles to reach the upper station level from street level. Stabling for over 160 horses was provided below the railway viaduct or on sites close-by.

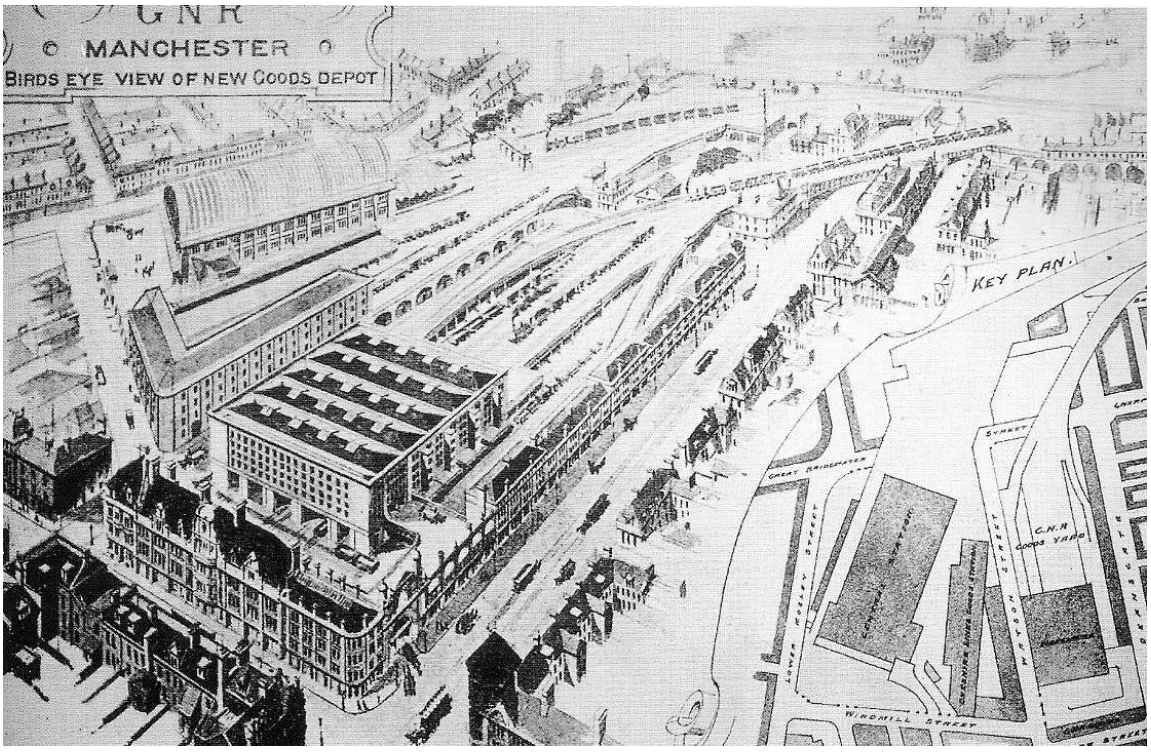


Figure 1: A bird's eye view, 1898 (from E.M. Johnson Manchester Central Station and the Great Northern Railway goods warehouse, n/d, p.51)

The building was planned on an imposing scale: it is 267 feet long, 217 feet wide and 75 feet high above street level. Along with the goods sidings and tracks to the

south of the warehouse, the complex originally occupied a whole city block, bounded by Watson Street to the east, Deansgate to the west, Great Bridgewater Street to the south and Peter Street to the north. The main entrances to the goods yard were from Deansgate in the north-west, Watson Street in the north-east and from Great Bridgewater Street to the south.

The building of the warehouse entailed the clearance of workers' housing, several pubs, a brass works, The Deansgate Central Schools and the Great Bridgewater Street Wesleyan Chapel and School. Some of these buildings were in active use, but the Corporation of Manchester saw the scheme as an opportunity to improve a run-down part of the city and attract investment. During negotiations in the 1890s, the Corporation insisted that shops be provided as part of the scheme along Peter Street and Deansgate. The new block on Peter Street was called Reades' Buildings and was initially used as railway offices. The new warehouse was approved by the Great Northern Railway Act in 1895, which laid down conditions for the development, including the widening of Deansgate along its east side.

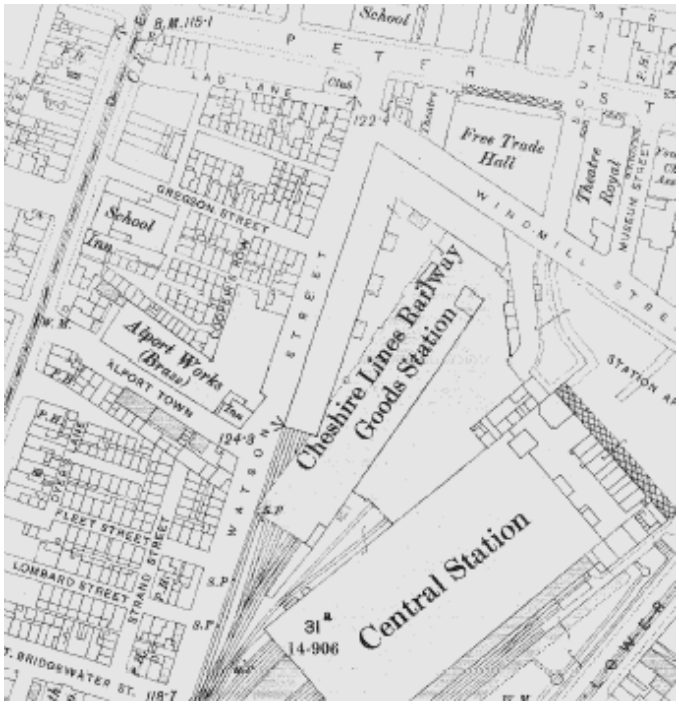


Figure 2: The site before the warehouse was built, 1893 OS map (Digital Archives)

The warehouse was designed by consulting engineer W.T.Foxlee alongside engineers for the railway company, Richard Johnson and Alexander Ross. The warehouse was constructed by Robert Neill & Sons of Manchester with steelwork supplied by Heenan & Froude of Newton Heath, Arrols of Glasgow and Keay & Son of Darlaston. The building is built of brick with an internal fire-resistant structure of brick vaulting on steel columns and beams, an early example of steel

being used in place of cast-iron. The warehouse entrances facing north and south were originally open, simply framed by steel or brick piers and with no doorways - to allow for access by railway wagons and for loading. Internal steel fire doors were installed between sections to minimise the risk of fire spread. The interior was lit by electricity from the outset. The total cost of the project was over a £1million in 1898, a vast investment at the time.

The warehouse formed part of a complex of substantial railway structures built by different railway companies south of Peter Street, including the Cheshire Lines Goods Station immediately to the east (now the site of the Convention Centre), and Central Station to the south-east (now Manchester Central), all served by railway lines carried on viaducts from the south-west edge of the city.

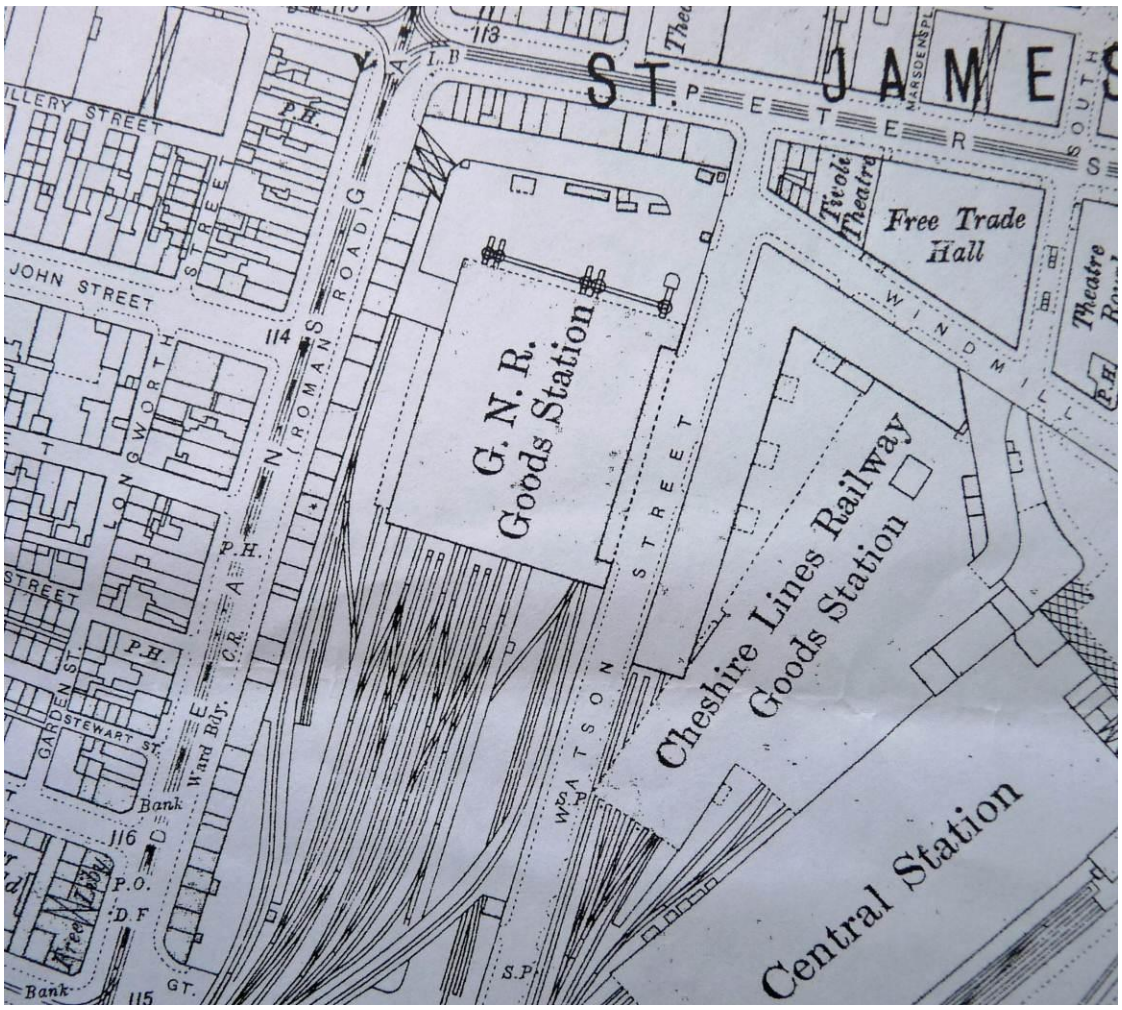


Figure 3: The warehouse as built, 1908 OS map, surveyed 1905 (Manchester Libraries)

The station and warehouse closed in the mid 20th century; later the sidings were used for surface parking, the fate of many under-used sites across the city.



Figure 4: the site in c.1970s

2.2 Recent alterations, 1998- 2000

After years of under-use, in 1996 the Central Manchester Development Corporation gave planning permission for the redevelopment of the warehouse for business and retail uses. After objections from heritage bodies and protracted planning negotiations, the viaducts to the south, the carriage ramps and buildings on Peter Street and the north-west corner with Deansgate were demolished in 1999-2000. The developer was Merlin International and Morrison Developments, with funding from Manchester City Council and English Partnerships. The scheme, along with a new public space to the north - Great Northern Square - was designed by Leslie Jones architects. A new block to the south was built in c.2000, with a connecting link block to the warehouse.

2.3 Regeneration context

During the last 15 years, this area of the city has been developed for a mix of conference, residential and leisure uses, complemented by new public realm. To the east of the site, Manchester Central and the Free Trade Hotel are important to the city's important conference function, while the area on the western edge of this zone, close to Deansgate and including the Building, has been developed for retail and leisure. The success of the Great Northern Square is limited by the lack of activity on the north frontage of Great Northern, but in warm weather the sunken seating area is a popular outdoor space.

3.0. CURRENT CONDITION & SIGNIFICANCE

3.1. Introduction

Assessing significance is a key principle for managing change to heritage assets, and is embedded within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, March 2012). A key objective in the NPPF is to 'conserve England's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance'. The NPPF advises that the more significant the heritage asset the greater the weight should be given to its conservation. Significance can be measured in different levels:

- **Highest**– an asset important at the highest national or international levels, including scheduled ancient monuments, Grade I and II* listed buildings and World Heritage Sites.
- **High** – a designated asset important at a regional level and also at a national level, including Grade II listed buildings and conservation areas.
- **Medium** – an undesignated asset important at a local to regional level, including local (non-statutory) listed buildings or those that make a positive contribution to the setting of a listed building or to a conservation area. May include less significant parts of listed buildings.
- **Low** – structure or feature of very limited heritage or other cultural value and not defined as a heritage asset. May include insignificant interventions to listed buildings, and buildings that do not contribute positively to a conservation area.
- **Negative** – structure or feature that harms the value of a heritage asset.

3.2 Significance summary

The grade II* listing reflects the outstanding national importance of the building. The former goods station and warehouse is of the highest significance for the architectural and engineering value of the exterior and internal structure. It is one of the earliest examples of a large structure built in Manchester using steel, a material adopted in the 1890s in preference to cast-iron for structural reasons. The building's external form and appearance is of high significance as an example of railway architecture, instantly recognisable by the glazed brick lettering along the upper level. The massive bulk of the building, the repetitive fenestration, robust detailing, blue engineering brick elevation grid and its dominance in the townscape contribute to its significance.

The building is of high significance for its historic value and association with the Great Northern, one of the Britain's great Victorian railway companies. It also has high significance for historic value in illustrating the development of Victorian Manchester. The clearance of a vast site to make way for a railway structure was a significant part of Manchester's Victorian urban development, where the Corporation was able to secure beneficial works such as widening Deansgate and providing shops to the site perimeter.



Figure 5: mall interior, looking north (Jeffrey Bell Architects)

The interior structure has been altered to accommodate new uses, with the upper floors now used for car parking, with cast-concrete spiral ramps between the warehouse and Deansgate, added in c,2000. The structure of brick vaults on steel beams and columns survives to a large extent, removed in selected areas to enable vertical circulation and services to be installed. Where original structure survives it is of the highest significance. Modern partitions and linings are generally scribed round historic features. Modern interventions are of no significance and in some cases have a negative impact.

The north frontage is defined at ground level by five full-height openings. Each has a lintel of a riveted steel beam carried on large blue brick piers with stone padstones. The openings vary in width and the beams across the two widest bays are supported mid-span by riveted steel column sections. The bases of the piers flanking the largest opening (through which All Star Lanes will be entered) are protected by cast iron bollards. Historically, these larger openings were not filled with doors, to provide access direct to wagons on rails, but they are now partly in-filled with glazing or temporary boarding; the current significance of these openings is eroded by their current appearance and condition.



Figure 6: incomplete frontage to vacant unit, from the north

The former goods station and warehouse was listed in 1979 and is Grade II* (Appendix 1). The list description concludes by stating that it is:

> 'A unique survival of a 3-way railway goods exchange station, serving the railway, canal and road networks of the Manchester region, incorporating a complex system of hydraulic haulage between the subterranean canal access to the building, the street level access, and the other storage levels. Built to be fully fire proof, it was considered in its day to be one of the most advanced railway goods exchanges in the country'.

Grade II* listed buildings are defined within PPS5 and the PPF as 'designated heritage assets of the highest significance'. Applications for proposals that affect them require consultation with English Heritage, the government's advisors on historic buildings.

3.3. Setting and Conservation Area context.

The setting of the Building has been significantly altered in the last 15 years. Historically, the goods station was approached from the north, with a service yard defined by perimeter shops and high walls, as shown on the 1908 OS map.

In c.2000 the blocks that enclosed this yard were demolished, including Reades' Buildings and shops to the north-west corner of the site. Great Northern Square was created in the former yard, with a wedge-plan building (Bar 38) on the Peter Street frontage. This public landscaped space provides an attractive modern setting for the Building, designed by Leslie Jones and completed in c.2000, but the lack of activity in the ground floor of Great Northern creates a depressing south side to the public space. The external ground level varies, with a slope from east to west and from south to north that is part of the current landscaping.



Figure 7: Great Northern from the north (Jeffrey Bell Architects)

Deansgate provides the setting for the Building to the west, lined by late Victorian retail units built at the same time as the warehouse. This listed Grade II range partly screens the warehouse from street level. The Building's visual connection to Deansgate improved after the shops on the north-west corner of the site were demolished in c.2000. A new café block and entrance unit incorporates the line of the original angled entrance into the former goods yard.

The bulk of the Great Northern Tower, a 2003 residential scheme by Assael Architecture, now forms the setting to the east of the Building and blocks views of Manchester Central from the site. The Building is located just to the south of Deansgate/Peter Street conservation area; the south boundary runs east-west across Great Northern Square. Due to its scale and bulk the warehouse is visible from within the conservation area and contributes to its character, helping to define its southern edge.

4.0 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

4.1. Summary of the proposals.

Proposals for All Star Lanes bowling have been designed by Dan Evans, adapting an unused unit in the Building, and Jeffrey Bell Architects have designed the proposed frontage treatment for Capital and Regional. This report should be read in conjunction with the current set of proposal plans and drawings and the Design & Access Statement**.** The proposals are a response to three key factors:

- The vacant unit currently makes no contribution to the vitality or economic life of this part of the city centre, and the appearance of the north frontage is hard to 'read' and detracts from Great Northern Square. Continuing under-use is not compatible with the long-term sustainability of the Building.

- A bowling alley is an appropriate leisure use for the area, and some minor adaptations are required to enable this use.

- The building is listed Grade II* and is of the highest heritage significance; there is a strong presumption against changes that could be harmful. A consistent approach is needed to the frontage to maintain the unity of the north elevation.

The key proposals are set out in the table in section 4.2.2 below, which summarises each proposal and assesses its impact on the significance of the Building. Mitigation is suggested, where appropriate.

Frontage scheme: The proposed entrance screen of the bowling unit and adjacent units will be set back behind the existing brick piers and steel stanchions, parallel to the front wall plane, in preference to the diagonal line of the existing shop fronts. The line of the new screen will align with the first internal steel beam, so that one bay of vaulted brickwork is exposed in front of the shop-front and the modern work is recessed behind the historic outer wall.

Using a "minimal intervention" approach, a series of repeat elements will unify the ground floor frontage and create a clear contemporary language for the Warehouse which will significantly increase public awareness of the building. Openings will be infilled with clear structural glass assemblies using steel sections located behind the glazing line to provide secondary support. The secondary steel sections are visible in outline behind the glazing and their impact is not significant; they tend to merge in with the many other elements seen behind the glass. Side cheeks or reveals are of solid construction, to be framed out and over clad in powder coated pressed metal cladding. Elevationally, a horizontal transom line across the various screens will further assist in unifying the five openings. This line is set to provide a degree of vertical order to the entrance screens and provide balance across changing pavement level across the entire frontage, whist at the same time allowing for the individual expression of an occupiers brand or identity via internal signage and graphics.

All Star Lanes: Internally, original structure will be retained, with exposed service suspended from the structure, to enable the brick and steelwork to be visible. New interventions will be minimised. New M&E, some vertical partitions and raised floors will be required, inserted on top of historic fabric. New work will be installed in a reversible manner.



Figure 8: interior view of the unit, with unfinished partitions (Jeffrey Bell Architects)

4.2. Impact of the proposals

The impact of proposals has been considered in the context of the significance of the building as a whole, and the relative significance of affected fabric and areas. The impact of each principle alteration is described below:

Proposal	***Significance of affected area***	***Impact/Benefit***	***Mitigation***
Entrance and frontage	Affects views of an asset of the highest significance. Fixing new sub- frame to beams of the Building affects structure of highest significance.	Medium impact. Entails new fixings to the historic brick piers and beam soffit. Design unifies the frontage and expresses new uses to enhance legibility of uses. Low visual impact on the conservation area.	Mechanical fixings to structure to be minimised. Agree detail of fixings.
New internal partitions	Medium significance space, structure of highest significance	Affects spatial character, but area already altered. Neutral impact overall.	New structures to be scribed around structural features, to ensure work is reversible. Record by photography
New WCs, services and M&E	Medium significance space, structure of highest significance with modern partitions and services of no significance.	Low impact	The work will be reversible, although some new routes through brick structure may be required; these will agreed in detail and minimised
Raised floor for bowling lanes	Concrete floor installed c.2000, of no significance.	Neutral impact	None

The principal benefit of the proposals is that the new leisure use will contribute to the sustainability of the building, and enhance the vitality of this part of Manchester.

4.3. Policy context

The national legislative framework for development affecting listed buildings is provided by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990; referred to as the Listed Buildings Act. This states that there is a duty on local authorities to '*have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of architectural or historic interest*' (section 16 (2)). The definition of a listed building includes all objects and structures fixed to the building and in its curtilage.

A listed building is defined as a designated heritage asset in the NPPF. Policies in the NPPF guide local authorities and applicants in determining applications that affect all heritage assets. Local policies are also relevant, although the NPPF now provides the principal framework for planning decisions, with an emphasis on sustainability.

4.3.1 Significance: The NPPF require applicants to describe the significance of affected heritage assets (section 128). This report sets out the significance of this Grade II* listed building, and its setting. The conclusions on its significance are set out in section 3 above.

4.3.2 Impact on the Building: In considering the impact of development proposals**,** the NPPF (section 132) requires the LPA to give great weight to the heritage asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater weight should be given. The impact of the proposals has been set out in the table in 4.2.6, above; proposals can be harmful, enhance or have a neutral impact on a heritage asset. None of the proposals will cause substantial harm or loss, so the tests in NPPF (section 133) do not apply. In this case, any harm should be weighed against public benefits (section 134).

The only aspects of the frontage scheme that will have a physical impact are the fixing of a new secondary steel sections and channels for glazing to the soffit of the beam over and the ground slab along with solid and over clad cheeks fixed to the rear face of the front brick piers and part of the brick vault over. The impact of the new fixings will be mitigated by careful choice of minimal fixings, using joints in masonry where possible. There will be some visual impact but overall this is neutral when compared with the existing arrangement; the design has been developed to be appropriate to the scale and character of the historic structure and to enhance the legibility of the uses.



Figure 9: a new frontage will be parallel to & set behind the front wall plane

No interior spaces of highest significance will be harmed by the proposals. As the interior space was previously altered, the internal changes will generally have a neutral impact. The modern tiled lobby floor and glazed inner front wall will be removed to enable the new frontage and entrance for All Star Lanes, set within the building line. The new structural glass entrance screen will be fixed to vertical secondary steel sections that will be fixed first steel beam and ground slab, glazing will be fixed using channels carefully detailed and fixed to the brick masonry. The siting and design of this proposed frontage will have a low impact on the Building and its design is considered appropriate for the character of the building.



Figure 10: the outer bay of brick structure will remain on view, with the new inner wall aligned below the first inner beam

Within the All Stars Lanes unit, new partitions and fittings will be used to define separate areas and to enclose WCs and service areas. Reversible light-weight partitions will be used scribed round existing structure. The bowling lanes will be aligned to follow the structural grid of the building. The installation of new services such as plumbing and drainage will require some new routes through historic fabric but these will be minimised. Previous routes that are redundant will be made good.

In relation to the balance between the NPPF's presumption in favour of sustainable development and the impact on the heritage asset, there is a strong case for the proposals. The proposals for All Star Lanes will help to secure a long-term future for the building for leisure and entertainment, contributing to the life of this part of the city. New floors, M&E, partitions and frontage treatment are the main interventions, works that will have some visual impact but are reversible and have minimal impact on the most significant aspect of this Building – its structure.

The building has previously been altered for the layout of shell units as part of the Leslie Jones 2000 scheme. The interior is unfinished and requires a full fit-out to enable a new use. The current proposals represent the refinement of these works to suit an operator, part of this shift in the use of the Building from railway use to leisure.



Figure 11: example of poor quality modern linings and finishes

4.3.3 Recording: Section 141 of the NPPF requires information about significance to be gathered and made accessible to the public. This report provides part of the heritage asset record and if required, can be made available for the public record as part of the HER. Record photographs can be taken of affected areas, if necessary.

4.3.4 Impact on Deansgate/Peter Street conservation area: The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that there is a duty on local authorities to pay special attention to the '*the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance*' of conservation areas (section 72 (1)). The policies in NPPF apply to conservation areas, which are defined as 'designated heritage assets'. Conservation area policy also applies to development just outside a conservation area. As the north frontage of Great Northern is visible from within the Deansgate/Peter Street conservation, Manchester City Council's advice on this conservation area is relevant.

The City Council provides online guidance on new development in conservation areas:

'All development proposals should demonstrate recognition of the characteristics of the conservation area…' [as described by the Council].

On enhancement and improvement in the conservation area, the Council advises that:

'The elevations of buildings fronting a square should be designed to give the space coherence.'

It is considered that the proposals comply with this guidance and will not harm the conservation area. The external proposals will relate well to Great Northern Square in terms of scale, use, form and materials. The external treatment is low-key and in proportion to the scale and robust character of the Building and its setting. The design of proposed entrance treatment will give coherence to the space by helping to express the activity within the building, within a consistent design framework.

5. Conclusion

The former goods station and railway warehouse is a grade II* listed building constructed in 1898. The Building is of the highest significance for its architectural, engineering and historical value, which particularly relates to the structure and external appearance. The present condition of the interior is of relatively low significance, as it was subdivided and altered for new leisure uses in 2000, within the structural frame. The modern interventions are of no significance. The Building makes a positive contribution to the Deansgate/Peter Street conservation area, as it is located just outside the south boundary.

The vacant units and the current frontage appearance detract from the vitality of the surrounding area and affect Great Northern Square. Introducing an appropriate leisure use will enhance this part of the city centre and contribute to the long-term sustainability of Great Northern.

The scheme by Jeffrey Bell and All Star Lanes has been designed to complement the character of the Building and express the leisure uses within it, minimising physical and visual impact on the significance of the building and its setting. The consistent approach to the design of shop-front infill has taken account of the robust character of the north front of the building. This will enhance the frontage, and not harm heritage significance. Enhancing the legibility of the leisure uses within the building is critical to the long term future of the building.

Supporting visual information demonstrates that the impact on the listed building and on the wider street-scene is acceptable and will not be harmful to heritage assets in the city. AHP is pleased to support the proposals.

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Appendix 1: Listing Text:

SJ 8397 NE
MANCHESTER
WATSON STREET (West side)
698-1/31/432
Deansgate Goods Station and attached carriage ramp
4/5/79

23/11/79

II*

Goods station and warehouse, and attached carriage ramp, now car park. 1885-96, and 1899, for Great Northern Railway Company. Steel-framed construction, cladding of red brick with blue brick bands, slate roof. GOODS STATION; Rectangular plan, 267 feet long and 217 feet wide. Five storeys, with 27-window east and west sides and 17-window north and south ends; segmental-headed windows with cast-iron glazing bars; frieze with lettering in white brick:"GREAT NORTHERN RAILWAY COMPANY'S GOODS WAREHOUSE" (on all 4 sides); and brick bracketed painted cornice with blocking course. The east facade (to Watson Street) has 5 wide cart entrances at ground floor with deep iron lintels, and the north end has 3 similar entrances. The west side and south end have similar entrances at 1st floor level: 2 where the carriage ramp enters at the north end of the west side, and 3 offset to the left in the south end where the former railway viaduct enters. In addition, the west side has 4 bays of tiered segmental-headed loading doorways with cast-iron surrounds, separated by 2 pairs of windows. The interior is of brick jack arch, fire-proof construction. To the west side at its north end, CARRIAGE RAMP to the upper floor of the goods station completed 1899. Brick, iron and steel, and paved with granite setts. 3-sided ramp extends west, then north, then east. The lower portion is carried on 4 semi-circular vaults of blue engineering brick. The western portion and short return to the building has an iron deck supported on the open side by 4 steel staunchions with a blue brick parapet. Forms groups with Nos 235-92 Deansgate (q.v.). For the

original construction and full details of its working see "The Railway Engineer" for January 1899 and "The Engineer" for September 2nd, 1898. A unique survival of a 3-way railway goods exchange station, serving the railway, canal and road networks of the Manchester region, incorporating a complex system of hydraulic haulage between the subterranean canal access to the building, the street level access, and the other storage levels. Built to be fully fire proof, it was considered in its day to be one of the most advanced railway goods exchanges in the country.

Listing NGR: SJ8356597867

Selected Sources

1. **Article Reference** - *Title:* 2 September - *Date:* 1898 - *Journal Title:* Engineer
2. **Article Reference** - *Title:* January - *Date:* 1899 - *Journal Title:* Railway Engineer

National Grid Reference: SJ 83565 97867

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