MOSI

Building 4: Power Hall

1.1 Introduction

Historical Asset
Power Hall of the Museum of Science and Industry, Liverpool Road (north side), Manchester. Also known as the Transit or Shipping Shed.

Grade
II



North elevation of Power Hall, showing part of Crane Gantry

Significance/Reasons for listing

- Well-preserved example of a large railway transhipment shed. The building is highly expressive of its original function: its height and rail entrance are attuned to the size of loaded rail wagons, its footprint is tailored to accommodate rail wagons, road carts

and loading activities, and the multiple entry points for carts cater for the needs of rapid transshipment.
- With its composite frame, the Shipping Shed symbolizes the increasingly sophisticated use of materials by Victorian structural engineers, rooted in their improved understanding of the structural properties of iron.
- Construction of much larger shed demonstrates expansion of trade and industry in Manchester.
- Integral to the later operational life of world's oldest station; the adjacent travelling cranes and gantry illustrate operational life.
- Dramatic contribution to the character of the streetscape. More Georgian than Victorian in character, the Shipping Shed complements the Passenger Station complex and gives balance to the Liverpool Road frontage, both buildings being of similar length.

Extent of special interest
External and internal original structures. Original door openings and lifting equipment.

Element	Significance
Overall	**Level B: High**
- Original exterior structure	Level B: High
- Original interior structure	Level B: High
- Glass infill of exterior entrances	Neutral
- Roller-shutter doors	Level D: Low
- Internal overhead crane	Level C: Medium

History/changes of use

The first Shipping Shed of 1831 was one of three warehouses designed by Haigh Franklin of Liverpool and built by Samuel Buxton of Manchester. It was located parallel to Liverpool Road in what was then the south-east corner of the site, further west than its replacement and was 68.7 x 12.8 m in size. Its purpose was to facilitate the transhipment of goods between rail wagons and horse drawn carts. Having no storage function, it was also used as an overnight engine shed. A single railway track entered on the western side, with four turntables. Alongside this to the north ran a wooden loading platform. Originally timber-walled, a brick façade on Liverpool Road was added in 1836. Access for carts was through a gate on Liverpool Road, adjacent to the shops, leading to the Lower Yard and up a ramp to the Shipping Shed.

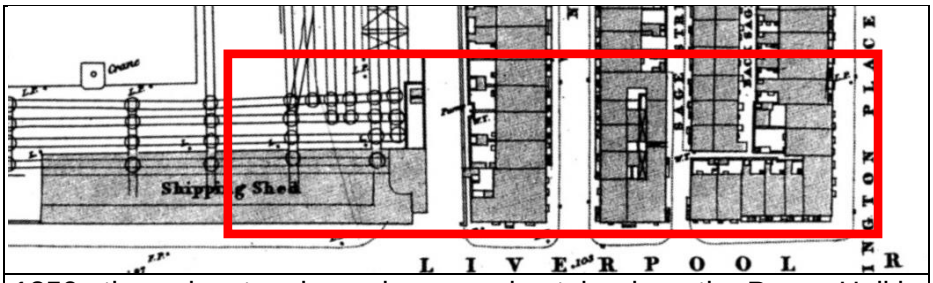
In 1854 Manchester Corporation was planning to improve goods services to the open market on Camp Field by persuading the Railway Company to provide a direct rail link. In order to achieve this, it was granted compulsory purchase powers over the land between the Station site and Wellington Place (now Lower Byrom Street), which had been developed for housing between 1819 and 1828. Plans appear to have changed and the rail extension across Lower Byrom Street did not materialise.

However the 1831 Shipping Shed was replaced by a larger shed (122 x 27.5 m) covering two rail tracks instead of just one track. Access for carts from Liverpool Road was through three large doors. The trains entered the Transit Shed through a double-width doorway in the west façade. [The third track stopped outside the Shipping Shed, as shown on the 1891 OS Map. The area to the south of the loading deck was restricted to cart traffic.]The wide doors to the north were previously connected to the yard with turntables and rails tracks, allowing further transhipment and movement of wagons. A central raised loading stage facilitated the unloading of goods at wagon level.

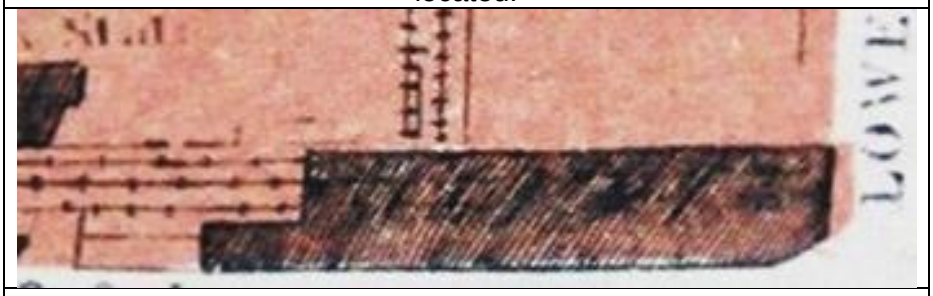
Externally the building was modified by the erection of the imposing overhead crane gantry along the north elevation. The exact date of the crane gantry is unknown, but it was certainly in place by 1881 and is likely to have been erected shortly after the building of the Great Western Warehouse in 1880. After the Station's closure, the Shipping Shed was first reused during the 150th anniversary Great Railway Exposition in 1980, providing accommodation for locomotives involved in the cavalcade. In 1981-82, it was refurbished for use as a Museum Gallery. Internally this primarily involved alterations to the floor in order to provide adequate footings for large steam engines and smooth paths for visitors, in the form of concrete paths across the stone setts and a newly configured wooden deck. The central raised loading stage was retained. Externally the building was modified by the insertion of glass to the wide openings to the north and south, and the erection of a small brick extension fronting Lower Byrom Street at the north-east corner (see Visitor Services Building for further details).

Existing use	Museum gallery.
Past uses	Goods transhipment.
Alterations	A notable variation in brick colour suggests that the parapet was added later, possibly in 1860-65 when the Freight Offices were built. Small office block added at north-east corner in c. 1880 and later removed. Changes to openings in west elevation to link with Freight Offices (new pedestrian doorway and upper window, now bricked up) and to accommodate roller shutter doors – e.g. larger opening to north was originally arched. Original timber doors removed from north and south elevations and openings glazed in 1981-2.

1.2 Maps showing sequential development of the Power Hall



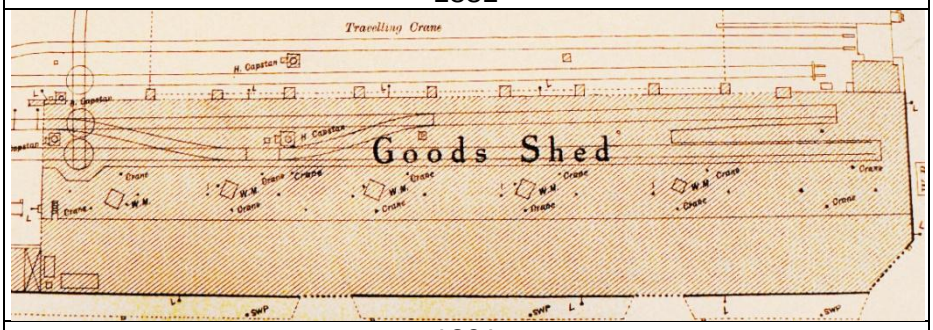
1850: the red rectangle marks approximately where the Power Hall is located.



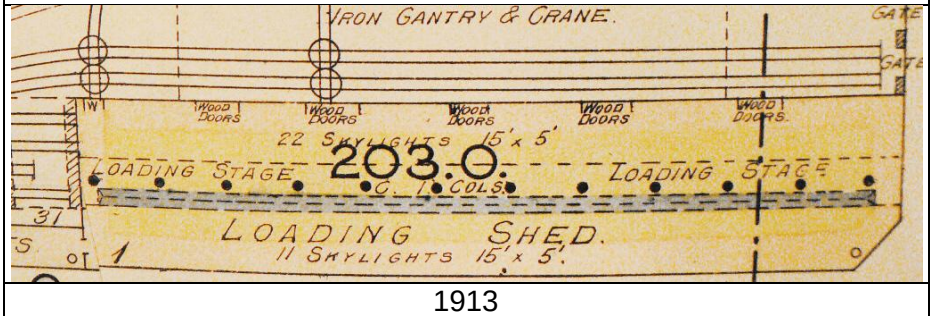
1876



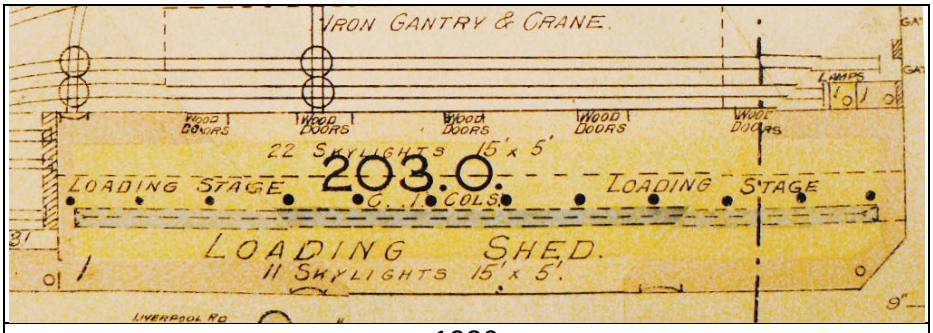
1881



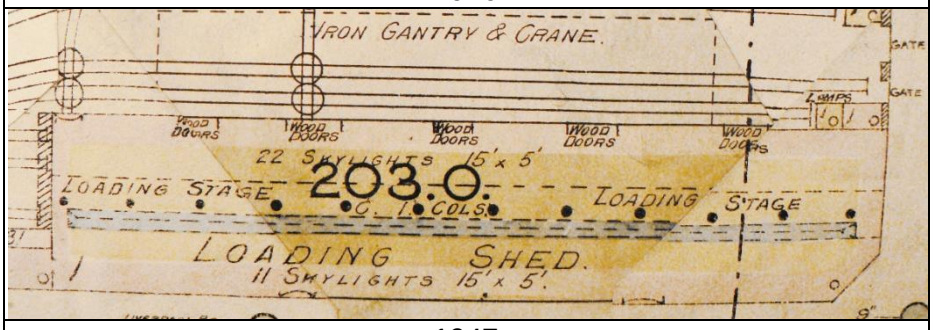
1891



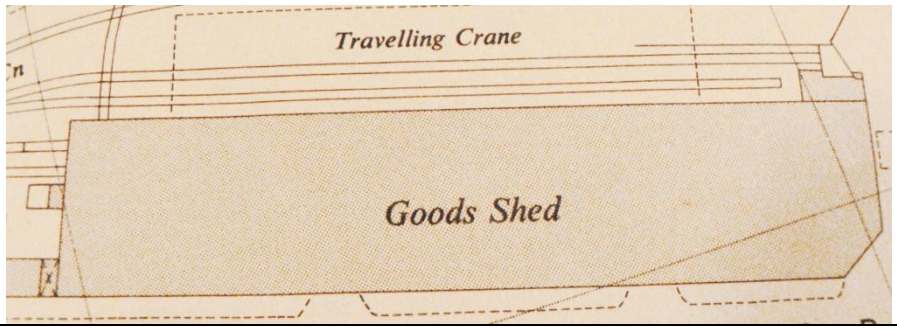
1913



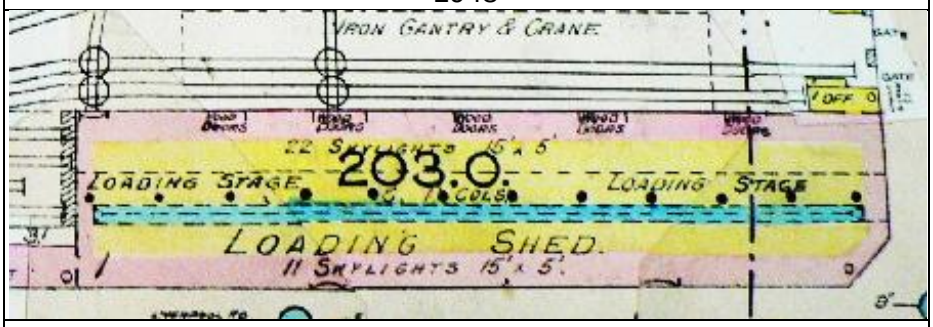
1926



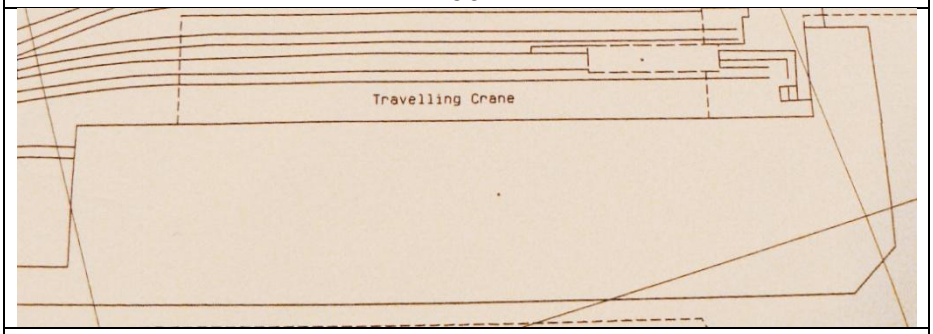
1947



1948



1961



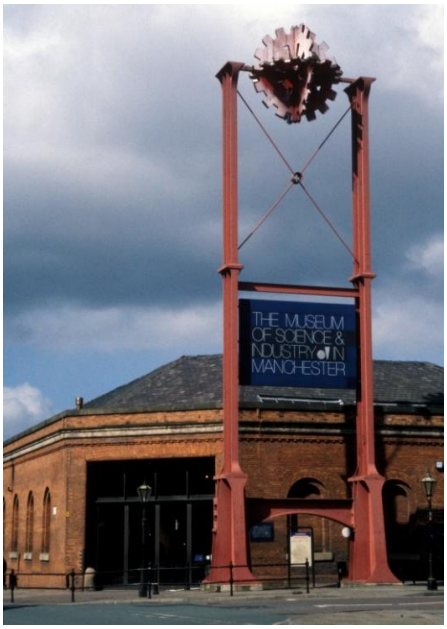
1990

1.3 Exterior Features

Materials	Brick; stone sills, corbel blocks, copings, buffers, and facing and quoins to pier at north-west corner up to wagon height
Plan	Rectangular with six access bays. Oblique angle to south-east corner. Short, curved stone-buffered wall extending westward from north-west corner as winching aid
Height	Very high single-storey
Roof	Hipped roof covered in slates, with banks of skylights
Elevation	Lower Byrom Street and Liverpool Road façades have dentillation below a corbel table with a moulded white brick band and plain stone band, surmounted by a short brick parapet edged with stone coping Lower Byrom Street façade has four blind arched windows with stone sills (three replacement, one original) Liverpool Road façade has a series of blind arched windows with stone sills punctuated by three high wagon entrances, one on the oblique angled wall at the south-east corner North and west facades do not have any architectural embellishments. The west façade has two rectangular openings, the one to the north being wide enough for two rail tracks The north façade has a series of six arched openings, now glazed
Doors	Modern metal incorporated into windows on south elevation Large opening at west end for trains, arch in brick now partly bricked in, reinforced with a wrought steel plate/beam Modern door in west end adjacent to goods door
Windows	Earlier cart and rail entrances on the north and south have been enclosed with glass to form windows Two windows have iron bars across the opening area



East (Lower Byrom Street) elevation of Power Hall



East elevation of Power Hall, with Museum's vertical 'gate guardian'



Part of the south elevation of Power Hall, looking west



Part of west end of north elevation of Power Hall



Part of the south elevation of Power Hall, looking east



Power Hall from tracks, with Gantry to left



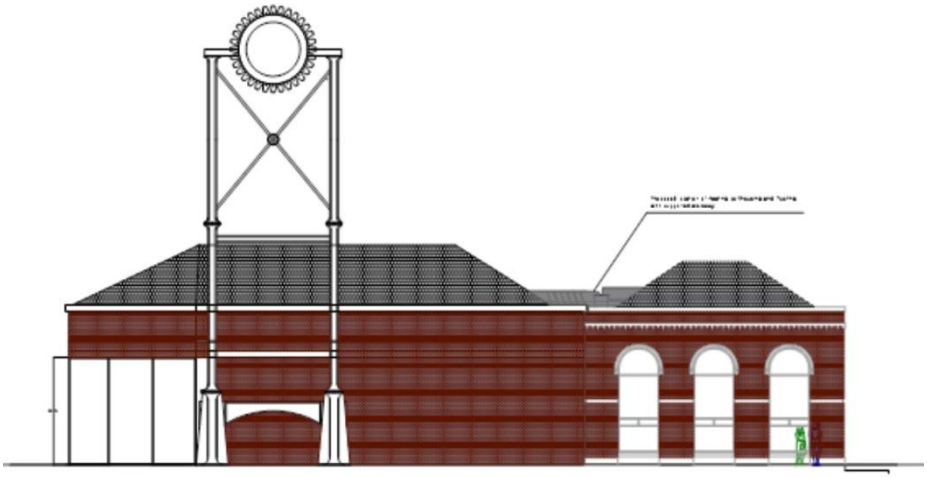
Corner of Power Hall



Roller shutter doors



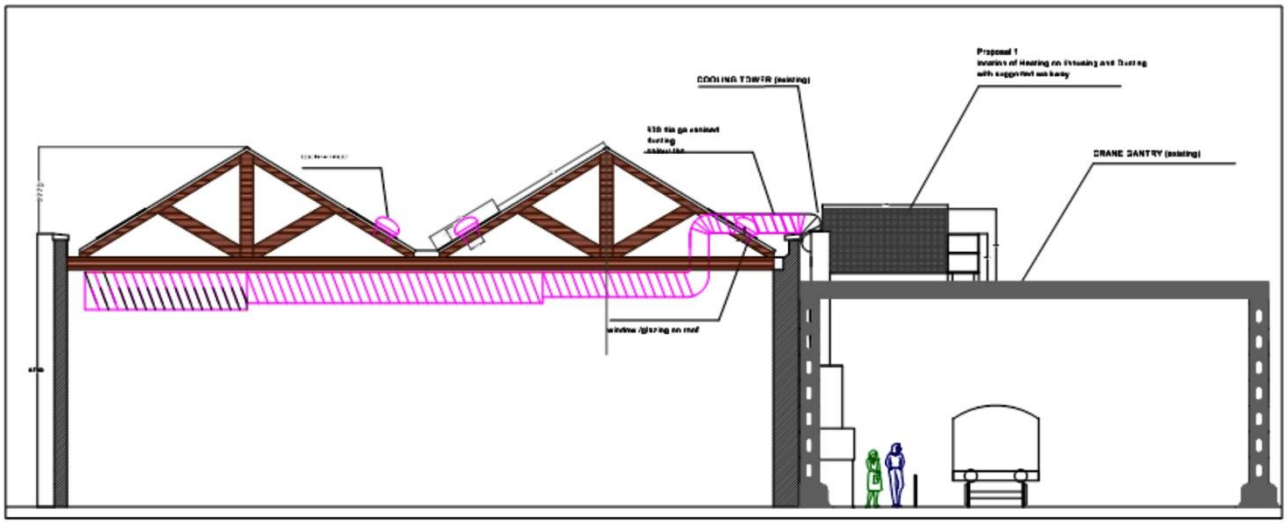
Gantry, north elevation and roof of Power Hall



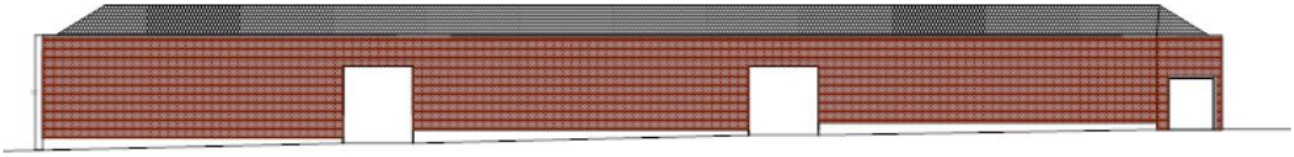
East elevation from Lower Byrom Street



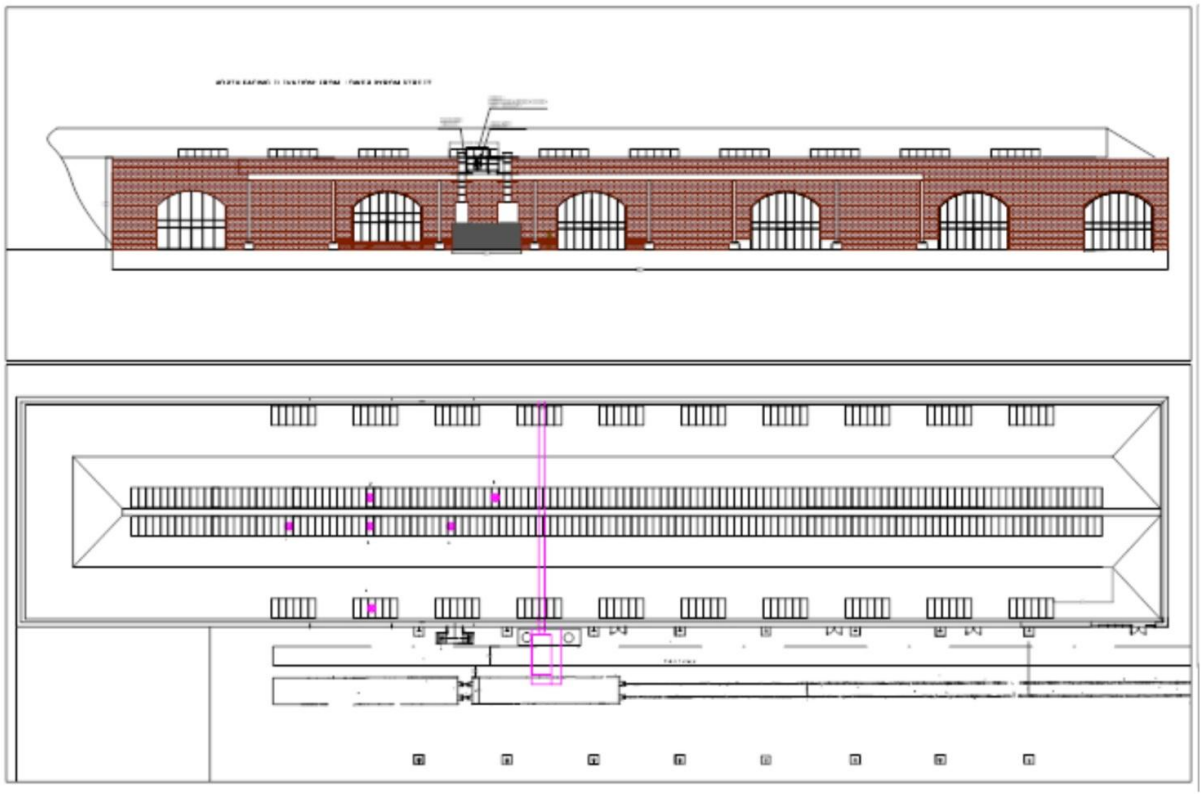
West elevation from Station Building



Section through Power Hall with Gantry to right



Drawing of south elevation, facing Liverpool Road



Drawing of north elevation, together with plan showing the Crane Gantry



North elevation and Crane Gantry prior to restoration, c. 1979, showing earlier timber doors

1.4 Interior Features

History of Use and Alterations

Existing use	Museum gallery
Past uses	Goods transhipment
Alterations	Introduction of concrete engine footings and pathways, alterations to shape of loading stage

Description of Surviving Elements

Ceiling	Double-pitched hipped roof, trusses springing from central line of cast-iron columns and external walls. Skylights to external slopes of roof, ten skylights, each a group of five, spread across each external slope Continuous bank of glass skylights to the slopes of the internal valley
Walls	Brick, with wider piers around openings
Floors	Original setts interspersed with concrete paths, display areas, wooden sleepers Original central raised loading stage retained
Doors	Modern replacement
Columns	Twelve in cast iron
Fixtures	Engine beds for exhibits in the centre and at the south end



Power Hall interior: locomotives, with Beyer-Garratt to left



Power Hall interior: steam engines



Door in south-west corner of Power Hall, leading to Curatorial Centre



Power Hall, looking west towards Station Building



Power Hall, November 1982



Power Hall, looking west, towards Station Building

1.5 Listing Description

Location: POWER HALL OF MUSEUM OF SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY, LIVERPOOL ROAD (north side) MANCHESTER, MANCHESTER, GREATER MANCHESTER

Grade II

MANCHESTER SJ8397NW LIVERPOOL ROAD 698-1/30/218 (North side) Power Hall of Museum of Science and Industry GV II Railway goods transfer shed, now museum exhibition hall. 1855, for London and North Western Railway. Red brick with some sandstone dressings, hipped slate roof. Very long rectangular plan parallel to street, with wide splayed corner and short return to Lower Byrom Street. Single storey, 6:7:4 blind windows with wagon entrances between these groups and another in the splayed corner; round-headed blind windows with stepped surrounds and raised stone sills, large square-headed wagon doorways with flat-arched heads and stone fenders at the bases of the jambs (formerly furnished with sliding wooden doors but now glazed); continuous brick frieze with simplified corbel table and white brick band, brick parapet with stone coping. Three-bay return side similar.