PLANNING
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Design & Access Statement

86 King Street, Manchester, M2 4WQ

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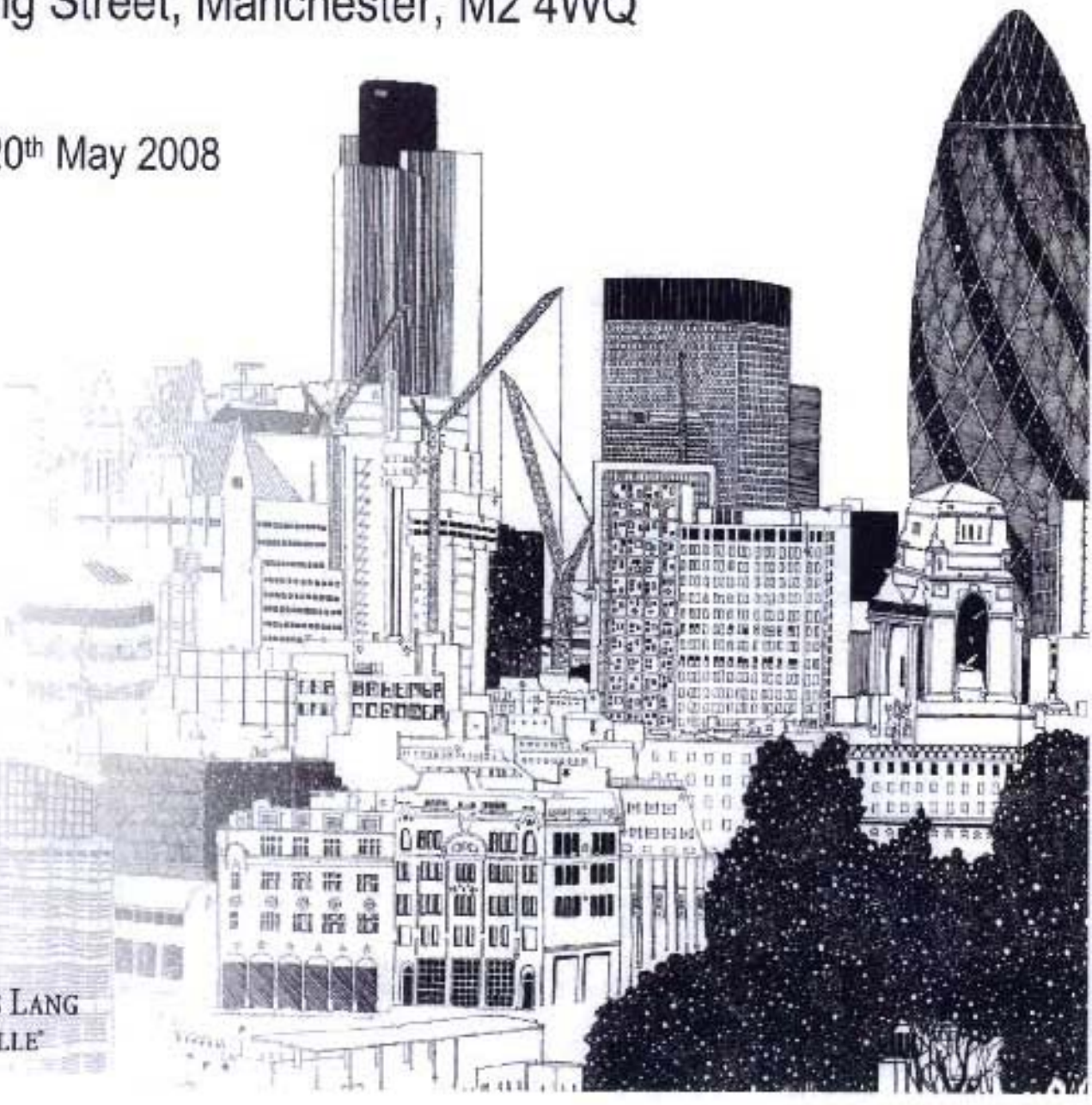

JONES LANG LASALLE

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1 Executive Summary

DESIGN PROCESS

1.0 ASSESSMENT

1.1Physical

The property is located in the centre of Manchester providing office accommodation on the 1st & 2nd floors with retail premises on the ground floor. The main entrance to the offices is located facing King St and gives access to the common parts. The entrance to the retail premises is located on the corner of King St and Pall Mall but is excluded from this assessment.

We understand that the property is Grade II Listed, and it is the intention of our client Henry Smith Charity to refurbish the main office entrance, passenger lift and common parts. As part of these proposals we have investigated upgrading and improving the main entrance to provide wheelchair access and improve the overall accessibility and usability of the property to satisfy the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.

1.2 Social

The proposals aim to improve the accessibility of the property and include primarily cosmetic alterations which will not impact on the surrounding area or general public.

1.3 Economic

The leases of the office areas contain obligations on the landlord to refurbish the common parts and main entrance. These improvements are necessary to retain the occupiers in the property who contribute to the economy and vitality of the area. King St and the immediate surrounding area contains a high number of shops, restaurants and bars all of which benefit from increased trade and revenue by maintaining office occupancy in the vicinity.

2.0 INVOLVEMENT

Preliminary consultation has taken place with Manchester City Council Planning Department culminating in a meeting on site with Anthony Mitchell. A follow up meeting has also been held with Anthony Mitchell, conservation officer Myles Leatherbarrow and Darren Hunwicks of Manchester City Council.

3.0 EVALUATION

We have considered options to provide improved access to the property. Unfortunately the restrictions of the site make it difficult to do so without major structural alterations and economic financial expenditure. The listed nature of the property also restricts the options. We can however make the property more user friendly and fulfil the majority of the requirements of the DDA within the scope of the works.

We understand that the building is listed primarily because of its historic structural framework and external elevations. Substantial internal alterations have been made in the past which are not consistent with the exterior and as we understand from the local authority have little or no architectural significance to the building as a whole. The proposed alterations are limited to these features and comprise a combination of simple redecoration and replacement of unsuitable or redundant fixtures and fittings. It is not intended to alter any of the structure which holds much of the architectural importance and significance for the property.

2 Design Considerations

DETAILED CONSIDERATIONS

(A) - Access Arrangements

Currently, the space available within the entrance area up a step from street level is extremely limited, and further restricted by the encroachment of the staircase. The existing configuration of the staircase also means that access to the passenger lift is via a flight of steps down to a half mezzanine landing. Therefore there are two major issues:

- How to achieve suitable access into the property.
- How to access the lift once into the entrance lobby.

To assess the feasibility of resolving these issues we sought the advice of a Structural Engineer. The Structural Engineer's site inspection and calculations culminated in the following four potential options:

1) **Provide level access from street level and install a wall mounted inclined platform lift to provide access to the passenger lift.**

   To achieve this option it will be necessary to reduce the reinforced concrete ground floor landing level by 50mm to 100mm due to the nature of the sloped external access. It will also be necessary to reduce the entire landing to provide clear wheelchair manoeuvring space and level access to any proposed platform lift. The reduction of the slab will result in a loss of structural strength therefore essentially this section will have to be broken out and recast to suitable proportions at the reduced level.

   As a result of the ground floor landing works the levels on the reinforced concrete staircase will be uneven (i.e. the bottom step leading to the first floor will be too large and the top step leading to the basement will be too small). Accordingly the 2No. flights of stairs leading from the entrance lobby will have to be rebuilt in accordance with Part M and Part K of the Approved Documents. Furthermore the integrity of the load bearing walls may also be compromised which hold the reinforced stairs needing further reinforcement works.

   Once the staircases have been altered it would be possible to attach an inclined platform lift to the right hand wall of the stairwell to provide access to the lift on the basement mezzanine level below.

   Based on contractor estimates the approximate budget costs for the additional works are as follows:

Reconfiguration of original staircase	£37,000 - £42,000
Provision of new platform access lift	£15,000 - £20,000

   N.B All works would need to be completed out of hours and temporary measures provided for emergency egress for the duration of the works. All costs also exclude professional fees which would be in the region of 10 – 12% of the contract value.

2) **Raise the basement staircase half landing levels, and remove the basement staircase to enable installation of a vertical platform lift.**

This solution involves much the same work as Option 1 in the preparation of the existing access, alterations to the original reinforced concrete landings and provision of a mechanised vertical platform lift. However, once complete one of the emergency exit routes from the basement will be lost contravening Approved Document B (Fire Safety). The basement areas will also be isolated from the tenants on the first and second floor who currently have sections of the basement demised to them in their current leases.

From a legal and Health & Safety position this option cannot be considered.

3) **Reconfigure the whole staircase; we have been advised that this option would not create a significant amount of additional circulation space and would reduce the floor to ceiling height in the entrance area.**

As for option 2 this is not a practical proposition in an occupied building and any limited benefit of these major works would not be comparable to the level of expense that would be involved.

Estimated project costs would be in the region of £150,000 - £170,000

4) **Move the lift core further back in to the building and reconfigure the staircase.**

Again, this would involve major works in an occupied building and would be an expensive option. Also, pushing back the lift core would impact upon the let floor area within the office suites.

Summary

Each option outlined above involves varying degrees of structural alteration, cost implications and provides varying degrees of 'benefit'. Although it is possible to provide level access to the property, in no case can level access be provided without altering the existing stair configuration to conform to existing building regulations in particular Approved Document M.

The initial brief for the works was to refurbish and modernise the existing stairwell in order to retain the existing tenants and prevent the property becoming neglected should they decide to vacate. Tendered costs were obtained for the project and came in at circa £60,000. In our opinion Option 1 is the most suitable solution to improve access to the building although this would almost double the project cost and render the project financially unfeasible at circa £120,000.

Furthermore, at present there are no impaired people working within the property and the two business tenants have procedures in place to hold meetings at alternative external locations should the necessity arise, as such we feel that the provision of level access for mobility impaired people is unworkable at this present time.

However, we do understand the Disability Discrimination Act is wide ranging and as such we have provide for measures to be undertaken to make the property more DDA compliant such as tactile surfaces, lighter / more operable door set, DDA compliant entry system, DDA lift controls and audible alerts.

(B) - Refurbishment Proposals in a PPG 15 Context

Outline

86 King street is stone clad property which currently houses retail on the ground floor and office accommodation above. The main entrance to the office accommodation is located off King St adjacent to Ship Canal House. The property has undergone major alterations in the past and many of the original internal features (if not all) have been removed. However, the external stone facades remain and provide the character in keeping with adjacent properties.

Currently the common areas, the entrance doors, entrance area and staircase core appear dated and worn. It is felt that the common areas would benefit from wholesale refurbishment, including changing the existing entrance doors to make more use of natural daylight, installing feature lighting and changing the existing balustrade to enhance the internal environment. We anticipate the scope of works to comprise the following items:

Internal Works:

- Replace plaster to basement quarter landing where previously affected by damp.
- Repaint all previously painted surfaces, including wood-work, wall and ceiling surfaces or otherwise decorate with Dulux Light & Space light enhancing white / cream paint.
- Replace the existing brass ironmongery to the stairwell side of internal doors that open onto the main staircase circulation areas with new aluminium fittings to contrast the wood veneer doors.
- Remove existing worn floor and stair carpet and replace with new including tactile nosings.
- Clean and polish existing marble panels around ground floor entrance doors.
- Replace entrance lobby matt and leave flush with adjacent floor to prevent a trip hazard.
- Clean and polish all internal window and door glass.
- Remove existing wall lights and install new matching fittings in chrome to brighten the stairwell.
- Remove existing brass spotlights to landings and install new chrome fittings
- Replace existing painted steel balustrades and timber handrails with new stainless steel fittings to contrast surroundings.
- Provide new illuminated statutory fire signage above main entrance.
- Take off existing front door and frame and provide new full height glazed front door including manifestation to denote glazing. Link locking mechanism into existing phone entry system and provide new DDA compliant panel.

Lift Works:

- Undertake such improvements to the passenger lift as are feasible. This will involve the repositioning of in-car and on-landing controls and installation of audible signals to DDA compliant fittings.
- Refurbish the car interior to complement the re-decoration of the stairs and landings.
- Repair or reconnect the emergency telephone facility.
- Carry out various health and safety works to include an additional low level pit stop switch, a safe to use pit access ladder, and guard to the diverter pulleys in the pit area, additional hazard warnings.
- Install an overspeed governor and associated equipment.

External works:

- Repoint damaged granite panel joints in vicinity of door opening at street level.
- Remove existing flag-pole which represents a health hazard due to pigeon roosting and make good stonework.

Detailed Appraisal

In accordance with Planning Policy Guidance 15 (Planning and the Historic Environment), paragraph 3.4 states that full justification must be provided for works that will affect the character of a listed building and why they are desirable or indeed necessary.

Following a meeting on site with Anthony Mitchell (Planning Officer) and Myles Leatherbarrow of Manchester City Council (Conservation Officer) 23-04-08, no items of historical importance (including fixtures and fittings) were noted with the exception of the stone facades and marble entrance surrounds. The proposals do not affect either of these elements and the original materials, openings, layouts and designs will remain.

We would not therefore anticipate the works to significantly impact on the historic character of the property.

Turning to the fixtures and fittings there are two elements which we feel require attention and proposals for each are put forward in turn:

1. Main Entrance Doors

Existing

The existing main entrance doors are currently metal faced solid wood doors which currently afford little natural light to penetrate into the stairwell. The doors are also fairly heavy and may prove a barrier to ambulant impaired persons wanting to access the property. Notwithstanding the above the steel faced doors are a later addition to the property and we believe have been painted brown to replicate wood. We feel that this finish detracts from the character of the property and overall is poor for a main entrance.





Proposed

The proposals include the provision of a new full height glazed double door set which will allow natural light into the newly decorated and lit stairwell. The doors will also allow users to be more visually aware of people on the other side of the door and give a greater ease of use through floor mounted pivots taking the full weight of the door leaf. (Photographs are indicative of similar installation in and around King St)





2. New Stainless Steel Balustrade System

The existing balustrade and handrail system consists of a varnished wooden handrail with painted steel balustrades including a 'plant / flower' effect detail at each return. A single varnished wooden handrail is fixed to the wall on the outside of the staircase.

Again this is thought to be a later addition to the property and of no significant architectural importance. For a modern office (albeit within a character property) this handrail does not create a good visual impact especially if it is to be viewed through glazed entrance doors from street level.

It is proposed to replace the handrail with a new polished stainless steel system with stainless steel midrails to enhance the overall aesthetic of the common parts. (As this item is bespoke, picture is for indicative purposes)



Existing Handrails and Balustrades



Proposed

PPG 15, paragraph 3.5 addresses issues which are relevant to all listed building applications and can be detailed as follows:

1. The importance of the building

   The property is located within the King Street conservation area which historically was the main banking area in Manchester. Adjacent to the property is Ship Canal House and 82 King Street which was formerly the Bank of England headquarters. However, we can find no record of any important historical activity located on the site.

2. Important physical features of the property.

   The properties most important feature is the stone façade which will not be affected as part of the works.

3. Contribution and setting to the local scene.

   The property forms part of the King Street conservation area and as such plays a major role in the look and feel of the area. The one feature which the proposals will change is the main entrance doors from painted brown steel to full height glass. It has been noted that the majority of buildings located on King Street have undergone this alteration and we would see no reason why the same look could not be achieved at No. 86.

4. The extent to which the works would bring substantial benefit to the community.

   As part of lease negotiations with the landlord the existing tenants agreed to renew their leases with the proviso that the common parts of the property were refurbished as they were becoming worn and dated. As a result of the agreement (subject to local authority approval) the tenants agreed to renew their leases maintaining full occupation of the property. The current tenants offer professional and banking services and also employ a number of staff on site who contribute to other local businesses, bars cafes etc enhancing the local economy.

Summary

Following guidance from PPG 15 paragraph 3.8 the best way to ensure the upkeep of a historic building is to keep it in active use and 'will often necessitate some degree of adaptation'. The refurbishment of the common parts will ensure the continuation of the current occupancy levels and also enhance the visual impact of the property to fall in line with the standard of finishes found within adjacent properties.

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