6.0 Design

Proposed Use

6.1 It is proposed that the building will be repaired and restored enabling the accommodation of commercial retail, and business use as prior to fire damage, with the addition of a basement dance studio for community use.

6.2 The principle of development is addressed in the supporting Planning Statement. The proposed use is considered to comply with the following Principle Design Objectives:

- Brings a Grade II Listed building within the Stevenson Square Conservation Area back into mixed use after extensive fire, water, and smoke damage;
- Provides modern, high quality, commercial / business space ensuring the building is used throughout; and
- Ensures the sustainable future use of the building.

6.3 The proposals involve the change of use of the building to provide A1, A2, B1, and D1 use. Prior to fire damage the building was used throughout for A1, A2, and B1 use, with the basement used to house heating boilers and ancillary oil storage. The change of use proposed to regulate the building ensuring greater opportunities for future use.

6.4 The basement dance studio ensures the use of building throughout, whilst offering activity and passive surveillance outside of recognised business hours.



6.5 The lightwell extension does not house any commercial retail, or business floorspace. Instead, the proposed use is primarily for staff facilities and to contain the emergency escape stairs required for any continued use of the building in compliance with appropriate safety and building regulations.

6.6 The extension enables the use of each floor in an open plan format, enabling a more appropriate use of the building consistent with the historical use of commercial warehousing.

6.7 The proposed mixed use is therefore considered appropriate in the context of both the design of the existing building fabric, and that of the surrounding City Centre, and Northern Quarter context.

Amount

6.8 The amount of development has been determined by extensive consultation with key stakeholders, and the parameters for development as set out in the Principle Design Objectives, namely;

- Through maintaining the architectural and historic interest of the building;
- Maintaining the scale and massing of commercial warehousing in the surrounding streetscape; and
- Minimising any visual impact of the proposed extension.

6.9 The proposed lightwell infill provides 450 sq m of floorspace from ground to fifth floor. With the infill extension providing staff facilities and escape stairs the additional amount of floorspace added is gross, and will not be used for commercial, retail, or business use.

6.10 The existing gross internal floorspace of the building is approximately 5100 sq m. The infill creates a total floorspace throughout the building of approximately 5500 sq m.

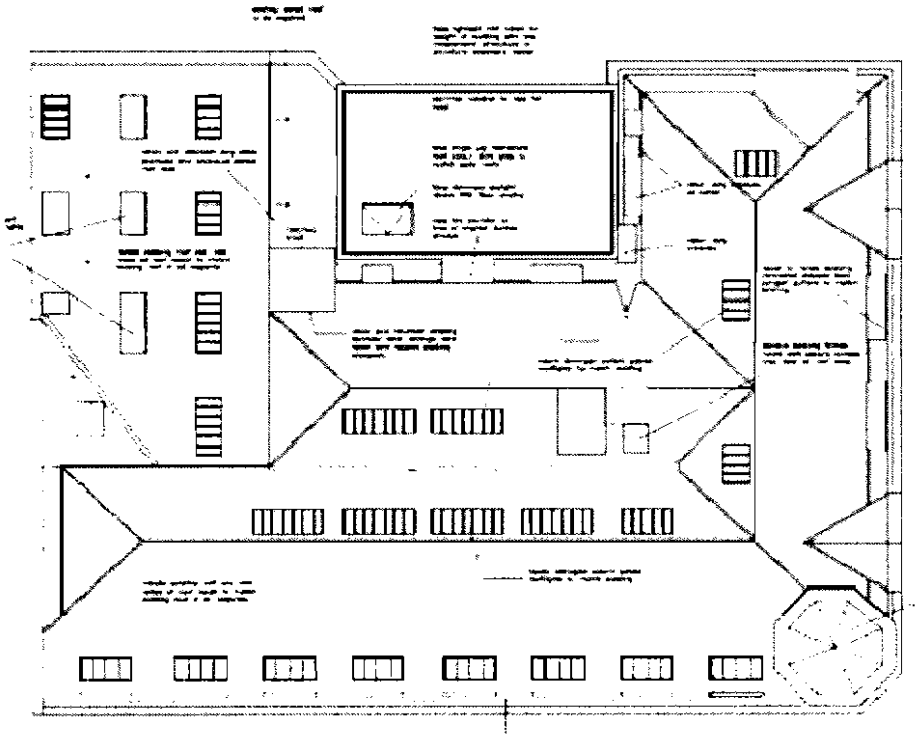
6.11 The amount of repair and restoration works required to bring the building back into a safe and habitable use after extensive fire damage is set out in the annotated scale drawings which form part of the application submission.

Layout

6.12 The layout of the proposed extension to the rear has been constrained by that of the existing building.

6.13 Both the layout of the lightwell infill, and the internal layout has been designed to ensure that the layout and form of the building remains consistent with the architectural and historical value of the building.

6.14 Through development within the lightwell this enables the construction of a separate, new build element contained within the footprint of the existing building. This layout ensures that minimal alteration is required to the Grade II Listed building, with potential for future removal as per the Principle Design Objectives.

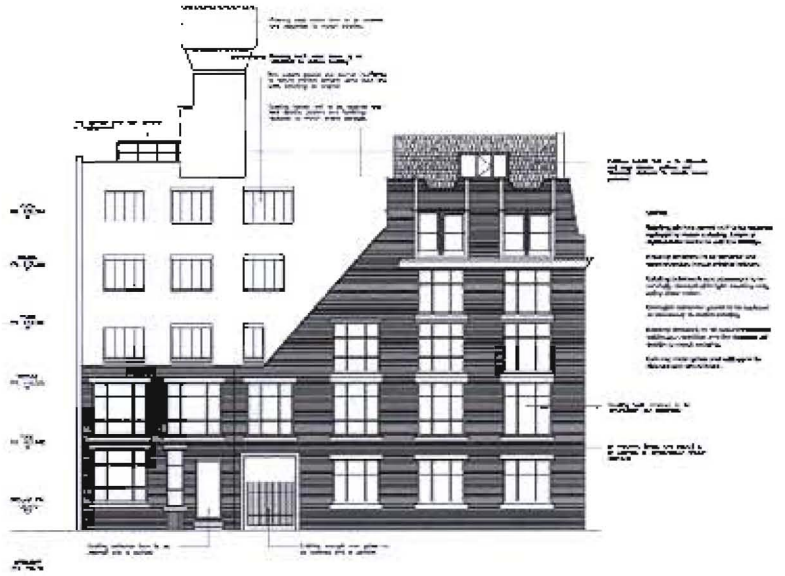


6.15 Prior to the fire damage the internal layout of the building was restricted by partition walls, small business units, and staff facilities associated with the sporadic short-term uses.

6.16 With the proposed lightwell extension to house staff facilities, and the fire escape stairs this enables a more practical internal layout—ensuring the use of the building throughout, whilst respecting the historical layout of the commercial warehouse.

6.17 Prior to the fire the building was used throughout on a tenanted basis, requiring the sub-division of each floor. It is proposed that each floor will be used in open plan format, however, as the accompanying drawings identify, there will remain possibilities for future subdivision dependant upon market trends, whilst protecting the internal fabric of cast iron columns.

6.18 Previous schemes (refer to Chapter 5) involved the inclusion of a penthouse apartment. Consultation and refinement of the scheme has therefore concentrated the internal building layout on this recognised value of 19th century warehousing.





Scale

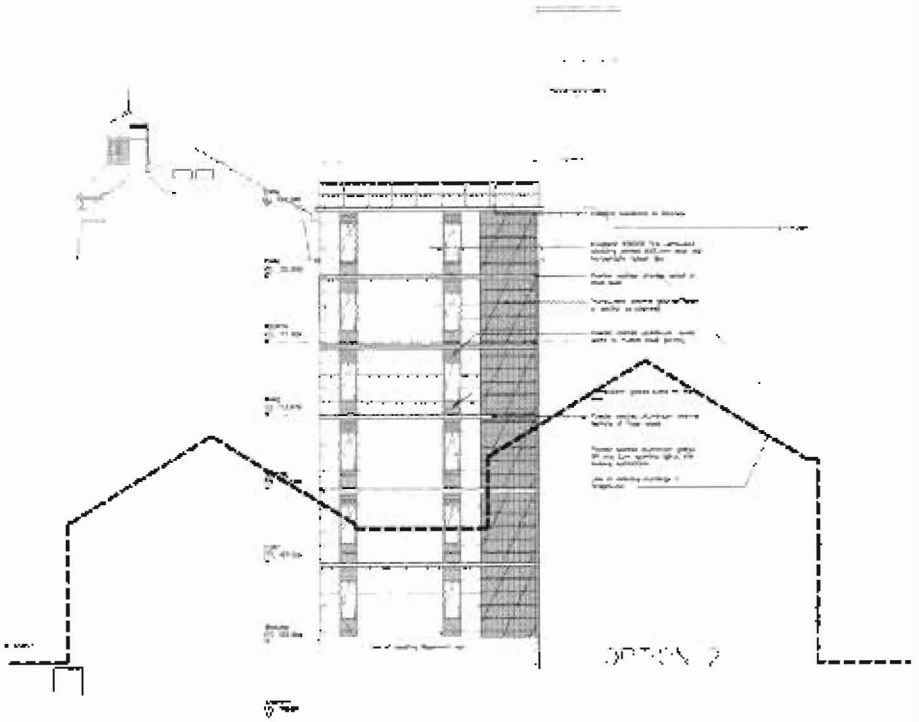
6.19 The scale and massing of the new build extension has been designed through consultation and design evolution to respect the scale and proportions of the existing building.

6.20 The angular block plan of the extension mirrors the massing and scale of the original warehouse whilst maintaining a sympathetic approach to the identified value of the building.

6.21 The proposed height has been determined by the height of the existing building to ensure that it is visually subservient to the former warehouse. Viewed from Piccadilly emphasis remains upon the punctuation of the water tower, and not the hidden lightwell extension.

6.22 Through evaluation of the existing site context and evolution of the design the scale of the proposal ensures that any visual impact is restricted to pedestrian access to the rear of the property along Back Piccadilly.

6.23 Set below the lowest ridge to the existing slated roof running parallel with Little Lever Street this ensures no punctuation in the roofscape along Dale Street, maintaining the character of the Conservation Area. As such the infill will have no impact on the roofline of the existing, or adjacent buildings.



Relationship of infill to existing roofline in minimising visual impact and protecting the setting of the building.

Appearance

6.24 The following Principle Design Objectives and parameters have formulated the appearance and material use of both the lightwell extension, and external façade restoration;

- Identify and maintain any architectural and historical interest and value of the building;
- Design a new-build lightwell infill extension which is visually separate from the existing building, yet sympathetic to architectural and historical value; and
- Identify and maintain any architectural and historical interest of the wider townscape area and streetscape along Dale Street.

Lightwell Infill

6.25 The appearance and material use of the building has been determined through a period of consultation with Manchester City Council. The design evolution in Chapter 5 demonstrates a series of options discussed with the Council which have determined the submitted proposals.

6.26 The horizontal detailing of external elavational treatment reflects that of the existing building, and of the string course throughout the building, as discussed with the Council.





Relationship of materials used elsewhere in Manchester City Centre