Pall Mall Court

61-67 King Street, Manchester M2 4PD

Alterations to Unit 1: heritage appraisal



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Consultancy for the Historic Built Environment

KMHeritage

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1 Summary

Pall Mall Court is located on a site extending between King Street and Marsden Street in central Manchester. The building is composed of three main elements, arranged at right angles to each other. The King Street block and the central block form a piazza facing west. It is listed Grade II and located in the Upper King Street Conservation Area.

The building was built in the period 1966-8 to designs by the firm Brett and Pollen. The key figure involved was the partner in charge, Harry Teggin. Lionel Brett was a notable figure in post-war architecture and planning, and was rector of the Royal College of Art. It was commissioned as a headquarters building for the London Assurance Group, which was taken over by the Sun Alliance Group as work began.

The building is constructed on a reinforced concrete frame, and clad in bronze-coloured painted aluminium curtain walling with bronze-coloured glass. The main elevations of each of the three blocks are divided into bays separated by narrow recesses containing opening windows. The interior of the building was designed for flexible sub-division according to the requirements of the building's occupants.

The special architectural interest of Pall Mall Court lies in the way that it occupies its L-shaped site, in its overall massing and division into three parts, and in its modelled curtain walling arranged into bays. The special historic interest of Pall Mall Court lies in its association with the firm of Brett and Pollen, and the figures of Harry Teggin and Lionel Brett.

The essential special architectural and historic interest of Pall Mall Court lies in its overall external appearance, its massing and scale, and the way it relates to its surroundings. It does not lie in its interior: neither the designers' intentions nor the physical fact of the building's interior at this point in time provide the interior of the building with any significant special interest.

Unit 1 of the 5 storey King Street Block to which this proposal relates is located at the basement, lower ground and ground levels and these floors have been vacant for ten years.

The proposed scheme is for a private medical clinic: Pall Mall Medical currently occupies the lower ground floor area of the central block. The practice has been very successful and this has led it to seek to expand into the existing basement, ground and lower ground floor areas of the King Street block.

The proposed scheme involves removal of most internal non-load bearing partitions, open staircase, ceilings, bank vault structure, the bullion hoist and redundant service pipes, cables & ducts; the addition of a new floor to infill the large void present in raised ground floor structure; internal fit out works involving the erection of new metal framed partitions, staircase, platform lift and suspended ceilings including structural alterations and a mechanical heating and ventilation system, installation of new condensers over an extended area of the existing screened roof mounted air handling plant over the 5th floor; and new signage.

The overall effect on the heritage significance of Pall Mall Court, described and analysed in this report, will be minimal. The scheme will change the building, but not in any way that is inimical to its special architectural and historic interest – quite the opposite. The long-vacant unit facing King Street will finally have a new use, and this will help sustain the listed building over the long term. The physical implications of the works required to facilitate this new use are sufficient to provide the required accommodation without interfering with what gives Pall Mall Court its essential architectural quality.

2 Introduction

2.1 This report has been prepared by KMHeritage, and relates to Pall Mall Court, 61-67 King Street, Manchester M2 4PD.

Purpose

2.2 The purpose of the report is to assess the proposed change of use and alteration of the existing vacant three floor levels in Unit 1 in the King Street Block against national and local policies relating to the historic built environment. The proposed scheme is for the conversion of this part of the building from office use to a medical centre.

2.3 Unit 1 of the 5 storey King Street Block to which this scheme relates is located at the basement, lower ground and ground levels and these floors have been vacant for a number of years.

2.4 This report should be read in conjunction with the drawings and Design & Access Statement prepared by the Makerfield Design Partnership.

Organisation

2.5 This introduction is preceded by a summary and followed by three report sections containing a description and analysis of Pall Mall Court, its history and development, and its heritage significance. Section 6 sets out the national and local policy and guidance relating to the historic built environment that is relevant to this matter. An outline is provided in Section 7 of the proposed scheme and its effect. Section 8 assesses the proposed scheme against that policy and guidance. Appendices include a location plan, the list description and photographs.

Author

2.6 The author of this report is Kevin Murphy B.Arch MUBC RIBA IHBC. He was an Inspector of Historic Buildings in the

London Region of English Heritage and dealt with a range of projects involving listed buildings and conservation areas. Prior to this, he had been a conservation officer with the London Borough of Southwark, and was Head of Conservation and Design at Hackney Council between 1997 and 1999. He trained and worked as an architect, and has a specialist qualification in urban and building conservation. Kevin Murphy was included for a number of years on the Heritage Lottery Fund's Directory of Expert Advisers.

3 Location and description

The site and its context

3.1 Pall Mall Court is located on a site extending between King Street and Marsden Street in central Manchester. It was originally an office building, and has more recently been in mixed use. The site is L-shaped: to the south is King Street, to the west a pedestrian link between King Street and Marsden Street, to the north is Marsden Street, and to the east is Brown Street.

3.2 The building is composed of three main elements, arranged at right angles to each other. The part facing south onto King Street ('the King Street block') is composed of five main storeys, over a lower ground floor set into the slope of the street, which rises from west to east. There is a basement throughout.

3.3 Running back from this frontage (i.e. from south to north) and towards Marsden Street is a taller block of twelve storeys, including lower ground floor ('the central block'). Extending eastwards along Marsden Street from this block, towards Brown Street is the third element of the building, another five-storey block over a lower ground floor ('the Marsden Street block').

3.4 The King Street block and the central block form a piazza facing west. This piazza is the top surface of an underground car park, entered from Marsden Street, and was formerly open to the adjacent pedestrian link. At the junction of the pedestrian link and Marsden Street is a brick enclosure containing the car park entrance and planting above, and this provides a northern boundary to the piazza.

3.5 The site of Pall Mall Court wraps around the former Norwich Union building, at the junction of King Street and Brown Street. This building has been refurbished in recent years, and is now known as 'the Pinnacle'. The gap between the Marsden Street block and the Pinnacle

permits both the central block and the Marsden Street block to have double elevations.

3.6 Pall Mall Court is located in the Upper King Street Conservation Area.

Construction and design

3.7 The three elements of Pall Mall Court described above are linked by circulation cores at the 'knuckle' between each rectangular block. The principal entrance to the building is at the junction of the King Street block and the central block. This is marked by a solid V-shaped tower clad in mosaic, containing stairs and lifts, relieved by vertical strip windows, and extending above the height of the central block. Similar elements are located at the southern end of the King Street block, at the junction of the central block and the Marsden Street block, and on the Brown street frontage of the Marsden Street block.

3.8 The main entrance is expressed as a 'pod' set forward of the main tower, and reached by a number of steps. It has recently-added revolving doors and a recent sign saying 'Pall Mall Court'.

3.9 The building is constructed on a reinforced concrete frame, and clad in bronze-coloured painted aluminium curtain walling with bronze-coloured glass. The main elevations of each of the three blocks are divided into bays separated by narrow recesses containing opening windows. The main bay is six foot wide, and the narrower recessed bay is either four feet or two feet. The main bays are paired around the two-foot module, and the elevational rhythm is thus 6ft- 2ft-6ft-4ft.

3.10 The curtain walling projects slightly in front of the expressed slab edge, which follows the recess-projection rhythm of the elevation. The bays are divided into a low glazed spandrel panel, behind which is located a solid panel and a radiator, and the main glazed panel above.

3.11 This is varied on the lower four floors of the central block, facing west onto the piazza. Here the concrete structure is

expressed, so that the structural grid is visible on the outside of the building, clad in mosaic. This shows that the wider of the two narrow bays is the line of grid; the expressed columns run behind the expressed slab edges. Within each structural bay created by this arrangement are two bay windows with sloping tops, corresponding to the wider bay above in the main part of the elevation. The slab edges on plan are stepped to follow the line of the bays, as they are elsewhere. This treatment to the lower part of the central block wraps around into Marsden Street.

3.12 The top two floors of the King Street block and the Marsden Street block are set back, creating a small balcony area.

3.13 The external expression of the lower ground floors in the King Street block and the Marsden Street block is in the form of a crenellated brick dwarf wall sitting beneath the main façade. The gap between the brick wall and the soffit above crates clerestory lighting with vertical glazed panels at irregular intervals – these do not correspond to the bay rhythm above. As both King Street and Marsden Street slope, the depth of the dwarf wall varies, and at the western end of the King Street block, it drops ways to permit larger glazing.

The interior of the building

3.14 Internally, the walls of the lift lobbies are clad in the same mosaic tile that is used throughout the building externally. Stair surfaces are in brick which have been painted over, and there are plain timber balustrades fixed to continuous vertical steel newels. Stair walls are painted white.

3.15 The offices spaces throughout the building were designed as single spaces for flexible sub-division according to the requirements of the building's occupants. It is clear that they have been substantially altered in the period since construction and since listing (substantial works were carried out at the start of the last decade), notably by the

replacement of suspended ceilings throughout, new lighting and new flooring. The original radiators have been replaced. Lift lobbies and service risers have also been extensively altered.

3.16 The exception is the ground and lower ground spaces of the King Street block. The ground floor is accessed from the main entrance lobby, and the lower ground by means of doors directly from the street at its western end, at the start of the pedestrian link to Marsden Street. They are also linked internally by an opening in the centre of the plan. There is a stairs near the main entrance end, and a glass and aluminium balustrade. This space was, and has been for a considerable period of time, essentially a shell. The lower ground floor has been altered by the insertion of later stud partitions to create ad-hoc enclosures. The basement beneath is utilitarian throughout, with a former bank vault the only atypical feature.

4 History

Development

4.1 Pall Mall Court was built in the period 1966-8 to designs by the firm Brett and Pollen. The key figure involved was the partner in charge, Harry Teggin. Brett and Pollen was based in London, and a local firm, A H Brotherton and Partners, was used as executive architect. The structural engineers were Cyril Blumfield and Partners.

4.2 Pall Mall Court was commissioned as a headquarters building for the London Assurance Group, which was taken over by the Sun Alliance Group as work began. The building has subsequently been let to multiple tenants.

The firm[1]

4.3 Brett and Pollen is notable for a small number of buildings, and for the figure of Lionel Brett, fourth Viscount Esher. The firm was formed in the late 1950s, when Brett's previous practice ceased trading. Francis Pollen was a talented designer specializing in Catholic and domestic work, whose enthusiasm for Lutyens had led him to pursue a more traditional architectural approach before embracing modernism.

4.4 In 1963 he won the commission for the redevelopment of the Guildhall area of Portsmouth, including Portsmouth Civic Centre, and worked on the buildings with Harry Teggin, who joined Brett and Pollen and became a third partner. Teggin helped to bring the practice's image up to date and gained widespread admiration for its work, such as 82–90 Sloane Street, London (now a listed building,

[1] Information regarding Brett and Pollen in this section is drawn from Alan Powers, 'Brett, Lionel Gordon Baliol, fourth Viscount Esher (1913–2004)', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, online edn, Oxford University Press, Jan 2008; online edn, Oct 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/93832, accessed 11 Jan 2010] and from the same author's obituary of Lionel Brett in the 'Independent' newspaper, Tuesday, 13 July 2004.

with the purpose-built Seker's fabric showroom at ground level), and Pall Mall Court.

4.5 By the late 1960s personal relationships between Esher, Pollen and Teggin had become strained, and when Esher was invited in 1971 to succeed Sir Robin Darwin as rector of the Royal College of Art, he left the firm. The practice is no longer in existence. Francis Pollen died of cancer and Harry Teggin established his own practice in Glasgow.

Lionel Brett[2]

4.6 Lionel Brett was born in July 1913 in Windsor. His father, Oliver, the third Viscount Esher, was Chairman of the Society for Protection of Ancient Buildings and of the National Trust, a literary figure with many connections in architecture and preservation, who bought Watlington Park on the edge of the Chilterns as a family home in 1921.

4.7 After Eton he married Christian Pike as he was leaving New College, Oxford, where he read History under the future Minister of Housing, Richard Crossman. He went to the Architectural Association but left to learn from the traditionalist A. S. G. Butler, and then to work as a non-qualified partner of William and Aileen Tatton-Brown, notable among the younger modernists. He passed the RIBA external exams in the summer of 1939, winning the Ashpitel Prize, which he spent on books by Le Corbusier and Lewis Mumford.

4.8 Clough Williams-Ellis, who in the immediate post-war years was a serious force in planning, got Brett a job replanning Littlehampton, but nothing came of it. Deciding to save Watlington, Brett moved his nascent practice there, and offered accommodation in the house to his staff. Brett's first partner, Kenneth Boyd, preferred to work in London, however, and ran their housing commission in Hatfield New Town from there. Fifty of the two-storey terraced houses designed by the firm, planned

[2] ibid

in attractive serpentine lines, lost their monopitch roofs in a storm in November 1957. A public inquiry was called, and he shared financial liability with the contractor, Wimpey. His first architectural partnership - Brett, Boyd and Bosanquet - ended.

4.9 Brett is perhaps best known for things other than his architecture, and was, by his own admission, not a great architect. He nonetheless was President of RIBA from 1965 to 1967. His real interest was in planning, for which he had the right combination of visual and administrative skills. He advocated building on brownfield sites, but many of his early planning studies were not taken up. His conservation survey of south Oxfordshire, published in 1965 as *Landscape in Distress*, made him a suitable candidate for one of the pilot studies of historic towns that Richard Crossman was planning for the Ministry of Housing and Local Government.

4.10 Commissioned in 1966, the studies of Bath, Chester, Chichester and York each contributed to the new breadth of understanding of what conservation could achieve for quality of life. Brett chose York, where the aim was to encourage people to move back into the walled city to live, by converting houses to student accommodation, taming the car, and making a host of minor improvements.

4.11 After he left Brett and Pollen in 1971, Brett struggled to steer the RCA through a troubled period, and in 1978, retired bruised once more. He spent the succeeding years writing and painting. *A Broken Wave: the rebuilding of England 1940-1980* (1981) was an attempt to chronicle and analyse the contested achievements of post-war architecture and planning, following on from *Parameters and Images: architecture in a crowded world* (1970), a book born of the post-heroic mood that followed modernism. Lionel Brett died on 9 July 2004.

5 The heritage significance of Pall Mall Court

5.1 Pall Mall Court was listed Grade II on 4 December 2000 and is located in the Upper King Street Conservation Area. The list description is contained in Appendix B. A revised list description is in the process of preparation, and is expected to be issued shortly.

Heritage values

5.2 Pall Mall Court and the conservation area are 'designated heritage assets', as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

5.3 'Significance' is defined in the NPPF as 'the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic'. The English Heritage 'Planning for the Historic Environment Practice Guide' puts it slightly differently – as 'the sum of its architectural, historic, artistic or archaeological interest'.

5.4 'Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment' (English Heritage, April 2008) describes a number of 'heritage values' that may be present in a 'significant place'. These are evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal value. In respect of listed buildings, these values are consistent with the statutory definition of 'special architectural and historic interest',

Architectural interest

5.5 The architectural interest of Pall Mall Court lies in a number aspects of the design, and in its relationship to the general architectural trend of the time.

5.6 Lionel Brett later wrote of Brett and Pollen's work that 'with the hindsight of the more rhetorical Seventies some of our stuff looked pusillanimous and dull'. In terms of Pall Mall Court, this is a rather unfair judgement. With the perspective of four and a half intervening decades, Pall

Mall Court now looks – for a building of the mid-1960s – advanced compared to many commercial office buildings of the time.

5.7 The use of curtain walling in the design is clearly linked to the Mies Van der Rohe steel and glass aesthetic exemplified by his Seagram Building in New York (1958), and to similar work in the UK such as the Euston Tower (designed by Sidney Kaye, completed 1970) in London. However, a different approach was taken by Teggin at Pall Mall Court. Teggin designed the building 'to have the impact of a jet stone by the use of bronze glass, sharp angles and opaque facets[3]'. As opposed to the rigorous and minimal expression of those buildings, Pall Mall Court is treated sculpturally. The cladding is heavily modelled in a manner more reminiscent of English concrete Brutalist architecture of the later 1950s and 1960s, seen in buildings by Alison and Peter Smithson, Leslie Martin and Denys Lasdun.

5.8 The building is contextual in the way that it occupies its L-shaped site, and in the overall massing and division into three parts. An aspect of this is the articulation of the connecting points or 'knuckles' between each part. Each of the blocks responds specifically to its location, with the King Street block and the Marsden Street block having a different expression from the central block. There is a deliberate contrast between the solidity of the 'knuckles' and the glass of the blocks, and they are expressed by means of angular shapes. The combination of the modelling of the facades, the crenellated wall at the base of the street blocks, the dramatic shapes of the 'knuckles' and the overall composition of three blocks in a 'Z'-shape creates a dramatic and highly articulated design.

5.9 The creation of a piazza was an important aspect of the design, and a positive urban design measure.

5.10 In broad terms Pall Mall Court looks forward to the type of 1970s work to which Brett referred. The manner in

[3] Quoted in the list description (see Appendix B)

which it fits within the urban block rather than ignoring it, and the tangibly aesthetic, almost decorative, approach to the appearance of the building, anticipates later office buildings who were more concerned with making an individual statement than fitting into a 'school' of architectural thought. Pall Mall Court is in marked contrast to the very many flat-walled rectangular office blocks that were erected throughout Britain in the 1960s.

Historic interest

5.11 The historic interest of Pall Mall Court lies in its association with the firm of Brett and Pollen, and the figures of Harry Teggin and Lionel Brett. While far from being in the leading group of English architectural practices of the period, they were nonetheless notable. Their small output was distinctive, and Pall Mall Court won the RIBA Regional Award for 1970.

5.12 The building also has historic interest as forming part of Manchester's 1960s economic expansion and – together with Casson Conder's former National Westminster Bank built at the same time immediately to the west – as part of the transformation of King Street in that period.

Negative aspects of the building

5.13 The building has weaknesses: though it is a listed building and has special interest, it is compromised in a number of respects.

5.14 Firstly, the spatial and accommodation standards of buildings such as Pall Mall Court have changed, and – as is very common with commercial buildings from the post-war period – the building has had to be altered so as to continue to provide accommodation that suits current needs. This is clear in the office spaces (where ceilings have been replaced) and in the ground and lower ground levels of the King Street block (where later stud partitions were inserted in an effort to create useable space). This has not compromised the essential special interest of the listed building.

5.15 Secondly, the site layout of the building deliberately created a valuable public open space, but this positive aspect of the development is devalued by the lack of interconnectivity between inside and outside that is an inherent part of the design. The difference in ground and floor levels is a key impediment to the building offering life and vitality to the piazza.

5.16 Thirdly, this lack of interconnectivity runs counter to the positive way in which the street blocks relate to King Street and Marsden Street. Pall Mall Court was advanced for its time in seeking to adapt to the scale of the street and to fit into the urban fabric – other modern buildings and development during the 1960s were doing the opposite, and causing great harm to our cities. But while Pall Mall Court sits comfortably in the busy thoroughfare of King Street, the detailed design of the façade of the King Street block inhibits the building from making a meaningful contribution to the street at the level of the pedestrian. The reflective façade and the solid elements of the lower ground floor treatment effectively create a visual barrier between the street and the building.

6 The policy context

6.1 This section of the report briefly sets out the range of national and local policy and guidance relevant to the consideration of change in the historic built environment.

The National Planning Policy Framework

6.2 The legislation governing listed buildings and conservation areas is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

6.3 On Tuesday 27 March 2012, the Government published the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which replaces Planning Policy Statement 5: 'Planning for the Historic Environment' (PPS5) with immediate effect.

6.4 Section 12 of the NPPF deals with 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment'. It says at Paragraph 126 that 'Local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment', and that

'In developing this strategy, local planning authorities should take into account:

- *the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- *the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;*
- *the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness;*
- *and opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place'.*

6.5 The NPPF says at Paragraph 128 that:

In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution

made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

6.6 A detailed description and analysis of the heritage significance of Pall Mall Court is provided earlier in this report.

6.7 The NPPF also requires local planning authorities to 'identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal'.

6.8 At Paragraph 131, the NPPF says that:

In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- *the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- *the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- *the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*

6.9 Paragraph 132 advises local planning authorities that 'When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting'.

6.10 The NPPF says at Paragraph 133 'Good design ensures attractive, usable, durable and adaptable places and is a key element in achieving sustainable development. Good design is indivisible from good planning.' Paragraph 133 says:

> *Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:*
>
> - *the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and*
> - *no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and*
> - *conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and*
> - *the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.*

6.11 Paragraph 134 says that 'Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

6.12 Further advice within Section 12 of the NPPF urges local planning authorities to take into account the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset when determining the application. It says that 'In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset'.

6.13 Paragraph 137 of the NPPF advises local planning authorities to 'look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably'.

6.14 Paragraph 138 says that:

> *Not all elements of a World Heritage Site or Conservation Area will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 133 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 134, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole.*

6.15 The NPPF incorporates many of the essential concepts in the former Planning Policy Statement 5 'Planning for the Historic Environment'. PPS5 was accompanied by a 'Planning for the Historic Environment Practice Guide', published by English Heritage 'to help practitioners implement the policy, including the legislative requirements that underpin it'. The 'Guide' gives, at Paragraph 79, a number of 'potential heritage benefits that could weigh in favour of a proposed scheme' in addition to guidance on 'weighing-up' proposals in Paragraphs 76 to 78. These are that:

- It sustains or enhances the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting;
- It reduces or removes risks to a heritage asset;
- It secures the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long term conservation;

- It makes a positive contribution to economic vitality and sustainable communities;
- It is an appropriate design for its context and makes a positive contribution to the appearance, character, quality and local distinctiveness of the historic environment;
- It better reveals the significance of a heritage asset and therefore enhances our enjoyment of it and the sense of place.

6.16 Paragraph 111 of the Guide sets out the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 that local planning authorities when making decisions must 'have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses' and 'pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance' of a conservation area.

Manchester's Local Development Framework

6.17 Manchester's Core Strategy was adopted on 11th July 2012 and is the key Development Plan Document in the Local Development Framework (LDF). A number of Unitary Development Plan policies for the historic built environment have been saved and continue to be valid.

6.18 Spatial Objective SO6 'Environment' seeks to 'Protect and enhance both the natural and built environment of the City and ensure the sustainable use of natural resources, in order to mitigate and adapt to climate change, support biodiversity and wildlife, improve air, water and land quality, recreational opportunities and provide networks of high quality green infrastructure, ensuring that the City is inclusive and attractive to residents, workers, investors and visitors'. Aspects of Spatial Objective SO1 'Spatial Principles' also refers to the aspiration to 'protect and enhance the built and natural environment'. Expanding on Policy SO6, Policy EN1 says of the City Centre

Character Area that 'The City Centre contains a rich legacy which reflects its urban evolution to the current day and includes listed buildings, conservation areas, archaeological remains and an historic street pattern' and that 'Developers will be expected to consider the City's heritage and continue the rich pattern of activity in the core area'.

6.19 Policy EN3 deals with 'Heritage' and says that:

'Throughout the City, the Council will encourage development that complements and takes advantage of the distinct historic and heritage features of its districts and neighbourhoods, including those of the City Centre. New developments must be designed so as to support the Council in preserving or, where possible, enhancing the historic environment, the character, setting and accessibility of areas and buildings of acknowledged importance, including scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings, registered parks and gardens, conservation areas and archaeological remains. Proposals which enable the re-use of heritage assets will be encouraged where they are considered consistent with the significance of the heritage asset'.

6.20 Policy EN3 supersedes the former Unitary Development Plan Environmental Improvement & Protection Policy E2.7. However, Saved UDP Policy DC19.1 deals with listed buildings: 'The Council will have regard to the desirability of securing the retention, restoration, maintenance and continued use of such buildings...' and will (amongst other policies):

- 'not permit a change of use of a listed building, where it would have a detrimental effect on the character or appearance of the building;
- not permit any external or internal alteration or addition to a listed building where, in its opinion, there would be an adverse effect on its architectural or historic character;

- not permit alterations to a listed building which would prevent the future use of any part of the building, in particular upper floors or basements, or where poor maintenance is likely to result'.

6.21 Saved Policy DC19.1 also addresses the setting of listed buildings, and is similarly worded: 'the Council will seek to preserve and enhance the settings of listed buildings by appropriate control over the design of new development in their vicinity, control over the use of adjacent land, and where appropriate, by the preservation of trees and landscape features'.

6.22 Saved Policy DC18.1 deals with conservation areas, and says:

a. The Council will seek to preserve and enhance the character of its designated conservation areas by carefully considering the following issues:

i) the relationship of new structures to neighbouring buildings and spaces;

ii) the effect of major changes to the appearance of existing buildings;

iii) the desirability of retaining existing features, such as boundary walls, gardens, trees, (including street trees);

iv) the effect of signs and advertisements;

v) any further guidance on specific areas which has been approved by the Council.

b. The Council will not normally grant outline planning permission for development within Conservation Areas.

c. Consent to demolish a building in a conservation area will be granted only where it can be shown that it is wholly beyond repair, incapable of reasonably beneficial use, or where its removal or replacement would benefit the appearance or character of the area.

d. Where demolition is to be followed by redevelopment, demolition will be permitted only where there are approved detailed plans for that redevelopment and

where the Council has been furnished with evidence that the development will be undertaken.

e. Development proposals adjacent to Conservation Areas will be granted only where it can be shown that they will not harm the appearance or character of the area. This will include the protection of views into and out of Conservation Areas.

7 The proposed scheme

7.1 This section of the report briefly outlines the proposed scheme for Unit 1 at Pall Mall Court, which is illustrated in the drawings and Design & Access Statement prepared by the Makerfield Design Partnership.

The need for the proposed scheme

7.2 Unit 1 of the 5 storey King Street Block to which this proposal relates is located at the basement, lower ground and ground levels and these floors have been vacant for a number of years.

7.3 All buildings need a use, and the policy and guidance makes clear that historic buildings need a use to sustain them into the future. While the office spaces in Pall Mall Court are (subject to economic conditions) generally occupied, it is clear that the ground and lower ground levels of the King Street block are in need of alteration in order to continue to play a part in the overall building. It appears that the unit has been vacant for over ten years, and it is easy to see why: it provides cramped and badly-lit space that has little external connection, whether visual or physical. This latter quality contributes to an overall separation of the building from its surroundings.

Potential for change to the listed building

7.4 What is possible in terms of appropriate and sensitive change to Pall Mall Court is – as is the case with all listed buildings –a question of balance and degree. As with all listed buildings, change is possible. Whether change is acceptable or not depends on the effect on the *overall* special architectural and historic interest of the building.

7.5 Substantial changes have occurred to the listed building since it was listed in 2000 these include the replacement of suspended ceilings throughout, new lighting and new flooring. The original radiators have been replaced. Lift lobbies and service risers have also been extensively

altered. These changes were considered acceptable presumably because large parts of the interior were not considered to be central to the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building, or had already been altered.

7.6 Compared to other listed buildings, Pall Mall Court is inherently susceptible to more change rather than less. It is not a medieval chapel or an 18th century house. It does not have fine, hand-crafted detail or features made of traditional materials subject to decay. Notwithstanding the specific nature of the massing, the site layout, the bay rhythm of the curtain walling, it is a modern building, made of standardised parts and materials, providing generic internal spaces.

7.7 The essential special architectural and historic interest of Pall Mall Court lies in its overall external appearance, its massing and scale, and the way it relates to the surrounding urban fabric. It does not lie in its interior: neither the designers' intentions nor the physical fact of the building's interior at this point in time provide the interior of the building with any significant special interest.

7.8 A fundamental quality of Pall Mall Court – and of buildings like it built at that time and since – is flexibility. The internal spaces of the building were designed to be inherently flexible. This is the reason that, outside of the lobby and circulation spaces, there is no specific architectural concept relating to the internal design, other than that provided by the bays of the external façade.

7.9 This is clear when alterations that have occurred internally are considered. The replacement of the suspended ceilings throughout the building has certainly not harmed the building. On each of the floors, at various times and in a multitude of layouts and designs, internal walls and partitions have been erected to create individual offices and other rooms - this has also not harmed the building.

7.10 This applies to the ground and lower ground levels on King Street. There is no specific architectural quality in the size or location of the opening in the floor slab – there is simply the fact that these two floors were designed to be interconnected. The opening in the slab could be larger, smaller or in another position without affecting the overall special architectural and historic interest of the listed building. Similarly, the location of the stairs between the two floor levels is purely expedient – there is no specific architectural quality in the position of the stairs, and its location could also be different without affecting the overall special interest of the listed building.

The proposed scheme

7.11 Pall Mall Medical is a private medical clinic which provides healthcare services in central Manchester. Established in 2009, Pall Mall Medical currently occupies the lower ground floor area of the central block. The practice has been very successful and this has led it to seek to expand into the existing basement, ground and lower ground floor areas of the King Street block. The practice has already signed a tenancy agreement with the landlord, subject to obtaining planning permission and listed building consent for the proposed works.

7.12 The brief from Pall Mall Medical principally requires cellular accommodation as is normal for medical services, and the accommodation is intended to meet the growing demands for medical consultations and diagnostic equipment.

7.13 The proposed scheme involves:

- Removal of most internal non-load bearing partitions, open staircase, ceilings, bank vault structure, the bullion hoist and redundant service pipes, cables & ducts;
- Addition of a new floor to infill the large void present in raised ground floor structure;

- Internal fit out works involving the erection of new metal framed partitions, staircase, platform lift and suspended ceilings including structural alterations and a mechanical heating and ventilation system;
- Installation of new condensers over an extended area of the existing screened roof mounted air handling plant over the 5th floor
- Installation of internally illuminated signs over the existing external wall of staircase 1 facing King Street and over replacement lower opaque glass panels in two bay windows facing Pall Mall Court

The effect of the proposed scheme

7.14 The Design & Access Statement provides a detailed explanation of the rationale and purpose for each aspect of the works, and describes why it is necessary to make the interventions proposed. No harm is caused to the heritage significance of the listed building by what is proposed – the key elements of special architectural and historic interest described earlier in this report are preserved and enhanced.

7.15 The void at upper ground floor level is not an original feature of the listed building, and – as set out above – is not connected to what is of central special architectural and historic interest at the building. The filling in of this void will not harm the listed building, will assist in the beneficial re-use of Unit 1 and will, of course, be reversible.

7.16 A new internal private accommodation staircase and lift are located within the void area of the ground floor, and will therefore not affect any original fabric within the building.

7.17 The layout of partitioning within Unit 1 will not affect the appearance or character of the building, and no significant alterations are proposed to the external envelope. Partitions will avoid window openings or are

aligned with mullions in a suitable detail. Blinds will be used to provide privacy. Suspended ceilings will be provided; this is consistent with the original design of the listed building.

7.18 It has been shown that the bank vault and bullion lift at basement level are also non-original features of the building, and were installed when Unit 1 was occupied by a bank after the original occupant left the building. These features are not in themselves remarkable – they are features of many post-war banks up and down the country and have no particular heritage significance in themselves.

7.19 The placing of new condensers over an extended area of the existing screened roof are will have no significant effect on the appearance of the listed building or the conservation area – the existing enclosure is extended by only a small amount and the work will match the existing enclosure in appearance and colour.

7.20 The proposed external signage will be minimal and discreet. External signage for the medical practice already exits, and has no negative effect on the overall appearance of the listed building. The Design & Access Statement provides a detailed rationale for the approach to the signage and the location and design of the signage has demonstrably been carefully undertaken with the preservation of the character and appearance of the listed building as a key priority.

7.21 The overall effect on the heritage significance of Pall Mall Court, described and analysed earlier in this report, will be minimal. The scheme will change the building, but not in any way that is inimical to its special architectural and historic interest – quite the opposite. The long-vacant unit facing King Street will finally have a new use, and this will help sustain the listed building over the long term. The physical implications of the works required to facilitate this new use are sufficient to provide the required accommodation without interfering with what gives Pall Mall Court its essential architectural quality.

8 Compliance with policy and guidance

The National Planning Policy Framework

8.1 This report has provided a detailed description and analysis of the significance of Pall Mall Court and its heritage context, as required by Paragraph 128 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

8.2 In respect of Paragraph 131 of the NPPF, the proposed scheme can certainly be described as 'sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation'. It secures the 'positive contribution' that Pall Mall Court makes to the conservation area and the setting of other listed buildings, and the overall scheme contributes to sustainable communities by helping to reinvigorate a moribund part of listed building in central Manchester, and in turn enhancing the economic vitality of the conservation area and this part of the city.

8.3 The proposed development complies with Paragraph 133 of the NPPF. It does not lead to 'substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset'. It also complies with Paragraph 134 for the reasons given in detail earlier. We do not believe that the scheme involves any 'less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset', but any such 'less than substantial harm' that can be ascribed to the scheme is greatly outweighed by the benefits generated by the scheme in terms of intrinsic quality and helping to provide Pall Mall Court with a future in manner consistent with its essential heritage significance – this is addressed in detail in Section 7.

8.4 The scheme very definitely strikes the balance suggested by Paragraph 138 of the NPPF – it intervenes in Pall Mall Court in a manner commensurate to its relatively low internal significance as a listed building, its contribution to the conservation area and its contribution to the setting of

other listed buildings. This balance of intervention versus significance is described in detail earlier.

8.5 The scheme also does the relevant things that the 'Planning for the Historic Environment Practice Guide' urges in its Paragraph 79. For the reasons explained earlier, the proposed development 'makes a positive contribution to economic vitality and sustainable communities', and 'is an appropriate design for its context and makes' – indirectly by enhancing the broader permitted scheme – 'a positive contribution to the appearance, character, quality and local distinctiveness of the historic environment'.

Manchester's Local Development Framework

8.6 The proposed scheme clearly helps 'protect' and 'enhance' the built environment of central Manchester as sought by Spatial Objective SO6 – it helps secure the economic future of the building and thus its continued presence as part of central Manchester's heritage. As required by Policy EN1, the proposed scheme has clearly considered 'the City's heritage and continue the rich pattern of activity in the core area' – this is demonstrated by this report and the Design & Access Statement.

8.7 In respect of saved Unitary Development Plan policies, the proposed scheme is consistent with Saved UDP Policy DC19.1. It does not fully involve 'a change of use of a listed building, where it would have a detrimental effect on the character or appearance of the building' – the proposed scheme is a considered and careful response to the listed building while providing new healthcare facilities. Any 'detrimental effect' is strongly and overwhelmingly balanced by the exceptional public benefits flowing from the scheme. For the reasons given in respect of the NPPF, the scheme doesn't involve an entirely 'adverse effect on its architectural or historic character' in the listed building – that character is preserved in all its most important parts. The scheme certainly does *not* 'permit alterations to a listed building

which would prevent the future use of any part of the building, in particular upper floors or basements, or where poor maintenance is likely to result'

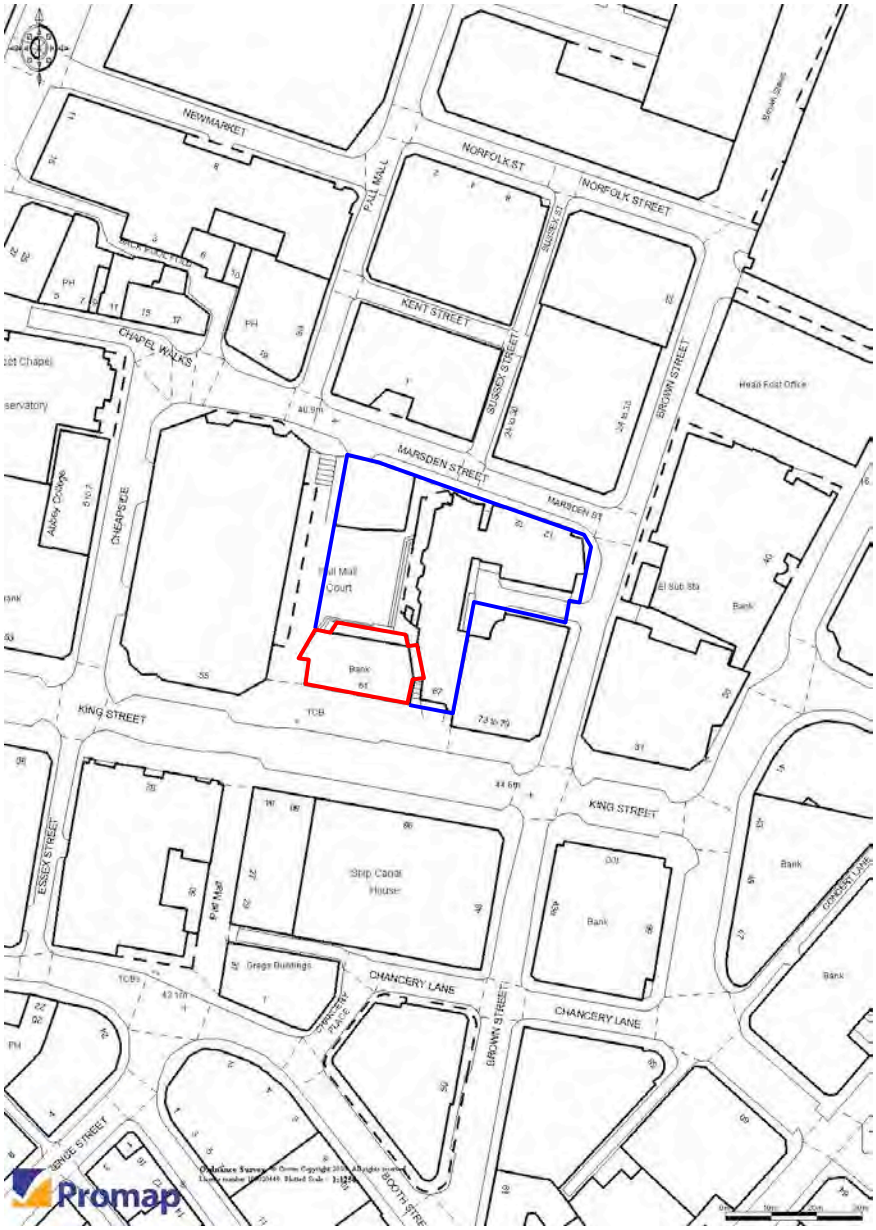
8.8 The proposed scheme will not have any harmful effect on the setting of other listed buildings or the Upper King Street Conservation Area – these things are preserved and indeed enhanced by providing vacant parts within Pall Mall Court with a new use, lending new life and activity to King Street. For the reasons given here and in the previous section, the scheme complies with the Council's Policies DC18.1 and DC19.1.

9 Conclusion

9.1 The proposed scheme is a positive measure that intervenes in the listed building to provide a vacant part with a new and sustainable use without harming any essential elements of the listed building's heritage significance. The scheme enhances Pall Mall Court by giving it a new use that is consistent with its spatial and architectural characteristics, and thus helps provide the listed building with a sustainable future.

9.2 For these reasons, explained at length in this report, the proposed scheme complies with national and local policy for the historic built environment.

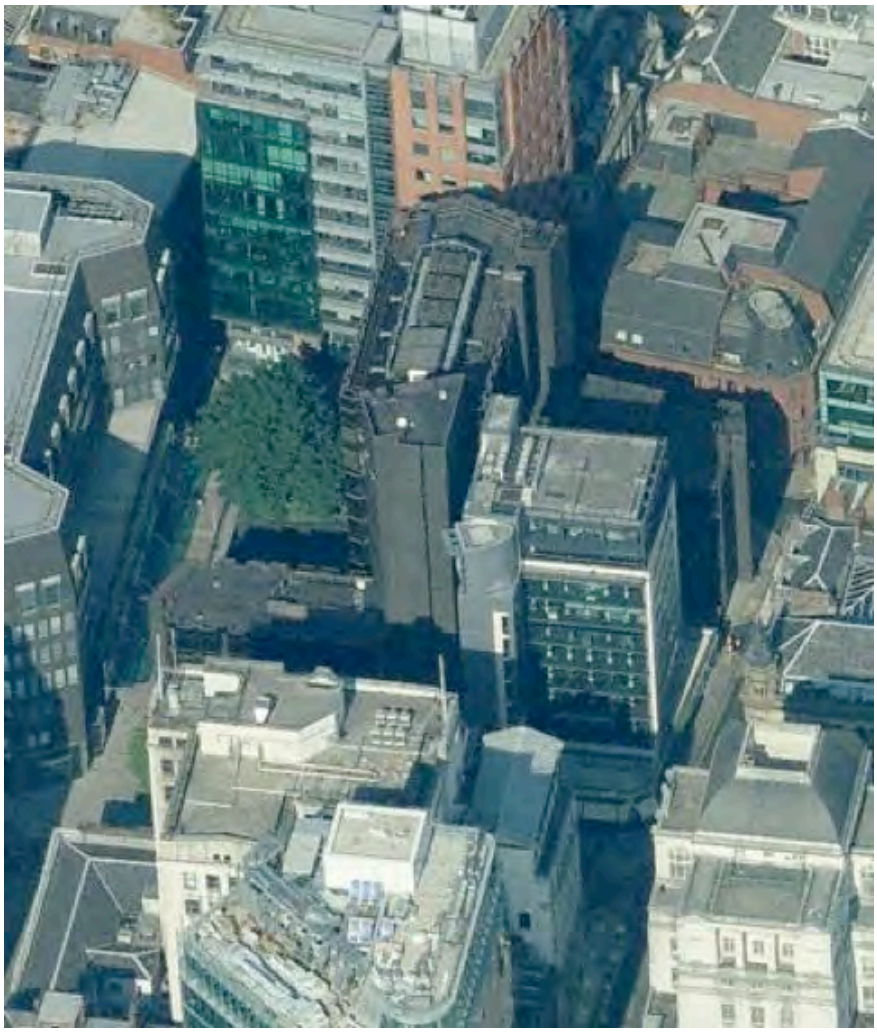
Appendix A: Location



Current Ordnance Survey



Aerial photograph



Oblique aerial view from the south



Oblique aerial view from the east



Oblique aerial view from the north



Oblique aerial view from the west

Appendix B: List description

PALL MALL COURT, AND RAISED PIAZZA AND PODIUM TO SIDE
67
Parish: MANCHESTER
District: MANCHESTER
County: GREATER MANCHESTER

LBS Number: 486899
Grade: II
Date Listed: 04/12/2000
Date Delisted:
NGR: SJ8397898303

SJ8398SE MARSDEN STREET
698-1/27/11133 (South side)
04-DEC-00 12
Pall Mall Court, and raised piazza and
podium to side

KING STREET
(North side)
67
Pall Mall Court, and raised piazza and
podium to side

GV II

Commercial offices. 1966-8 by Brett and Pollen, partner in charge Harry Teggin, in association with A H Brotherton and Partners, engineers Cyril Blumfield and Partners. Reinforced concrete frame with bronze ceramic mosaic to staircase and lift towers, blue brickwork and bronze painted aluminium curtain walling with bronze glass. `Z'-shaped plan, with five-storey block to King Street and twelve-storey range to rear, wrapped round the adjoining Norwich Union building of no merit, and with raised paved public piazza, Pall Mall Court, set with brick planter podium, over basement garage. The facade of the building was deliberately broken up with glazed bays separated by narrow

recesses containing opening windows and allowing natural ventilation in sheltered conditions. The bays are of a repetitive pattern on a 6ft- 2ft-6ft-4ft grid so that they are paired. Tall projecting lift tower to right of entrance, with later revolving doors, on King Street. Interiors were open plan from the first, and have not been inspected.

Pall Mall Court was commissioned as a prestige headquarters office building for the London Assurance Group, which was taken over by the Sun Alliance Group as work began. Brett and Pollen had already designed the listed Seker's building in Sloane Street for the Cadogan Estate, and this secured their commission here. It is one of only three buildings by Teggin, the third being council offices built for Portsmouth City Council in a similar style in the early 1970s. The change of client meant that the building has been occupied by a variety of tenants in addition to Sun Alliance. Teggin conceived the building `to have the impact of a jet stone by the use of bronze glass, sharp angles and opaque facets', although the cleaning of the surrounding stone buildings has subsequently tempered its effect. Nevertheless we can still enjoy the exemplary detailing which won the building the RIBA Regional Award for 1970. `The building exudes quality and a sensitive mind', wrote the Architects' Journal in 1970, while the RIBA committee admired the way it knits into the existing urban environment and its creation of a new public open space.

Sources
Architects' Journal, 28 October 1970, pp.1007-13
RIBA Journal, July 1970, p.301
Information from the architect

Listing NGR: SJ8397898303

Appendix C: Selected photographs



Figure 1: Looking west on King Street



Figure 2: the frontage to King Street



Figure 3: The main entrance on King Street



Figure 4: The ground and lower ground floor on King Street



Figure 5: The lower ground floor treatment



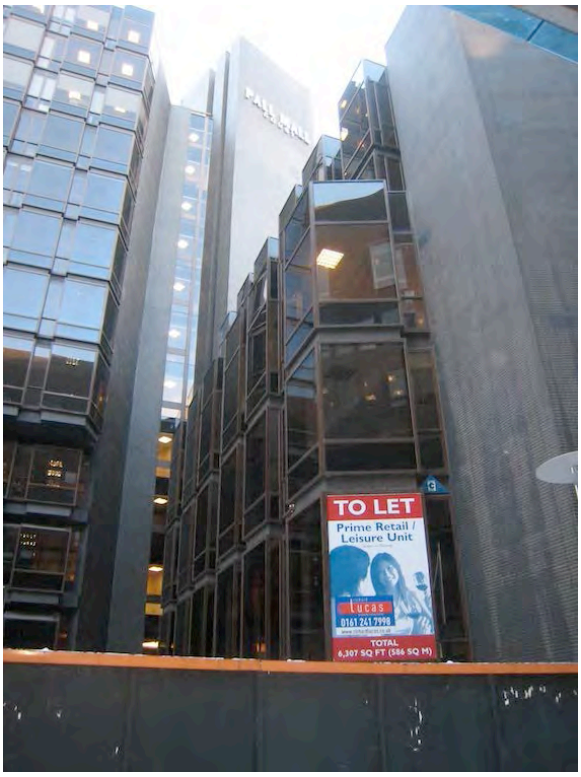
Figure 6: The King Street frontage



Figure 7: The western end of the King Street block



Figure 8: The western elevation of the central block



Figures 9 and 10: The rear of the King Street block





Figure 11: The central block from Marsden Street



Figure 12: Marsden Street looking towards Brown Street

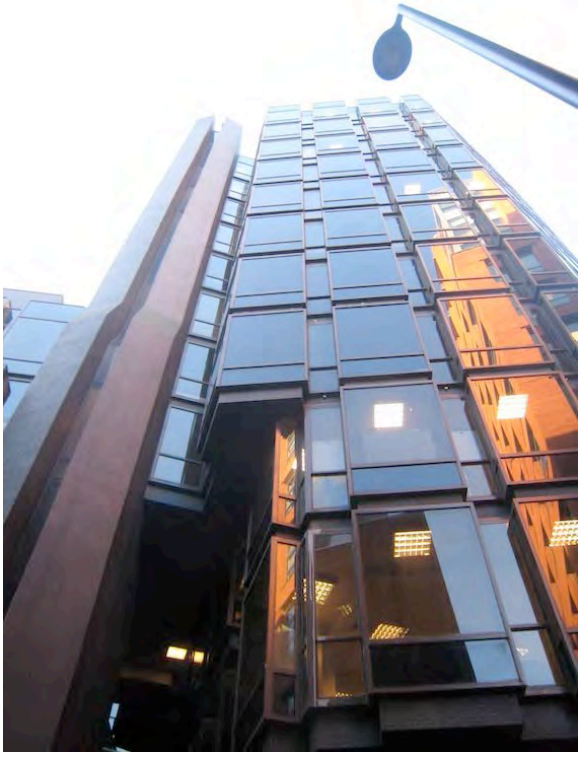


Figure 13: The central block from Marsden Street

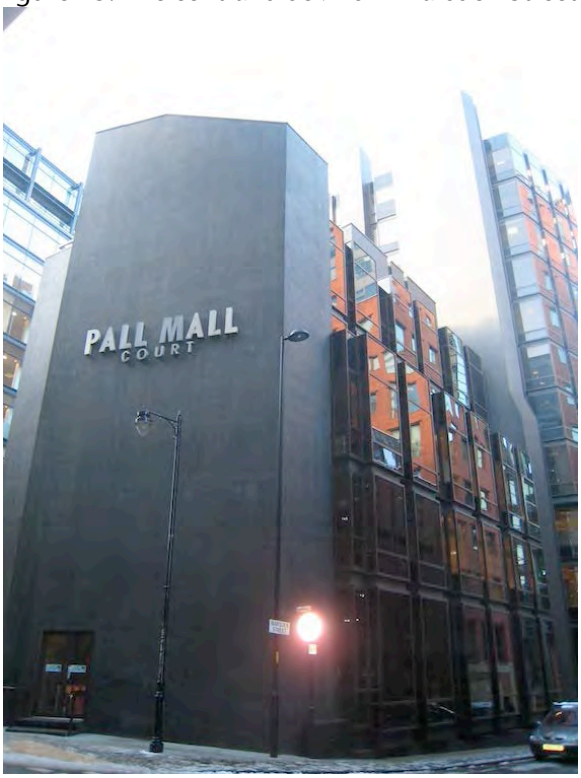


Figure 14: The Marsden Street block from Brown Street



Figure 15: The central block from Brown Street



Figure 16: The vacant unit on King Street: upper level (ground floor)





Figures 17 and 18: The vacant unit on King Street: upper level (ground floor) – external envelope





Figures 19 and 20: The vacant unit on King Street: upper level (ground floor)



Figures 21 and 22: The vacant unit on King Street: upper level (ground floor)



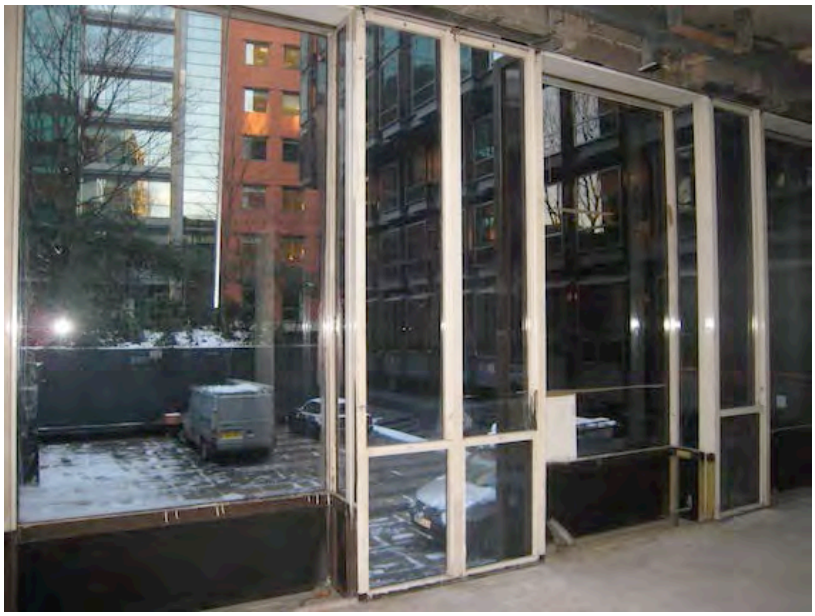


Figure 23: The vacant unit on King Street: upper level (ground floor), looking into the piazza



Figure 24: The vacant unit on King Street: upper level (ground floor) – exposed soffit





Figures 25 and 26: The vacant unit on King Street: lower level (lower ground floor)



Figures 27 and 28: The vacant unit on King Street: lower level (lower ground floor)





Figures 29 and 30: Stair details

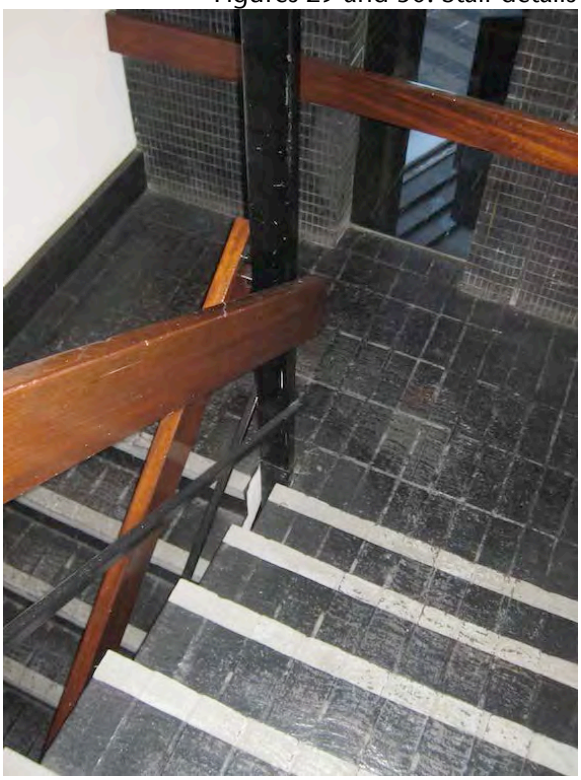




Figure 31: Lift lobby



Figure 32: Office interior



Figure 33: Office interior



Figure 34: Office interior



Figure 35: Office interior



Figure 36: Office interior



Figure 37: Office interior

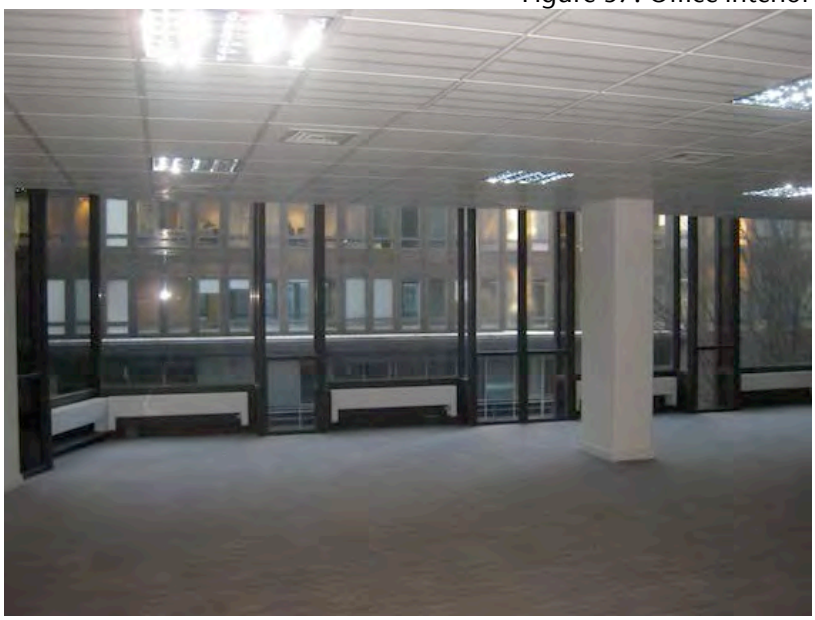


Figure 38: Office interior



Figure 39: Office interior



Figure 40: Office interior

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