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59/59A CROSS STREET • VICTORIA BUILDINGS • MANCHESTER

Design, Access and Heritage Statement

Revision B



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Revision B *7th Feb 2014 – Clarification of the requirement for and design of a new suspended, raft ceiling at ground floor level. Clarification of the Royal British Legion's proposed use and aspirations for this site.*

1.0 Introduction. Victoria Buildings and The Royal British Legion

This heritage statement has been prepared as part of a new Listed Building Consent application for alterations at Victoria Buildings on the junction of Cross and Princess Streets, Manchester. The alterations to which this application apply comprise relate to changes proposed by The Royal British Legion who have agreed a tenancy on ground floor retail units – 59 and 59a Cross Street and office space on the 1st and 2nd Floors. The extent of the demise and proposed fit out are shown in Lees Associates Drawings and are described n more detail under section 6.0

934_MAN_LBC_00 P1 – Site Location Plan
934_MAN_LBC_01 P1 – Ground floor plan - existing
934_MAN_LBC_02 P2 – First floor plan - existing
934_MAN_LBC_03 P1 – Second floor plan - existing
934_MAN_LBC_04 **P3** – Ground floor plan - proposed
934_MAN_LBC_05 P2 – First floor plan - proposed
934_MAN_LBC_06 **P3** – Second floor plan – proposed
934_MAN_LBC_07 **P2** – Cross Street Elevation – Existing and proposed
934_MAN_LBC_08 **P2** – Bow Lane Elevation – Existing and proposed
934_MAN_LBC_09 **P2** – Proposed Ground Floor Sections

2.0 Planning History and Heritage – Victoria Buildings

Heritage Statement

Located on the corner of Cross Street and Princess Street, Victoria Buildings is a Grade II listed building over 7 levels. Comprehensively redeveloped in 2000, the building comprises of retail units to the ground floor and basement with offices over, and is situated within the Albert Square Conservation Area.
The Conservation Area is centered on the Town Hall with most of the buildings around the Square itself, excluding those immediately opposite the front of the Town Hall, constructed during the Victorian era. Though variable in style and materials, all of the buildings tend to be typified by a ground floor retail element with office accommodation above. This pattern was established in the late 1800's when land in the city centre had become too expensive for domestic residences and city centre locations became favorable for offices.

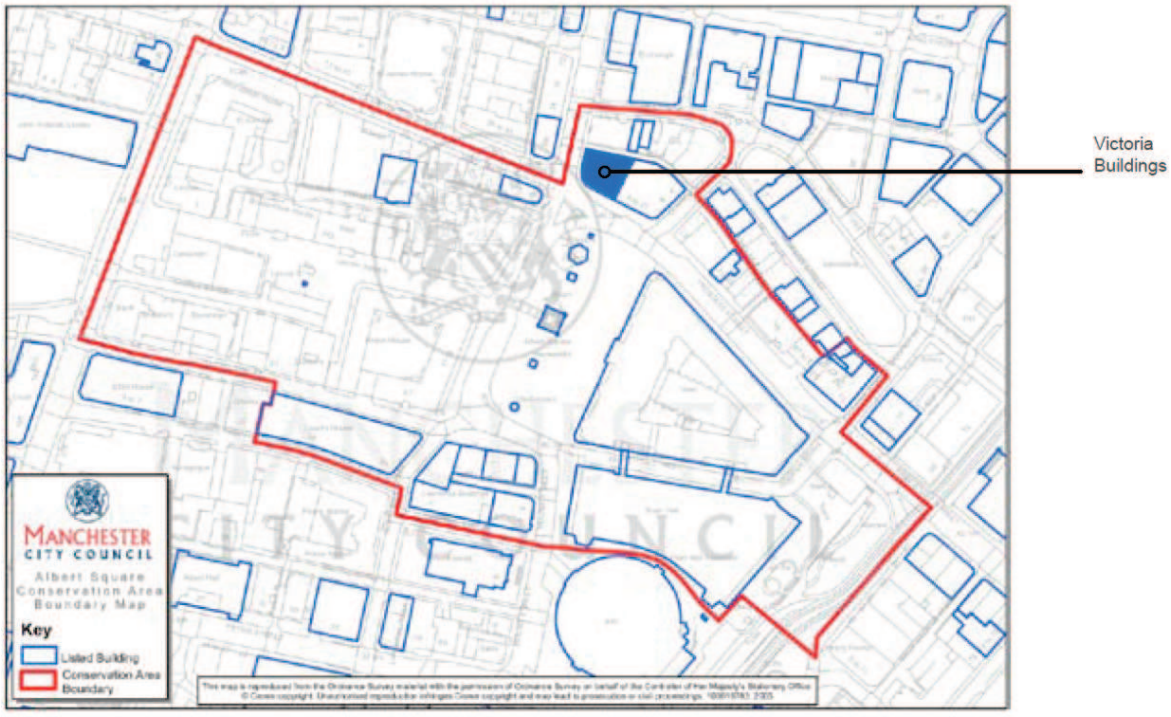


Figure 1: The building is Grade II listed and lies within the Albert Square Conservation area

English Heritage Description

The building was listed in October 1974. The listing refers to the property as to the two buildings making up the property; No's 59 and 61 Cross Street, although the property is fully described as Victoria Buildings 59-61 Cross Street and 1-7 Princess Street, and refers to the outside of the buildings only, as per the description below (extracted from the List Entry from English Heritage):

Includes: Nos.59 AND 61 CROSS STREET. Shops and offices. 1877, by Pennington and Bridgen; altered. Red brick with sandstone dressings, red tiled roof. Curved trapeziform plan on end-of-block site. Gothic style. Four storeys and attic, 8 windows including corner and Cross Street side; stone ground floor and frieze with Tudor-flower and grotesque ornament; slender chamfered shafts of brick and stone rising to a large gable in each main facade and 2 small gables over the corner, all with tourelles and finials and linked by open-work parapets, stone spirelet to

end of Cross Street facade, steeply-pitched roof with small hipped dormers and large clustered chimneys. Ground floor of each facade has 2 wide elliptical- arched windows with moulded heads, a 2-centred arched doorway to the left of the Princess Street facade, with carved enrichment and traceried overlight (C20 shopfronts inserted in corner); 1st and 2nd floors have tiered mullion-and transom windows to the gabled bays, those in the main facades canted and those at the corner bowed, all with terracotta traceried panels between the floors and elaborately traceried open-work parapets, and various other transomed windows; 3rd floor has mostly 2-light windows with Gothic enrichment, including 2 in the Princess Street facade with carved stone gablets; gables have 2-centred arched windows with tracery.



Heritage Assessment 59 – 59a. Cross Street, Manchester M2 4JW.

The building is located at the far southern end of Cross Street at the junction of John Dalton Street and Princess Street. This planning application is for the shop units of 59 and 59A Cross Street combined with part of the first floor building known as 59 – 61 Cross Street and 1 – 7 Princess Street (Victoria Buildings)

The units of 59 and 59A Cross Street have been extensively refurbished within the last 15 years. Little historic detailing is visible and none of the existing features are original, except for the windows.

2.1 Existing arrangement of Victoria Buildings

The Victoria Buildings currently houses multiple tenants with the various parts generally retaining the original shop/office function. New tenants propose minor interior alterations and refurbishment to a specific parts of the building. Owing to the grade II listing, listed building consent will be required before the work can be carried out.

On account of the building's heritage value, the extent of past interior alteration establishes that the primary physical significance of the building lies in its exterior architectural treatment. Principles of minimum intervention and reversibility have been advocated in terms of proposed changes to the interior so as to limit the potential for any

unnecessary damage to the historic building fabric. This is done giving due deference to the presumed original interior layout of the building which is an important facet of its historical character.

Further internal work has been carried out during property occupation, which has had a major impact upon the historic fabric of the building and led to the loss of original features. None of the internal detailing remains.

3.0 The Site and Surroundings of Victoria Buildings

The Victoria Buildings occupy a rounded corner plot and front directly on to the pedestrian pavement, with Cross Street to the west and Princess Street to the south. The narrow Bow Lane forms the northern plot boundary and to the east the building adjoins the grade II listed Northern Assurance Buildings, by Waddintgon, Son and Dunkerley (1902). Victoria Buildings comprises four storeys plus an attic, with shops at ground level and office space above. The main access to the upper floor accommodation is via an entrance lobby, stair and lift from Princess Street.

The predominant character of this part of the conservation area is commercial. Most of the buildings in the conservation area were completed between 1800 and 1880 and a substantial proportion of these are either listed, or considered to make positive contributions to the character of the conservation area.

3.1 Immediately adjoining buildings and sites

53 – 55 Cross Street: Bow Chambers.
61 Cross Street and 1 – 7 Princess Street: Forming part of Victoria Buildings.
9 – 21 Princess Street: Northern Assurance Buildings.

4.0 The existing access arrangement.

Salford Central and Manchester Victoria station is within a few minutes walk of the site and offers national rail links. Major bus routes also operate along Cross Street and Princess Street as well as near by tram stops at Market Street Station and St Peters Square Central, making the site highly accessible.

A new entrance threshold to the ground floor public space is being provided as part of approved application 102990/LA/2013/C1. A new platform lift already approved under the same application will provide DDA access from the new public ground floor space to the commercial office spaces on the first and second floor above. First and Second floors are level throughout thus providing DDA access to all proposed Royal British Legion internal spaces.

5.0 Existing and Proposed Layouts.

Existing GA Plan
Ground Floor: 934_MAN_LBC_01 P1

Existing GA Plan
First Floor Plan: 934_MAN_LBC_02 Revision P2

Existing GA Plan
Second Floor Plan: 934_MAN_LBC_03 P1

Proposed GA Plan
Ground Floor: 934_MAN_LBC_04 Revision P3

Proposed GA Plan
First Floor: 934_MAN_LBC_05 Revision P2

Proposed GA Plan
Second Floor: 934_MAN_LBC_06 Revision P3

Existing & Proposed Street Elevation Revision P2
Cross Street: 934_MAN_LBC_07

Existing & Proposed Street Elevation
Bow Lane: 934_MAN_LBC_08 P2

Proposed Ground Floor Sections
Ground Floor: 934_MAN_LBC_09 P2

Drawings revised for this issue are in **bold** above.

6.0 Proposal and design

The proposed scheme will look to work within the recent structural and cosmetic changes that have been undertaken in recent months Ref:102990/LO/2013/C1 listed building consent and Ref:102989/FO/2013/C1 change of use.

The changes being proposed are to provide the Royal British Legion with a publically accessible advice centre and associated, private office space and forms one of 16 similar, new premises across the UK.

The Royal British Legion is the UK's leading Service charity. They provide practical care, advice and support to serving members of the Armed Forces, veterans of all ages and their families. The space is to be a publicly accessible advice centre that facilitates the provision of these services by The Royal British Legion. Currently, this service has been provided by home visits by 'outreach staff', the new facility will invite beneficiaries to the Legion premises and double as an information and advice centre to the wider public. The upper two floors of office spaces will allow for the corporate side of The Royal British Legion to perform their administrative services.

The Royal British Legion is a high profile, important body and the quality of the design, materials and installation of these premises are of great importance.

The proposal presented has fully consulted the Historic Environment Practice Guide (PPS5). This states that when considering proposals for buildings of architectural and historic interest:
"Understanding the extent of the fabric that holds that interest is important because this can, amongst other things lead to a better understanding of how adaptable the asset may be and therefore improve viability and the prospects for long term conservation".

The Proposal will refurbish the existing property presenting a new layout that is well informed for modern office and shop front conditions. The scheme will have no effect on the overall representation of the historic features of the building and all proposed internal works are non-structural. There is an absence of original internal features as a result of the spaces having been subject to multiple refurbishments over the past decades.

There is a dedicated public entrance offering direct DDA access from the street to the customer-facing ground floor facility and to first and second floor levels via a new vertical platform lift. Access from the street is via new auto opening system to existing entrance doors. There will be a dedicated staff access to first and second floor office spaces via the existing communal stairs accessed directly off Princess Street.

There is strong design intent towards maximising natural light into the internal spaces and the layout of new partition walls allows for an optimal working environment.

Proposal at Ground Floor Level

At ground floor we propose the construction of two visually and acoustically private meeting rooms that will be formed with new demountable metal stud partitions and lowered ceilings (to be supported by the new partitions). Partitions will be fixed to the floor and will be part height stopping approximately 700mm below the proposed new suspended ceiling. This will present the proposed interview rooms as a temporary new installation into the ground floor space. It will accentuate a sense of height to the ground floor space in keeping with the original feel. New plasterboard ceilings in the Interview rooms will be at a height 2600mm above FFL. This will provide a concealed void for M&E services behind the higher partition walls.

The new, previously approved platform lift will be enclosed in a full height metal stud partition surround to improve the aesthetics of the internal spaces.

In order to conceal the required M&E installation to the ground floor retail unit, a new suspended mf plasterboard ceiling raft will be installed at a height 3900mm above the FFL. This has been determined by the minimum 100mm clearance required below the underside of the new structural beam to allow necessary M&E services to pass the existing beam. This structural beam has been provided as part of approved application102990/LA/2013/C1.

This ceiling raft will be set back from the existing external walls and glazing to ensure the original windows are visually unaffected and the sense of double height space is not compromised. A new slim line up-lighting system will be added to the perimeter of the raft ceiling to illuminate the full height of the existing structural ceilings. This will accentual and draw the eye to the original full height spaces. The drop below the original ceiling height has been set at a maximum dimension and is just sufficient to house the air handling equipment required to meet current building regulations along with the proposed new recessed light fittings.

The new floor finish at ground floor level will be a combination of new Oak engineered timber board, inset carpet rug and carpet tile to the existing pine board substrate.

Proposal at 1st and 2nd floor Levels

The first and second floor spaces will be used as offices and divided by new demountable metal stud and plasterboard partitions to rationalise the internal spaces to optimise functions for Royal British Legion business. The new partitions will be fixed the existing raised floor and scribed around any existing joinery detail of heritage value. Mechanical fixing to the existing ceiling soffit will be avoided.

On the first and second floors, the existing carpet tile on raised timber floors will be retained.

We propose no changes to ceilings on the first and second floors which will be as existing with a new decorative paint finish.

There will be a reconfiguration of the current sanitation area on the first floor in the Cross Street elevation. This will include new DDA fittings/fixtures and finishes and a new access door. New WC facilities will be added adjacent the

proposed new kitchen outside the conference room. This new WC facility is located in a space that has previously contained WC facilities.

New external signage is proposed including two facia signs (one above Unit 59 and the other above 59A on Cross Street elevation) and one projecting sign. Details of the external signage proposal forms part of a separate Advertising Consent application Ref: 104458.

In this case, the proposal has no effect upon the original neo-gothic building, and seeks to improve the internal appearance and fabric for future generations.

7.0 Conclusion

All of the planned works are sympathetic to the buildings existing context; none of the works adversely impact on the special architectural or historic interest of the building. The proposal will further improve the Cross Street Façade by unifying the external appearance of two previous units into a single detail.

The building spaces forming our application are currently vacant and the refurbishment and alterations proposed are essential to help return the building to a viable community and economic use. The development would lead to the sustainable restoration of this much altered, but attractive late neo-gothic commercial building.