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File Ref.	Rev.	Author	Creation Date
113-DOC005	-	DMP	24 September 2014

Document

Heritage Asset Statement

Project

The Midland Hotel, Manchester: Acoustic Upgrade

Client

QHotels

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Heritage Asset Statement

INTRODUCTION

This heritage asset statement has been prepared by Kitson Architecture on behalf of QHotels and Midland (Manchester) Ltd in support of a Planning Application for proposed works at the Midland Hotel, in accordance with Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework to assess the impact of the proposals on the Heritage Asset.

The works for which Planning Consent is sought form part of an acoustic upgrade to the building in light of the proposed Metrolink Second City Crossing construction works and subsequent increase in tram frequencies.

There have been discussions prior to the submission of this application with Planning and Conservation officers, as part of a separate Listed Building Application.

ASSESSMENT OF THE HERITAGE ASSET

The hotel was built by the Midland Railway Company and designed by architect Charles Trubshaw, with the aim of constructing "the finest hotel in the world". It opened in 1903.

The building is an early example of a steel framed building, with its use of terracotta and red granite on its façade giving a wonderful feel of elegance, luxury and substance.

The architecture is described in its listing as an "elaborate, eclectic baroque style" and is very unique with crossovers of late Victorian and Edwardian styles with elements of Art Nouveau in the railings, and Trubshaw himself does not seem to have produced a comparable building.

Original features of the hotel that no longer exist include a palm court, concert hall, winter gardens, Russian Baths, Turkish Baths, a roof garden and a glass dome above the Octagon Court.

As the Midland Railway Company's flagship hotel, it was located just across from Central Station (now Manchester Central convention centre) and linked via its rear door which led to the winter gardens through a tunnel.

Built as a show of wealth and luxury, the hotel suffered into the 1930s as the golden age of railway hotels began to fade, and after the Second World War a swathe of interior changes meant that much if the original glamour was lost. It was during the post war era that the theatre was removed with the demolition of two storeys within the small lightwell and when the glass dome above the Octagon was dismantled.

In poor state of repair, dated and dilapidated decorations and in need of urgent maintenance, the hotel closed in 1985 for two years whilst a substantial refurbishment programme was undertaken which brought back much of the elegance and glamour it once had, including the reinstatement of the two massive, grand entrance arches which were hidden by a mezzanine floor.

Another refurbishment was undertaken in 2006, this time much less extensive, to give the hotel an update and refresh so that it stayed ahead of its competitors and thus remaining a viable use for this incredible heritage asset.

Today, the Midland Hotel is one of Manchester's most popular venues not only as a hotel, but for restaurants, bars, banqueting, conferences and events. This is combined with a unique architectural history that is key to its success and something that the owners of the hotel are keen to capitalise on,

evidenced by their success at restoring the hotel to its early grandeur and enabling a viable use of a heritage asset.

THE SETTING OF THE HERITAGE ASSET

The Midland Hotel is located on an island site, bound by Peter Street, Windmill Street, Mount Street and Lower Mosely Street and is included in the St. Peter's Square Conservation Area.

St. Peter's Square was formed in 1907, creating a civic space in what was formerly a largely commercial and residential area. The Square was designated a conservation area in December 1973, encompassing the area bordered by Museum Street, Peter Street, Southmill Street; Central Street and Library Walk; Dickinson Street and George Street, and; Hale Street, Bale Street, Lower Mosely Street and Windmill Street.

The hotel commands a strong position fronting onto the square, contributing enormously to the scale and grandeur of the area. The position will be further enhanced when the redevelopment of the square is complete.

The description of the St. Peter's Square Conservation Area has this to say about the Hotel:

> *The Midland Hotel is the epitome of the grand style in late Victorian architecture. Built close to Central Station (G-MEX), and originally intended to be linked with it, the hotel marked the terminus of the Midland Railway Company's line from London. It is a splendid example of that period, constructed in red brick, brown terra cotta and red granite with elaborately detailed gables, turrets and tourelles, and pierced terra cotta balustrades. The present owners have undertaken a major refurbishment, including reinstatement of the massive red granite entrance arches.*
>
> *Dated: December 1992*

The hotel now forms part of an important conference district, Manchester Central, its main venue the former Central railway station for which the hotel was built, allowing it to capitalise on its corridor and rear entrance.

DESCRIPTION OF LISTING

The Midland Hotel was listed in October 1974. It is described as follows:

> *MANCHESTER*
>
> *SJ8397NE PETER STREET 698-1/31/277 (South side) 03/10/74 Midland Hotel*
>
> *GV II**
>
> *Hotel. 1898-1903, by Charles Trubshaw, for the Midland Railway Company; altered. Steel frame, with cladding of brown polished granite, red brick and much buff and brown glazed terracotta (roof not visible). Very large trapeziform plan on island site. Elaborate eclectic Baroque style. Five diminishing storeys with cellars and attics, the principal element of the facade to Peter Street 2:4:2 bays, symmetrical, plus a 3-bay portion to the left slightly canted back, and 3-sided corners to both ends; the paired bays bounded on the inner side by fenestrated 3-sided pilasters finished as turrets, and surmounted by elaborate attic gables; with cornice and balustraded parapet over ground floor, giant round-headed arches to the next 3 floors, small coupled round-headed arches to the 4th floor, a bracketed cornice and pierced parapet, and gabled attic dormers over the centre. The ground floor, of polished granite, has a recessed central entrance under 2 massive semi-circular arches (like shipping*

holes of neighbouring canal warehouses), a roundel between containing a griffon, and a convex frieze above with raised lettering "MIDLAND HOTEL"; and coupled round-headed arches to the outer bays with terracotta mullion-and-transom windows, the basement areas below these protected by bowed wrought-iron railings in Art Nouveau style. The windows of the upper floors are mostly coupled, those at 3rd and 4th floors round-headed, all with wrought-iron balcony railings and much terracotta enrichment. The canted portion to the left, the longer side walls (to Lower Mosley Street and Mount Street) and the shorter rear wall (to Windmill Street) are in generally similar style, but the Lower Mosley Street facade has segmental curved balconies to the 1st floor and bow-shaped balconies to the 2nd floor, and the rear facade has domed corner turrets. Interior: originally had a palm court, concert hall, winter gardens, Russian and Turkish baths, roof garden, 23 lifts, three and a half miles of corridors and 400 bedrooms; ground floor altered and upper floors not inspected. Very prominent building representative of the cosmopolitan wealth and taste of late C19 Manchester, and an early example of a steel-framed building.

Listing NGR: SJ8382897870

IMPACT OF THE PROPOSALS ON THE HERITAGE ASSET

Paragraph 132 of the NPPF states:

> *"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. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional."*

And Paragraph 134 advises:

> *"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."*

Within the scope of this Planning Application, the proposals are:

- Install two louvres within existing openings to the Mosely Street elevation
- Install two louvres within existing openings to the large lightwell elevation
- Replacement fire exit doorset from the Trafford Room
- Replacement fire exit doorset from the Alexandra Suite

Both sets of louvres are required to provide the adequate level of fresh air ventilation into the affected rooms as required by Building Regulations, as existing ventilation through the windows will not be possible following their acoustic upgrade. To minimise the affect the louvres will have on the building we propose their installation within existing window openings instead of forming new penetrations within the building fabric, which would cause significant damage to the asset.

We propose that the existing glazing panes are removed whilst retaining the existing window frames which the new louvres are to be fitted within. The window panel to which the louvre is proposed at

the first floor plant room has in fact been found to be missing its glazing and is currently boarded over with a timber board which is painted black. This board will be removed to facilitate the louvre install. Existing louvres in nearby windows, which are somewhat larger than the proposed, set a precedent for this type of works and evidence the necessary plant that is required to operate a hotel.

The doors to both the Alexandra Suite and Trafford Room are not original and were installed during the major refurbishment of the hotel that took place during 1986. There is Georgian wired glazing to the window lights surrounding the door to the Trafford Room which is proposed to be replaced with clear, laminated glazing.

CONCLUSION

In summary, we feel that the proposals have been designed in such a way to minimise any detrimental effect on the heritage asset. The appearance of the louvres will be very subtle and hardly noticeable within the wider elevation, helped by maintaining the existing frames and placing the louvres within the plane of the existing glazing and having a dark grey colour to suit the colour of actual glazing.

As the new doors will be replacing existing doors we do not feel that there is any loss to the heritage asset, and the change is more than justified to maintain the level of service the hotel provides.

It is key for the future viability of the hotel that the continued use of the rooms in question is not affected by the construction works along Mosely Street or increase in tram frequencies. Therefore it is important that the acoustics are upgraded to form rooms that meet the expectations of a hotel of the quality of the Midland in the 21st century.