atelier MB
URBAN ARCHITECTS & DESIGNERS

Heritage Statement to support a Listed Building Consent Application for works at Ground and Basement Floors of 13-15 King Street, Manchester

December 2013
Job 1502





facade along King Street



view from the corner of King Street
and Police Street

Introduction

This heritage statement accompanies the listed building consent application for alterations to the interior of 13-15 King Street Manchester. Previously let to the retailer Monsoon, on a 25 year lease, the building has now been vacant for some months. A combination of the wider economic environment and the general retail decline of the King Street area has not helped in the securing of a new tenant.

Listing Text

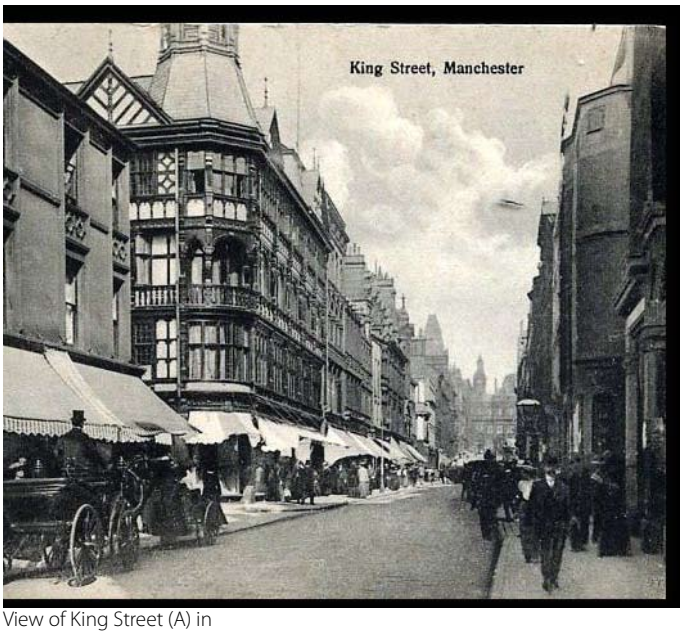
Shop. c.1920-30. Probably steel-framed but with elaborate "timber-framed" cladding; slate roof. Rectangular plan on corner site, with rounded corner. Tudor style. Four storeys with 5 bays to King Street, one curved corner bay, and 3 wide bays to Police Street; panelled piers and large plate-glass windows to ground floor; carved wallposts to 1st and 2nd floors, wooden blind balustrading between the floors, projected eaves with mutules, an octagonal turret over the corner with swept slated sides and arcaded cupola, gables flanking this and coupled gables over the 4th and 5th bays, all with herring-bone stuts and finials. The 1st floor has wooden mullion-and transom windows (6 lights to King Street, 10 curved lights to the corner and 8 lights to Police Street);the 2nd floor has set-in oriels with arched centre lights and sharply-curved corners with transoms and small-paned top lights (and those in the the wide bays to Police Street flanked by galleries with splat-baluster fronts); and the top floor has 10-light mullion-and-transom windows (those in the narrower bays to King Street forming continuous fenestration and those in the wide bays to Police Street flanked by lozengepanels). A good pastiche of the richest period of decorative timber-framing, forming a very striking feature in the street. Included for group value.

Listing NGR: SJ8372598330

King Street



View of King Street (B)
believed to be the 50s



View of King Street (A) in
the early 20th Century

Building History

Although the listing text describes the building's age as "c 1920-1930" this has been widely disputed. Clare Hartwell in "Pevsner's Manchester" states 1902 as the date of construction. This is perhaps more accurate as the detailing of the windows and the decoration of the building are more reminiscent of a Victorian era than a newer, plainer 30s pastiche, more common of public houses on new roads which were so commonly built in the 30s. (Even pastiche buildings follow trends of the time.)

The architects, Maxwell and Tuke, were more famously the architects for the Grade 1 listed Blackpool Tower completed in 1894. Both founders of the practice had died by 1893 some 9 years before 13-15 King is believed to have been completed. For this reason it is doubtful whether either of them had any input in the design. The building appears to have been built for Goodall and Co, a firm of furniture manufacturers and agents, and we have not been able to determine when Goodall and Co vacated and the building became offices and pure retail.

What is known is that the ground floor retail space was occupied by Jeager, in the 1950s right up until the early 1990s, when Monsoon took out a long lease on the premises. At this time the upper floors were used as offices.

With reference to the historic photograph A. Although not dated, the horse drawn cart and manner of dress would suggest that this photograph was taken in the early Edwardian era. Awnings on the ground floor unfortunately hide much of the ground floor detail, but the upper floor elevations can clearly be seen. Photograph B shows a hand drawing of the building from the City Council Archives. This is dated as "1930", but the style of the cars and dress would indicate that the 50s was the actual date of the sketch.

The remarkable fact is that, with the small exception of the introduction and removal of a canopy over the front door, there appear to have been very few elevation changes since the building was constructed. The façade, as well as being intact, is in very good condition, having been well maintained by the present and former Landlords. No information on the original state of the interior has been found



Detail of ceiling at
Ground Floor

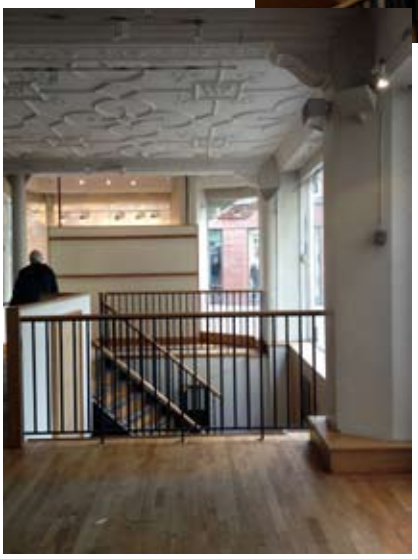
Internal qualities of the Retail Unit.

Internally on the ground floor much of the historic ceiling pattern is still present and in good order. There has been an inappropriate lay-in-grid suspended ceiling installed in the small bay beyond the non-original stud wall. On inspection the ceiling detail is largely intact in this ceiling void.

Much of the shopfront is also intact and, as far as can be ascertained, original. However, it is unlikely that originally the glass expanse would have been so large. As glass technology improved, original mullions and transoms may have been removed to improve visibility for retail purposes. There are no plans to alter any of the shopfront as part of this application, and any works will seek to reinforce improve and enhance rather than change.



images of non-
original staircase



The one major departure from the original layout is the presence of a non-original staircase between ground and basement floor. This is located on the edge of the unit by the Police Street façade. Apart from being a rather dominant and alien feature in the space, the design of the stairs handrail and risers are rather visually heavy. The irregular orientation and location of the flight detract from the orthogonal nature of the space highlighted by the steel columns, the ceiling patterns and the decorative downstand beams.

In order to form this opening between ground and basement floors, new steelwork members in the form of columns and beams were introduced in the basement and subbasement. Again the bizarre orientation of the stairs has facilitated the rather random sub-basement column layout.

In the basement, a complex non-original mf suspended ceiling of differing heights is present. As far as can be ascertained, there is no original ceiling above this and the bare floor joists supporting the ground floor boards can be seen through apertures in the plasterboard. As part of this application we proposed to carefully remove this ceiling and expose the beams and joists. A decision on the finishing of this element can be made at that point.



Basement view showing modern MF ceiling

Sub Basement view showing non original columns to be removed



Proposals

In summary our proposals are as follows:

1. Soft strip of various non original elements on the ground floor (refer to drawing).

2. Soft Strip of various non original elements in the basement (refer to drawing).

3. Careful removal of non-original columns in sub-basement

4. Careful removal of non original staircase and introduction of new stair to rear of unit.

The new staircase

We are proposing to carefully remove the existing staircase and install a new, more sympathetic fully DDA compliant staircase to the rear of the space. There will be no need to introduce extra steelwork to support the trimmed opening and intervention will be minimal. (please refer to the Clancy Consulting report for more detail)

In terms of design, the use of steel and glass for the handrails will clearly express the contemporary nature of the intervention risers.

The existing opening will be floored over and all steelwork columns formally supporting the trimming elements will be removed.

Cat B work

Any fit out work for a new tenant will be the subject of a separate application.

Conclusion

This application seeks to strip non original elements and replace the dominant staircase with a more sympathetic orthogonol and contemporary structure to the rear of the unit. On completion of the proposed works the space will be relieved of the non original clutter that had previously been in evidence.