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Statement of Justification in support of:

The Proposed refurbishment of Basement restaurant at:

Portland House,
103 Portland Street,
Manchester
M1 6DF

1.0 BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

This Statement of Justification forms part of an application to refurbish the basement level of the above property, as part of a new lease agreement. The building is a designated Heritage Asset due to its grade 2 listed status. Section 12 (Conserving and enhancing the environment) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires applicants (for alterations to a heritage asset) to describe the significance of the asset affected including contribution made by their setting. It states that the level of detail required should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. We posit that the level of detail provided within this and the supporting documents is proportionate to the assets' importance and sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on the significance of this heritage asset.

As this document deals with the significance of the heritage asset (which is primarily spatial as described below) and impact of the proposed works on that significance, please refer to the accompanying Method Statement which describes proposed works in terms of detail rather than in terms of impact on heritage significance.

2.0 Description of Significance (NPPF Para 128):

No 103 Portland Street forms part of a group (including no.s 40 to 46 Princess Street) which together are Grade 2 listed Heritage Asset, the description of which appears as follows:

> English Heritage List entry number: 1247058
>
> MANCHESTER
>
> SJ8497NW PORTLAND STREET 698-1/32/307 (South East side) No.103 Portland House
>
> GV II
>
> *Includes: Nos.40 TO 46 Eastern House PRINCESS STREET. Shipping warehouse, now offices, club, etc. c.1870-80. Probably iron-framed, with cladding of red brick in Flemish bond, sandstone dressings, slate roof. Trapeziform plan on corner site, with loading at rear. Eclectic style. Five storeys with basement and attic, 3 bays, symmetrical, with stone-banded pilasters and bracketed cornice to ground floor, some stone bands to upper floors, moulded terracotta panels between 2nd and 3rd floors, plain frieze interrupted in the centre, steeply-pitched roof with hipped gable in the centre finished with a finial. Ground floor has square-headed doorway with moulded surround and plain frieze with attached lettering "PORTLAND HOUSE", flanked by pairs of segmental headed windows over basement openings; 1st, 2nd and 3rd floors have 3-light windows with stone mullions, those at 1st and 2nd floors of the centre in a segmental oriel with a carved panel between floors, segmental-headed lights to the upper floor, dentilled cornice and brick parapet, those at 1st floor of the outer bays with pilaster mullions and segmental pediments to the centre light, and those at 3rd floor segmental-headed with keystones; pairs of 1-light windows to 4th floor; flat-roofed dormers over the outer bays; gable chimneys. Left return (40 to 46 Princess Street), 7 bays in matching style, symmetrical, with hipped gables to the 2nd and 6th bays and square headed loading bay entrance in the centre. Rear and interior*

not inspected. Forms group with No.101 (q.v.) on opposite corner of Princess Street; and with Nos 105 and 107, 109 and 111, and 113 to 119 to the right (q.v.), together comprising a complete block of former shipping warehouses.

The significance of the building lies in its being of a building type unique to Manchester, with spatial arrangements telling its original purpose and its place in the history of the cotton industry. In terms of scale it follows the 'export' shipping type, however its style is eclectic rather than the palazzo style employed by many other buildings of its type.

The significance of the basement levels of buildings of this type lie in their use as goods packing areas for the occupying business on the floors above, their access arrangements for goods handling into and out of the building and their relationship to the street level. As packing areas they were generally architecturally austere as display areas for client goods-inspection lay on Ground and First floor levels.

103 Portland Street has the typical raised ground floor which allows the main basement level to be naturally lit by windows at pavement level. Provisions for goods handling takes place via a 'hovel' access off Princess St, which also gives way to a courtyard serving the neighbouring buildings on Portland St and Princess St. An inset goods shaft complete with teagle and service access doors to Ground and Basement is also present off the hovel entry. A workers' access door is located adjacent the inset goods shaft, giving access to a full-height service stairway and to back-of-house areas.

Evidenced by the listing entry above, the building is thought to be an iron-framed structure, which would relieve most of the internal walls of the burden of bearing load, giving the possibility in its original use of being open plan.

Evidence suggests that the main access to the basement was originally by way of the internal staircase from the Ground Floor level above. This stair originally discharged in the area now used as the ladies toilet, however, together with a passenger lift adjacent, this area is permanently sealed off at this level.

The current main access to the Basement level is now via a door in a former window opening off Portland Street. A non-original steel stair and balustrade leads down to the Basement level. The Ground floor above has been trimmed out to create the necessary head-height to the stair.

The Lower Basement is accessed by a narrow stair off the kitchen area and also by the full-height service stair to the rear of the building. This area lies below the cobbled 'hovel' entrance off Princess St. The primary structure comprises cast iron columns and beams supporting brick vaulted ceilings. All walls are exposed brickwork with deteriorating paint finishes.

Also contained within the basement are the remnants of plant likely to be associated with the original Manchester Corporation high pressure water system.

Consultation & Records

Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service (GMAAS) have confirmed that Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record holds no additional information on the building beyond the English Heritage listing entry. The Service cites the English Heritage publication "Manchester, The Warehouse Legacy" as a key document in understanding the shipping warehouse building typology of Manchester; this document has been a major reference point in the preparation of this statement of justification.

The Service has also advised that as the proposals are to strip out and reveal the historic fabric to much better effect than the current situation, they consider that an archaeological survey and desk based assessment are not merited in this instance, but request a photographic and short written description following the strip out.

The building is not on English Heritage – Heritage at Risk register 2013.

Searches on the Heritage Gateway do not result in any records applicable to the building.

Current use
The building is now in mixed use, with the restaurant (currently unoccupied) in the basement and lower basement. There are offices on the Ground and some subsequent floors and residential accommodation above. We are advised that all floors are under separate ownership.

The main restaurant is located in the Basement with principal access off Portland Street as described above. The second portion is located to the rear, in the Lower Basement beneath the cobbled 'hovel' accessway off Princess Street as described above.

At Basement level, approximately 95% of the original fabric in the main restaurant area and public access areas (toilets and lobbies) has been altered or concealed with heavy and insensitive thematic decoration associated with the theme of the preceding occupancy. The walls of the kitchen have been lined for the most part in stainless steel. Elsewhere on this level, the fabric has acquired subsequent paint finishes and service pipes and cabling.

3.0 PROPOSED:

Impact on the Significance (NPPF para 131):
The proposals comply with NPPF para 131 by enhancing the significance of the basement by revitalising its use consistently with its conservation.

The proposals comprise appropriate intervention works which facilitate the conservation of the heritage asset which in turn allow it to make a positive contribution to the sustainability of the city centre, including economic vitality.

The interventions will reinforce the broader context in which the asset sits by enlivening business activity in the area. The building was built for commercial use, the proposals seek to regenerate the commercial life of this part of the building.

Restaurant use is very much in keeping with current demands for small/independent nature of business activity in the area, which has thrived and helped to sustain for the long term, the use of the plethora of listed buildings in this area.

In compliance with NPPF para 132, the refurbishment as proposed will not incur substantial harm to the significance of the asset. Proposed works are intended to enhance the significance of the heritage asset instead. The most significant enhancement will be the removal of non-original, themed interventions and additions within the main restaurant space, and the revealing of original fabric wherever possible. In doing so, the Basement space will be opened-up, in a manner commensurate with the structural rationale and appreciation of the original, larger volume returned in line with the nature of an original packing area.

Original cast-iron columns which are partially or wholly concealed by embedment within or behind walls will be revealed wherever found, please refer to the accompanying drawings. Existing finishes to the walls of the main restaurant are proposed to be removed to reveal underlying brickwork, to ascertain the condition of the brick and degree of damp penetration from the surrounding ground. It may subsequently be necessary to undertake additional works to control any damp by way of insulated dry-lining. It is not felt however that an appropriate solution can be finalised prior to removal of the existing finishes to reveal the existing substrates.

Within toilet areas, insensitively installed cubicles are to be removed and replaced with proprietary, lightweight cubicle partitions which are 'floating', free of the surrounding walls and floor, for greater appreciation of original and non-original fabric & volume. Original wall tiles within the Male toilets is to be preserved and revealed more appreciably by reorientation of the toilet cubicle. Themed elements are to be removed in both toilets and new finishes toned down to be more sensitive to complement original fabric.

No works are proposed to the Service Corridor on the Basement level, which for the greater part remains broadly in original form.

To take advantage of existing service drops at the base of the existing service lightwell, it is proposed to install a WC pan and wash basin to provide a staff toilet facility which is not

provided in the previous establishment. This is not thought to harm significance as the lightwell base is very much a services-conduit to the entire building and the intervention comprises the installation of the above 2no. fittings and floor tiling only.

Works to the kitchen comprise its enlargement through redirecting the fire escape through the Store adjacent the central lift shaft and giving the corridor space over to the kitchen by removal of the dividing wall. It will be further enlarged by removing the existing makeshift partition separating off the narrow Cylinder storage space from the main kitchen. The walls are to be relined with new stainless steel panelling for food safety & hygiene standards. A portion of the floor is to be removed to restore the use of the original narrow access stair to the Lower Basement area (prep-kitchen) and flanking handrails in stainless steel are to be installed for safety reasons.

Works to the Lower Basement comprise the addition of free-standing linings within two spaces, in order to isolate and protect original fabric and features whilst achieving required food hygiene and safety standards. An original connecting stairway between the Basement and Lower Basement levels is to be reinstated for use as described above.

Proposed external works comprise the removal of the non-original access door off Portland St and replacement with a frameless glass door and side panel. This will serve to 'de-solidify' what is thought to be a window opening originally, and serve to enhance its appreciation with a solution closer to original form.

Interventions are intended to appear explicitly as independent and not part of the original. They are also intended to be easily and visibly reversible in the next cycle in the evolution of the use of the space.

4.0 CONCLUSION:

The proposals comply with National Planning Policy Framework para 134, as any perceivable minor harm to the significance of this designated heritage asset is considerably less than substantial and is significantly outweighed by benefit to the building and to the public, as evidenced in the supporting drawings and documentation. The proposals will undoubtedly serve only to enhance its significance though revelation and conservation of original elements within the Basement & Lower Basement, and facilitate its contributing positively to the greater understanding of the built heritage of Manchester.