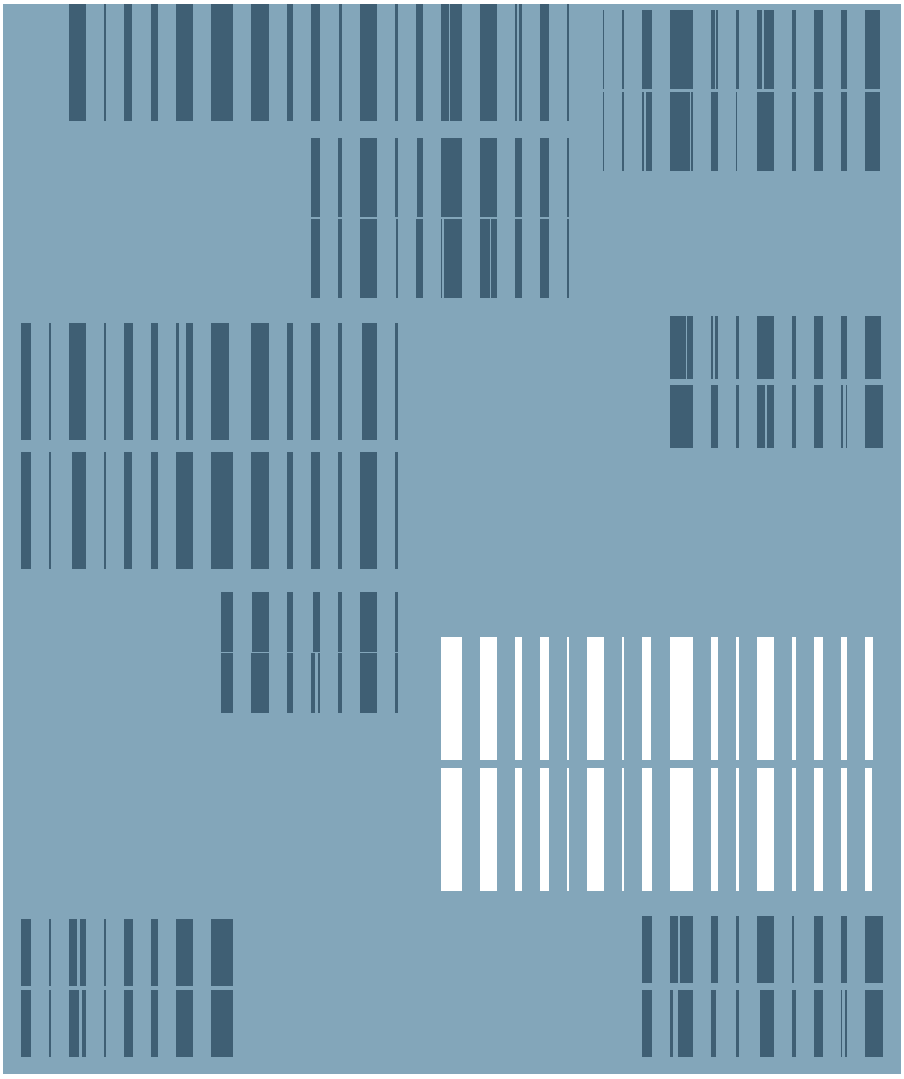
THE HIVE

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

AUGUST 2025



OMI Architects

PREPARED ON BEHALF OF

GROSVENOR OEI LIMITED

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Image - View of The Hive looking north-east

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by OMI Architects, in support of the Planning Application by Grosvenor OEI Limited for alterations to an existing building known as The Hive on Lever Street (numbers 47, 49 & 51) within the Northern Quarter of central Manchester.

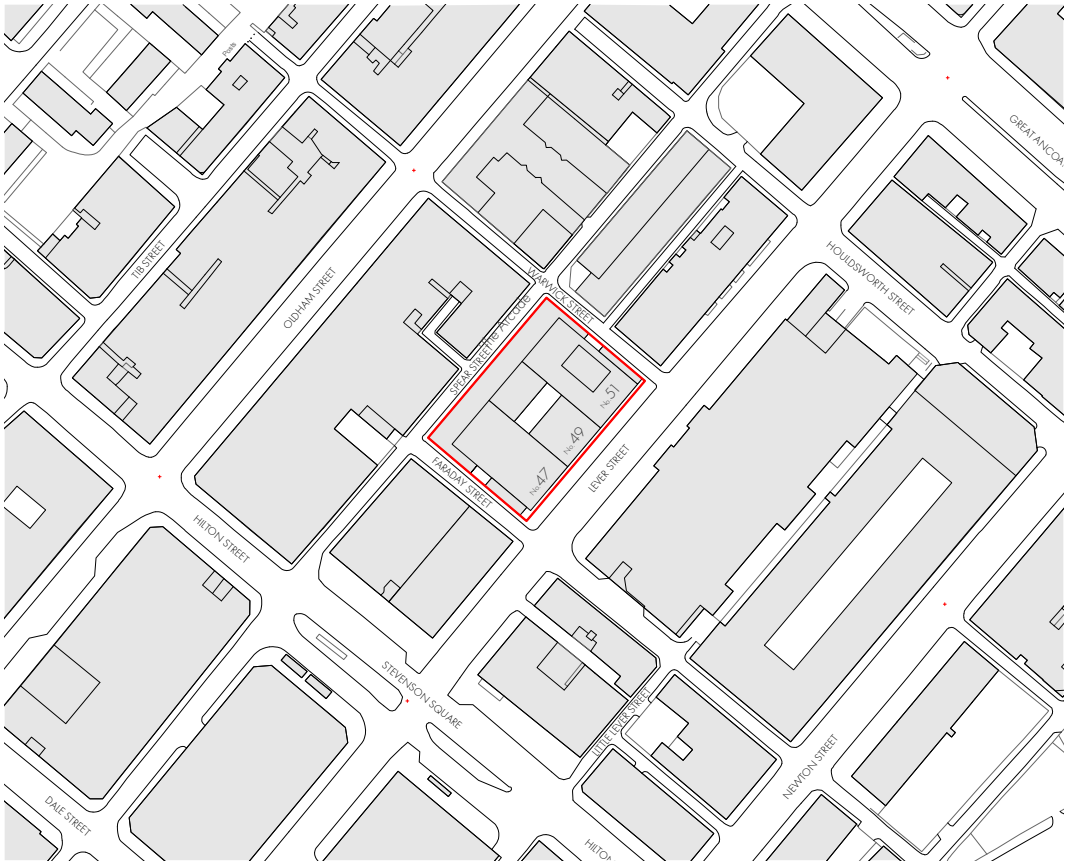
1.1.2 The applicant wishes to undertake a series of works which are necessary to address work required to recently vacated spaces at ground, first and second floor levels as well as delivering best-in-class office accommodation that is fit for purpose and future proofs the building in a way that better reflects the nature and character of the Northern Quarter.

1.1.3 The proposal comprises of series of alterations that include the rationalisation of the building's main entrance, alterations on the primary Lever Street elevation, works to provide future roof level equipment capacity as well as wider internal alterations required to improve access and circulation around the building.

1.2 Summary of Supporting Documents

1.2.1 The purpose of this document is to set out the design principles, concepts and strategy behind the proposals, and it should be read in conjunction with the planning drawings prepared by OMI Architects, along with the following supporting documents:

- Application Forms & Certificates
- Covering Letter
- Planning Statement



Application Site

Drawing - Location Plan

2.0 CONTEXT

2.1 The Site

2.1.1 The application site stands to the north-west of Lever Street towards the northern edge of the Northern Quarter, 75 metres north-east of Stevenson Square and 150 metres south-west of the junction of Lever Street and Great Ancoats Street.

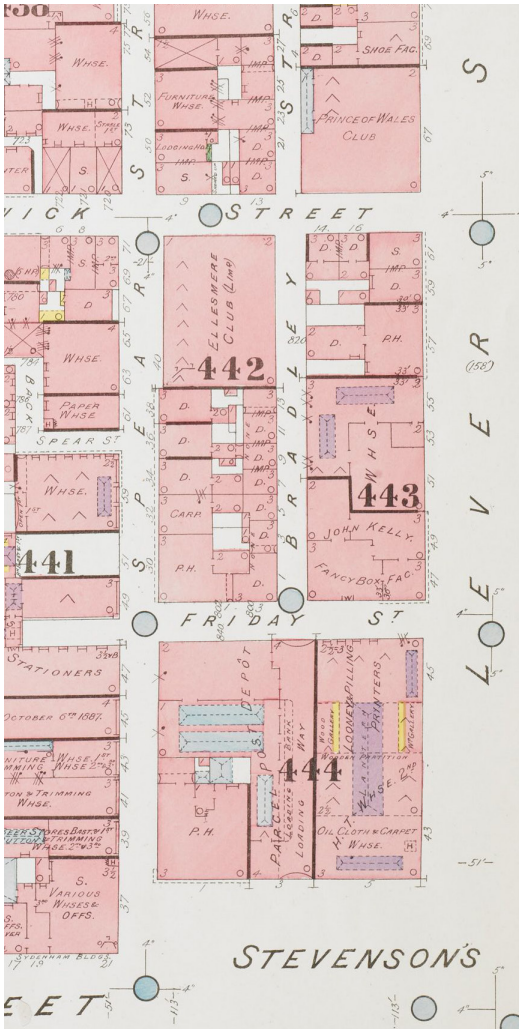
2.1.2 The site is rectangular in shape and is bounded by Faraday Street to the south-east, Spear Street to the north-west, Warwick Street to the north-east and Lever Street to the south-east.

2.1.3 The site is entirely occupied by an existing office building that also includes an element of ground floor retail / food & beverage units; there is an existing external walkway, known as 'The Arcade' that splits the building into two halves at ground level and links Faraday and Warwick Street.

2.1.4 The site is located within the Stevenson Square Conservation Area; the nearest Listed Buildings are not directly adjacent to the site but are as follows:-

- Numbers 4, 6 & 8 Bradley Street (75 metres north-east of the site)
- Numbers 69 - 77 Lever Street & 10 Bradley Street (50 metres north-east of the site)
- Castle Hotel, 66 Oldham Street (100 metres west of the site)

2.1.5 The Lever Street frontage is the building primary elevation when compared to the three other streets that form the site boundary, all of which are much narrower and more subsidiary in nature. As a result the building encompasses three separate Lever Street addresses, numbers 47, 49 & 51.



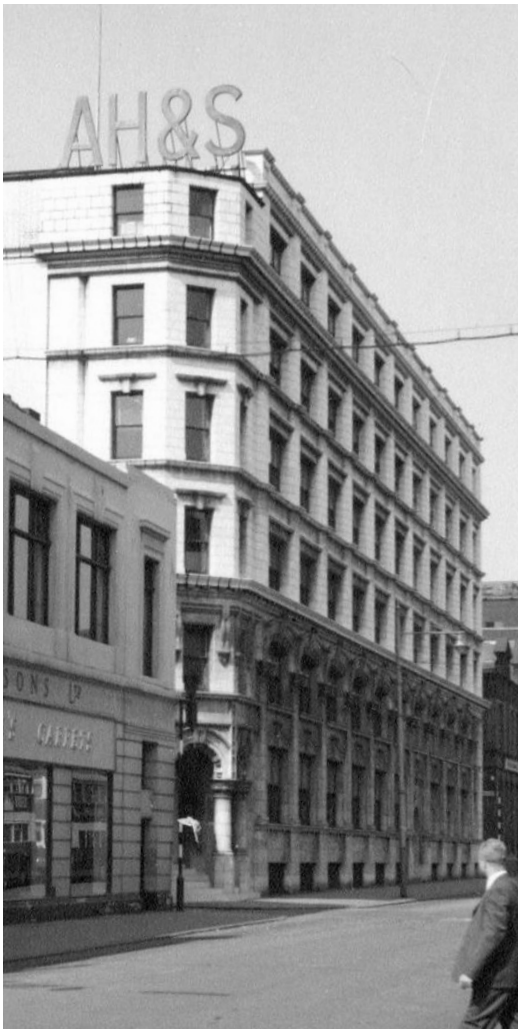


Image - Insurance map 1880s

Image - View of Abel Heywood & Sons Warehouse

CONTEXT

2.2 Site History

2.2.1 The area around Stevenson Square was originally developed from the mid 18th century on land sold to William Stevenson (hence Stevenson Square) by Sir Ashton Lever (hence Lever Street).

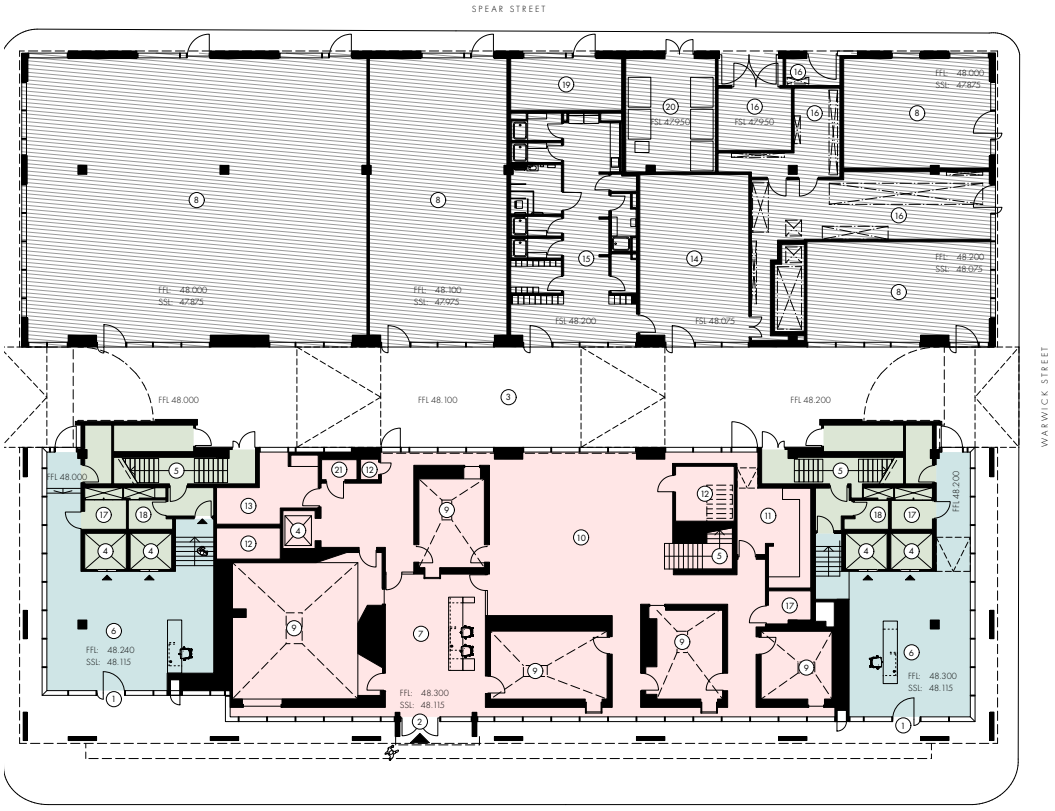
2.2.2 The area was originally intended as a residential district, of which built examples remain (for example 69-77 Lever Street), however, the area became dominated by commercial concerns.

2.2.3 An insurance map of the 1880s show how the area around the site displayed a wide of range of uses with back-to-back housing and public houses closely mixed with small scale manufacturing and retail functions. This diversity reflects the nature of the area located between traditional retail on Oldham Street (and markets further north-west) and the packing warehouses clustered around Piccadilly Basin.

2.2.4 The site was originally bisected by Bradley Street which still continues north-east of the site as far as Great Ancoats Street; the line of Bradley Street has been reinstated and now forms the partially enclosed space known as The Arcade.

2.2.5 During the late 19th and the first half of the twentieth century the Lever Street facing part of the site was occupied by a warehouse associated with Abel Heywood & Sons publishers who also had retail premises on Oldham Street. The building they occupied, which was constructed in at least two phases, was known as 'The White House' and featured as a cover image on a number of their publications. Part of the site appears to have hit by a bomb in December 1940.

2.2.6 This building was demolished in the 1970s and site was used as Lever Street Bus Station until it was redeveloped in the 2000s.



1 - Building entrances
2 - Arts Council England (ACE) entrance
3 - The Arcade
4 - Lift
5 - Stairs
6 - Building receptions
7 - ACE reception
8 - Vacant unit
9 - ACE meeting rooms
10 - ACE break-out space
11 - ACE kitchenette
12 - Plant
13 - Store
14 - Bike store
15 - Showers / changing rooms
16 - Plant room
17 - Accessible WC
18 - Back-of-house
19 - FM office
20 - Bin store
21 - WC

Drawing - Existing ground floor plan

CONTEXT

2.3 Existing Building

2.3.1 The building now known as The Hive is a seven storey, concrete frame, 80,000sqft office building that was developed by Argent to designs by 5 Plus Architects which opened in 2009.

2.3.2 The building was constructed speculatively as office space building with areas of the ground floor dedicated to retail / food and beverage as well as bike store, showers, changing rooms and plant rooms.

2.3.3 The building massing comprises two four storey elements connected by bridges either side of The Arcade which separates the site into two rectangular halves. The massing of the top three floors are orientated at 90 degrees to the lower levels comprising two separate building elements served by separate vertical circulation cores.

2.3.4 At roof level of these two upper sections are two external equipment enclosures formed by powder coated aluminium louvre screens.

2.3.5 Externally the ground floor is treated as a set-back curtain wall glazed element; the first and second floors are clad in a dark blue brick with punched vertically proportioned window openings. Six large steel screens with perforated metal infill panels are cantilevered off the Lever Street façade above pavement level.





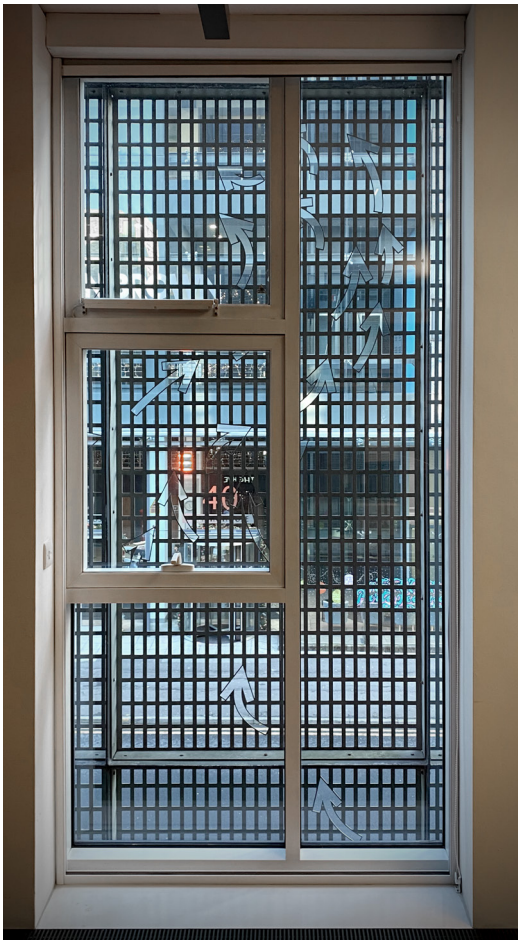


Image - Detail of screen and relationship with facade

Image - Impact of screen on internal spaces

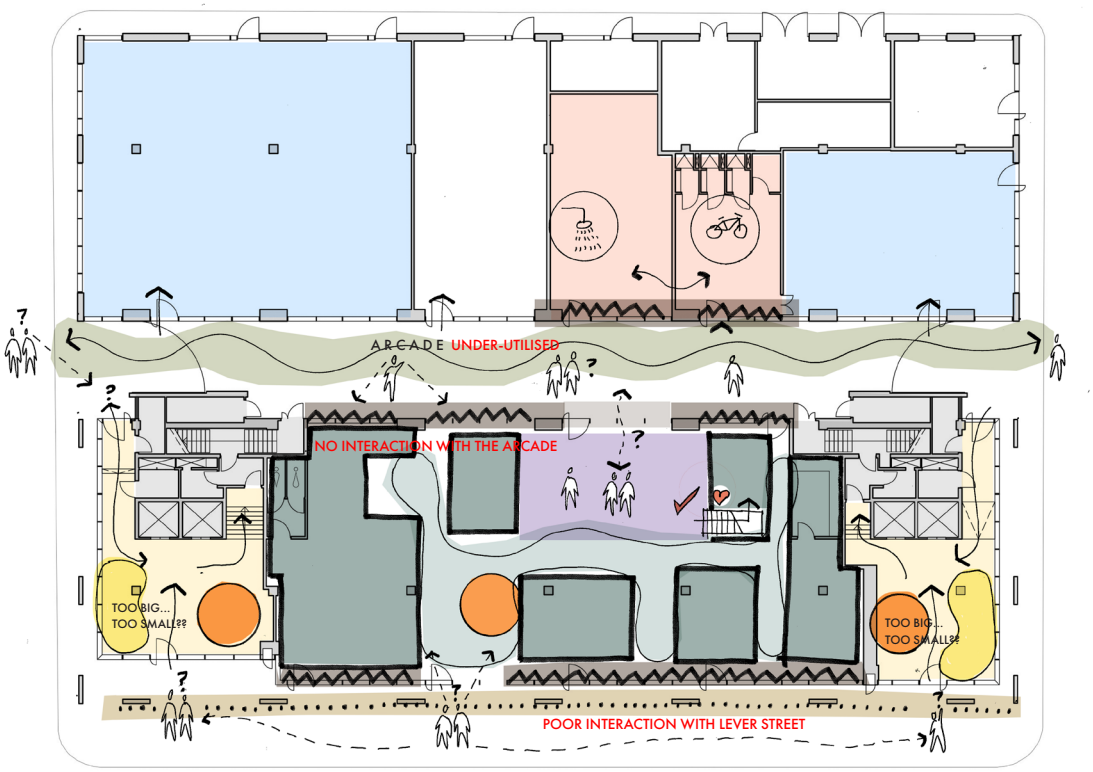
2.3.6 The third floor has similar fenestration but is finished in a white render; the bridges over 'The Arcade' are enclosed in horizontally expressed curtain wall glazing.

2.3.7 The upper three floors are primarily clad in a buff brick with isolated areas of blue brick and white render. Windows are expressed as vertical slots across all three upper levels with intermediate floors concealed by aluminium spandrel panel integrated within the window system.

2.3.8 Subsequent to the original development some isolated alterations have taken place to improve bike storage and 'end-of-trip' facilities and building signage as well as alterations related to changing ground floor retail / food & beverage units at ground floor level.

2.3.9 Along Lever Street the building is divided into 3 sections; at either end are two separate and independent building entrances each providing access to one of the two circulation cores. In the central section is the former Arts Council England dedicated entrance.

2.3.10 The Art Council England occupied the front half of ground, first and second floor. The fit-out of these spaces is of high-quality but bespoke to their operations, most notably the ground floor consists of a series of meeting rooms of various sizes which are formed in masonry.



POOR ENTRANCE SEQUENCE.... NOTHING IS CONNECTED

Drawing - Existing building issues diagram

CONTEXT

2.4 Building Analysis & Project Rationale

2.4.1 The project was initiated as a result of the Arts Council vacating their space and moving into an alternative part of the building.

2.4.2 This created the need to find alternative use / occupiers for the now vacant space and also provided an opportunity to resolve issues with the existing arrangement and improve the aspect and user experience of the building.

2.4.3 The following issues were identified with the existing building that any new project would look to address:-

- The building has three separate receptions creating a management issue in terms of security and staffing as well as confusion for visitors to the building in terms of identifying which reception they need to go to.
- The existing Arts Council England's ground floor fit-out, whilst suitable for their requirements, presents blank blockwork walls (behind the curtain wall glazing) to the street frontage creating a lack of visibility and activity on the street-scene.
- Similarly, the Arts Council space does not engage well with the arcade space resulting in this being an underutilised asset that could better serve other building occupiers as well as the locality more generally.
- The existing screen on Lever Street conceals the building entrance(s) and negatively impacts the first and second floor office spaces facing Lever Street by limiting daylight and blocking views out (see images on page 12).

2.4.4 The arcade also plays a key role in delivering the end-of-trip facilities and therefore in order that these function effectively for all building users and encourage sustainable transport options the arcade is required to be welcoming and better integrated with the building as a whole.

2.4.5 The Lever Street screen was also considered as part of the scheme as it is at a point that it required a reasonably significant amount of routine maintenance and therefore a point in time had been arrived at where was a need to review its configuration more generally. In addition, it was noted that the original planning approval for the screen (ref: 088039_FO_2008_C2) highlighted that it was expected to have a limited lifespan of at least 15 years.

2.5 Planning History

2.5.1 There have been a number of planning applications on the site including residential schemes that were not proceeded with, more recently applications relate to signage.

A full list of previous planning applications is as follows:-

2.5.2
App Ref: 018220
Date: 1982
Decision: Approved
Description: Construction of a car park after demolition of existing warehouse and office.

2.5.3
App Ref: 066709/FO/CITY2/02
Date: 2002
Decision: Not Proceeded With
Description: Mixed use development comprising retail and office units (ground floor) with 61 residential units above, ancillary basement car parking and associated works

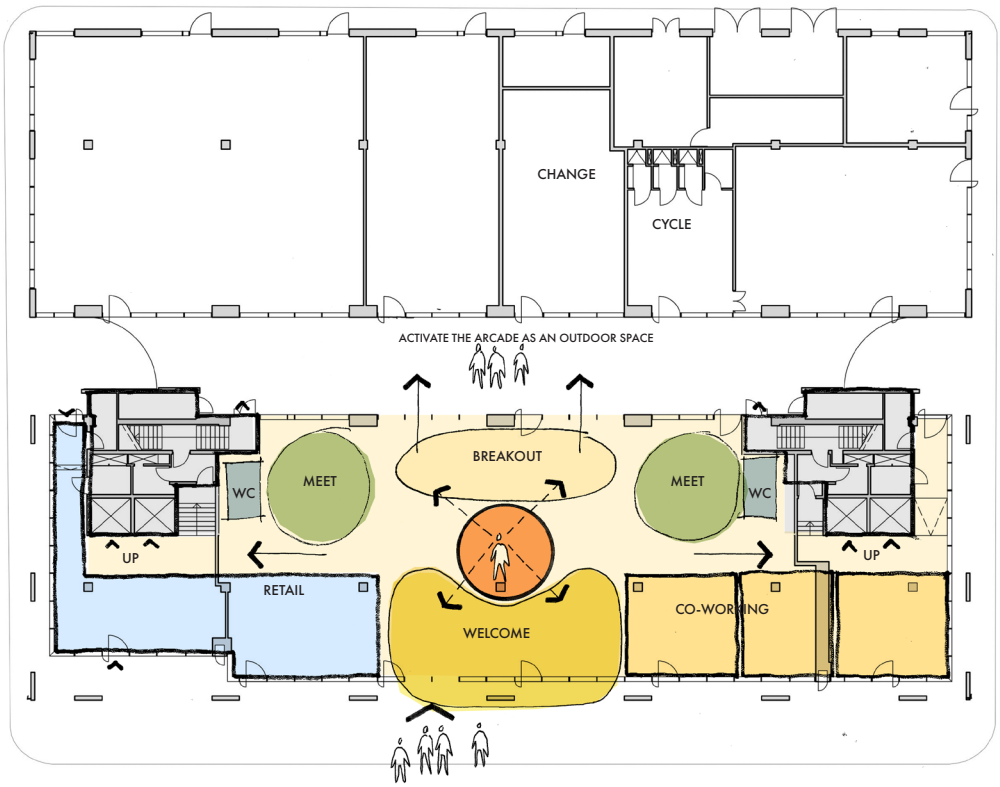
2.5.4
App Ref: 072411/FO/2004/C2
Date: 2004
Decision: Not Proceeded With
Description: New mixed-use development to include 75 no. apartments on upper floors, Use Class B1 (office) and Use Class A1 (shop) at ground floor and basement car parking

2.5.5
App Ref: 081291/FO/2006/C2
Date: 2007
Decision: Approved
Description: Seven storey new building plus basement parking, incorporating retail (Class A1), financial/professional services (Class A2), restaurant/cafe (Class A3) and offices (Class B1) on ground floor and offices (Class B1) on upper floor

2.5.6
App Ref: 088039/FO/2008/C2
Date: 2008
Decision: Approved
Description: Erection of 7 storey building with A1 (Shop), A2 (Financial and Professional services), A3 (Restaurant/Cafe) or B1 (Business) use at ground floor and B1 (Office) use above

CONTEXT

2.5.7	App Ref:	091490/JO/2009/C2
	Date:	2009
	Decision:	Approved
	Description:	Variation of conditions 2, 3, 11 and 18 attached to application reference number 088039 as follows: Condition 2- to amend approved drawings; Condition 3- to amend approved materials condition in relation to ground floor doors; Condition 11- to amend opening hours from 7.30-19.30 to 00.00- 00.00 (24 hrs); Condition 18- to amend proposed material for solar shading from stainless steel to mild steel aluminium
2.5.8	App Ref:	091866/FU/2009/C2
	Date:	2009
	Decision:	Approved
	Description:	Change of use of 3rd floor from office use (Class B1) to office use (Class B1) or training facility (Class D1) dual use
2.5.9	App Ref:	111840/AO/2016/C2
	Date:	2016
	Decision:	Approved
	Description:	Erection of 3 projecting number signs to Lever Street and alteration of existing sign within the arcade
2.5.10	App Ref:	134112/AO/2022
	Date:	2022
	Decision:	Approved
	Description:	Works to existing projecting signs, painting of individual letter signs on the elevations and installation of individual letter signs.
2.5.11	App Ref:	139604/FO/2024
	Date:	2024
	Decision:	Approved
	Description:	Replacement of selected windows.



Drawing - Ground floor design concept plan

3.0 DESIGN

3.1 Entrance & Ground Floor

3.1.1 The primary design driver has been to resolve the multi-entrance arrangement along Lever Street by amalgamating the two existing receptions into one. By creating a new central entrance space the two formerly separate building circulation cores can be accessed from a single of point access and control.

3.1.2 The existing Arts Council England entrance location is re-used, its central location on the Lever Street elevation will improve the visibility and legibility of the building aiding orientation. To either side of this new, centralised, building entrance the intention is to create two spaces that contribute to activating the street frontage.

3.1.3 To the south a new deli is proposed that has an independent access (re-using the existing access to No. 47 Lever Street) as well as direct internal connections with the main entrance space mean that can serve as an amenity to both the wider public as well to building occupants.

3.1.4 To the north the space will be dedicated office space that, along with the deli to the south will provide visible internal activity that the existing building lacks and therefore contribute to a more animated street frontage in contrast to the existing opaque arrangements.

3.1.5 The remaining areas of ground floor space, as well as being the building entrance and including back-of-house functions, is envisaged as a busy communal break-out space that is an asset that all building occupants and visitors can access and benefit from.

3.1.6 To the rear of this space where it looks out onto 'The Arcade' new door openings within the existing curtain wall system are proposed that will allow the occupants of the break-out space to utilise this external space bringing a currently underutilised asset of the building into more regular use.



Image - CGI of proposed Lever Street elevation

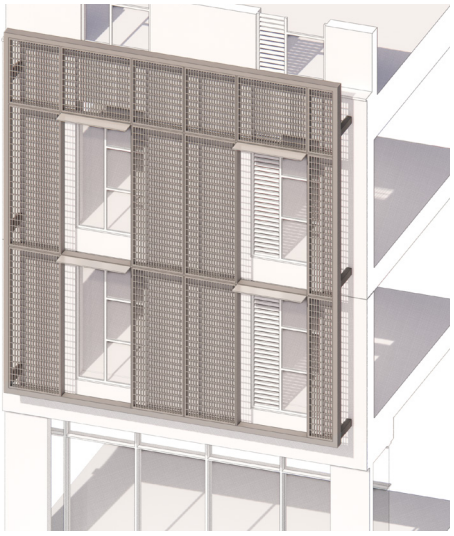
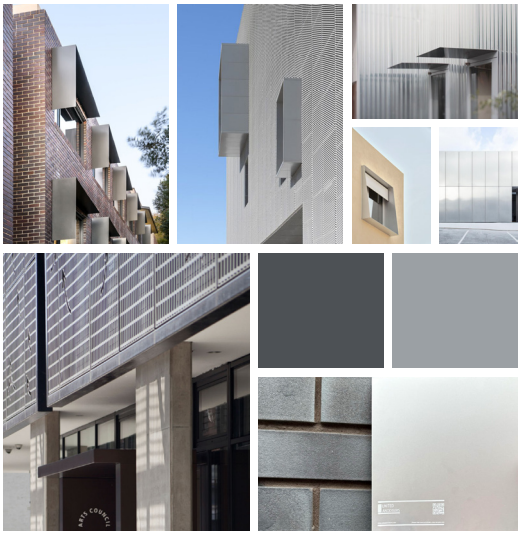


Image - Indicative 3D bay axo of anodised aluminium fins



Material Precedents - Anodised Aluminium 100A Natural

DESIGN

3.2 Lever Street Elevation

3.2.1 The issues with the existing screen that sits in front of first and second floor of the Lever Street elevation are outlined above. It has been acknowledged the screen contributes to the overall architectural treatment, however, while also results in poor legibility of the building entrances and lowering of the quality of the internal spaces where it compromises daylight in, and views, out of existing windows.

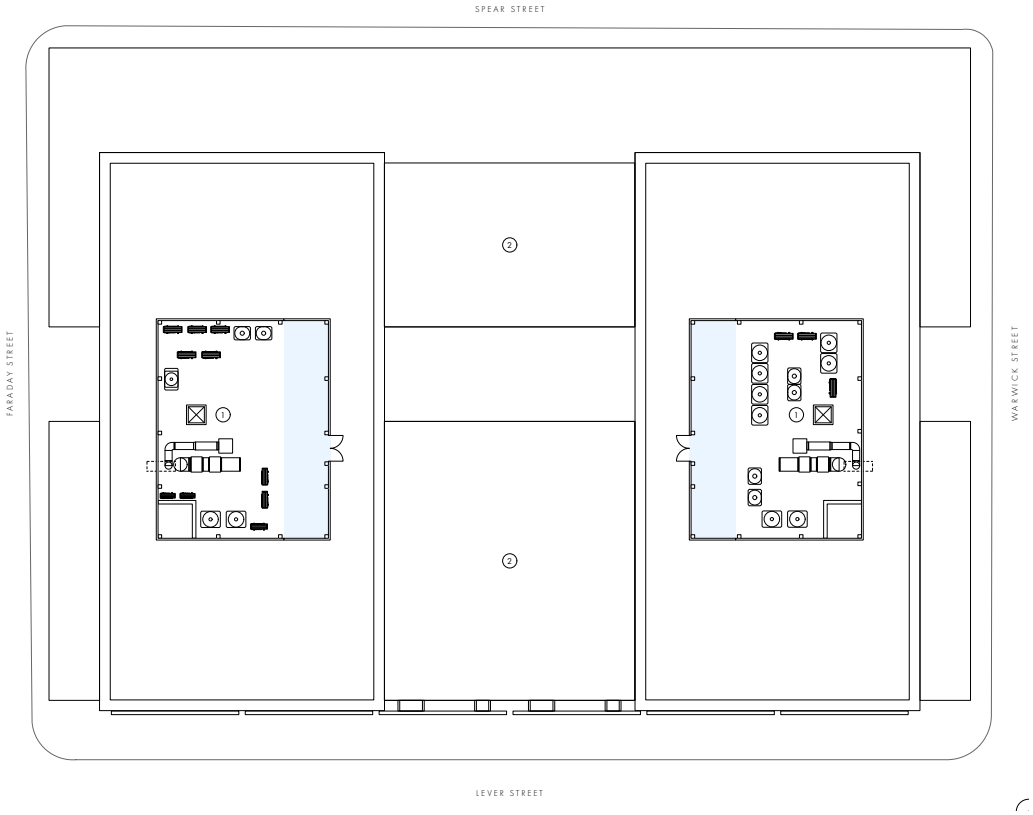
3.2.2 The design team have tested various options for alteration and adaptation, including removal of the screen in its entirety. Following several pre-app meetings where all options were explored and discussed, it was collectively agreed to proceed with the option on the left which addresses the current challenges while preserving the design intent of the screen and overall architectural quality of the building.

3.2.3 As a result of opening up the screen, and acknowledging its original intent of solar shading, it is proposed to introduce projecting natural anodised aluminium panels positioned above any punched through hole in front of any glazing along this elevation; this is proposed for the following reasons:-

- The most effective way to continue to provide solar shading to assist in reducing heat gain where the screen panels have been removed is by placing a horizontal shade above each window opening (as opposed to directly in-front as per the current screen)
- The introduction of horizontal fins will assist in animating the façade and emphasise the relationship between existing and proposed
- The colour of the panels will compliment the existing screen colour palette and the overall grey blue tones of the existing façade treatments. The aim is to work with the existing design and not against it.

3.2.4 To further highlight the building entrance the screen lower section has been removed, the existing box section lifted and refixed to the frame above. This helps improve the legibility of the ground floor.

3.2.5 The existing Arts Council entrance portal will contribute towards a rationalised central entrance access strategy as a simple form that incorporates signage and lighting. This will be explored further as part of a separate signage planning application.



1 - Existing plant enclosure
2 - Lower roof

Extent of enlarged enclosure

Drawing - Proposed roof plan

DESIGN

3.3 Roof Level Enclosure

3.3.1 The re-ordering of the entrances, as well as internal alterations at first and second floor levels, has led the design team to review the servicing strategy for the building and to propose methods of ensuring a suitable and flexible internal environment can be created

3.3.2 The existing ventilation strategy is not sufficient to accommodate highly cellularised spaces that are in demand and which are proposed for the first and second floors. These spaces need additional ventilation and climate control as well as associated external equipment.

3.3.3 The external equipment is to be housed at roof level alongside existing mechanical services that are currently screened within an aluminium louvre enclosure. To accommodate the new equipment, as well as provide space for future flexibility, it is proposed that both louvred enclosures will be extended utilising the same enclosure design.

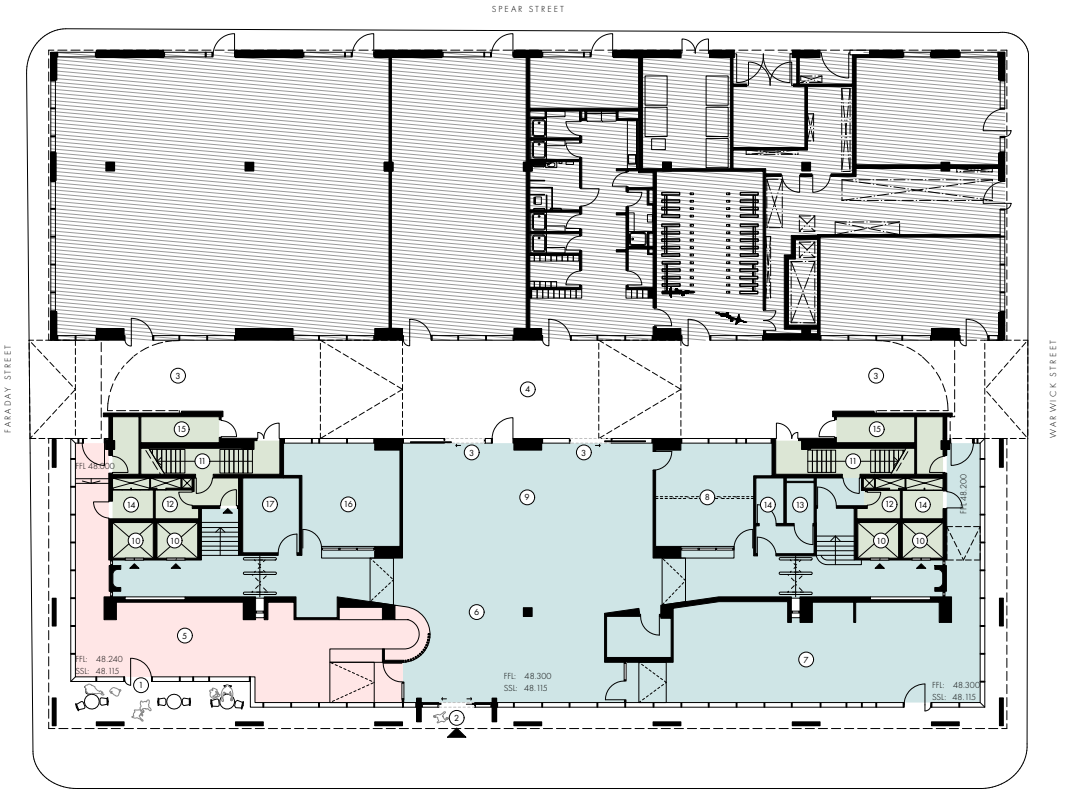
3.3.4 The proposed ventilation strategy does not require new openings within the façade but, instead, utilises louvres that are part of the existing window system, as result there no external alterations required beyond the aforementioned expansion of the roof level enclosures.

3.4 Other Alterations

3.4.1 In addition to the amendments outlined above there are a small number of other changes that support the overall design strategy or accommodate minor design improvements.

3.4.2 In line with the new central entrance access strategy, existing entrance portal is to be retained and partially amended to remove the reference to the Arts Council. The existing door and glazing arrangements are to be amended in order to provide a new glazed sliding door arrangement located slightly north of the existing swing doors.

3.4.3 A pair of existing gates that close off 'The Arcade' during the night are to be retained but moved further back along the space in order to provide additional external space for existing retail / food & beverage units located on the 'The Arcade. This will assist the management of the building by providing more flexibility in terms of operations for these tenants as well as ensuring the security of the space.



1 - Deli entrance
2 - Main entrance
3 - Access to The Arcade
4 - The Arcade
5 - Deli
6 - Entrance space
7 - Office space
8 - Meeting room
9 - Break-out space
10 - Lift
11 - Stair
12 - Back-of-house
13 - Accessible WC
14 - WC
15 - Store
16 - Podcast Room
17 - Wellbeing Room

Entrance, co-working & meeting space

Deli space

Circulation cores

Areas outside of application scope

Drawing - Proposed ground floor plan

4.0 ACCESS

4.1 Sustainable Transport Access

4.1.1 The existing access to the bike stores and changing rooms, located on 'The Arcade' remain unchanged. These spaces were relatively recently subject to alterations to improve facilities and increase storage and shower provision and therefore these remain unchanged.

4.1.2 However, the proposed ground floor entrance space has been designed to interact and be better connected to 'The Arcade' which improves the user experience of transitioning between showers and the main building circulation cores. This will encourage further uptake of the existing facilities and encourage sustainable transport options.

4.2 Refuse Access & Waste Management Strategy

4.2.1 The existing waste management strategy remains unchanged with an existing internal bin store on Spear Street being retained.

4.2.2 The space is not currently utilised to its maximum extent and therefore there is sufficient capacity to deal with any increase in arisings associated with the ground floor café space.

4.3 Equal Access & Security

4.3.1 Level access is provided throughout the existing building and none of the proposed design changes will alter this arrangement or negatively impact accessibility.

4.3.2 In combining the two existing entrances into a single point of entry legibility and accessibility will be improved and ensures building visitors can access all areas of the building without the need to identify the correct entrance.

4.3.3 The single entrance also ensures management and security of the building is simplified and made more robust. The improved connections and the visibility of both building circulation cores, Lever Street entrance and access to / from 'The Arcade' from a single control point will significantly improve the security and operations of the building.

5.0
Consultation

5.1 Planning Consultations with Manchester City Council

5.5.1 The design team met with MCC on 18th December 2024 outlining the broad design principles of amalgamating two building entrances in to a single point of access.

5.5.2 At this meeting a potential scheme that explored options for enclosing 'The Arcade' were also presented but these initial design concepts were not progressed further and do not form part of this application.

5.5.3 The team also presented initial design explorations of how the existing Lever Street screen could be altered as well as highlighting issues with the existing in terms of condition, impact on internal daylight conditions and how the design compromises the legibility of the building entrance(s).

5.5.4 A second pre-app meeting took place on 20th June 2025 where the design team presented an option where the Lever Street screen was proposed to be removed in its entirety. This was not positively received by MCC and therefore not progressed further.

5.5.5 The following two pre-app meetings explored various options to address the challenges raised previously while also partially maintaining the screen. A preferred option was selected, however further design clarifications were required to submit.

5.5.6 The design team addressed all concerns regarding the screen modification particulars at a final pre-app meeting which took place on 30th July. The design and materiality of the proposed elements were welcomed. It was also agreed that a separate planning application for the signage will follow further down the line.

6.0
Conclusion

6.1 The proposals outlined in this document and the associated supporting information are for the amendments to The Hive as a result of opportunities that have arisen due to the Arts Council England relocating their existing space for space elsewhere within the building.

6.2 This has created the opportunity to resolve issues with building access and security resulting from having two existing entrances. At the same time improving legibility and activating both the Lever Street and 'The Arcade' frontages will benefit the building and the wider area.

6.3 Roof level changes will also ensure flexibility in how the building services are provided and therefore ensuring the building can accommodate a wide range of potential office tenants

6.4 The proposed series of discreet design alterations will improve legibility, access, security and building amenity and deliver improvements that benefit existing tenants as well appealing to potential new tenants and therefore ensuring the building's long-term success.

OMI Architects