

September 2025

HERITAGE STATEMENT: SUNLIGHT HOUSE, MANCHESTER – STAIRCASE OPENING

Savills Heritage and Townscape have been commissioned to provide a Heritage Statement in relation to a listed building consent (LBC) application for the creation of an opening within the ground floor level slab, to provide a staircase between this and the basement mezzanine level at Sunlight House, Quay Street, Manchester, M3 3JZ (hereafter 'the Site'). This follows a series of previous planning and LBC applications for the Site, including consented applications for internal refurbishment at ground floor level and above, as well as a shell and core application for the basement and basement mezzanine spaces (refs: 136162/FO/2023, 142317/LO/2025).

The wider refurbishment of the listed building is now nearing completion and it has become clear that in order for a viable use of the ground floor café area to be secured, additional space and a connection to the basement mezzanine below is required. The principle of this has been discussed with MCC during on-site meetings, with agreement reached that a listed building consent application for the slab opening could be submitted, with details of the staircase design to be confirmed by the new tenant and secured through discharge of an appropriately worded condition.

This report should be read in conjunction with drawings and documents provided by the contractor MYCO Ltd and Anomaly architects. Please also refer to the full Heritage Statements (February 2023 and March 2025) previously prepared for the listed building by Savills Heritage and Townscape in relation to previous applications, an overview of which is included below.

Significance:

Sunlight House is Grade II listed building (NHLE ref: 1270915), which is also located within the Deansgate/Peter Street Conservation Area. A full assessment of the listed building's significance is included in the detailed Heritage Statement referenced above, with a summary provided here.

Sunlight House was constructed in 1932 and designed by Joseph Sunlight. The architectural interest of Sunlight House is considered to be primarily derived from its external façades. This is due to both its striking design as a landmark within the surrounding context and its external detailing, particularly at ground floor level. Its central lightwell is also considered to be a key architectural feature, which gives the building a unique character.

Internally the building has undergone numerous stages of refurbishment during its history, with the resulting loss of original features throughout the building and considerable variety across different floors. These changes are particularly pronounced throughout the basement and basement mezzanine levels. Key internal features include surviving areas of parquet flooring, fenestration and distinctive ceiling coffers, as well as the glazed dome over the pool space at basement level.

Sunlight House also derives historic interest from its association with the prominent local figure of Joseph Sunlight, as well as being a milestone in the history of Manchester's development and the wider transition from industrial to commercial in this part of this city.

Impact assessment:

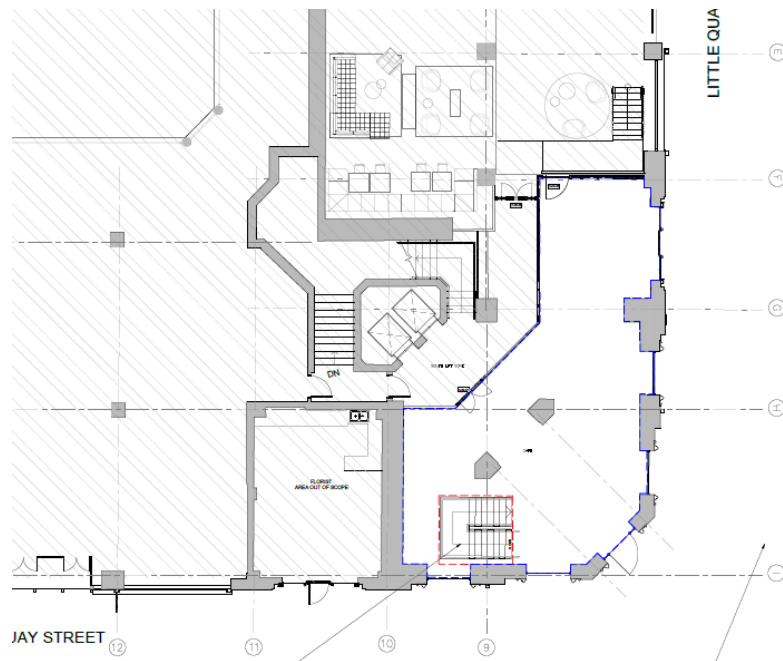
The proposed works comprise the creation of an opening within the existing ground floor slab, to connect this space to the basement mezzanine level (as shown below). The scope of this application is limited to the creation of the opening itself, with the final staircase design and other details to be agreed with MCC by the future tenant as part of their fit out.

The basement area has undergone a particularly high level of change historically, and there is currently no access to this part of the basement mezzanine from within the ground floor tenancy area. The area below the ground floor café is also not required for use as part of the separate basement fit out, and is therefore currently redundant and unappreciated space within the building. Through the creation of an opening within the ground floor slab here, this under utilised

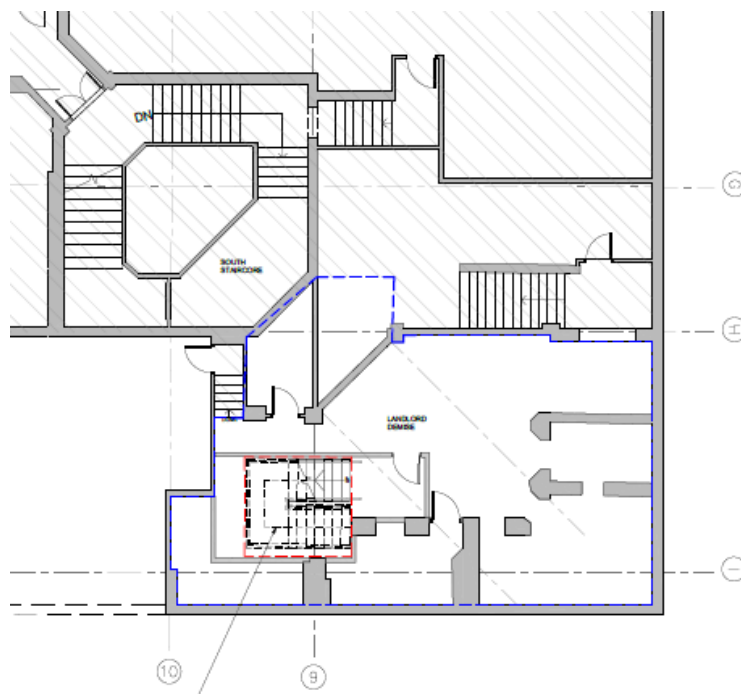
area will be effectively reconnected to the wider building, as well as being accessed by staff and members of the public as part of a future café use in this area of the building. The location of a café in this part of the building has been the design intent from the beginning of the project, meeting an identified need for the building and established through the introduction of partitions and sensitively designed louvres accordingly. The creation of an opening to connect these two spaces within the building therefore enables the long-term viable use of this space as an identified requirement for future tenants, whilst also opening access to a currently isolated area of the basement mezzanine space.

The location and intervention requirements for this opening have been reviewed by Savills Heritage and Townscape as part of the design process, with an emphasis on minimising fabric loss and any interaction with historic features of interest. The proposed opening therefore adheres to these principles, whilst also meeting structural requirements and fire regulations. The fabric to be removed as part of the proposals comprises a small area of the concrete slab itself, and a limited section of steel beam below. The basement mezzanine level itself is a later insertion within the building, and the decorative coffers found elsewhere in the basement space are therefore not present in this area; there is consequently no impact on any features of key architectural interest.

The structural integrity of this area of the building will be assured through the introduction of new steelwork to support the building's façade in this location (as detailed in the structural engineer's drawings provided). Indicative details of the staircase design, partitions and doors required, in order to ensure compliance with fire regulations, have been included as part of the proposals. These are intended to provide a technical specification for compliance, with final materiality and appearance to be confirmed as part of the tenant fitout and approved by MCC through condition discharge.



Proposed ground floor plan



Proposed basement mezzanine plan

Conclusion:

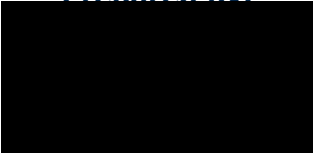
The architectural interest of Sunlight House is principally derived from its external façades, as well as key historic features internally. The proposed creation of an opening within the ground floor slab will not result in any impact on such important internal features, and will result in minimal fabric loss overall. This limited intervention will also ensure the long-term viable use of this area of the building by creating a practical space for café tenant use, whilst also opening up a currently redundant and unappreciated area of the building. The proposals have been designed sensitively in relation in the listed building, minimising fabric loss to secure the use of this space accordingly, with the works to be carried out in accordance with robust method statements reviewed by Savills Heritage and Townscape.

Overall the proposals are considered to result in **no harm** to the significance of the Grade II listed Sunlight House, and represent a key facet of the building's ongoing refurbishment and rejuvenation.

References:

- *Sunlight House, Manchester: Heritage Statement*, Savills Heritage and Townscape (February 2023 and March 2025)
- Manchester City Council, Deansgate/Peter Street Conservation Area: https://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/511/conservation_areas/1092/deansgatepeter_street_conservation_area
- National Heritage List for England: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>
- National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)
- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Prepared by:

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