Church House, 90 Deansgate Shopfront Design Strategy

zedwell



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1.0

Building Background

1.1 Background

Buttress Architects Ltd have been appointed on behalf of Criterion Capital to develop proposals for the refurbishment and conversion of Church House, on the corner of Deansgate and St Mary's St, Manchester.
This proposal has been developed for Criterion Capital who are an affordable accommodation platform for hotels, hostels, serviced apartments, and private residential flats.

This design guide is developed to support wider planning application and specifically focuses on the shop-frontages for 90 Deansgate. It will serves as a long term development plan as future tenants come on board. All final design will be subject to future planning application.

1.2 The Brief

The scope of the brief consists of:
To develop a design strategy for the ground floor retail and commercial units for 90 Deansgate.
It reviews the current condition of the commercial unit frontages and proposes a design strategy for future tenants. It is envisaged that this will be implemented as a long-term strategy.

1.3 The Purpose of this document

This Design Guide has been commissioned by Criterion Capital to present the developed proposals for Church House, 90 Deansgate, Manchester. It has been prepared by Buttress in conjunction with the professional team to support a full planning application for the refurbishment and redevelopment of Church House. The purpose of this document is to set out the comprehensive analysis of the existing fabric and context, discussing design decisions and interventions.

It explains the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the existing building at ground floor level.

1.4 Other Documents

This report should be read in conjunction with the drawings, Design and Access Statement and Heritage Impact Assessment which have been submitted as part of this application.

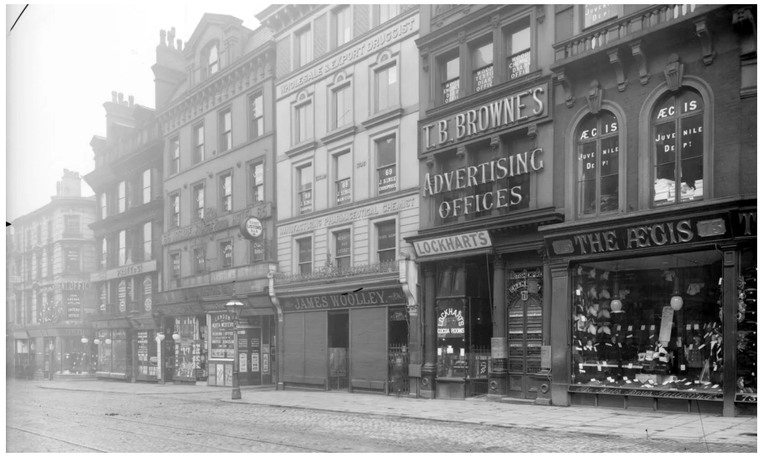


1.5 Deansgate Historical Shop Fronts

Deansgate has a long history of trade, evolving from a rural lane into one of Manchester's key shopping streets. While many original shopfronts have been altered over time, there are still signs of the street's Victorian and Edwardian character in some details and proportions.
Much of the historic fabric may still exist, hidden beneath modern signage or later additions.
Regarding 90 Deansgate, reinstating these features would help reconnect shop fronts with the building's heritage and the surrounding conservation area.



Deansgate and Golden Lion Hotel in 1872. By Glass Negative. Picture from Manchester Local Image Collection at Manchester City Council.



Deansgate in 1910. By Glass Negative. Picture from Manchester Local Image Collection at Manchester City

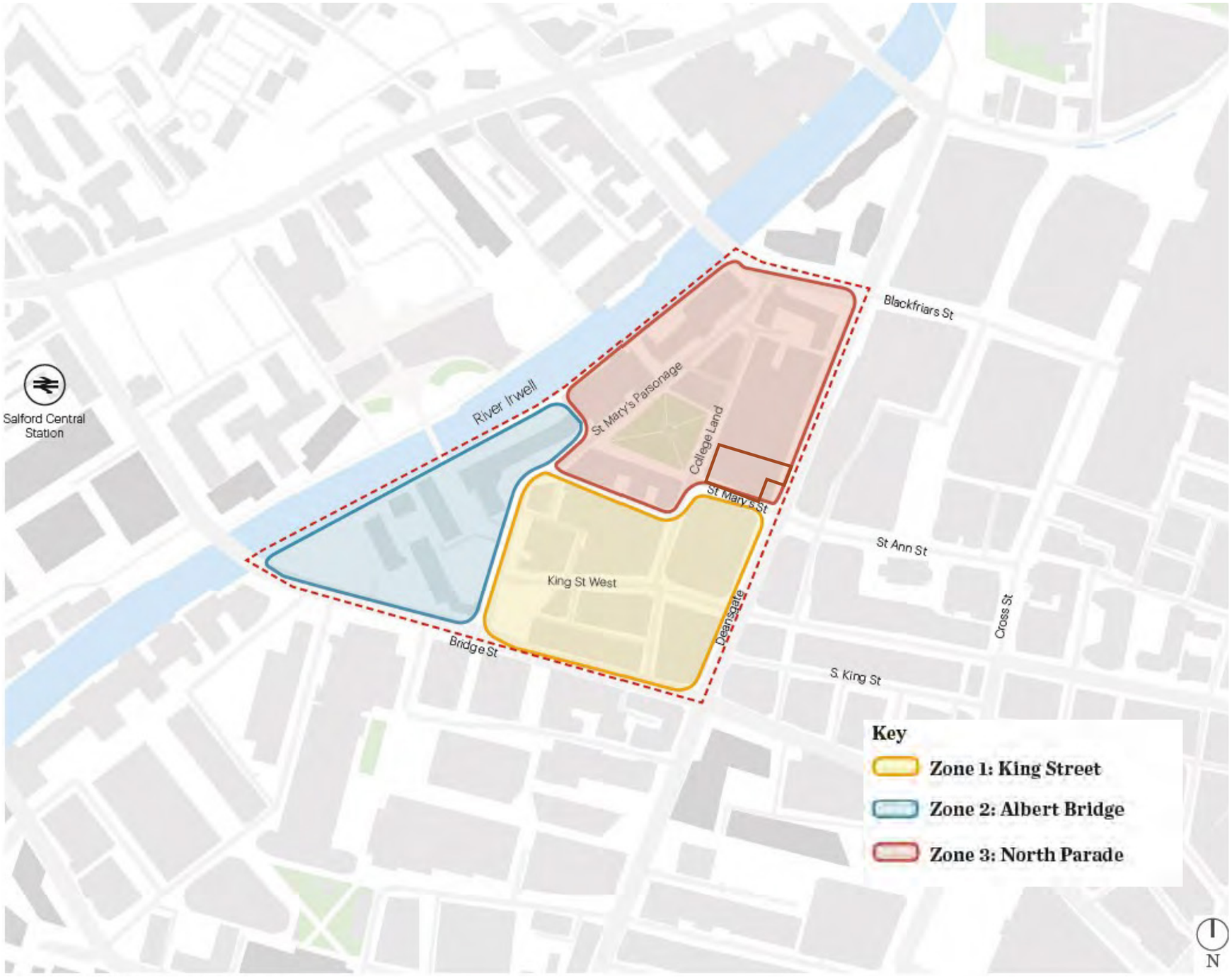

Deansgate, Manchester by Kris Baxter



A woman waits at a tram stop outside Rhind's carpet and furniture shop on Deansgate, Manchester, August 27, 1931

1.6 Site Location

North Parade is located at the northern edge of the SRF area, defined by its quiet, inward-facing character, and its proximity to Parsonage Gardens. St Mary's Parsonage provides a north-south route through the area, though it is currently underused. The surrounding context includes large commercial and residential buildings, with retail and restaurant frontages on Deansgate that remain externally oriented and disconnected from the site.



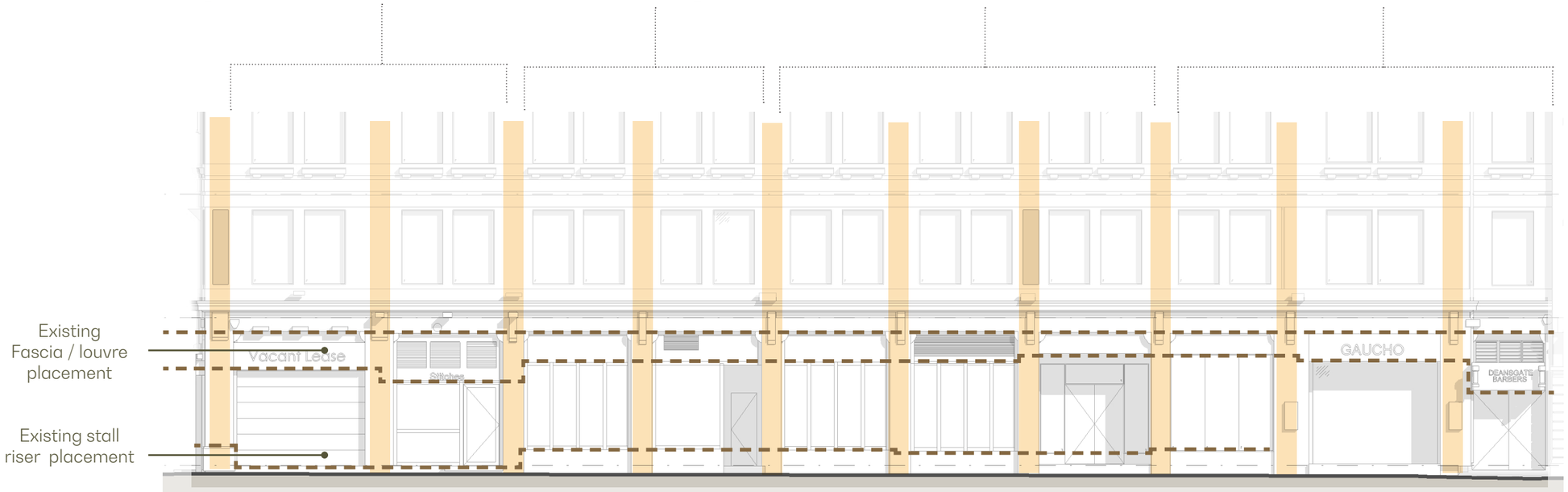
2.0

Analysing Existing Shop Fronts

2.1 Existing Elevations

The current studies asses the existing conditions of the retail/commercial elevations please refer to DAS and heritage statement.
St Mary's Street Elevation
The current shop frontage lacks consistency in both fascia and louvre heights and stall riser levels. This misalignment disrupts the visual rhythm across the elevation, undermining the original proportions of the building.
In several units, fascias sit too low or vary in depth, cutting across pilasters and capitals. Stall risers are also inconsistent in height and detailing, further weakening the cohesion of the frontage. The Hanging signage is mounted at inconsistent heights.





1. Vacant unit was stitches

2. James Roberts

3. Vacant unit was Cote

4. Gaucho

5. Richard Smith

Existing Pilasters

Alignment Fascias and stall risers

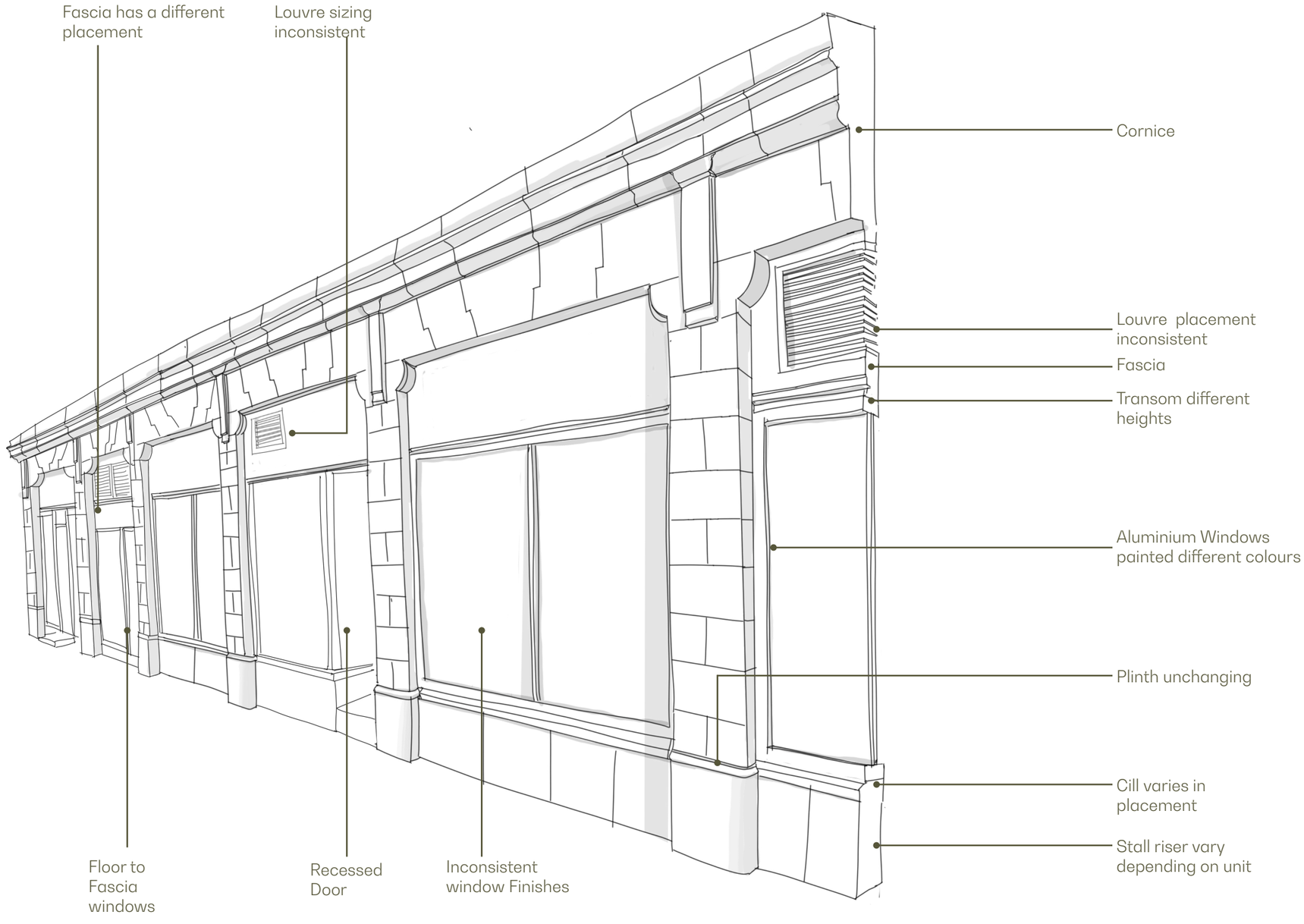
2.2 Existing shop front St Mary‘s Street

Pros

- Cornice and Pilaster Rhythm: The original structural hierarchy (cornice line, pilasters, and stall risers) remains legible and provides a strong base for reinstating traditional features .
- Recessed Entrances: Some units have recessed doors, which are implemented in Edwardian/ Victorian shop fronts.
- Stone Plinth: Continuous stone plinth lines contribute to visual grounding and could be enhanced with aligning with the stall risers.

Cons

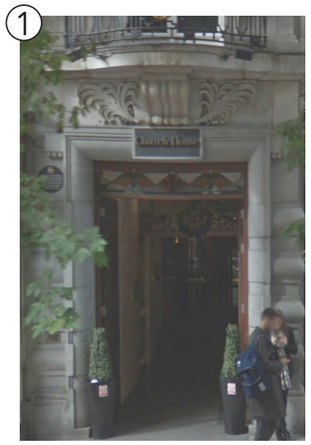
- Fascia Inconsistency: Varying fascia heights and placements break the horizontal continuity, detracting from the original elevation rhythm.
- Louvres: Sizes of louvres and placements disrupt facade cohesion and detract from heritage assets.
- Inconsistent Window Frames: Varied aluminium colours and inconsistent finishes create visual disconnection.
- Transom Misalignment: Differing transom heights between units reduce clarity and fail to respect original Victorian proportions.
- Irregular Stall Risers and cills: Variations in height and design of stall risers and cills compromise the uniformity.
- Modern Interventions: Mismatched signage, light fixtures, overshadow heritage assets.
- Lack of Coherent Detail Strategy: No consistent approach to cornice detail, corbels, or mullion articulation, making the facade feel disjointed.



2.3 Existing Elevation Deansgate

Modern alterations across the eastern elevation have disrupted the original proportions of the building. The proposed hotel entrance retains a more traditional and detailed appearance with the original door still in place. However, Simpson's signage is face fixed to the original moulding and obscures the original features, moreover, it breaks the symmetry of the elevation. Toni & Guy features a contemporary fascia that conceals original architectural elements such as corbels and capitals. Fascia and louvre heights vary along the elevation, and stall risers are either inconsistent or hidden entirely, often sitting out of line with the original stone plinths.

1



2



3





1. Proposed hotel entrance

2. Toni and Guy

3. Timpsons

Existing Pilasters

Alignment Fascias and stall risers

2.4 Existing Elevation College Street

The current shop frontage lacks consistency in both fascia and louvre heights and stall riser levels. This misalignment disrupts the visual rhythm across the elevation, undermining the original proportions of the building.
In several units, fascias sit too low or vary in depth, cutting across pilasters and capitals. Stall risers are also inconsistent in height and detailing, further weakening the cohesion of the frontage. The existing manifestation obscures views in and out to Parsonage Gardens.





2.5 Fascias & Cornices

In some shopfronts modern signage has removed or obscured some of the building's traditional features. Although some features are still present and visible, shops like Timpsons, Gaucho and Toni & Guy, conceal these traditional features.
Traditional fascias are generally of a similar height, along the shop frontage, these vary in height depending on the usage, adding to an uncoordinated street frontage along the building's elevation.
There are examples of some simple moulded cornices, and some more decorative, including dentil and dogtooth moulding. These should be exposed and repaired where they remain behind modern additions.







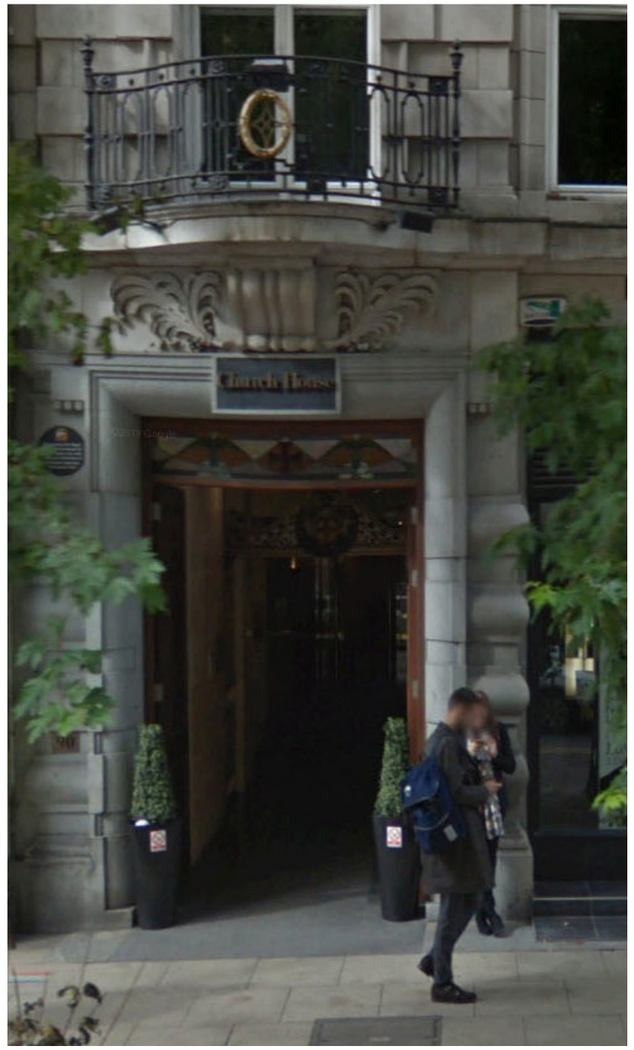


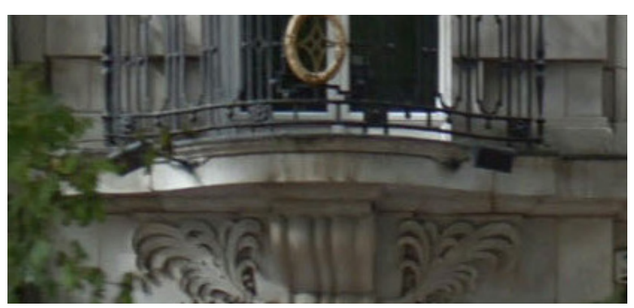
2.6 Stall Risers, Plinths and Cills

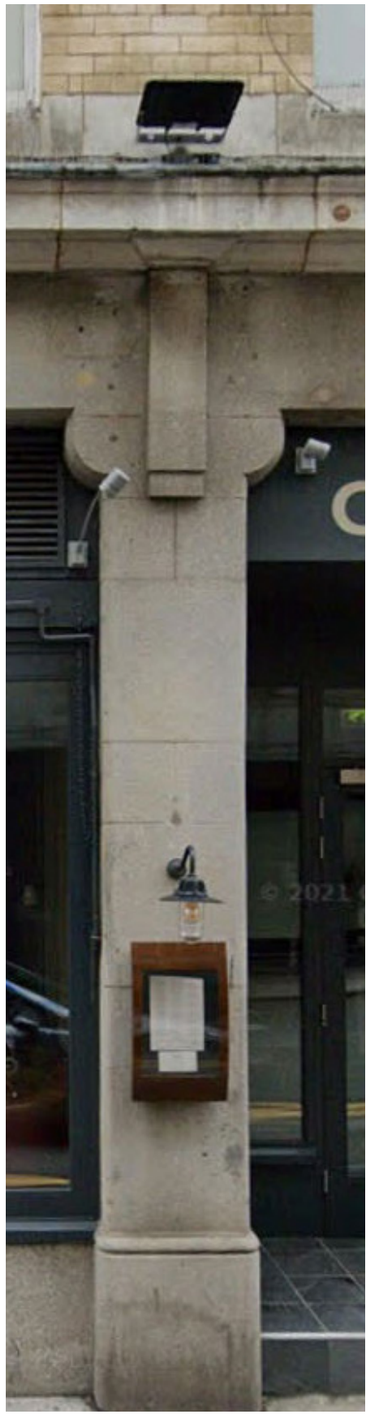
Despite later alterations, the stall risers and cills of shops on the frontage of 90 Deansgate should always be the same height. This helps to create a cohesive and attractive street. This is true for the majority of shop fronts, though a handful do not fit with the style.
Existing stall risers across 90 Deansgate vary between cohesive and floor to fascia windows, depending on the shop/restaurant. Many stall risers have been removed. Those that are remaining are typically quite simple and in an unkempt condition.
Cills vary between each shop front creating a uncoordinated and disjointed street frontage. Some cills vary in height also adding to a disconnected shop front





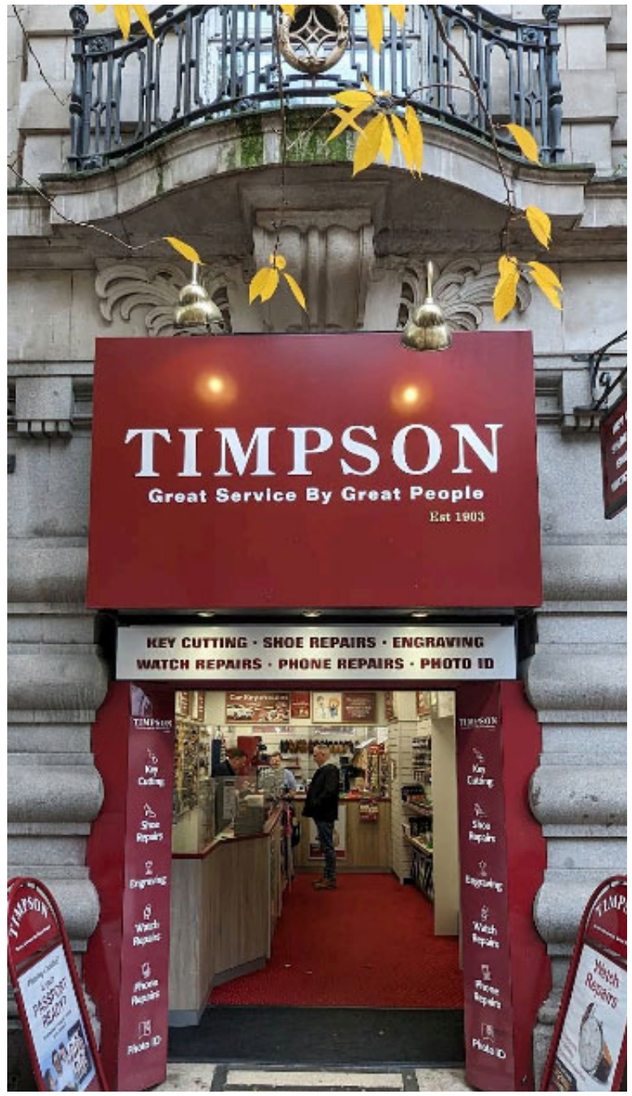






2.7 Recessed Lobbies, Doors & Thresholds

Recessed lobbies help to add visual interest to a street lined with shops. There are remnants of some of these, but many have been brought forward to the street line.
Victorians favoured largely glazed doors, with an opaque panel at the bottom matching the height of the stall riser.







2.8 Corbels, Capitals & Pilasters

Pilasters across 90 Deansgate vary by elevation. The southern and western elevations feature plain, simple pilasters and capitals, while the eastern elevation is more decorative. Here, capitals include subtle detailing, and corbels are more ornate, with carved features that contribute to the character of the frontage.













3.0

Design Studies

3.1 Discounted Design Studies

These studies consider principle including consistent fascia and stall riser heights, exploring door and window arrangements within existing openings. These have been discounted dues to following:

Option 1: Minimal intervention

- Maintains existing door apertures, however door openings inconsistent.
- No improvement to street frontage rhythm or symmetry

Option 1:





Option 2: Centralising doors and pulling them forward to align with back of pavement

- Improves symmetry and rhythm to the frontage
- Simplifies layout, however, doesn't allow for outward opening doors to the F and B units for fire regulations
- Flat doors reduce visual depth
- No opportunity for recessed thresholds or visual intrigue.

Option 2:





Option 3 Recessing all door openings

- Fully recessed doors and windows within the aperture disrupt the rhythm and create negative space within the elevation
- Retail units lose GIA.

Option 3:





3.2 Shop-front Preferred Option

Design Philosophy

- All windows to have Portland Stone with decorative, perforated fascias to allow for ventilation where required.
- All doors to be centralised within aperture
- All windows, door and fascias to be dark grey (RAL 7016 or similar approved.
- Signage / Lettering - opaque vinyl manifestation applied to back of glazing.
- External hanging signage to align with entrance points to retail units. Boards to be dark grey and/ or to match approved colour of window and doors. Lettering to be unified type-font: Colour - Gold or similar approved.



3.3 Shop-front Preferred Option- continued

All signage to be subjected to a separate planning application.



Typical Bay



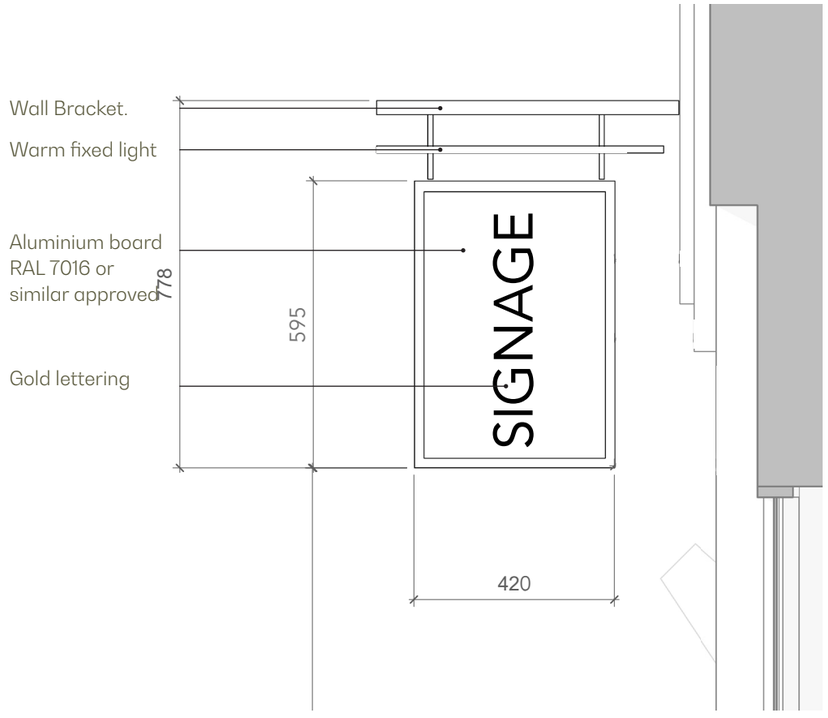
View Looking Down St. Mary's Street

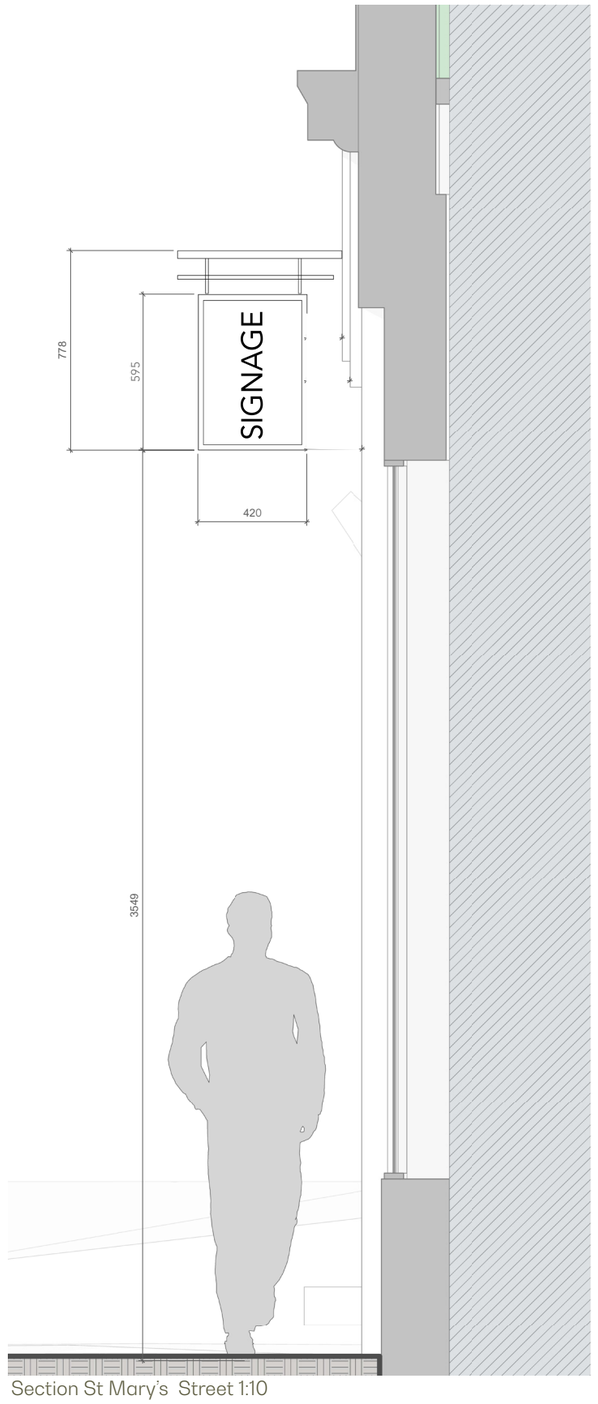


St Mary's Street

3.4 Sign Design

The proposed hanging sign is A2 in size (420mm x 595mm) and made from an powder coated aluminium panel finished in RAL 7016 or a similar approved colour. Gold lettering type font to be agreed. Each sign is mounted on a steel bracket with a fixed warm light. The light is positioned above the sign to improve legibility at night. Signs are positioned in line with each unit entrance and consistent across the elevation. Final designs subject to future planning application.





Section St Mary's Street 1:10

3.5 Shop Front Precedents

These examples use blank fascias with consistent, minimal signage placed behind the glazing or suspended from the building. Recessed doors break up the flat frontage, adding depth and improving visibility/intrigue into the unit. Together, these elements create a clear and interesting street frontage.

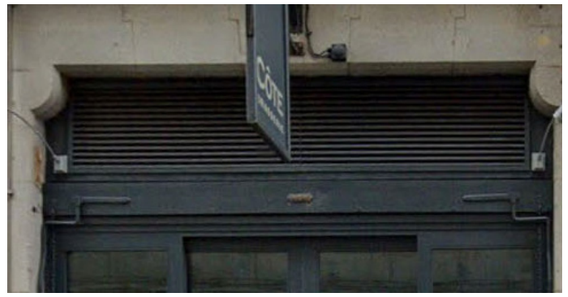






3.6 Louvre Precedents

Historic buildings within the Deansgate Conservation Area feature a range of decorative treatments, from ornate ironwork to patterned stone panels. These examples provide a useful reference point for how louvres could be more integrated and expressive. Applying similar treatments to the louvre system at 90 Deansgate would not only reflect the character of the wider conservation area, but also strengthen its relationship to the existing building.



Existing Louvres



National House



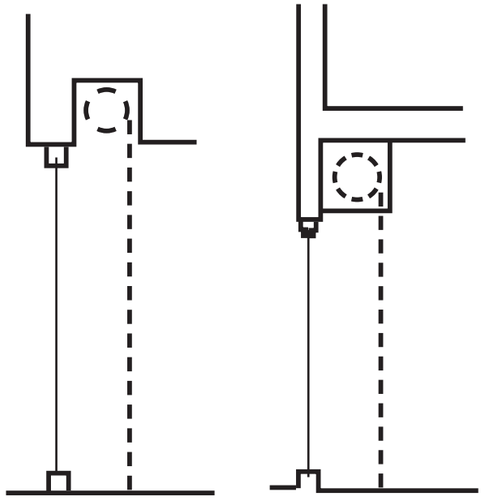
7 Barton Square



Barton Arcade

3.7 Secured by Design

Security should be provided through chain-link roller shutters installed behind the glazing. These should be integrated within the shop front frame and concealed behind the fascia, providing a seamless appearance. This approach maintains visibility into the unit, reduces opportunities for graffiti, and provides secure out-of-hours protection. All door and windows sets to be PAS 24.









3.8 Hanging Signage

These examples demonstrates how clear, minimal hanging signs can provide effective branding without relying on fascia signage. Each is mounted on a simple metal panel and suspended from discreet brackets, keeping the frontage uncluttered and visually consistent.







3.9 Signage Behind Glazing

These examples demonstrates how minimal, opaque window vinyl can be used for clear branding and business information. Applied directly to the inside of the glazing, this approach avoids cluttering the facade and helps maintain a clean, unified street frontage.







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