

Heritage Statement

Studio 14, 14 Little Lever Street, Manchester, M1 1HR

Application for entrance refurbishment

April 2025

CT Planning & Development

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Table of Contents

1.	Introduction	2
2.	Site Location and Description.....	3
3.	Policy Context	7
4.	Statement of Significance.....	9
5.	Description of Proposed Works	11
6.	Assessment of Impact on Heritage Significance	12
7.	Approach to Signage.....	14
8.	Conclusion	15

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Heritage Statement supports a full planning application for external alterations to the entrance of 14 Little Lever Street, located within the Stevenson Square Conservation Area in Manchester city centre. The proposals relate solely to the replacement of the existing entrance and immediate surrounding finishes at ground floor level. The building is not listed but lies adjacent to a Grade II listed building, with other designated heritage assets nearby.
- 1.2 The existing entrance detracts from the appearance of the host building and the wider conservation area. The proposed new entrance has been carefully designed to deliver a modest but clear visual enhancement, improve legibility and provide a better-quality arrival experience.
- 1.3 This statement has been prepared in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024), and draws on national and local planning policy, as well as online guidance about the Stevenson Square Conservation Area.

2. Site Location and Description

- 2.1 14 Little Lever Street is located on the western side of a commercial block bounded by Hilton Street, Dale Street and Newton Street in Manchester's Northern Quarter. The street itself is a narrow back street, serving as a secondary frontage to properties within the Stevenson Square Conservation Area.
- 2.2 The building is a simple commercial structure thought to be constructed in the late 19th century for occupation in the early 20th century, and is of no particular architectural distinction. The application relates to the entrance of Studio 14, a multi-unit office building that is accessed directly from street level. The entrance is currently poorly defined, visually tired, and lacks presence or legibility. A metal shutter, which is currently closed outside of office hours, further detracts from the street scene. The entrance is recessed, stepped, and enclosed within dated materials (see Figures 1–3).

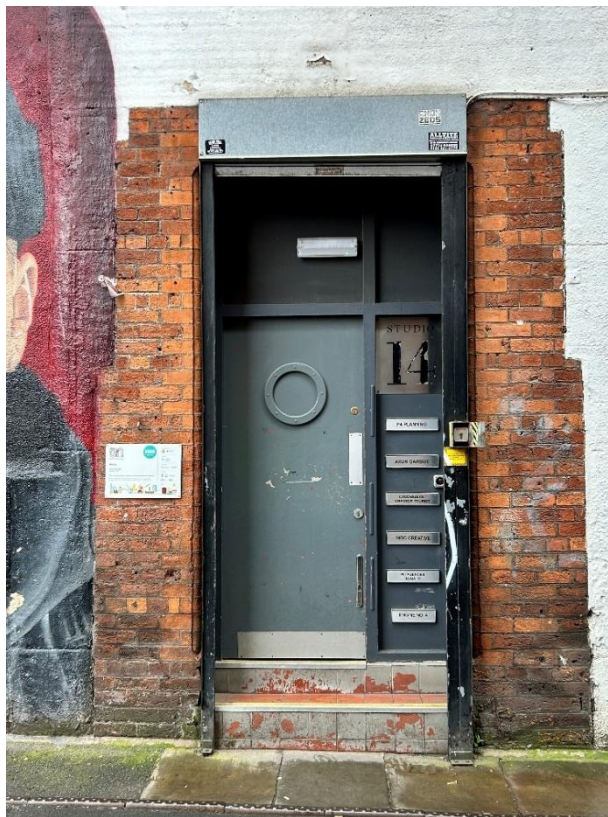


Figure 1 : Current entrance to Studio 14



Figure 2 : Studio 14 - Little Lever Street façade



Figure 3 : Entrance shutters, used outside office hours

- 2.3 The site shares a party wall with 18 Hilton Street ('Studio 18'), a Grade II listed building that forms part of a substantial 19th century warehouse block extending between Hilton Street, Newton Street, and Stevenson Square (see Figure 4). While the entrance to Studio 14 is located on Little Lever Street – and distinct in architectural character and treatment – its physical connection to a designated heritage asset requires a careful and considered approach to any alterations. However, as shown in Section 6, the proposed entrance works are of such limited scale and visibility that they will have no adverse impact on the architectural or historic significance of 18 Hilton Street, nor on the wider conservation area. It is noteworthy that 18 Hilton Street has recently been successfully refurbished. These works have included installation of a glazed entrance, a theme not dissimilar to that proposed as part of the current application.
- 2.4 The rear of the Grade II listed Watts Brothers building at 22 Lever Street is also visible from the entrance, located diagonally opposite on the other side of Little Lever Street.



Figures 4 & 5 : Studio 14 and Studio 18 from Stephenson Square

3. Policy Context

- 3.1 The site lies within the Stevenson Square Conservation Area, designated in February 1987 and amended in December 1987. The building is not statutorily listed, but is adjacent to and in the setting of listed buildings.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024)

- 3.2 Paragraphs 202–221 (Chapter 16) address the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. Paragraph 202 states that heritage assets “*should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations*”. Paragraph 207 requires that applications affecting heritage assets provide a description of significance proportionate to the proposals, including any effect on setting.

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

- 3.3 The NPPG offers additional guidance on assessing significance, setting, and the distinction between “less than substantial harm” and “no harm.”

Places for Everyone (adopted March 2024)

- 3.4 Policy JP-P2 (Heritage) encourages sensitive development that sustains and enhances heritage assets and their settings.

Manchester Core Strategy (adopted July 2012)

- 3.5 Policy EN3 promotes the conservation of Manchester’s historic environment and requires that proposals preserve or enhance heritage significance.

Stevenson Square Conservation Area

- 3.6 The City Council’s online guidance for the Stevenson Square Conservation Area provides a general overview of the area’s historic development, architectural character, and the significance of its grid-like layout of 19th century commercial buildings. The guidance highlights the importance of preserving the built form, scale and materiality that

contribute to the area's special interest. However, Little Lever Street is not mentioned directly, and there is no detailed appraisal of individual frontages or buildings. While this does not imply a lack of heritage value, it suggests that Little Lever Street is not considered one of the area's defining streetscapes.

4. Statement of Significance

- 4.1 The host building is not statutorily listed, nor identified as being a positive contributor in the Stevenson Square Conservation Area. It is of limited intrinsic architectural interest, typical of late-19th century commercial infill, and currently detracts from the appearance of the street scene due to a poorly defined and visually tired entrance.
- 4.2 The application site is directly adjacent to the Grade II listed building at 18 Hilton Street, and also sits within the setting of the Grade II listed Watts Brothers building at 22 Lever Street, which presents a rear elevation obliquely across the narrow street. The Watts Brothers building is a fine late 19th century textile warehouse, constructed in red brick and stone with a richly detailed principal elevation to Lever Street. Its rear elevation, while more functional in appearance, contributes to the industrial character of the area and forms part of the local townscape experience when moving through Little Lever Street.
- 4.3 Although the entrance to Studio 14 is visually modest and architecturally distinct from these neighbouring assets, its proximity to both 18 Hilton Street and 22 Lever Street means that any proposed changes must be assessed for potential impact on the setting of these designated heritage assets.
- 4.4 The entrance as existing makes no positive contribution to the conservation area or to the setting of adjacent listed buildings.
- 4.5 Overall, the significance of the affected heritage assets comprises:
- 18 Hilton Street, Grade II listed: high historic and aesthetic value as a former textile warehouse;
 - Watts Brothers, 22 Lever Street, Grade II listed: a building of recognised historic and architectural interest as a late 19th century textile warehouse; its rear elevation contributes modestly to the industrial character of the conservation area;
 - The Stevenson Square Conservation Area: mixed but cohesive townscape with a strong 19th century commercial character;

- The application site: neutral contributor with no intrinsic heritage value

4.6 The Studio 14 entrance is on a recessed return elevation and does not form part of the principal Hilton Street façade. It does not share the architectural characteristics or original detailing of the listed building.



Figure 6 : Map showing application site and surrounding listed buildings (Historic England)

5. Description of Proposed Works

5.1 The application seeks permission to replace the existing entrance door and surrounding treatment with a new, well-detailed glazed door system and associated finishes.

5.2 The proposed development comprises:

- A new glazed door with a blackened bronze metal frame and minimalist pull handle
- Metal panel to the recessed entrance reveal, finished to match the door frame
- Discreet integrated post boxes
- External steps re-clad in Staffordshire Brown Brindle ceramic tiling, with appropriate stair nosing
- Feature lighting and improved signage to enhance legibility and safety
- The existing shutter is to be removed
- The white area of façade above the entrance will be returned to brick.

5.3 The proposed finishes are derived from a considered palette, drawing on local character and materiality while delivering a clearly contemporary upgrade (see Design and Access Statement). The design is intended to support an improved user experience and create a more attractive and appropriate frontage within this part of the conservation area.

6. Assessment of Impact on Heritage Significance

- 6.1 The proposals are modest in scope and confined entirely to the replacement of a tired entranceway on a secondary elevation. There will be no change to the scale, form or materiality of the host building at upper levels, nor any alteration to key features of the adjoining listed former warehouse.
- 6.2 The design has been informed by materials and motifs found within the Northern Quarter and surrounding warehouse typologies, including:
- Use of blackened bronze metalwork and deep-toned tiles, referencing the area's industrial palette
 - Integration of subtle lighting and signage for clarity without visual clutter
 - Removal of a visually intrusive metal shutter.
- 6.3 Importantly, the new entrance will not physically interfere with, or materially affect the fabric of the adjoining listed building at 18 Hilton Street. The works are limited to the Little Lever Street frontage, which does not form part of the Hilton Street or Newton Street elevations described in the list entry.
- 6.4 The setting of 18 Hilton Street, and its recently enhanced entrance, will not be undermined or diminished by the proposed works. On the contrary, the upgrade to the neighbouring entrance will remove a poor-quality intervention and bring a more consistent and respectful tone to this part of the block.
- 6.5 The proposals will also preserve the setting of the Grade II listed Watts Brothers building at 22 Lever Street, which presents a rear elevation diagonally across from the site on Little Lever Street. While this elevation is more utilitarian in character, it still forms part of the streetscape experience within the conservation area. The improved entrance treatment at No.14 will reduce visual clutter and introduce higher-quality materials and detailing, thereby making a modest positive contribution to the building's wider setting.

6.6 In summary:

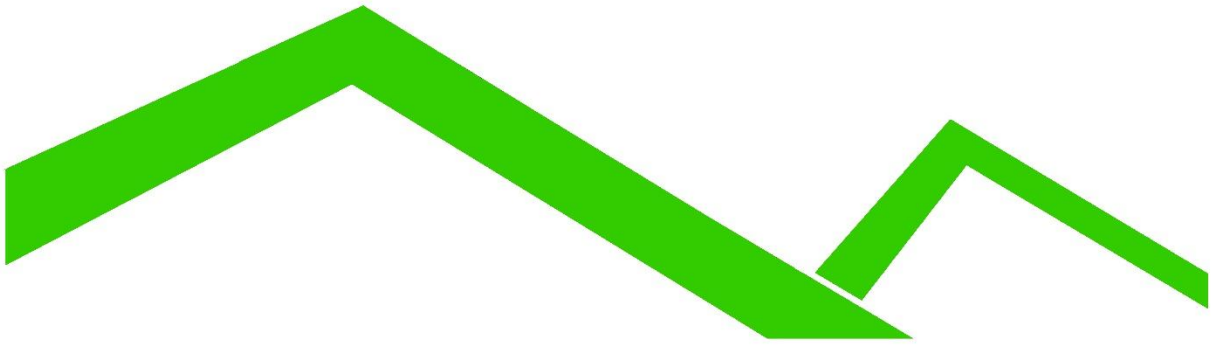
- There will be no harm to the setting of the listed buildings at 18 Hilton Street and 22 Lever Street
- The proposals will result in a minor enhancement to the Stevenson Square Conservation Area
- The design achieves an appropriate and well-judged balance between clarity, context, and restraint.

7. Approach to Signage

- 7.1 The signage details are submitted alongside this planning application and are to be considered together with the works to the entrance.
- 7.2 The proposed signage comprises:
- A modest backlit wall-mounted projecting sign, to be fixed to the entrance reveal
 - Discreet graphics applied to the glazed door to identify the office entrance
- 7.3 The signage has been designed as an integral element of the façade treatment. It is low-key, appropriately scaled, and uses high-quality materials. There will be no harm to heritage assets arising from the signage as proposed.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1 The proposed entrance improvements at 14 Little Lever Street have been developed with careful regard to the site's location within the Stevenson Square Conservation Area and its immediate physical relationship to the listed buildings at 18 Hilton Street and 22 Lever Street.
- 8.2 Although the application site has no inherent heritage value, it lies adjacent to and within the setting of designated heritage assets. The replacement of the current tired and poorly resolved entrance with the more refined, contemporary and materially sensitive design is considered a clear opportunity for enhancement.
- 8.3 The proposed works have been designed with restraint, contextual awareness, and respect for neighbouring built form. The entrance will be upgraded through high-quality, contemporary materials in a way that enhances visual legibility and improves the public realm, without introducing visual noise or harm.
- 8.4 There will be no impact on the adjoining listed building's fabric, and no adverse effect on its setting. Overall, the proposal will make a modest but positive contribution to both the conservation area and the setting of the nearby listed assets.
- 8.5 The proposals are in accordance with:
- The requirements of the NPPF (2024)
 - Manchester Core Strategy Policy EN3
 - Places for Everyone Policy JP-P2
 - The objectives of the Stevenson Square Conservation Area online guidance
- 8.6 Accordingly, planning permission and advertisement consent should be granted.



CT Planning & Development Ltd

www.ctpd.co.uk

ct@ctpd.co.uk

