CUSHMAN & WAKEFIELD

PLANNING STATEMENT

25 St Ann Street & 17 St Anns Square.

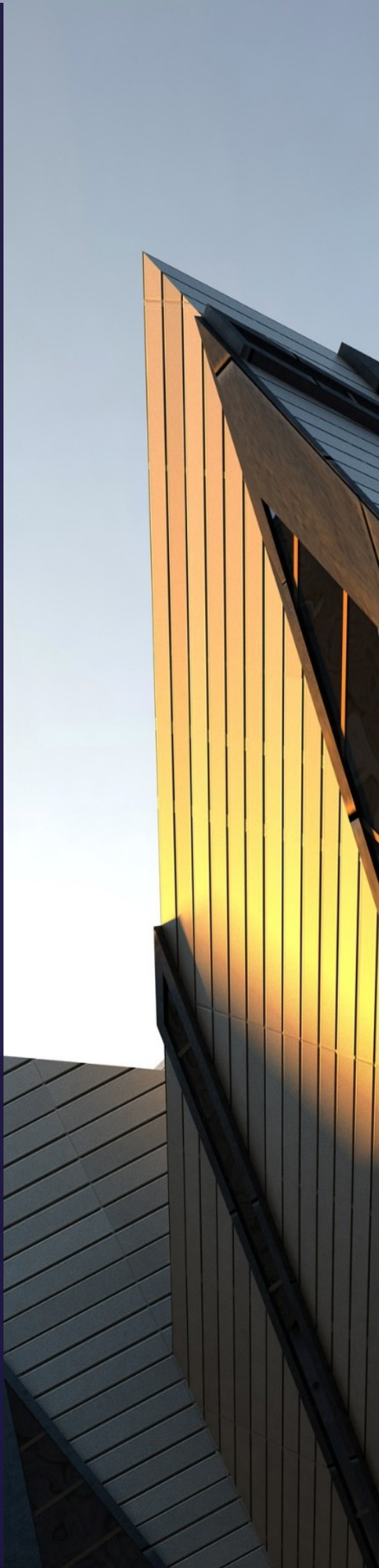
NatWest Group PLC

Job No. 253VTS00

DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING | LEEDS

April 2025

Better never settles



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Version	Prepared By	Approved By	Date
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Contents

1. Introduction 1
2. Background 2
3. Site and Surrounding Area 4
4. Development Proposals 7
5. Planning Policy Context 9
6. Heritage 12
7. Analysis 13
8. Summary and Conclusion 14

1. Introduction

1.1 Cushman & Wakefield (C&W) has been instructed by NatWest Group PLC to prepare two applications for listed building consent for the removal of the stepped access 'bridge link' connection between 25 St Ann Street (former RBS Building) and 17 St Anns Square (Mansfield Chambers). 25 St. Anns Street is a Grade II* listed building and 17 St Anns Square is a Grade II listed building.

1.2 This Planning Statement will consider the background to the development proposals and will provide analysis. A separate Design, Access and Heritage Statement has been prepared for the site and forms part of the applications for Listed Building Consent. The Heritage Statement assesses the heritage impact of the proposals on both listed buildings.

1.3 Accordingly, this report is structured as follows:

- Background: Section 2;
- Site and Surroundings (including planning history): Section 3;
- Development Proposals: Section 4;
- Review of Planning Policy: Section 5;
- Heritage: Section 6
- Analysis: Section 7, and;
- Summary and Recommendations: Section 8.

2. Background

2.1 NatWest Group PLC is seeking to separate two properties through the removal of a non-original bridge link structure. The bridge was constructed in 1985. The proposed work is a result of the RBS Bank branch closure. The works will separate 25 St Ann Street (former RBS Building) from 17 St Anns Square which is part of a block (17-23 St. Anns Square - Mansfield Chambers) to reinstate both properties back to their original forms.

2.2 25 St Ann Street is designated as a Grade II* listed building that is currently vacant. 17-23 St Anns Square is a designated Grade II listed building that is operating as a shop with offices above.

Planning History

2.3 A search of the planning register has been undertaken. The most relevant planning records are provided below:

Table 1- Planning History

Application Reference	Description	Decision
17-23 St Ann's Square		
141481/LO/2024	Listed Building Consent for Internal Structural Works due to Unstable Pier.	Granted November 2024
141297/LO/2024	Listed Building Consent for Internal Structural Works to Plant Room	Granted November 2024
139944/LO/2024	Listed Building Consent for the internal refurbishment, along with the installation of a new shopfront.	Granted May 2024
134538/LO/2022	Listed Building Consent for proposed internal refurbishment works to ground to third floors	Granted September 2022
133625/LO/2022	Listed Building Consent external and internal works, including removal of existing external signage, removal of external ATMs and internally for removal of internal counters, ATMs, partitioning and all furniture.	Granted April 2022
25 St Ann Street		

25599	Listed Building Consent Construction of bridge access link at 1st.floor level	Granted December 1985
112030/LO/2016/C1	Listed Building Consent for the refurbishment for the existing bank.	Granted June 2016

3. Site and Surrounding Area

3.1 The application site comprises the inner courtyard in between 25 St Anns Street which is currently vacant but formally occupied by RBS and 17 St Anns Square, which consists of a shop with offices above. 25 St Anns Street has two entrances off St. Anns Street. The first (green door) provides the entrance to the Coutts part of the former bank and the second (blue door) provides access to the RBS part of the bank with the original banking hall to the left of this entrance. 17 St Anns Square is also accessed from St Anns Street.

3.2 The pedestrian link bridge connecting 25 St Anns Street and 17 St Anns Square is on the first floor. The link bridge is concealed by 25 St Anns Street and 17-23 St Anns Square which surround it. The bridge is visible from the internal windows and the service roof only (see photographs – Figure 1 and 2 p5) The main vehicular access to the properties is from St Anns Street to the south and Half Moon Street to the east.

3.3 A site visit was undertaken on 2nd April 2024. It was observed that 17 St Anns Square is currently undertaking construction works to implement the Listed Building Consent. The access to 25 St Anns Street was located on the south side of the building through the blue door. This door had been damaged and is temporarily boarded up for security reasons. On the ground floor lies the old RBS part of the bank, it is proposed that the stud wall to the right when walking in is to be removed to open up to the Coutts part of the former bank, this area can be accessed from St Anns Street through the green door. Continuing onto the first floor of the RBS bank the stepped access can be viewed. It is proposed the existing step be removed with the tunnel and the wall filled in with like for like materials on both sides to match the existing materials. This is the same for the exterior. The gap left from the removal of the tunnel will be filled with the appropriate like for like materials to ensure the works do not detract or cause harm to the heritage assets. At the other end of the stepped tunnel, the first floor of 17 St Anns Square is located. To the left when walking in a fire exit door and frame was observed to have been removed due to a break in. This entrance is therefore now temporarily boarded up for safety reasons. Multiple minor works are proposed in this room such as the removal of the existing ceiling mounted air conditioning units, the replacement of the existing lights with LEDs and the removal of a stud wall on right hand wall (when walking from 25 St Anns St into 17 St Anns Sq).

3.4 A pre submission site visit was held with the Manchester City Council Conservation and Planning Officer on 26th February 2025. It was agreed that the removal of the bridge was acceptable in principle subject to detail.

Figure 1 - Stepped access tunnel photograph from the roof

Figure 2 - Photograph of 25 St Anns Street from St Anns Street

Surrounding Area

3.5 The buildings form part of the St Anns Square Conservation Area. Within the conservation area 25 St Anns Street is highlighted as a fine example of the Italian palazzo style of architecture, with semi-circular headed arches and Venetian windows. Designed by the architect J. E. Gregan, it was originally Benjamin Heywood's Bank and was connected to the manager's house by a single-storey link. It is listed Grade II*.

Figure 3 - Photograph of 17 St Anns Square from St Anns Square

3.6 St. Ann's Square has many buildings of architectural merit., Notable buildings in the conservation area include St Anns Church opposite 25 St Anns Street, the Cotton Exchange building, and the Old Exchange located on King Street. St Ann's Square is within in the commercial heart of the City, where almost every building accommodates shops on the ground floor.

4. Development Proposals

4.1 The development proposals seek listed building consent for:

'the removal of the stepped access 'bridge link' connection between 25 St Ann's Street (former RBS bank) and 17 St Anns Square (Mansfield Chambers).'

4.2 Two separate applications for listed building consent have been made to address the alterations to each heritage asset to accommodate the access removal.

4.3 The key alternations involved in the removal of the link bridge include:

Internal

4.4 The alterations internally will consist of the addition of a stud wall to board up the stepped access to the link bridge and reinstate internal finishes to match the existing. The stairs leading up the bridge will be removed on both sides.

- Existing ceiling mounted air conditioning (A/C) cassettes will be removed and replaced with like for like ceiling tiles. (Existing and Proposed Mezzanine Floor Ceiling Plan 17 St Ann Square)
- Existing Lighting will be replaced with LED efficient lighting (Please refer to proposed and existing mezzanine Floor Ceiling Plan 17 St Ann Square).
- Installation of a replacement fire door due to damage from vandalism (See Proposed Mezzanine Floor Plan 17 St Ann Square)
- Proposal of a new submain route from the mains cupboard. (See Existing and Proposed Mezzanine Floor Ceiling 17 St Ann Square)
- Reinstate the fire escape to rear fire escape stairs. (See Proposed Mezzanine Floor Plan 17 St Ann Square)
- Install a new distribution board to facilitate the lighting and power and a new utility meter. (See Proposed Mezzanine Floor Plan 17 St Ann Square)
- Door and lock to be repaired to match the original due to damage from vandalism.(See Proposed Ground Floor Plan 25 St Anns Street)
- Remove existing non-original plasterboard partition to expose original doors retained behind. (See Proposed Ground Floor Plan 25 St Anns Street)
- Remove timber infill to doorway and non-original lintel above to facilitate the infill of the opening to separate 17 St Anns Square and 25 St Anns Street. (See Proposed 1st Floor Plan 25 St Anns Street)
- Make good all affected internal skirtings, brickwork, plaster and decorations.

External

4.5 The external alterations will include the removal of the of the non-original bridge link structure, infill the glazed brick wall with a similar brick to create a linear finish. The roof will be finished with roof pitch to blend into the existing sloping roof. The works will also involve the following:

- Make good all affected external masonry and flashing to both elevations (See Existing and Proposed Elevation Drawings 25 St Anns Street & 17 St Anns Square)

- Remove internal plywood mesh security cladding across the windows on elevation (See Existing and Proposed Elevations 25 St Anns Street & 17 St Anns Square)

5. Planning Policy Context

5.1 Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with relevant policies set out in the appropriate development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The main planning policies at a national and local level relevant to the determination of this application are summarised and explained in this section.

National Planning Policy Framework (2025)

5.2 The NPPF sets a presumption in favour of sustainable development and a positive approach to planning as a means of supporting the country's economic and housing growth, whilst protecting the environment.

5.3 **Paragraph 207** of the NPPF states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

5.4 **Paragraph 210** of the NPPF states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation.

5.5 **Paragraph 213** of the NPPF states that any harm or loss of the significance of a heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to a grade II listed buildings should be exceptional; and a grade II* listed buildings, should be wholly exceptional.

5.6 **Paragraph 215** of the NPPF states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

5.7 **Section 12** of the NPPF 'Achieving Well Designed Places' states that great importance is attached to the design of the built environment. Decisions should ensure that developments function well and add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive with materials appropriate to the local character and history of the area.

Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990

5.8 Sections 16, 66 and 72 of the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990 requires that special consideration is given to the preservation of the significant fabric and setting of listed buildings and conservation areas. Development decisions should, therefore, accord with the requirements of the NPPF.

Manchester City Council Development Plan

5.9 The Development Plan comprises of the following relevant documents:

- Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (March 2024)
- Manchester Core Strategy (July 2012)
- Extant UDP (1995)

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (2024)

5.10 **Policy JP-P 1** aims to consist of a series of beautiful, healthy and varied places. This policy requires developments should have a clear identity that conserves and enhances the historic environment, visually stimulating, adaptable, and is resource efficient.

5.11 **Policy JP-P 2** aims to proactively manage and work with partners to positively conserve, sustain and enhance its historic environment and heritage assets and their settings. Opportunities will be pursued to aid the promotion, enjoyment, understanding and interpretation of heritage assets, as a means of maximising wider public benefits and reinforcing Greater Manchester's distinct identity and sense of place. The policy requires development proposals affecting a designated heritage asset (or an archaeological site of national importance) and a conservation area to conserve those elements which contribute to its significance including those identified in any conservation area appraisal as making a positive contribution to the area. Harm to such elements will only be permitted where this is clearly justified and outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal.

Manchester Core Strategy (2012)

5.12 The site is within the St Anns Square Conservation Area and the City Centre Primary Shopping Area.

5.13 The following Core Strategy policies are of relevance:

5.14 **CS Policy EN1** states that developers will be expected to consider the City's heritage and continue the rich pattern of activity in the core area.

5.15 **CS Policy EN3** states that new developments must be designed so as to support the Council in preserving or, where, possible enhancing the historic environment.

5.16 **CS Policy CC9** states that development should preserve or enhance the heritage assets that have been identified, including listed buildings and conservation areas.

5.17 **CS Policy DM1** states that developments should have regard to appreciate siting, layout, scale, form, massing, materials and detail.

Extant UDP (1995)

5.18 **Saved Policy DC19.1** states that in determining applications for listed building consents regard will be given to desirability of securing the retention, restoration, maintenance and continued use of such buildings and to protecting their general setting. The City Council will not permit any externa or internal alteration or addition to a Listed building where, in its opinion, there would be an adverse effect on its architectural or historic character.

St Ann's Square Conservation Area Appraisal

5.19 The St. Anns Square Conservation Area was designated in July 1970. The St Anns Conservation area's significance derived from the field that St Anns Square now occupies holding a license to hold an annual fair on the eve and feast of St Matthew this become titled Acres Fair. Throughout the years several significant listed buildings where erected in the area. St Anns Church and the Manchester Cotton Exchange being two of note. The buildings around St. Ann's Square and along King Street developed into the most fashionable shopping district in Manchester, maintaining that status to the present day. St. Ann's Square is in the commercial heart of the City, where almost every building accommodates shops on the ground floor.

5.20 The St. Anns Conservation Area Appraisal states that it is expected that the height, scale, colour, form, massing and materials of new buildings should relate to the existing high-quality buildings, and also complement their character. There is great variety in the building materials used in the conservation area such as stone, brick and stucco. Most windows are of the sliding sash type and are vertically proportioned.

6. Heritage

6.1 The application corresponds to two listed buildings as detailed below:

17 -23 Mansfield Chambers listing no - 1247654

6.2 Mansfield Chambers 17-23, St Anns Square is a Grade II listed building formally listed as St Ann's Square (East side) Nos.17 TO 23 Mansfield Chambers. The building consists of 4 storeys and was constructed with Stucco on brick with dressings of stone and fiberglass imitating stone.

6.3 'Shop with offices over. U-plan formed by main range parallel to street with back extension, and rear wing attached to this parallel to Half Moon Street. Italianate style. Four storeys and 5 bays (the first narrower and slightly set back); 4-bay giant arcade to ground and 1st floors (1st floor treated as mezzanine), with pilasters (now partly or wholly of fibre-glass), frieze, and moulded cornice; low 3rd floor with sill-band and frieze; modillioned cornice and pilastered parapet with urns. The arcade has C20 shop fronts at ground floor and semi-circular windows above, and the narrow bay to the left of this has a doorway with C20 doors, rectangular over light, frieze lettered "MANSFIELD CHAMBERS", and segmental pediment on long fluted consoles, and above this a round-headed 2-light window with circular tracery; the 2nd floor has round-headed sashes in moulded architraves with swags and cornices; 3rd floor has short sashed windows. Three chimneys visible above parapet. Interior not inspected.'

6.4 Due to the proposed works being located within an external courtyard there is no expected impact to the listed building's facade.

25 St. Anns Street - Williams and Glyn's Bank listing no – 1270792

6.5 25 St Ann Street is a Grade II* listed building formally listed as St Ann Street (North side) Williams and Glyn's Bank. The bank originally constructed in 1848 is 3 storeys and was constructed of Sandstone ashlar and ed brick with sandstone dressings and hipped slate roofs.

6.6 'Bank, with attached manager's house. 1848, by J.E.Gregan, for Benjamin Heywood's Bank. Sandstone ashlar, and red brick with sandstone dressings, hipped slate roofs. Tripartite plan with bank on corner of St Ann's Square, entrance bay in centre and former manager's house to right. Italian palazzo style. The bank, 3 storeys, and 3x1 bays plus chamfered corner, has a plinth, rusticated quoins, rusticated ground floor with raised rusticated surrounds to large round-headed arches which contain Venetian windows with Ionic colonnettes and are linked by a moulded impost band; sashed windows to both upper floors, those in the centre tripartite, those at 1st floor with pedimented Corinthian architraves and balustraded balconies linked by a moulded sill-band, and those at 2nd floor with enriched architraves linked by a similar band; and a prominent dentilled and modillioned cornice. The corner has a carved shield at ground floor, and windows on the upper floors like those at the front; and the left return has tripartite windows on all floors, those at ground floor forming an arcade. The entrance bay has a single-storey porch with a round-headed doorway (the lintel lettered "BANK") with emphatic run-out voussoirs, and a balustraded parapet. The house to the right, 3 storeys and 4 bays, has a plinth, very emphatic rusticated quoins to the corners and surrounding a round-headed doorway to the 3rd bay, a cornice to the ground floor and moulded sill-band to the 2nd floor, a plain brick frieze and prominent modillioned cornice; and sashed windows with moulded architraves, those at 1st floor with panelled aprons and moulded cornices. Interior not inspected.'

6.7 Due to the proposed works being located within an external courtyard there is no expected impact to either of the facades of the listed buildings. The proposed development will remove a modern bridge structure and will ensure the works to 'make good' the changes will match the existing materials.

7. Analysis

Principle of Development

7.1 This section evaluates the proposed development against relevant planning policy, material considerations and technical assessments undertaken to support the planning application. Pre-application discussions have been instrumental in the development of the proposed scheme.

7.2 As a matter of law, applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan for this site comprises the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (March 2024), Manchester Core Strategy (July 2012), and Extant UDP (1995).

7.3 The application site is within Central Manchester, inside the St Anns Square Conservation Area and the City Centre Primary Shopping Area. The stepped access 'bridge link' is connected to a Grade II and a Grade II* listed buildings.

7.4 The pre-submission advice provided by the Planning Officer and Heritage Officer in a site meeting confirmed that the principle of the proposed development is acceptable (subject to detail). The advice received confirmed that two listed building applications would need to be submitted to reflect the impacts removing the bridge link would have to the heritage assets individually.

Heritage

7.5 This Statement has been prepared for the site to assess the heritage impact of the proposals. This Statement concluded that the proposals would have a mostly low impact on the significance of 25 St Ann's Street (the former RBS bank) and 17 St Anns Square (Mansfield Chambers) and will not adversely affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest.

7.6 The location of the proposed work being within the internal courtyard of the buildings decreases the significance of the wors taking place as the works cannot be seen from public places. Also, it is acknowledged that h the works are fundamental to ensue beneficial use of both buildings. Where an area of high impact has been identified the design team have sought to offset the harm by careful design and introducing measures that will have a positive impact on the building.

7.7 It is therefore considered that the proposals are in accordance with Core Strategy Policies EN1, EN3, CC9 and paragraphs 210, 213, and 215 of the NPPF.

Design

7.8 The proposed development has been carefully designed to ensure that it causes minimal harm to the listed buildings. The linked access bridge will be removed carefully by specialist contractors. The replacement materials to be used will match the existing materials.

7.9 It is therefore considered that the proposals is on accordance with Core Strategy Policy DM1,Joint Plan Policies JP-P1 , JP-P2 and section 12 of the NPPF.

8. Summary and Conclusion

8.1 This Planning Statement can be summarised as follows:

- The proposals relate to the removal of the stepped access 'bridge link' connection between 25 St Ann's Street (the former RBS bank) and 17 St Anns Square (Mansfield Chambers) and internal alterations listed in Section 4 p7 and 8 of this report.

- The principle of development is accepted by Manchester City Council (subject to details) as detailed in the verbal pre-application advice.

- The proposals will have a low overall impact on the Grade II and Grade II* listed buildings. The benefits of the proposals will outweigh any harm to the building.

- The proposals accord with national, regional and local planning policy.

8.2 It is considered that the proposal is an acceptable form of development and the application for listed building consent should be approved without delay.

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