

March 2025



52 Princess Street, Manchester, M1 6JX

**Heritage Impact Assessment and Design and Access Statement in
support of interior alterations to the fourth floor**

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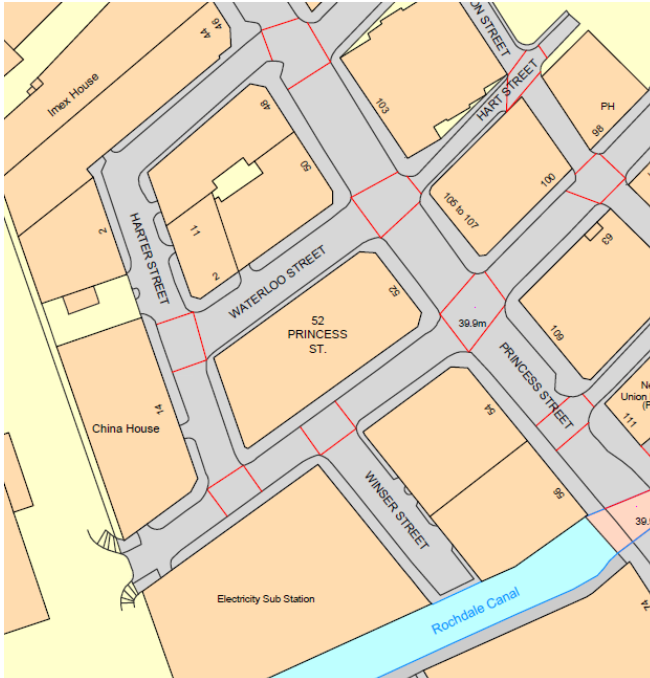
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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) and Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of a listed building consent application for interior fit out works to the fourth floor of 52 Princess Street, Manchester, M1 6JX (**Plate 1, 2**).



Left **Plate 1** - Extract of the Site Location Plan, scaled at 1:1250.



Right **Plate 2** - Exterior view of 52 Princess Street from Hart Street.

- 1.2 The purpose of this statement is to thoughtfully evaluate the impact of the proposed development on the significance and setting of identified heritage assets, and the appropriateness of the works in the context of the building use. This statement has been prepared in the context of relevant national and local planning policy and has considered supplementary guidance relating to the conservation of the historic environment.
- 1.3 Paragraph 207 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires applicants to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by a development proposal, with the intent of understanding the potential impact of the proposals on their significance. This statement aims to satisfy the requirements of NPPF Paragraph 207.

Methodology

- 1.4 The methodology of this HIA follows the requirements outlined in Section 16 of the NPPF, and accounts for the main legislative framework for the historic environment. Relevant statutory, national, and local policies are set out in **Section 2**.
- 1.5 Definitions of heritage assets, and of the conservation of the historic environment are derived from the National Planning Policy Guidance. Conservation is defined in the Planning Practice Guidance as an “active process of maintenance and managing change,” whereby, “in the case of buildings, generally the risks of neglect and decay of heritage assets are best addressed through ensuring they remain in active use that is consistent with their conservation.”
- 1.6 The analysis of heritage significance and setting in this report is informed by the relevant NPPF definitions; Historic England’s advice note 12 on *Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets* (2019); and the Good Practice

Advice in Planning: 3 (2nd Edition) on *The Setting of Heritage Assets* (2017). This HIA also accounts for the IHBC/CIfA/IEMA's guidance document entitled 'Principles of Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment in the UK,' published in 2021.

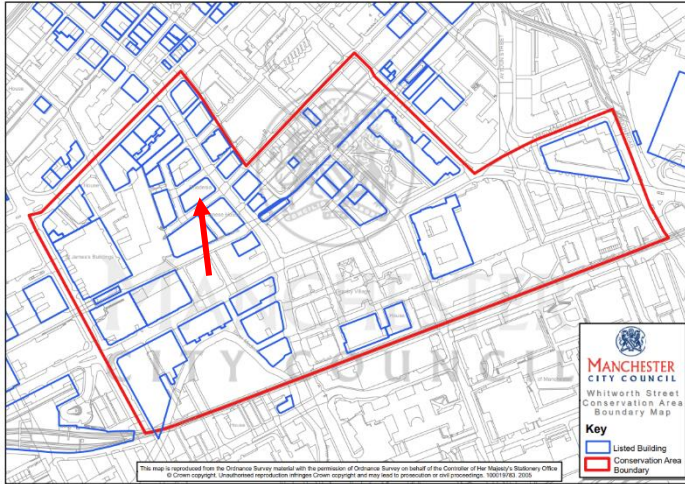
- 1.7 The conclusions of this report are determined in accordance with the call for the proportionality of detail relative to the significance of the asset outlined in Paragraph 207 of the NPPF. The assessment of significance and impact is gathered from a comprehensive process of research, combined with a balanced judgement on the value of identified assets compared with the relative level of change.
- 1.8 Additionally, not all elements of a heritage asset will contribute to its significance. In certain circumstances, heritage assets can accommodate change without sustaining any impact on significance, as change does not equal harm. This report will examine the extent to which the proposed changes could impact individual elements contributing to significance, while also assessing the cumulative impact any change will cause to the asset.

Site Context

- 1.9 52 Princess Street is a grade II listed building designated as 'Rhodesia House' on June 6, 1994. The official list entry description provides a brief overview of the age, materials, and architectural attributes of the building that contribute to its special significance:

Includes: No.102 Rhodesia House BLOOM STREET. Various packing warehouses. c.1880-90. Red brick with sandstone dressings, slate roof. Trapeziform plan on island site. Eclectic style. Four storeys with basements and attics, 3 bays plus chamfered corners, symmetrical; punch-dressed stone plinth, string-course and cornice over ground floor, pairs of string-courses between floors, moulded main cornice with brick parapet, attic above this with 2 large pedimented gables, steeply-pitched hipped roof with corner finials. The ground floor has a round-headed doorway with brick pilasters, carved capitals, moulded stone head with carved enrichments including keystone and swags and flanked by pairs of moulded brackets to the cornice above; coupled round-headed windows each side, with hoodmoulds and keystones (boarded at time of survey); upper floors have coupled sashed windows to the centre and tiered segmental bay windows of stone in the outer bays, with curved 3-light sashes and panels between floors decorated with swags. The attic dormers have pilasters, 3-light windows, and triangular pediments with stone surrounds flanked by short square chimneys. The corners have round-headed windows at ground floor, square-headed above. Nine-bay return wall, in similar style, including one bay with segmental bay windows and pedimented gable, and coupled loading bay doorways. Interior not inspected. Forms part of uninterrupted linear group of similar buildings on this side of Princess Street.

- 1.10 52 Princess Street is also located within the Whitworth Street Conservation Area, designated in 1985 (**Plate 3**). Further, within the immediate radius of the building are nine grade II listed buildings and one grade II* listed building (**Plate 4**). Due to the nature of the works being wholly internal, the proposed development is not considered to impact upon the character appearance of the Conservation Area, nor the appreciation of the setting of proximate listed buildings.



Left Plate 3 - Extract of Manchester City Council's Whitworth Conservation Area Map showing the location of the application site.



Right Plate 4 – Extract from Historic England List Map showing the immediate context of the application site within a 50m radius. The listed buildings surrounding the site are:

- 104 Bloom Street – grade II, LEN: 1218476
- 2 Harter Street – grade II, LEN: 1200841
- Langley Buildings – grade II, LEN: 1247385
- Transact House – grade II, LEN: 1247386
- 103 Princess St – grade II*, LEN: 1247391
- Brazil House – grade II, LEN: 1270871
- 109 Princess Street – grade II, LEN: 1270914
- New Union Public House – grade II, LEN: 1247444
- Lionesse House – grade II, LEN: 1247387
- Former Electricity Power Station – grade II, LEN: 1255031

- 1.11 52 Princess Street is spread over six-stories and has a main entrance along the Princess Street elevation, and a secondary entrance along the Bloom Street elevation. Significant alterations have been made to the interior of the building to facilitate the use as commercial office space, including the introduction of passenger lifts, lobby areas, toilet accommodation, and the installation of a DDA lift to the ground floor level Bloom Street elevation.
- 1.12 The proposed development relates solely to fit out works for the fourth floor.

2.0 Policy Context

Statutory Context

- 2.1 Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 establishes that “in considering whether to grant permission which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority, or as the case may be, the Secretary of State, shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.”
- 2.2 Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states “with respect to any buildings or other land within a conservation area... special attention must be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.”

National Context

- 2.3 The NPPF was updated in December 2024, and Section 16 refers specifically to conserving and enhancing the historic environment.
- 2.4 Paragraph 202 of the NPPF states that heritage assets are an “irreplaceable resource and 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.”
- 2.5 The NPPF defines heritage ‘significance’ as “the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic, or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.”
- 2.6 The ‘setting of a heritage asset’ is defined in the NPPF as “the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.”
- 2.7 The NPPF does not have a definition for archaeological, architectural, artistic, or historic interest with respect to heritage significance. However, Paragraph 16 of the Principles for Selection of Listed Buildings (DDCMS 2018) provides the following definitions:

Architectural interest – “to be of special architectural interest a building must be of importance in its design, decoration, or craftsmanship. Special interest may also apply to particularly significant examples of building types or techniques... and significant plan forms. For more recent buildings in particular, the functioning of the building... will also be a consideration. Artistic distinction can also be a factor relevant to the architectural interest of buildings and objects and structures fixed to them.”

Historic interest – “to be able to justify special historic interest a building must illustrate important aspects of the nation’s history and/or have closely substantiated historical associations with nationally important individuals, groups or events; and the building itself in its current form will afford a strong connection with the valued aspect of history.”

- 2.8 Historic England’s Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance (2008) also offers useful definitions which underpin a value-orientated approach to assessing heritage significance. In this document, heritage values fall into four categories, which are broadly comparable with those expressed in the NPPF:

Evidential value – The potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity.

Historical value – The ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present. This can be illustrative or associative.

Aesthetic value – The ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.

Communal value – The meaning of a place for the people who relate to it or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory.

- 2.9 Further, the Historic England Publication *Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets – Historic England Advice Note 12*, offers the values of archaeological interest, architectural and artistic interest, and historic interest under the following definitions:

Archaeological interest - There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.

Architectural and artistic interest - These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skills, like sculpture.

Historic interest - An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.

- 2.10 Paragraph 203 states that “plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. This strategy should take into account:
- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
 - b) the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
 - c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
 - d) opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.”
- 2.11 In determining applications, Paragraph 210 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should take account of:
- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
 - b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
 - c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- 2.12 Paragraph 212 states that “when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.”

- 2.13 Paragraph 213 details that “any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.”
- 2.14 Paragraph 214 establishes that “where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:
- a) The nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
 - b) No viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
 - c) Conservation by grant-funding or some form of not-for-profit, charitable, or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
 - d) The harm or loss is outweighed by the benefits of bringing the site back into use.”
- 2.15 Paragraph 215 states “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.”
- 2.16 Paragraph 219 establishes that “local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within conservation areas... to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.”
- 2.17 Paragraph 220 states “not all elements of a Conservation Area... will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area... should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 214 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 215, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area... as a whole.”
- 2.18 The revised publication confirms the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraph 8 sets out the three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. These are:
- An Economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
 - A Social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and
 - An Environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.
- 2.19 The NPPF contains policies relating to a number of matters, one of which is design. On this theme, NPPF Paragraph 131 states:

“The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.”

2.20 Paragraph 135 establishes requirements for design and states:

“Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and
- f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.”

Local Context

- 2.21 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 2.22 The statutory development plan for Manchester consists of the Local Plan which is formed of the Core Strategy 2012-2027 (2012), and the Addendum to the Manchester Core Strategy (2024), Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan for Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford, and Wigan 2022 to 2039 (2024), Extant Unitary Development Plan Policies, Waste DPD (2012), and Minerals DPD (2013).
- 2.23 Policy CC9 concerns design and heritage and notes that “development in Manchester City Centre should preserve or enhance the heritage assets that have been identified, including listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled ancient monument.”
- 2.24 Policy CC10 relates to creating ‘A Place for Everyone,’ and notes that “the City Centre will develop as a location which appeals to a wide range of residents and visitors. Development which promotes this objective will be supported, particularly through:
 - Uses which increase the diversity of activity in the City Centre, with an emphasis on family-oriented activity; and,
 - High standards of accessibility to buildings and across spaces in the City Centre.”
- 2.25 Policy SP1 (Spatial Principles) advises that development in all parts of the City should protect and enhance the built environment.
- 2.26 Policy EN1 concerns design principles and strategic character areas and states that for the city centre, “developers will be expected to consider the City’s heritage and continue the rich pattern of activity in the core area.”

- 2.27 Policy EN3 ensures that Manchester City Council will “encourage development that complements and takes advantage of the distinct historic and heritage features of its districts and neighbourhoods, including those of the City Centre.”
- 2.28 Regarding the saved Unitary Development Policies, DC19.1 concerns Listed Buildings, and states that “In determining applications for listed building consent or planning applications for development involving or having an impact on buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, the Council will have regard to the desirability of securing the retention, restoration, maintenance and continued use of such buildings and to protecting their general setting.”
- 2.29 Policy JP-P2 in the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan sets out that the Council will “proactively manage and work with partners to positively conserve, sustain and enhance our 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 character, identity and sense of place.”

3.0 Proposed Development and Design Statement

- 3.1 The proposal seeks permission for interior strip out works and alterations to the fourth-floor offices at 52 Princess Street. The use as offices will be retained for the incoming tenant.
- 3.2 Details of the proposed development are included within the submitted architectural drawings; material plans and specifications; and the Photographic Strip Out Schedule, which includes a construction methodology of all proposed works.
- 3.3 The submitted drawings include full details of the proposed flooring layout, lighting, furniture, decoration, and partitions, alongside joinery specifications for the new reception desk, tea point, boardrooms, kitchens, and additional decorations.
- 3.4 In brief, the proposed development involves the removal and replacement of modern materials to create a new office layout for the incoming tenant. The design intention is to carry out some minor changes and redecoration works to reflect operational needs and revive the quality of the existing building without any changes to the main fabric or essential character of the building.
- 3.5 The 'strip out plan' in drawing no. PST.L401 details the existing stud partition walls to be removed. In addition to the removed partitions, the works will include:
- Removal of the carpet tile and vinyl flooring;
 - Cleaning and replacement of ceramic floor tiles within WCs;
 - Strip out of the kitchens;
 - Removal of plasterboard ceilings;
 - Removal of fixed furniture including the reception desk and wall shelving; and
 - Removal of M&E installations.
- 3.6 Access arrangements to and within the building will remain unchanged, with disabled access along the Bloom Street elevation. The site is in a sustainable location within a 10-minute walk of Picadilly Station, however, car parking lies within the basement of the application site and will remain unchanged and accessible in this proposal.
- 3.7 There will be WC provision for separate ladies and gentlemen, as well as a gender-neutral WC and a fully accessible WC and shower facility included in the proposals for the floor.
- 3.8 As shown in the submitted plans, wayfinding and signage will be a key feature within the entrance to the floor when accessed by both the central elevators and the stairwells. The reception area will greet all guests ensuring a level of security for those working in the office.

4.0 Site History, Heritage Significance, and Impact Assessment

- 4.1 This section will describe the significance of the proposed site, to a level of detail which is proportionate to the proposed development.
- 4.2 This section will also provide an assessment of the likely impacts of the proposed development on the significance of the designated heritage asset in accordance with NPPF Paragraph 207.

52 Princess Street and the Whitworth Street Conservation Area

- 4.3 The Whitworth Street/Princess Street Conservation Area was originally designated in September 1974 and extended in 1985.
- 4.4 52 Princess Street lies within the north-west quadrant of the Conservation Area which is characterised by the Victorian and Edwardian buildings constructed throughout the mid-19th century and into the early 20th century. The Conservation Area is rich in its historical links to the textile industry of Manchester where wool, silk, and cotton were primary enterprises. Rhodesia House was initially built for JC Harter & Co. by the architects Clegg and Knowles who were prominent designers of the city's warehouses in the mid-19th century.
- 4.5 The Whitworth Street area retains historical characteristics of the distinctive architectural designs which placed both form and function at the forefront. Historically, the warehouses in this area would have offices fronting the main street with the rear of the building used as storage spaces for textile products. The principal elevations of these buildings are therefore often facing the historical 'main road,' and are richly decorated in brick and/or terracotta standing often at five or six storeys in height.
- 4.6 The application site in particular is constructed primarily of red brick in Flemish bond, with carved sandstone details, including window mullions, lintels cills and surrounds, sandstone string courses, and sandstone cornices. The building is recorded in the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record under entry number 12114.1.0.
- 4.7 Internally, the building has cast iron columns supporting timber beams and floorboards; however, there have been alterations to each floor since the original conversion in 1994 to offices, so that many materials internally are of modern construction. Further, the communal areas of the building have faced significant alteration in 2007/2008 with the insertion of two passenger lifts, a double-height atrium in the ground floor reception area, and WC accommodation for all floors.
- 4.8 The historic map regression attributed to this area further reveals the historical development and construction of the existing building (**Plates 5 – 10**).



Plate 5 - Extract from Lancashire Sheet CIV, surveyed 1845, published 1848 from the OS Six-inch maps for England and Wales (1842-1952). The approximate location of the site area is outlined in red. The application site was historically located along David Street, which was subsequently re-named as Princess Street in the mid-19th century.

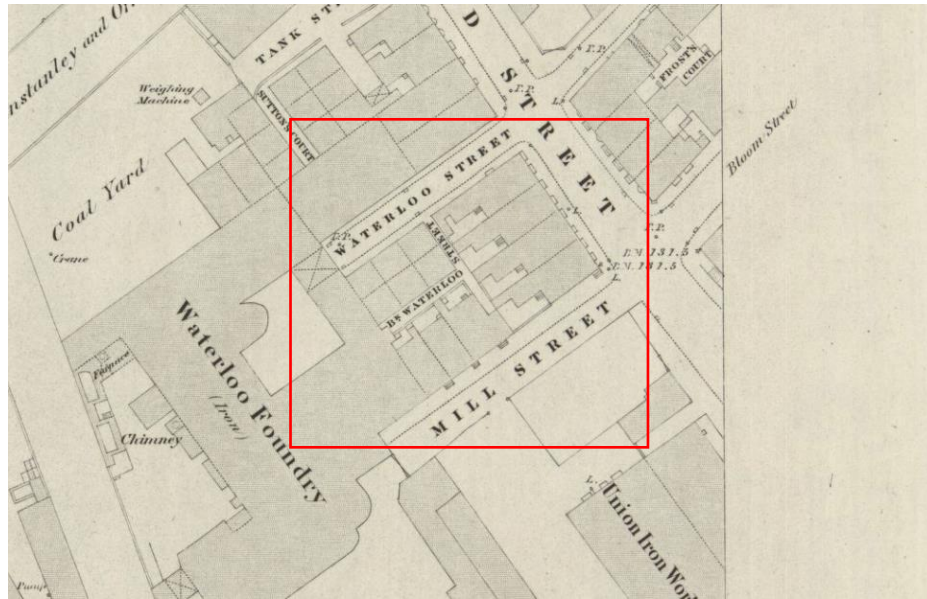


Plate 6 - Extract from Manchester and Salford Sheet 33, surveyed 1849, published 1851 from the Town Plans of England and Wales (1840s-1890s). The site of no. 52 was historically occupied by four separate buildings fronting onto David Street, with additional buildings and the Waterloo Foundry to the rear.

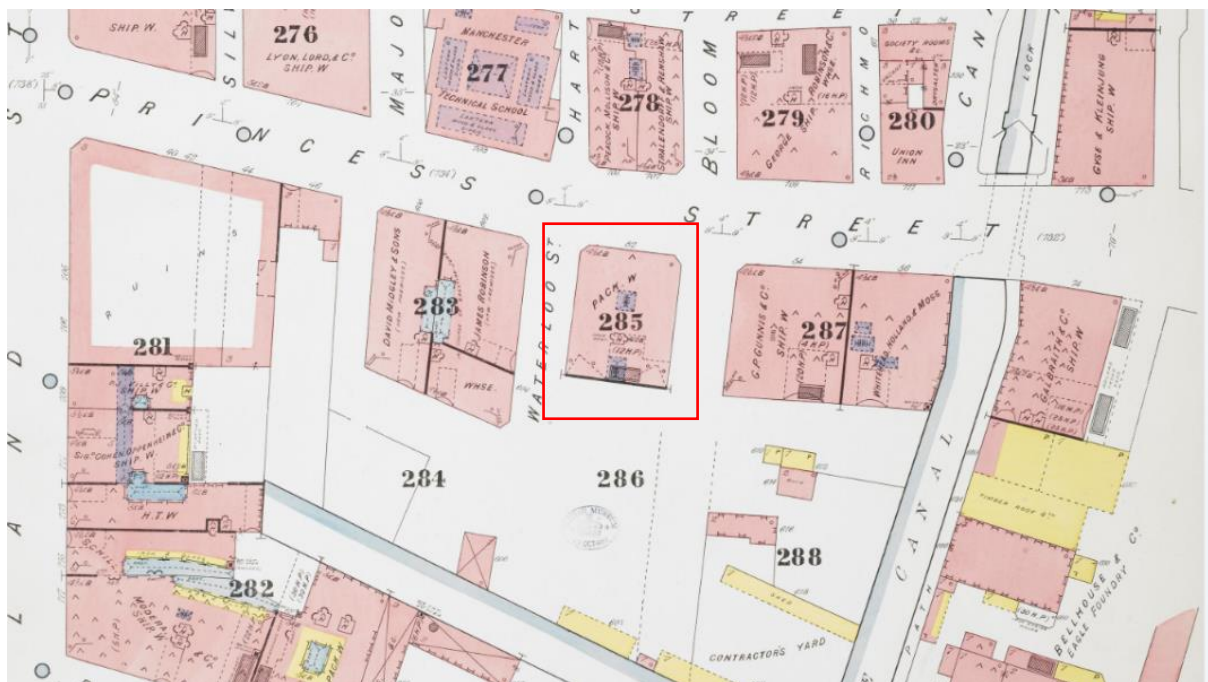


Plate 7 - Extract from Sheet 19 of the 1886 edition of the Goad Maps for Manchester. The building is described in this map as a 'Pack. W' with an iron hoist in the centre, and was spread over four and a half stories with a basement.

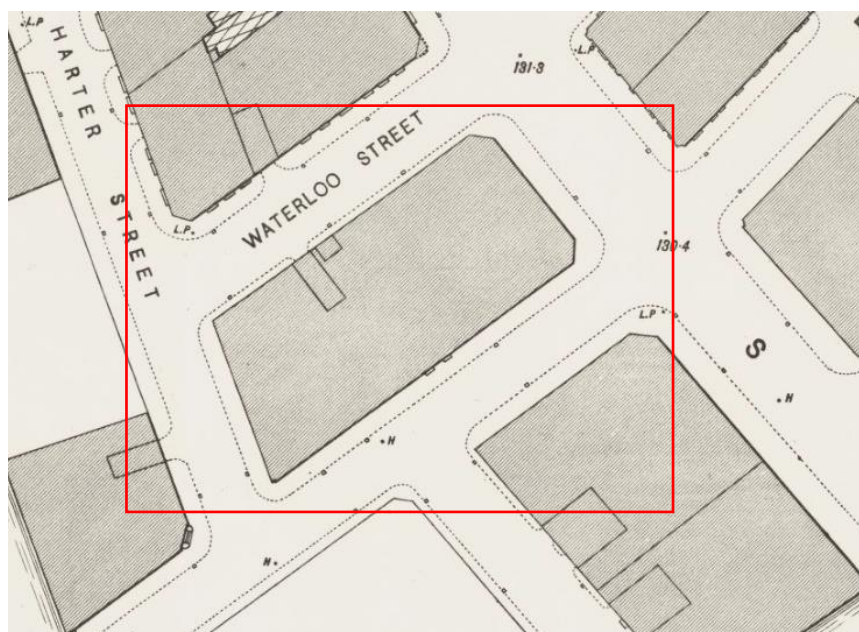


Plate 8 - Extract from Manchester - Lancashire CIV.10.10, surveyed 1889, published 1891 from the Town Plans of England and Wales (18401-1890s). The application site is outlined in red.

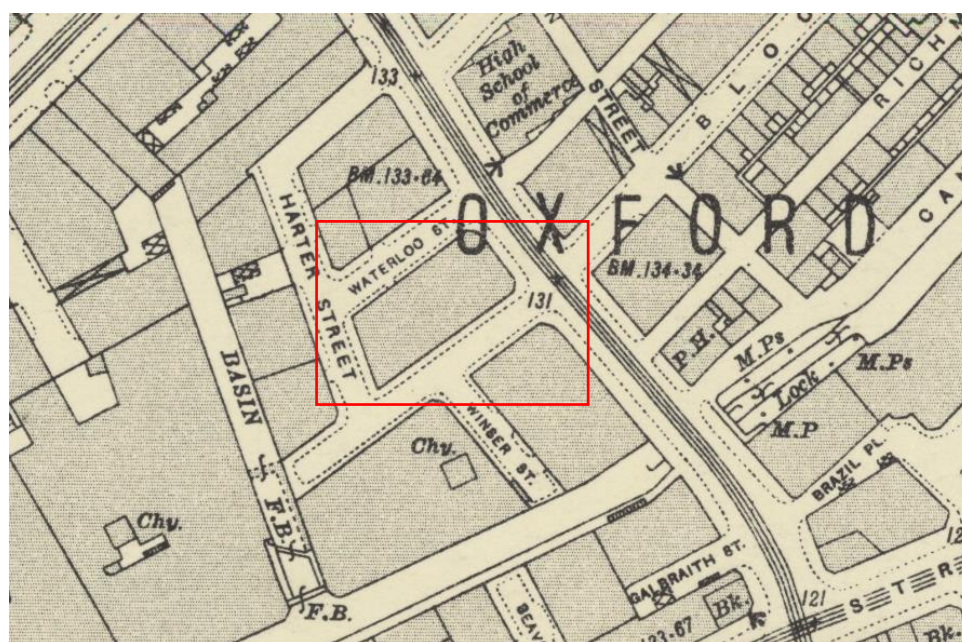


Plate 9 - Extract from Lancashire CIV.10, revised 1932, published 1934, from the OS 25-inch maps of England and Wales (1841-1952). The application site is outlined in red.

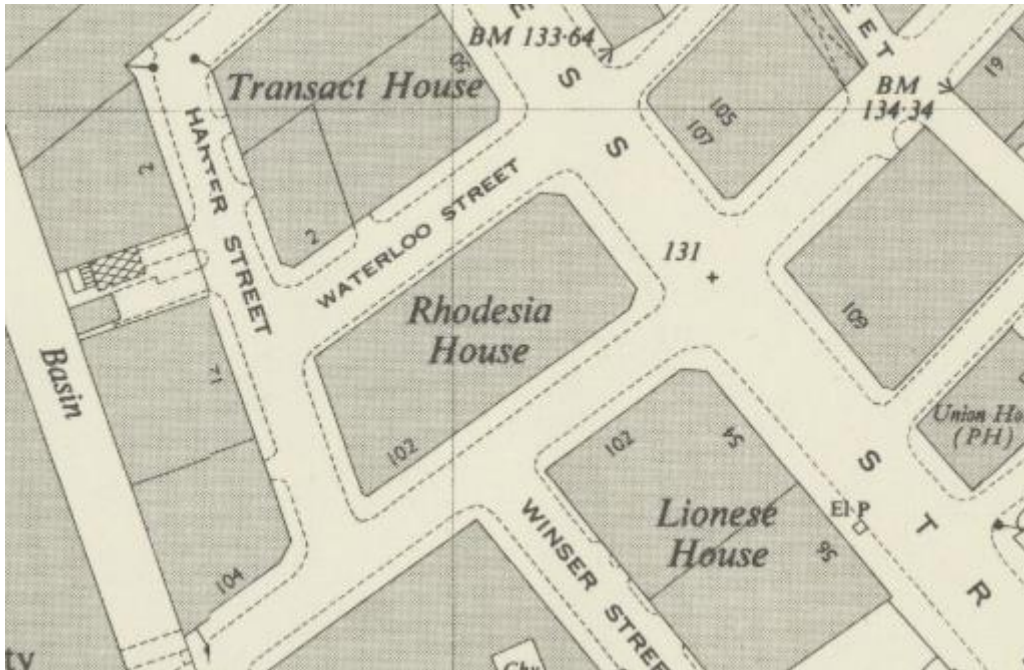
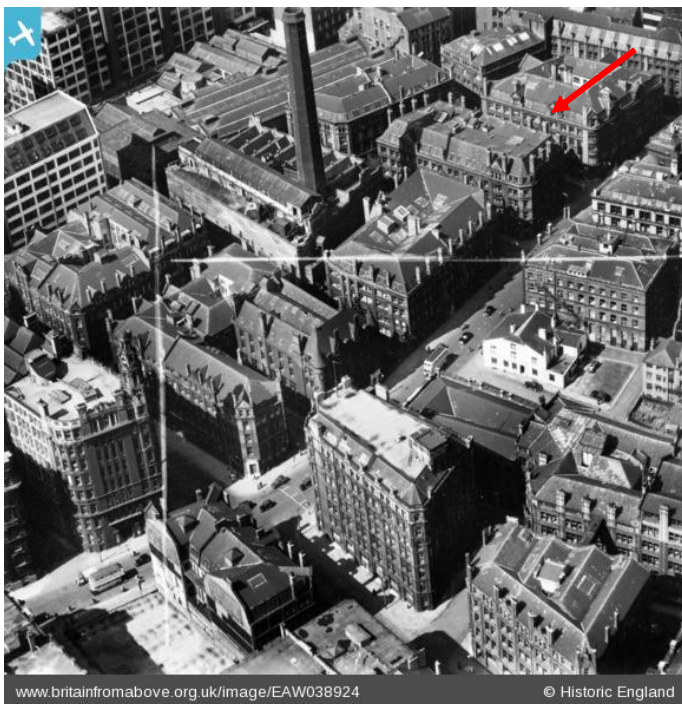
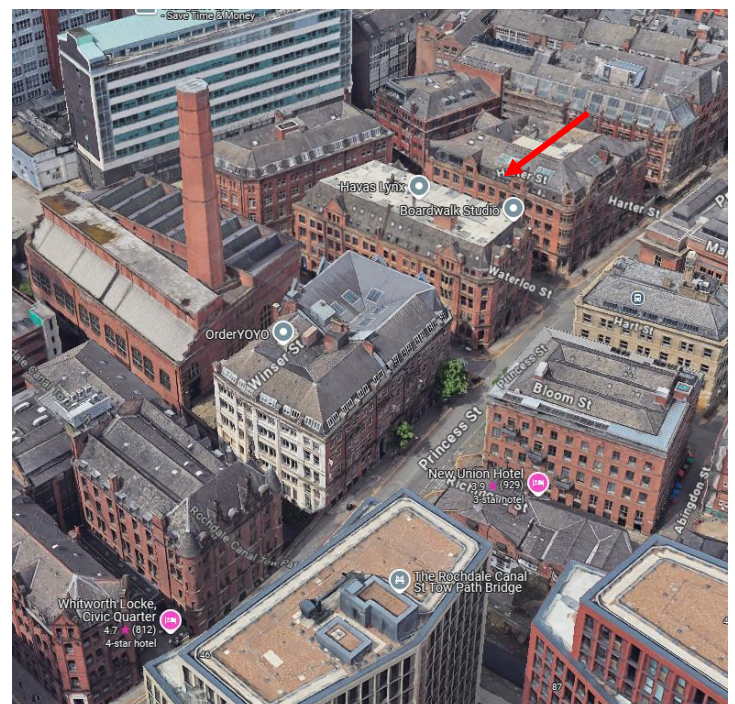


Plate 10 - Extract from SJ8497NW - A, surveyed 1948, published ca. 1949 from the National Grid Maps (1944 - 1974). The application site is identified as 'Rhodesia House' on this map.

- 4.9 Aerial Photography highlights the continuity of buildings within the Conservation Area surrounding the proposed application site, and the lack of any significant external changes to the majority of these former warehouses and offices (**Plate 11-12**).



Left Plate 11 - Extract of Aerial Image EAW038924 courtesy of Britain from Above. This image dates to 1951 and details 'Whitworth House off Princess Street and environs, Manchester.' Sourced from: <https://britainfromabove.org.uk/en/image/EAW038924>.

Right Plate 12 – Aerial image of Princess Street today with the majority of buildings, including the application site, retaining their original external layout and architectural detailing. Courtesy of Google Globe View, 2025.

- 4.10 Following the Historic England Conservation Principles, 52 Princess Street can be said to hold *medium evidential value, medium aesthetic and architectural value, medium historical value, and medium/low communal value*.
- 4.11 The overall significance of 52 Princess Street lies in the wider context of the Conservation Area and proximate listed buildings which showcase the development of a particular style of warehouse architecture in Manchester during the mid-19th and early 20th centuries. The survival of the form, fabric, and features of the building contribute to its evidential value as an example of the operations of the textile industry. Further, the buildings which were on site prior to the construction of 52 Princess Street, allow the development of Manchester City Centre to be traced throughout the life histories of uses that have been prominent at one time or another.
- 4.12 The evidential value of 52 Princess Street is accompanied by the aesthetic and architectural value of the building, which lies primarily in the little altered facades, as can be seen in **Plates 11** and **12**. Further, the external features of the building positively contribute to the character of the surrounding Conservation Area and its special significance. Internally, although the building has been altered to facilitate the use as offices, there remains a perception of the original packing warehouse use.
- 4.13 Due to the primarily modern materials used to create and revamp the offices in the late 90s and late 2000s, the interior is of little value. Finally, the exterior architecture heavily contributes to framing down Princess Street whereby all nearby buildings follow a similar pattern which unites the wider context and aspect. Architectural elements of the building also survive in the Science and Industry Museum where the 'Rhodesia House' sign is catalogued (**Plate 13**).

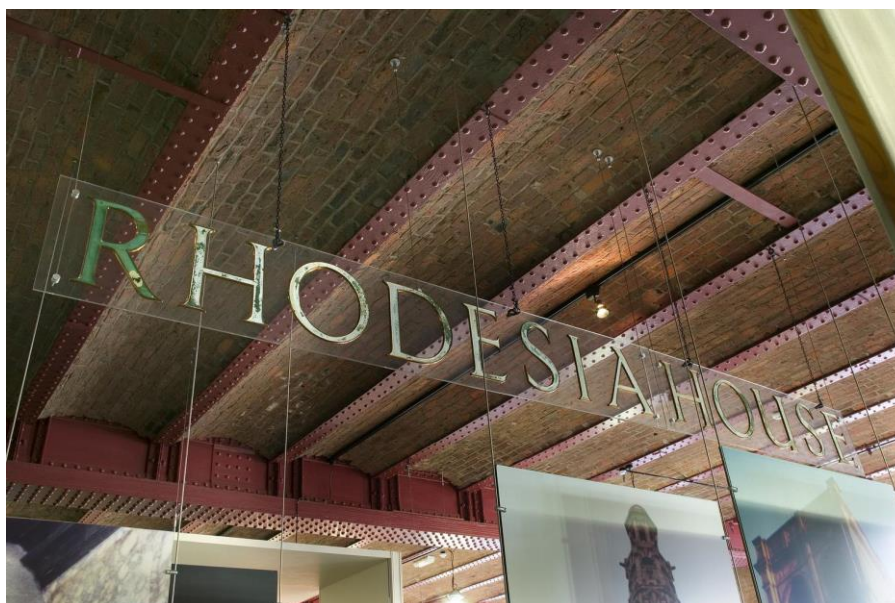


Plate 13 – Photograph of the metal 'Sign from Rhodesia House on Princess Street, Manchester.' Object number: Y1995.1.306. Courtesy of: <https://collection.sciencemuseumgroup.org.uk/objects/co8408979>

- 4.14 The historic value of the building also links with the evidential and aesthetic value, as the development of ornate facades concealing warehouses behind was a significant trope of building in this part of the Conservation Area, and certainly along Princess Street. The wider setting of the building, and its communal value is connected to the record of Victorian building practices in Manchester during the time of construction. In addition, the reconfiguration of the building into offices during the late 1990s and again in the late 2000s, may elicit communal value from the local community who have previously worked in this building, and demonstrates the changing working environment and types of employment within the city centre.

Impact Assessment of Proposals

- 4.15 The NPPF, and guidance contained within Historic England publications, recommends that any impact on heritage assets should be avoided, and harm to the significance of assets should be minimised, and where appropriate, justified in accordance with the associated public benefits of the proposal.
- 4.16 Where the development would enhance elements of setting or significance, these changes have been determined to be beneficial. Where the development would mar existing heritage significance, these changes have been determined to be adverse, with specific mitigation measures subsequently outlined. When taken together on balance, this assessment constitutes the description of whether a proposal would *preserve or enhance* the asset, or if it could lead to 'substantial' or 'less than substantial' harm.
- 4.17 The proposed development does not involve the alteration of any external elements of the building. Therefore, it is considered that the development will not impact upon the character and appearance of the Whitworth Street Conservation Area and *preserve* its special significance.
- 4.18 The extent of the works is considered to be minor in scope and will be located wholly internally. Thus, the primary aesthetic and architectural value of the property, which derives from the external facades, will be *preserved*. The alterations to the interior will primarily impact upon the modern materials inserted in the late-2000s conversion, which are of negligible value in themselves, and do not actively contribute to the significance of the building.
- 4.19 As is demonstrated in the Photographic Strip Out Schedule, no areas of historical significance around the perimeter of the floor will be impacted by the proposed development, and the removal of any partitions which abut the brick walling will be done so in a sensitive manner. The method statement included in the Photographic Strip Out Schedule details the removal of all aspects of the existing office installation, and any mitigation measures should these impact upon any historic features.
- 4.20 The existing office installations do not positively contribute to the experience of the space, and therefore their removal and replacement with higher quality decoration, and a more cohesive layout is considered to be a *beneficial* impact of the proposed works.
- 4.21 Additionally, the corporate branding of the former tenant, which occupies the majority of the office, is no longer applicable and is required to be removed before the occupation by a new tenant.
- 4.22 The proposals are considered to respect the balance of maintaining the primary significance of the building while also integrating necessary sensitive upgrades to enable the continued use as office space.
- 4.23 Therefore, the proposed development is considered to *preserve* the significance of the listed building and have a *minor beneficial* impact on the interior layout and decoration by removing the older office installation and upgrading all materials to create a well-designed, attractive office, which contributes to the offering of the entire building.
- 4.24 Based on the above, and having given "great weight" to the conservation of 52 Princess Street as a designated heritage asset, in accordance with NPPF Paragraph 212, there is, on balance, clear and convincing justification that the proposal will *preserve* the significance of the listed building and conservation area.
- 4.25 Paragraph 210 of the NPPF requires local planning authorities to take account of "the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to uses consistent with their conservation." It also underlines the "desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness." The proposed development has been found to achieve both of these objectives, which are also supported in adopted local planning policy.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 This Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) and Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of a listed building consent application for interior fit out works to the fourth floor at 52 Princess Street, Manchester, M1 6JX.
- 5.2 The proposed works have considered the historical significance of the site itself, and its contribution to the character appearance of the Whitworth Street Conservation Area.
- 5.3 It is concluded from the assessment of the proposals that the proposed development will *preserve* the significance of 52 Princess Street as a grade II listed building. Further, there will be a *minor beneficial* impact on the building in the meaningful upgrade of the fourth-floor offices to enable the continued occupation of the building. An accompanying Photographic Strip Out Schedule with removal methodology demonstrates that the proposed works are minor in scale and will not impact upon the historic fabric of the building or disturb its significance.
- 5.4 This assessment has followed NPPF Paragraph 203, whereby the development will positively contribute to local character by enhancing the offering of the office space and continuing the usage as an office which has been established as being consistent with the conservation and long-term enjoyment of the building. Further, the proposed works contribute to the wider social, cultural, and economic benefits of facilitating a new tenant which would contribute to the supply of office employment within the city centre. A full assessment is contained within **Section 4** of this statement.
- 5.5 As such, the proposals accord with S66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990; NPPF Paragraph 131, 135, 203, 212, and 213; Core Strategy Policies CC9, CC10, SP1, EN1 and EN3; Saved UDP Policy DC19.1; and all other local and national planning policy relating to the conservation of heritage assets.
- 5.6 It is therefore respectfully requested that permission is granted.