

6-14a Oxford Road, Manchester

DESIGN FRAMEWORK - COMMERCIAL UNITS - December 2008 v8

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DESIGN FRAMEWORK

6-14a Oxford Road, Manchester

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Examples of the current facades to the commercial units

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this document is to provide a framework of design guidance for which tenants can draw on for future modifications and improvements to the ground and first floor of the retail units at 6-14a Oxford Rd, Central Manchester. The content will inform future planning, listed building and advertisement consent applications for these units.

This framework will outline a high quality design approach to the commercial units within this grade II Listed Building. The precedent for the framework will be the remaining original architectural features and historic character, bound by the age and nature of the building itself.

This document is primarily concerned with the treatment of fascias in line with the existing architectural language.

The results of implementing this framework, will be to create a homogenous elevation, which should be to the benefit of all concerned, including the commercial tenants and the cityscape.





1.1 HISTORY

Formally known as the Regal Twins the building was built between 1929 and 1930 for the developer Emmanuel Nove. Originally designed as a shopping parade with rentable halls above, it was hastily changed into a two screen cinema before even being opened. The large windows on the second floor were crudely blacked out, and some internal plan modifications were actioned to increase the fire escape provision from the cinemas. The Architects were Pendleton and Dickenson.

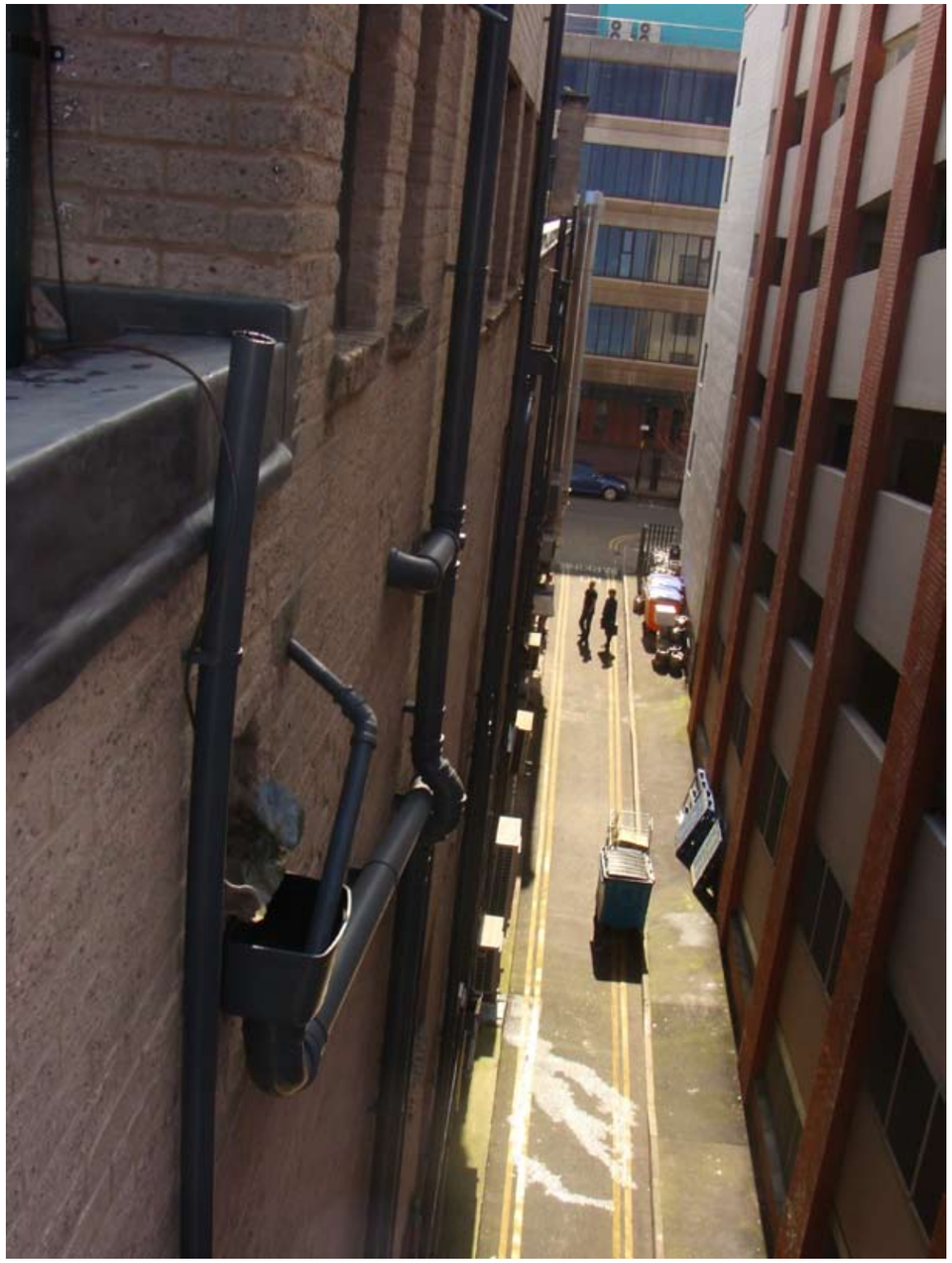
Since the 1930s there has been significant change to the Oxford Road Corridor. The railway bridge over Oxford Road was in place at the time and the line of the railway bridge was the transition point between the scale of the City Centre and that of the surrounding areas so that the adjacent buildings were sympathetic in terms of height and massing to 4-16 Oxford Road. Indeed the photographs show that the Regal Twins was marginally more dominant in the streetscape than its neighbours. Over the years, and with the advent of the importance of the university, the 'Oxford Road Corridor' has developed with the buildings and structures being built higher and in some cases, set back from the back of pavement. The BBC building opposite is a case in point, as is the bridge of the Mancunian Way. The building no longer dominates and is rather dominated by the new developments that surround it.



Left: The building today retains a lot of the original architectural features.

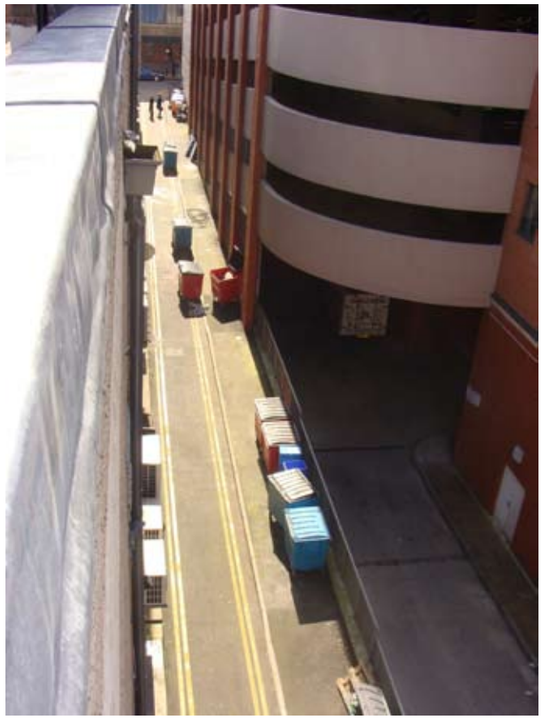
Top Left: image along Oxford Rd circa 1939 the Regal signage can be seen at the top of the building. (Source - Manchester Central Library)

Bottom Left: image along Oxford Rd circa 1960's. The signage clearly already incoherent. (Source - Manchester Central Library)



Photographs looking down Measham Mews showing the narrowness and "back street" nature of the environment.

This domination applies equally to the rear of the building on Measham Mews. This is a narrow, unadopted, gated street owned by the landlords of 6-14a Oxford Road. On the opposite side of the street sits a new development of 9 storeys which was approved in 2002, two years after 6-14a Oxford Road was listed. The first five stories of this development is a carpark and this is set right to the back of the footpath. Above this and set back by some 11m are 4 floors of apartments. This development, which dominates the area, has turned its back on 6-14a Oxford Street and effectively confirmed Meashem Mews as a back street. This car park has undermined the setting of 6-14a Oxford Road and this new building is seen to tower over its neighbour in the longer views of the area







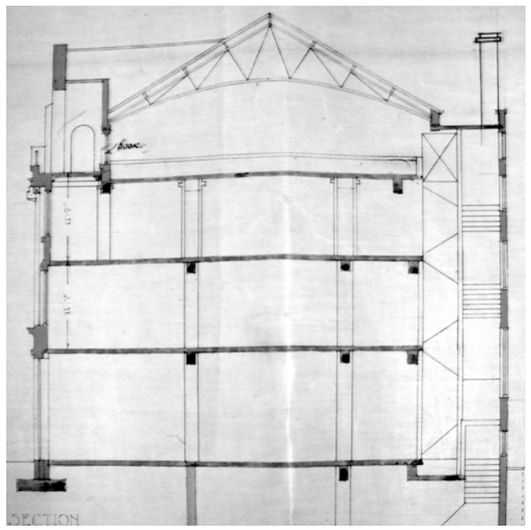
Original drawings obtained indicate that there was no specific design for the retail frontages,. It is clear they were intended to be secondary to the rest of the facade.

The building was listed in October 2000 and a more full description of the building form and significance can be found in the actual listing that appears as appendix A. The listing as it relates to the retail units is as follows:

The windows and interiors of the shops are not of special interest; the shops' significance is only as part of the formal composition of the facade.

It should be noted, however, that all fixed elements within a listed building are listed, irrespective of the listing description.

We have researched the drawing archives at Manchester City Council and noted that no drawings describe the original shop front treatments. As can be seen, the original drawings leave these areas blank. Equally, the oldest photograph in the Central Library archive dating from 1939 has no clear view of the shop fronts – there being too much traffic in the path of the camera. A photograph from the early 60's does show the shop fronts with some detail, but it is not known how original these were.
It is likely that each shop front was designed individually and may not have been part of the architect's brief. In the absence of any information, this guide adopts general good practice details for the shop front framework. The use of contemporary materials is to be encouraged, but any details must respect the unique 30s Art-Deco character of the existing front façade.
To the rear of the building it is more difficult to determine a defined distinction between what is original and what has been added later. Clearly there has been major alterations and infill over the years. This makes it difficult to read the original form but it is clear that there were large panels at ground floor level which have subsequently been infilled with a concrete brick.



Original section drawing.

1.2 PLANNING PROCESS

Future designs should follow the guidance given in this document, to inform a Listed Building Planning Application. All works which will materially affect the appearance of either the exterior, or interior of a Listed Building must obtain such approval from the Planning Authority.

However, repair works to existing structures and repair to existing, non-original interventions would not normally require Listed Building Consent unless the repairs were not a like for like replacement. Tenants are advised to contact a suitably qualified professional or the local planning Authority for advice prior to carrying out repairs

In addition, changes to or additional signage proposals, also require a separate advertisement application. (PPG19 "Outdoor Advertisement Control" gives guidance on this) Please refer to www.planningportal.gov.uk for further information.

This document is intended for outline guidance, and does not suggest standardised or prescriptive solutions. All individual proposals will require detailed consideration by the Planning Authority. We would therefore recommend that applicants following this guide, develop outline proposals within these guidelines, and attend Pre-Application discussions with the Planning department of the City Council.

To ensure that details developed will meet the high design and construction standards required when working in this context; this guide should be used in conjunction with the services of a suitably qualified professional person, who is conversant with listed buildings.

This document is prepared with consideration of Local Authority Planning guidance, such as the MCC UDP, and national Planning Policy Guidance Document 15 (PPG15).

The following pages will set out principles and parameters of design and construction, which can then be tailored to suit end-user requirements. Whilst advocating modern methods and materials, the guide will draw attention to the specific important features to be retained and respected within this building.

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Top: Examples of poor quality materials used on the facade currently.

Base: Simple, good quality signage on other buildings within Manchester. Signage touches the existing fabric minimally

2.0 DESIGN FRAMEWORK - FOR FUTURE ALTERATIONS

2.1 CONSTRUCTION QUALITY AND MAINTENANCE

It is imperative that good quality materials are specified when adding to the fabric of a listed building. The use of materials with sufficient durability and strength is encouraged. Materials which discolour or become distorted/defaced within short time periods should be avoided.

Where new external modifications connect with the existing construction, the connections must be carefully designed to minimise damage. For example, penetrations into the original fabric should be minimised and controlled.

Whist considering the materiality, maintenance procedures and time scales must also be taken into consideration. Materials chosen should be durable and low maintenance and be capable of sympathetic repair or alteration should the need arise. This will ensure a robust long term appearance without punitive maintenance costs. Tennants are advised to contact a suitably qualified professional or the local planning Authority for advice prior to carrying out repairs

2.2 TREATMENT OF EXISTING BUILDING FABRIC.

In principle, there are several core techniques, which should be adhered to when working with listed building fabric. (Again this should be with the advice of a suitably qualified professional or the Local Planning Authority)

1. Prevent Damage. Avoid permanently adhering finishes such as paint to the exterior faience work (Glazed earthenware) and carefully design connections to minimise permanent damage.
2. Minimise Cover-up where-ever possible. Expose all beams where possible and avoid covering over more of the external fabric than is set out in this guidance document.
3. Restore. Damaged elements can sometimes be acceptably repaired using approved conservation techniques. This should only be undertaken by approved conservation professionals.
4. Reinstate material. This should be considered case by case to determine whether it is preferable to reinstate or use a modern alternative.



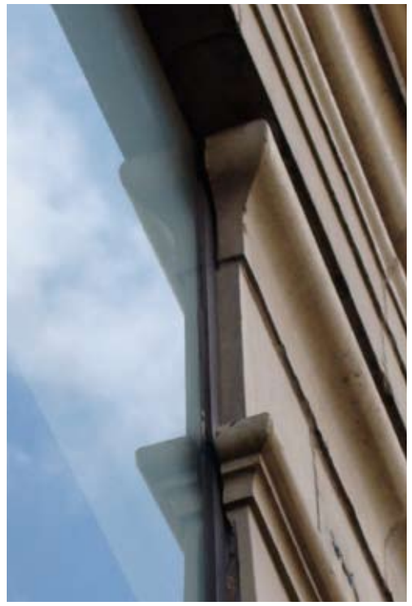


Left: Exposed Faience reveal
- refer to section detail - Fig 2.

Right: Example of successful fully glazed frontages - refer to elevation suggestions - Fig 3.



Below: It is preferable that the glazing sits further back from the face of the faience (circa 150mm from the front of the pier.) than has occurred in this instance.



2.3 FRONTAGES.

Frontages should be set back from the façade in line with the inner face of the faience work, and the designer should note any evidence of the original threshold position. See Figs 1-3 (pages 11-12) for details.

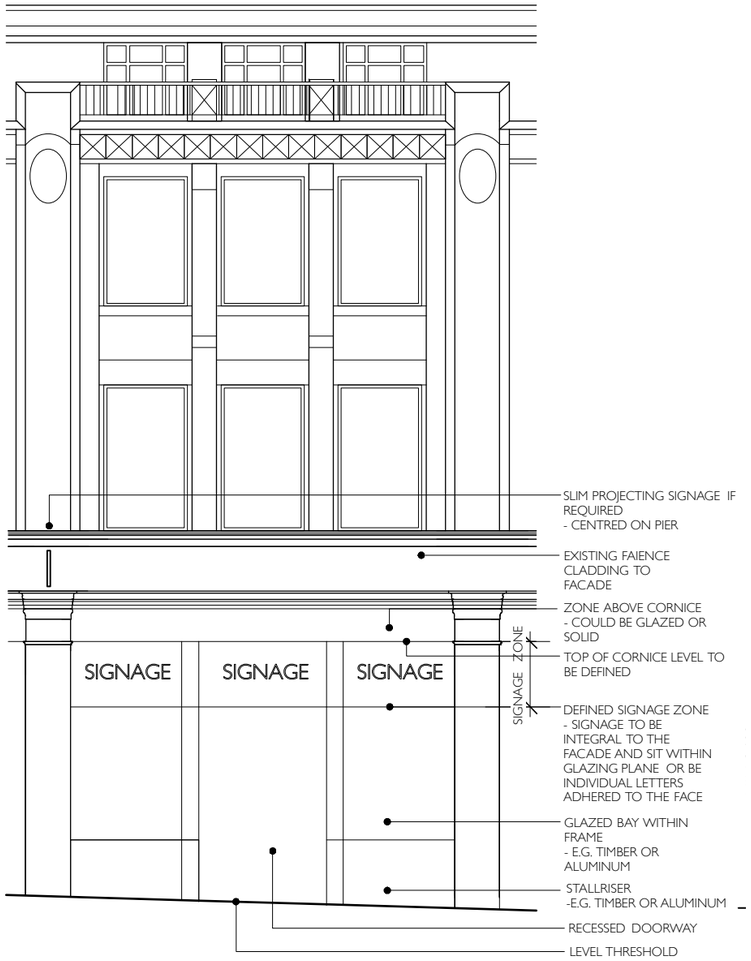
The boundary of the shop frontage is that of the opening formed by the faience work. All works to the shop front should be contained strictly within this boundary, both on plan and elevation.

2.31 Glazing.

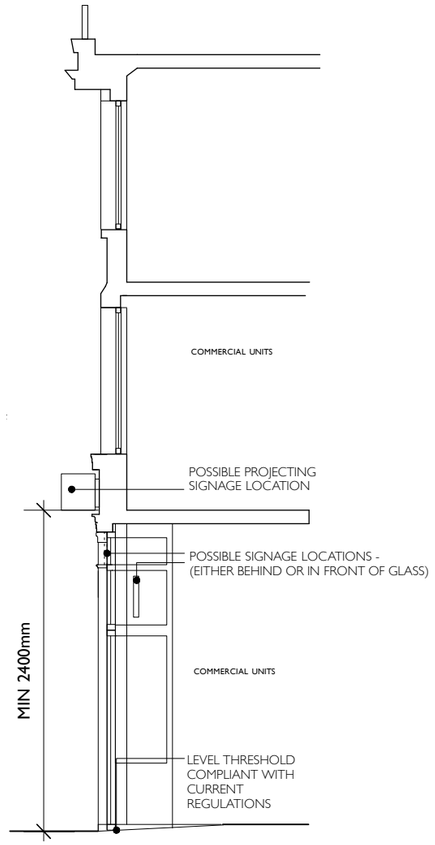
The use of glazing should be maximised where possible. Although there is no evidence of the original shop front designs for this building, we can be certain that they were subservient to the faience clad structural openings on the building façade. Glazing can assist the reading of these openings, minimising the visual impact of the new insertions.

Frameless glazing is permitted, however, diagrams 1-3 (pages 11-12) indicate both a modern interpretation of glazing, and a more traditional, framed technique. Both can be equally suitable within this context.

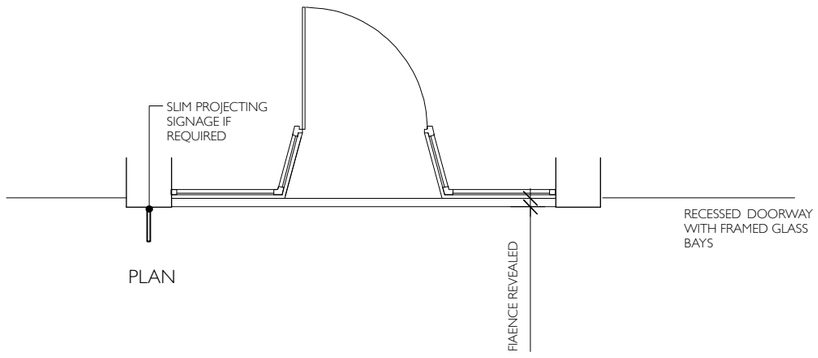
Promotional materials and posters within the glazing zone obscuring the shop frontage should be minimised. Refer to the maintenance and quality section.



ELEVATION



SECTION

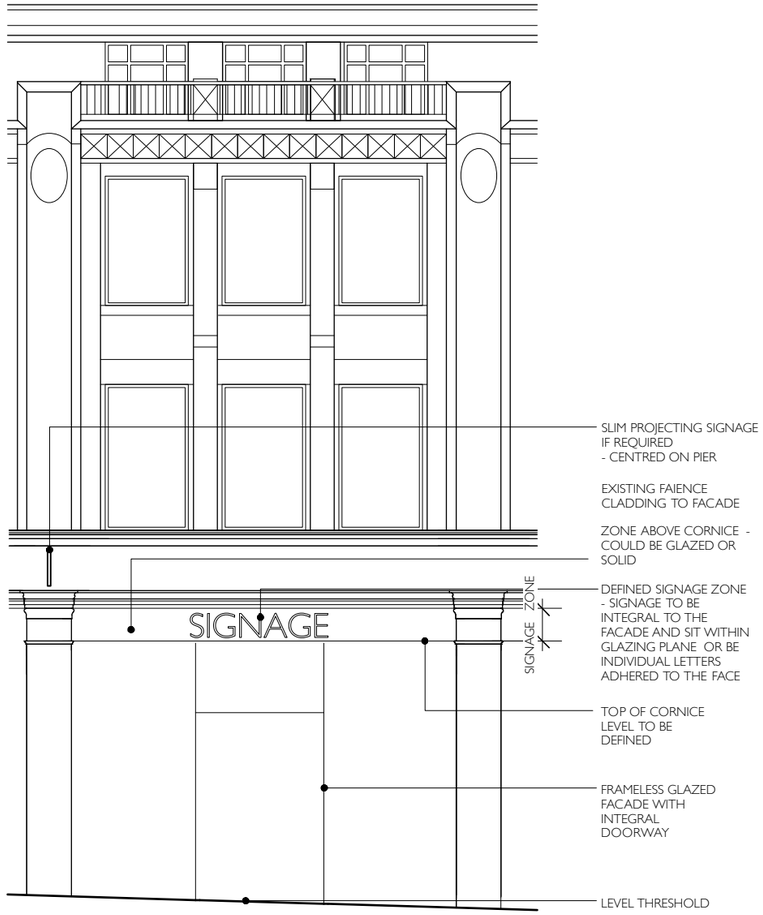


PLAN

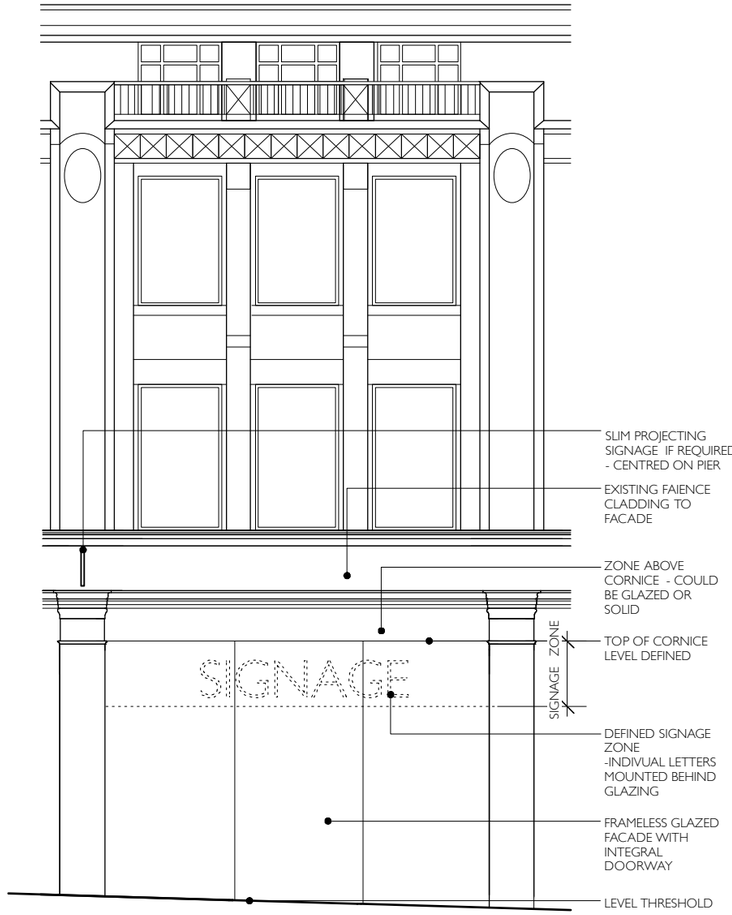
TRADITIONAL SHOP FRONTAGE EXAMPLE

Left: Fig 1 - Example of traditional style glazed frontage with frame.

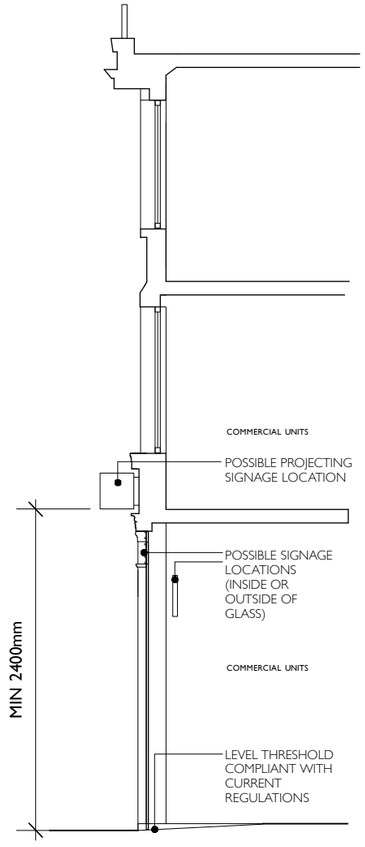
Right: Fig 2 - Section through typical traditional shop frontage



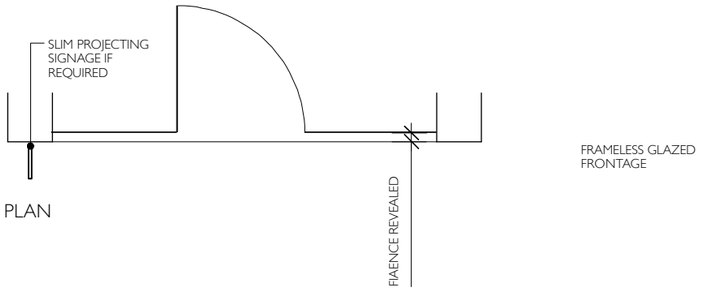
ELEVATION



ELEVATION



SECTION



PLAN

MODERN SHOP FRONTAGE EXAMPLES

Fig 3 - Examples of modern fully glazed retail frontage designs



Examples of good signage





2.32 Signage.

New signage must be limited to an agreed zone to ensure it does not obscure the built form. See Figs 1 and 3 (page 11 & 12) for details. The zone has been located in positions which reflect the architectural features of the façade, and how the original shop frontage may have been envisaged by the original designer.

The colour and shape of signage may reflect that of the tenants logo. However, we recommend the use of individually or slim bar mounted letters set off from the façade as a clear way to express brand without over dominating the façade.

Illuminated signage is appropriate providing the mechanisms are concealed and or presented suitably – refer to Security section for further guidance.

Whilst the largest sign should be along the face of the unit, secondary signage protruding from the facia at 90 degrees is often considered acceptable. The height and protrusion of these signs should follow guidelines indicated on Figs 1-3 (page 11 & 12), to ensure unity is achieved across the building frontage. Slim sections are to be encouraged, with many standard illuminated boxes usually considered too bulky for this setting and the maximum thickness should be 30mm. Height should be at least 2.44m above street level.





Incongruous security features should be minimised and carefully fixed with concealed wiring.

2.33 Shutters and Security Features.

New security features need to be subtly integrated into the façade design. Shutters, their boxes and mechanisms, should be mounted behind the façade glazing, with the visual impact limited by careful selection of products. The open lath types of shutter are considered most appropriate (10-15% solid), enabling some permeability into the unit to assist natural surveillance and security.

Alarm boxes, should not be adhered to the façade unless unavoidable and these are subject to Listed Building Consent. Any ancillaries such as wiring should be routed internally if possible, and if not then wiring should follow joints, or be hidden behind architectural features.

Any further security features must be considered as part of a coherent frontage design, and the visual impact minimised.



Level access already achieved in one unit





Examples of subtle lighting design

2.34 Disabled Access.

Full disabled access to at-least the ground floor of the units should be provided in any new proposal unless it can be proven to be impossible or so expensive as to be uneconomic.

2.35 Illumination.

Night time lighting of the unit from within is often an appropriate way to animate the frontage of a pedestrian route such as this.
Standard surface mounted security lighting is unsightly and detracts from the important features of the façade. Lighting should preferably be mounted within the signage zone to provide an illuminating wash, and avoid creating glare. However, other carefully chosen light fittings can sit subtly above the signage zone.

Fully illuminated signage would be considered too dominant for this setting, however, localised back lighting can be a subtle compromise.



Curved signage with faceted glazing can accentuate the curved form.



Carefully faceted glazing can blend with the architectural language.

6-14a Oxford Road DESIGN FRAMEWORK

2.36 The Corner and Side Units.

New faceted shop fronts that project from the faience would not be permitted.

Although the corner units can adopt the design framework, the frontage will be slightly varied to take into consideration the curved fascia. Individual glass panels must be positioned to ensure that the faience reveals are exposed as on the other units, and that the curvature is accentuated. It may, for instance, be possible to have a curved frame, but with faceted glass, or have a curved fascia to enhance the sensation of a curved frontage. It is worth noting that the original glazing to the windows on the upper floors on the curve is also faceted.



Above: Although not original, the sympathetic plasterwork on this unit has been retained enhancing the character of the space. (only in 10 Oxford Road)
Below: Monotonous flat suspended ceilings create a featureless space



2.4 INTERNAL FIT OUT AND ALTERATIONS

2.41 Existing Features

Existing Architectural features may currently exist hidden behind ceilings, walls and fit out items.

It is important that these existing architectural features are considered in any new scheme. Where feasible these elements are to be exposed, as this is almost certainly how they would have been treated originally. This includes ceiling and architrave moulding, skirting boards, and beams.

A strong case would have to be made to the Local Planning Authority to support the introduction of any new suspended ceiling systems, and any new ceiling system would have to respect the character and the volume of the interior of the units.

Internal features such as rainwater and soil vent pipes, would originally have been carefully concealed, and therefore this treatment is considered acceptable, however it must be done with care to minimise intrusion into the main space. Simple skirtings and architraves similar to those existing in the building, should be created around the boxing to retain continuity. However, these features should be legible as more recent additions.

Repair works to existing structures and new interventions would not normally require Listed Building Consent unless the repairs were not a like for like replacement.

2.42 Additional Features

Suspended ceilings should not normally be inserted. They falsely alter the original nature of the space, concealing features such as down stand beams. Such installations also negatively affect the facade if they drop below the glazed zone.

Internal lighting should follow the recommendations set out above, providing subtle washes, and avoiding glare. Light fittings should be carefully designed to minimise the impact on the listed building.

New partitions may be required to form the commercial spaces, but they should not be inserted on the unit frontage, and the locations of them should be carefully considered. Partitions should not cut through existing mouldings.

Existing staircases should not be altered prior to inspection by a suitably qualified professional.

It should be noted that original floor surfaces may exist below floor coverings, and care should be taken when existing floor coverings are removed during any refurbishment.





Plant equipment irregularly mounted to the rear of the building.
With greater consideration the impact could be mitigated.

2.5 MECHANICAL AND ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT

Mechanical servicing of the retail units has changed somewhat over the years. When the building was constructed ventilation was largely natural. Today heating, cooling and mechanical extract ventilation is the norm in order to satisfy regulations and provide modern standards of thermal comfort.

In a contemporary development the locations of these flues and condensers would be carefully considered as part of the design. On an existing building a balance must be struck between the requirement to maintain a viable commercial use and the effect on the building.

The typical location for condenser units is on the flat roof below the building parapet. We have looked extensively into this option and it is impracticable to use the roof for plant equipment for the retail units. (see separate report)

There are two approaches to the mounting of the units on the rear wall. A valid approach would be to mount the units into specially formed recesses in the first floor facade facing Measham Mews- such as utilising the existing window openings. The units could then sit flush to the external face of the wall. There may be technical problems with this approach, especially where there is a high level of equipment (bar or restaurant use). Unfortunately in 6 out of the 10 units the tenancy does not extend to the first floor, which makes this solution impossible.

If the recess solution is proven to be technically impossible then the units must be mounted on the rear wall. The units should be cream or beige in colour to match the brickwork. They should be all be mounted 3.2m and 4.9m from the street level on the Chester Street side to give order to the elevation. All condensate pipes are to be channelled into rainwater pipes.

The addition or relocation of such equipment requires planning permission and listed building consent. All cases should be dealt with on their own merits but it should be noted that permission and listed building consent. has been granted for this solution recently, most notably in the case of the Greggs sandwich shop. (Greggs: ref 073655/FO/2004/C3).

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3.0 SUMMARY

This document has set out generic principles for the design of retail units at 6-14a Oxford Road. The recommendations should be implemented in conjunction with suitably qualified professionals.
All alterations should be reversible, and clearly identifiable to enable removal at a later stage.
The use of this document is recommended for future alterations to this building, Over time it is intended that all the retail units are to adhere to the principles of this guide.

Sources:

Piccadilly Partnership Design Guide: Commercial Frontages – Bruntwood and MCC.
Guide to Development in Manchester: Supplementary Planning Document and Planning Guidance Adopted April 2007 – 2007, MCC
Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the Historical Environment – 1994, DOE
Manchester City Council Building Control Archive
Manchester Central Library

4.0 APPENDIX

A LISTING TEXT

IoE Number: 485456
Location: DANCEHOUSE THEATRE, INCLUDING NOS. 6-14A, 6-14A OXFORD ROAD

MANCHESTER, MANCHESTER, GREATER MANCHESTER
Photographer: Mr Peter Hyde
Date Photographed: 11 June 2007
Date listed: 05 October 2000
Date of last amendment: 05 October 2000
Grade II

SJ8497
698-1/20/11127
05-OCT-00

MANCHESTER
OXFORD ROAD
Manchester
6-14A

MANCHESTER SJ8497 OXFORD ROAD 698-1/20/11127 Manchester 05-OCT-00 6-14A Dancehouse Theatre, including nos. 6-14a GV II Also Known As: Regal Twins, including nos. 6-14a, 6-14A, OXFORD ROAD, Manchester Former cinema, built 1929-30 by Pendleton and Dickenson of Manchester for Emmanuel Nove. Faience clad facade, with stock brick rear elevations, on steel frame; flat roof with gable ends and flat-pitched sides. Original plan of two double-height auditoria set over first-floor restaurant and waiting halls, and ground-floor foyer and shops. EXTERIOR: Long, four-storey principal facade in classical style, clad in white faience, the ends curving into the return walls. The facade is divided into nine bays, filled with shop units at ground level, except for the central bay which forms the entrance to the theatre, with a canopy above to attract attention. At first and second floor levels the bays are separated by giant pilasters with stylised yellow faience Ionic capitals. The cornice is ornamented with miniature arches. Each bay contains six windows. All the bays, excepting the one over the entrance, have subsidiary pilasters on the first floor and consoles on the second floor to support the cornice. The windows over the entrance are separated by giant pilasters surmounted by capitals in the form of lion masks. The third floor is set back behind a balcony, which has a simple metal balustrade in the form of cross-members and verticals. The bay over the entrance rises to form an arched portico, with a volute keystone and a shaped pediment. On the top left corner of this appear the letters EN (for Emmanuel Nove) with the date, 1930, on the top right corner. The metal balustrade also continues across the bottom of the portico. The central pilasters of the quadrant ends have capitals in the form of embellished oval cartouches. The second floor quadrant central windows have faience balustraded balconies. All the windows have six light mullion and transom glazing. The last bay on the returns is treated differently, the furthest half of each being blind and the nearest half of the left hand one only having a window at second floor level. The rear elevation has large horizontal first-floor windows and a scattering of smaller windows to light the main stairwell, hallways and lavatories. Flat roof with gable ends and flat-pitched sides. Art Deco folding metal gates at the entrance to the theatre are not original, but were added in an appropriate style in 1992.

INTERIOR: Foyer retains a little original ceiling decoration, and was refurbished in the Art Deco style in 1992, with wall decoration inspired by that elsewhere in the building. Staircase rises through the centre of the building, with a metal balustrade with rising sun and Greek fret decoration; some of this is original, more has been renewed to the same pattern. At rear an escape stair set around 1930s metal lift cage and lift. The surviving cinema auditorium is at the second and third floor levels and has much fine Art Deco plaster decoration on the walls, a little renewed. This has an undulating profile with attenuated fluted pilasters and broader ones in the form of cascades or of the zig-zag Moderne type. Flat barrel ceiling divided into fields with plaster cruciform ventilation grilles. The other cinema auditorium and the first-floor spaces (parts of which were originally a restaurant and waiting halls) have now been converted to offices and rehearsal rooms; while the wall decoration here has gone, the Art Deco cruciform plaster ventilation grilles have survived. The windows and interiors of the shops are not of special interest; the shops' significance is only as part of the formal composition of the facade. ANALYSIS: The cinema was built as a speculative suite of halls by Emmanuel Nove, who was a housing estate developer. After his project failed, it opened as the Regal Twins (operated by the Manchester Piccadilly Picture Theatre), closing as the Cannon in 1986, to become the Dancehouse Theatre in 1992. The Regal Twins represents an early example of a multiple cinema complex, a type which only became common some forty years later with the decline in film attendances. The exterior is a particularly handsome faience composition. Internally there is much high quality Art Deco plaster decoration to the surviving auditorium, in a surprisingly rich Art Deco idiom rare in Britain. SOURCES: Dennis Sharp, The Picture Palace, London, Hugh Evelyn, 1969, p.211 William Shenton, unpublished gazetteer of Manchester cinemas

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: that the inclusion of a listed building on this website does **not** mean it is open to the public.