



**Manchester Crown Court
Minshull Street
New Gates and Handrail**

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE &
HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

Revision 1: 24th March 2025

Revision 2: 4th April 2025

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Manchester Crown Court, Minshull Street south-east elevation with Auburn Street Bridge gates in foreground

Revision 1: 24th March 2025: NPPF references updated; drawings of gates as existing and proposed added to clarify intent of proposals

Revision 2: 4th April 2025: Basement floor plan revised

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

This document containing a Statement of Significance and Heritage Impact Assessment has been produced to support an application for Listed Building Consent for the installation of new external gates to the Auburn Street Bridge entrance and new handrail in the CPS Room at the Grade II* listed building known as Manchester Crown Court, Minshull Street located at Minshull Street, Manchester.

1.2 Project Detail & Justification for the works

The project comprises two components and proposes:

1. the replacement of existing external gates located on the Auburn Street Bridge entrance of Manchester Crown Court, Minshull Street, and
2. the installation of a new handrail to steps connecting different floor levels within the room occupied by the Crown Prosecution Service in the basement floor level within the building.

The aims of the project are to:

1. replace an existing pair of gates that have decayed beyond repair and are difficult to open and close manually, with a new exact replica pair of gates, and
2. install a new handrail to steps to make the level change compliant with Part K of the Building Regulations and provide appropriate health and safety protection to building users. The existing, original handrail is installed at an incorrect height in relation to the pitch line of the steps and does not extend to provide edge protection to all steps in the flight.

The change of gates is justified on security and manual handling grounds – the decayed structure of the gates no longer provides the required physical protection to prevent determined access onto the bridge when they are closed, and they require manual lifting to open and close them because they are heavy and existing wheeled supports are failing to operate.

The addition of the handrail is justified on health and safety grounds and will overcome a deficiency in edge protection to the steps.

1.3 Authorship

This document has been prepared by Rob Firman, Director of **firman | consulting**. Rob Firman is a Chartered Architect with over 35 years' experience of which more than 15 years has involved working with listed buildings. He has been engaged in works to listed court buildings in the Ministry of Justice Estate continuously since 2014 and has completed many Listed Building Consent applications across the UK.

1.4 Purpose of this document

This document has been produced to assess the impact of proposals on the significance of the Listed Building. It summarises the significance of the asset as necessary and proportionate in the context of the works currently proposed as recommended by NPPF paragraph 194. By assessing the proposals for Manchester Crown Court, Minshull Street in the context of the historic understanding and statement of significance, this HIA will test the impact of the proposed changes to the building on that significance to assist the Local Planning Authority in their duties under NPPF paragraph 195.

1.5 The Structure of the Assessment

The document has been set out in a series of logical sections. The sections are sequential and each one builds upon the previous section explaining more about the process of understanding the historic asset.

The Understanding Section 2.0 seeks to summarise the background context of the site.

The Historical Development section 3.0 provides key information regarding the development of the historic asset, its surroundings and phases of development.

The Assessment of Significance Section 4.0 builds upon the extent of understanding and seeks to make judgements about the importance of the asset using a "value based" assessment technique. This approach is an established principle within international conservation practice.

Description of Proposals Section 5.0 summarises the proposals for changes to the building.

The Heritage Impact Assessment Section 6.0 assesses the impact of the proposals on the significance of the listed building using the relevant planning policy and guidance.

2.0 UNDERSTANDING

2.1 Location

The Manchester Crown Court, Minshull Street building stands in a prominent location in the city centre, close to Picadilly Railway Station (to the south-east). It is bounded on all sides by roads – Minshull Street to the south-west, Bloom Street and the Major Street surface car park to the north-west, Aytoun Street and the A6 to the north-east and Auburn Street to the south-east. The Rochdale Canal passes the building adjacent to its south-eastern wall.

2.2 Designations

2.2.1 Listed Buildings

Listed Buildings are buildings of special architectural and historic interest which make up the historic environment in England and Wales. They are protected under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which entails for all alterations or demolition works to require Listed Building Consent from the local planning authority before they can proceed.

Manchester Crown Court, Minshull Street is listed Grade II* (Historic England List Entry Number: 1219894). The building was first listed on 3rd October 1974 and is named as 'City Police Courts'. The listing text reads:

1868-71, by Thomas Worthington. Red brick with sandstone dressings, steeply pitched slate roofs. Rectangular plan on corner site. Italian Gothic style. Two-and-a-half storeys over basement, plus tower at north-west corner, 1:3:3:3:1 bays, the centre gabled, the left end formed by the tower and the right-hand end with a turret; with moulded stone plinth, impost bands, enriched 1st-floor sill-band, Lombard frieze, and stone parapet stepped up to the centre gable with tourelles at the corners of this. Central 2-centred arched doorway with gabled surround including shafts with carved crocket caps; three 2-centred arched 2-light windows above the doorway, and arcaded 5-light attic window in gable; 2, 3 and 2-light windows to both floors of the side ranges, with shafts and 2-centred arched lights with linked hoodmoulds;

another doorway to the right-hand end, which has slightly different fenestration to the main floors, arcaded 7-light attic window, and saddle-back roof. Very tall octagonal chimney behind ridge.

Tall square tower to left, with bands, 3-light window to 1st floor with balcony, 2 small lancets to next stage, clockface in arched surround, elaborate stone top stage with corner tourelles and arcaded belfry, and slated pyramidal roof. Left return (to Bloom Street) in similar style, with central doorway, windows of 3, 3, 2, 3 and 3 lights, and 2 large gables each with a 2-centred blank arch containing two 2-light windows. Interior not inspected but probably contains features of equivalent quality.

2.2.2 Conservation Areas

Manchester Crown Court, Minshull Street is not located in a Conservation Area.

2.3 Description

The Crown Court building is constructed in red brick with sandstone dressings and steeply pitched slate roofs. The building is in the Gothic Revival style, with a massive corner tower and a chimney stack styled as a campanile.

The interior court rooms have been preserved with relatively few alterations.

2.4 Planning Context, Policy and Legislative Framework

The legislation, policy and guidance most relevant to this application are outlined below.

2.4.1 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) act 1990

Manchester Crown Court, Minshull Street is Grade II* Listed. The primary legislation relating to Listed Buildings is set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

2.4.2 National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework was revised on 20 July 2021 and sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. With regard to the historic environment, the overarching aim of the policy remains in line with the philosophy of the 2012

framework, namely in achieving sustainable development. An environmental objective is to protect and enhance our built and historic environment.

The relevant policy is outlined within Chapter 16, 'Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment'. This chapter reasserts that heritage assets should be conserved in a 'manner appropriate to their significance' (Paragraph 202).

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'.

2.4.3 Planning Practice Guidance

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), Historic environment, advice on enhancing and conserving the historic environment, was updated on 24 June 2021 and is a companion to the NPPF.

2.4.4 Manchester Local Development Framework

The Local Development Framework is contained in the Core Strategy Development Plan 2012-2027 adopted 11th July 2012. The core strategy sets out the long-term strategic policies for Manchester's future development and is supported by the 'Addendum to Manchester Core Strategy 2024'. Policies applicable to this application are:

Objective 6 Environment; Heritage

Para 12.16: Manchester is the original industrial city and much of its character is derived from the physical legacy of Victorian innovation. While the City is once again at the forefront of innovation it is important that areas of special architectural or historic interest are preserved and enhanced to create a modern and distinctive City based on its proud heritage.

Para 12.20: The historic environment is central to our cultural heritage. It contributes to the identity of Manchester through its aesthetic value and the memories of events. The original Victorian city helps create a sense of place and enhances the quality of our daily lives. Furthermore, it can provide a catalyst for regeneration.

Para 12.21: Historic sites and areas of particular heritage value should be both safeguarded for the future and, where possible, enhanced both for their own heritage merits and as part of wider heritage regeneration proposals.

Policy EN3: Heritage

Throughout the City, the 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.

New developments must be designed so as to support the Council in preserving or, where possible, enhancing the historic environment, the character, setting and accessibility of areas and buildings of acknowledged importance, including scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings, registered parks and gardens, conservation areas and archaeological remains.

Proposals which enable the re-use of heritage assets will be encouraged where they are considered consistent with the significance of the heritage asset.

2.4.5 Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan

Manchester (along with its surrounding Boroughs in the Greater Manchester Region) adopted the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan 2022 to 2039 with effect from 21 March 2024. Broadly, policies from the Core Strategy Development Plan are carried forward, but policy EN3: Heritage is amended by policy JP-P2: Heritage which includes the following statements relevant to this application:

We will proactively manage and work with partners to positively conserve, sustain and enhance our historic environment and heritage assets and their settings.

Particular consideration will be given to ensure that the significance of key elements of the historic environment which contribute to Greater Manchester's distinctive identity and sense of place are protected from harm.

Development proposals which will help safeguard the significance of and secure a sustainable future for Greater Manchester's heritage at risk will be supported in principle, provided they are not contrary to national policy or other policies in the development plan.

3.0 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

The foundation stone for the building, originally known as the City Police Courts was laid by the mayor of Manchester on 10 July 1868. The building was designed by the architect Thomas Worthington, who won an invited design competition to secure the commission, and it was completed in December 1871.

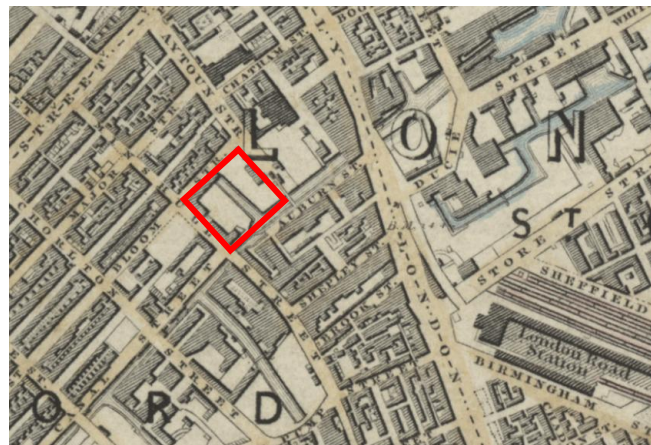
The site of the new building in Minshull Street was formerly used by the paving department of the corporation as a stone yard and the previous buildings on the site were demolished in May 1868.

Worthington drew both on his rejected designs for Manchester Town Hall, and on his earlier plans for Ellen Wilkinson High School, although the central tower he used there is placed asymmetrically at the Police Courts, due to the constraints of the site. It originally contained 4 courts, two of which being appropriated to the police business and two to the sessions. Each façade of the original Police Court building has a distinct, though always Gothic, appearance. On the elevation facing Auburn Street each floor has a different window design—the higher the floor the more ornate the window. The basement has square-headed openings, the ground-floor has shallow triangular-headed windows, and the first-floor windows are of the typical Gothic-lancet type.

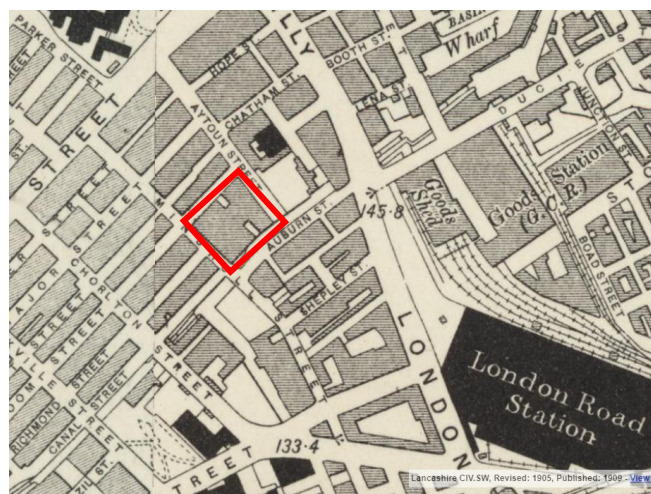
Following the completion of new Courts of Justice in Crown Square in May 1961, the Lord Chancellor's Department decided to close the Minshull Street building in 1989, but as the volume of cases increased in the early 1990s, the department decided to re-open the Minshull Street building again to support the Courts of Justice in Crown Square.

Between 1993 and 1996, the Minshull Street building was extensively modernised. The original courtyard was glazed over, and an extension was added to the Aytoun Street side of the courts. The architect for these works was James Stevenson of the Hurd Rolland Partnership. Internally, the modernised complex at Minshull Street was laid out to accommodate 12 courts.

Since then, there have been multiple changes and enhancements to satisfy changing operational and functional requirements of the justice system.



Location of the Crown Court 1848 showing site as a stone storage yard with small linear buildings to perimeter



Location of Crown Court 1909 showing new court building but not much other change to buildings in the surrounding area



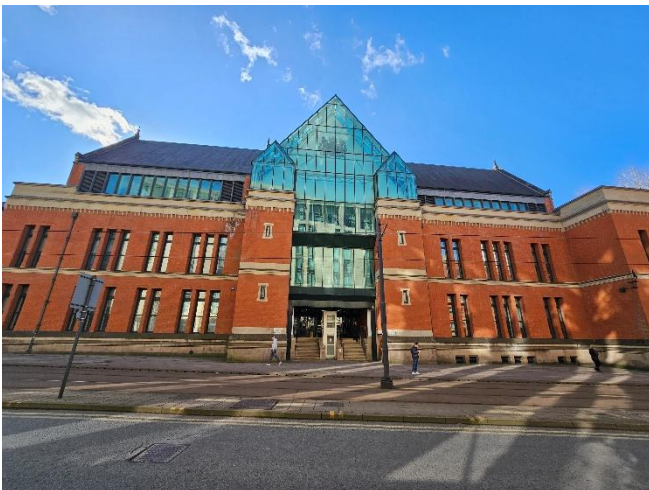
Drawing of the Minshull Street elevation, from the Architectural Design Competition entry by Thomas Worthington c1868



Minshull Street and Auburn Street elevations



Bloom Street elevation



Extension constructed 1993-96 on Aytoun Street, now providing the main entrance to the court building

4.0 SIGNIFICANCE

The building stands in Manchester City Centre close to Picadilly Railway Station and with modern office buildings and hotels nearby. It stands out as a fine example of Victorian Civic Architecture against the rather mundane surrounding modern buildings.

The Crown Court building was constructed for the purpose for which it is now used. Under the current operation and stewardship the historic fabric is not being placed under threat by inappropriate activities. The 1990s extension added courtrooms and upgraded facilities for visitors and relocated the main entrance from Minshull Street to Aytoun Street. The extension compliments the original Victorian Gothic and maintains the architectural significance of the Minshull Street building.

A substantial amount of modern servicing has been inserted into the building, especially in recent years, in order to attain compliance with present day standards of comfort and so forth. These interventions have generally been carried out sympathetically and with care.

4.1 Criteria for Assessing Significance

Significance can be defined as the sum of the cultural heritage values that make a building or place important to this and future generations. The aim of conservation is to sensitively manage change to a place to ensure that its significance is not only protected, but also revealed, reinforced and enhanced at every possible opportunity.

As is explained below, the recognised method of assessing significance is defined by four categories, however there is no set hierarchy and research efforts must be undertaken to determine what forms an asset or element's value. That in turn informs the proposals and interventions applied to a scheme.

All historic sites or buildings are significant for a range of reasons, and it is important to fully understand what all of those reasons are, before arriving at the assessment of the level of significance of the site or building.

Once that process has been undertaken more informed and balanced decisions can be made about the future uses and conservation approach being applied to development.

Annex 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) defines a 'heritage asset' as:

'A building, monument, site, place, area, or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest.' It goes on to define the setting of a heritage asset 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.'

The "values based" assessments were first pioneered by James Semple Kerr and were embodied into the ICOMOS Burra Charter and are now an established part of Conservation Principles.

Evidential Value: This derives from those elements of an historic asset that can provide evidence about past human activity, including its physical remains or historic fabric. These remains provide the primary evidence for how the asset has changed over time. It is 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. These illustrative or associative values of an historic asset may be less tangible than its evidential value but will often connect past people, events and aspects of life with the present.

Aesthetic Value: The ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place. This might include the form of an historic asset, its external appearance and how it lies within its setting. Understanding the aesthetic value of an historic asset will be more subjective than the study of its evidential and historical values and will involve trying to express the aesthetic qualities or the relative value of different parts of its form or design.

Communal Value: This derives from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory. Communal values are closely bound up with historical (particularly associative) and aesthetic values but tend to have additional and specific aspects; it can be commemorative, symbolic or spiritual.

4.2 Assessment of Significance

Evidential (or archaeological) value: Derived from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity. **Evidential value = High**

Manchester Crown Court, Minshull Street is an extremely fine example of Victorian civic architecture demonstrating and recording the status of Manchester as a significant industrial and commercial city in the late 19th century. Throughout its existence changes have been made to the building, most noticeably the large extension in the 1990s, but clear understanding of its significance ensured they were built to a very high quality. Today the Minshull Street Crown Court building stands rather alone in this part of Manchester as a survivor from the Victorian era but still provides a powerful impression of the place. The consistency of scale and materials with high quality detailing underpins the value of this place.

The Auburn Street Bridge gates are an original part of the composition of the south-east elevation of the building and can be assessed as having High Evidential Value.

The carved handrail to the steps in the CPS Room is original and is of an elegant design and finish. As part of the original building fabric, it can be assessed as having high evidential value.

Historical value: Derived from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present. **Historic Value = High.**

Throughout its existence Manchester Crown Court, Minshull Street has been a regional focus for the implementation and interpretation of the laws of England and it has remained in that use for around 150 years. It has been consistently updated to suit changing operational approaches and attitudes including construction of the new courts and main building entrance in the 1990s.

The Auburn Street Bridge gates are an original part of the composition of the south-east elevation of the building. The carved handrail to the steps in the CPS Room is an original component of the building fabric. These features can be assessed as having High Historical Value.

Aesthetic value: Derived from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place. **Aesthetic value = High**

The original City Police Courts building is a landmark and grand architectural statement, regarded as one of the finest examples of Victorian Gothic civic architecture anywhere in the UK.

It is undeniably a glorious monument to the strength of the law in Victorian England and throughout the 20th century.

The building interiors contain grand public spaces, finely designed and detailed courtrooms and elegant corridors and stairways. Few spaces are untouched by the over-arching approach to a coherent and quality building.

The Auburn Street Bridge gates are an original part of the composition of the south-east elevation of the building. They are rather plain but stand between elegant brick piers. The carved handrail to the steps in the CPS Room is an original component of the building fabric and is of an elegant design and finish. These features can be assessed as having High Aesthetic Value.

Communal value: Derived from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory.

Communal Value = Medium - High.

Manchester Crown Court, Minshull Street's communal value is based on its extensive history as the highest court in the city where a vast number of extremely important cases have been tried and judgements laid down. Continuous use of the building as a court since its opening in the late 19th century adds to the historical communal value by retaining valuable historic buildings to ensure they are preserved for the long-term future.

The Auburn Street Bridge gates are an original part of the composition of the south-east elevation of the building adding to the visual identity of the building. They can be assessed as having High Communal Value. The handrail in the CPS Room has been a fixture since the building opened and it has only been touched by Court and Crown Prosecution Service staff, so its communal value is high to them.

5.0 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSALS

5.1 Context Analysis

5.1.1 Character Appraisal

The Manchester Crown Court, Minshull Street building is of the highest significance due to its imposing design and exquisite craftsmanship. The building was purpose built for use by the Justice system and as such performs both aesthetically and functionally, with changes made over time being executed to ensure that the fabric is maintained and preserved for future generations. The historic fabric is in fine condition and will continue to remain so given careful consideration to its long-term maintenance. The proposals for this work are specifically designed to retain all significant listed fabric and fixtures and thus preserve the building for both current use and long-term retention of character.

The Court stands within a defined site in the city centre of Manchester, bounded on all four sides by footpaths and roads, with the Rochdale Canal passing its south-east frontage.

The building is a fully functioning Court and as such gets a high volume of pedestrian and vehicular traffic using the building every day, with members of the judiciary, building staff and prisoner transport entering the building through the gates on the Auburn Street bridge for which this application applies. Whilst the gates are left open during the hours that the court is operational, it is important that they present a secure barrier to entry when closed overnight and during weekends.

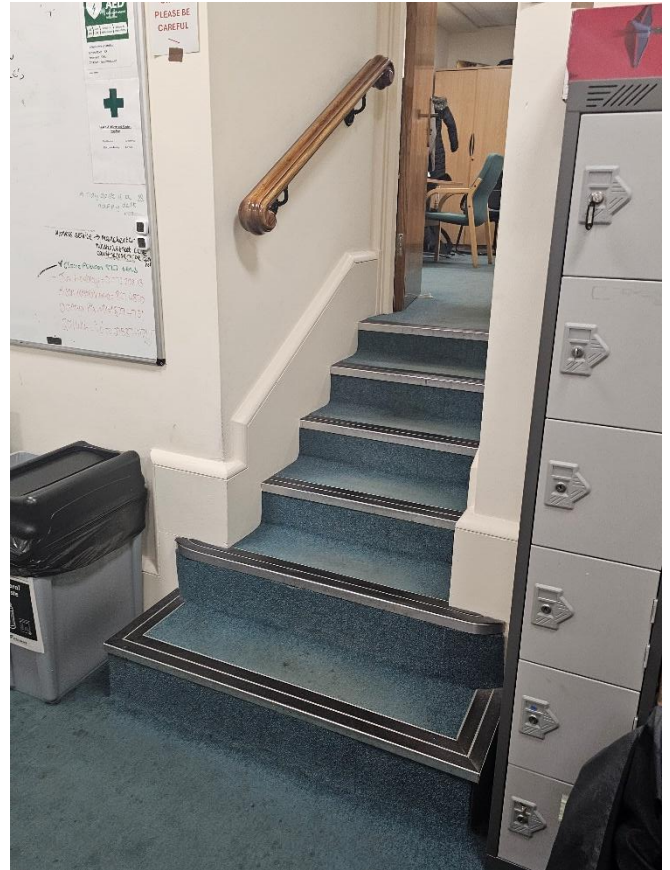
The level change in the CPS Room separates groups of staff and is on the route to the room entry/exit for staff based in the higher floor level area. The steps are quite steep, and the risers are not all of a consistent height. The existing handrail does not afford support to users traversing the bottom two steps.

The nature of the building use means that it is required to be robust and to provide modern comfort standards, facilities and equipment required for its operation and primary usage.

An appraisal of the spaces directly impacted by these proposals is at Section 5.8 of this document below.



Existing gates in open position, with areas of decay clearly visible



Existing steps and handrail at floor level change within basement CPS Room

5.1.2 Local Facilities

The local facilities are neither benefitted nor adversely affected by this proposed work.

5.1.3 Physical, Social and Economic Issues

There are no tangible physical socioeconomic issues associated with this work. There will be a contract for the work, which will employ a number of persons locally.

5.2 Policy Context

HMCTS has maintained a policy of caring for the quality of the original building since they assumed ownership, and all works within it are carried out within the over-arching management policy that the building has “capacity to absorb and accommodate change without unacceptable or irreversible damage”.

Accordingly, these proposals have been developed to minimise the impact on the building fabric and quality of internal spaces, are fully reversible and will improve the functionality and amenity of the building for its primary users.

Within the current Manchester Core Strategy Plan, the principal policy applicable to this application is:

Policy EN3: Heritage

Throughout the City, the 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.

New developments must be designed so as to support the Council in preserving or, where possible, enhancing the historic environment, the character, setting and accessibility of areas and buildings of acknowledged importance, including scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings, registered parks and gardens, conservation areas and archaeological remains.

Proposals which enable the re-use of heritage assets will be encouraged where they are considered consistent with the significance of the heritage asset.

5.3 Involvement

There has been no consultation with the wider community.

5.4 Response to objectives of good design

A Access

The access to the building is neither enhanced nor adversely affected by the proposals. Replacing the existing decayed Auburn Street bridge gates with new gates will enhance the environment that the building sits within with the visual improvement to that part of the court site.

Access(ibility) within the basement CPS Room and the health and safety of using the steps to the level change will be greatly improved by the addition of the new handrail compliant with current legislation.

B Appearance

The proposed works to the Auburn Street bridge gates will significantly improve the appearance of the gated entrance to the site.

The installation of a new handrail to the steps in the CPS Room will be located to minimise visual impact and will not detract from the aesthetic quality of the original handrail.

C Environmental Sustainability

There is no tangible environmental benefit to the proposals.

D Layout

The layout of the works is dictated by the requirement and the functionality of the fittings proposed to be installed.

E Scale

The scale of the works is determined by the requirement.

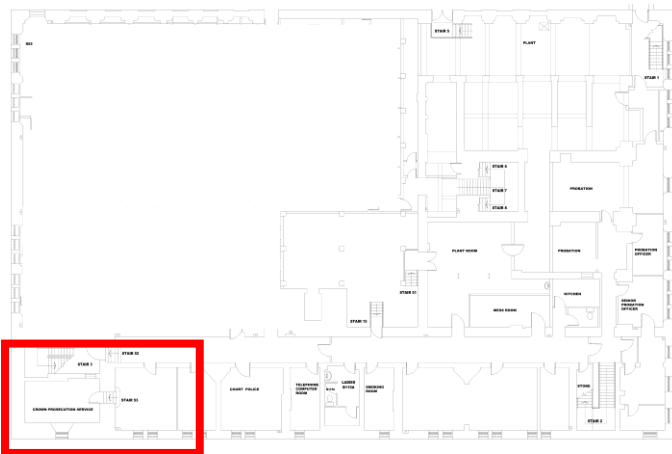
5.5 Location of proposed works

The works are proposed to the exterior and interior of the building. The exterior works are proposed to the existing Auburn Street bridge access to the site located on the south-east of the building and providing access across the Rochdale Canal. The interior works are proposed within the existing basement room occupied by the Crown Prosecution Service.

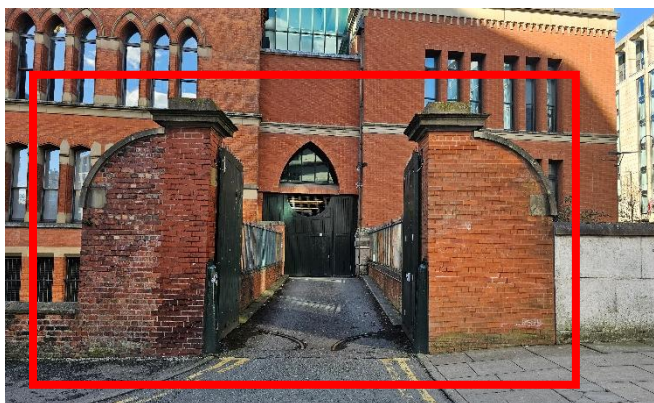
5.5.1 Site Location Plan



5.5.2 Proposed Works Locations



Basement floor plan showing location of CPS Room



Location of gates on Auburn Street bridge access to building

5.5.3 Aerial View of Site



5.6 Design Evolution

5.6.1 Option proposals

Each of the two component proposals of this application have been developed with a view to minimising the impact on the heritage asset and options have been identified for consideration.

Options considered for the gates were:

1. treat the decay and rot on the existing gates and repair damaged sections,
2. replicate the existing gates with new gates using the existing materials,
3. install new gates to new design using existing materials,
4. install new gates to new design using new materials

Options considered for the new handrail were:

1. Extending the existing handrail with new carved sections, including swept return to wall and floor mounted support,
2. Replacing the existing handrail with new contemporary handrail,
3. Retaining existing handrail in existing position and installing additional contemporary handrail to the opposite side wall of the steps

For the gates, Option 2 was selected as preferred and for the handrail, Option 3 was selected as preferred.

The extent of decay and rot infestation in the gates renders treatment and repair so extensive as to virtually require full replacement, and replacing the gates with a new design was felt to compromise the aesthetic consistency of the original building.

As the handrail is believed to be original it was felt inappropriate to modify or remove it. Adding a new handrail to the opposite side of the level change achieves a solution that is reversible and leaves the original handrail untouched.

5.7 Understanding the constraints

5.7.1 Existing building features

Any new fittings should seek to minimise the visual impact on the grade II* listed building and aim to not cover or detract from existing features and details, either on the building exterior or within the building.

5.7.2 Effective location and installation of new fittings

The installation of the new gates must replicate the existing position exactly, using existing hinge mounts and floor tracks and as much of the existing ironmongery and cast metal features as practically possible.

The installation of the new handrail must be fully compliant with current Building Regulations and should supplement rather than replace the existing original handrail to the level change steps.

5.7.3 Building Regulations Part K requirements

Building Regulations Part K defines the requirements for installation of handrails to steps and ramps. Diagram 1.12 applies to the level change in the CPS Room:

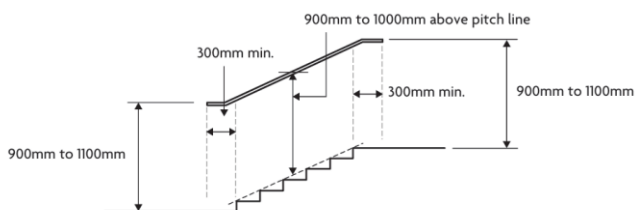
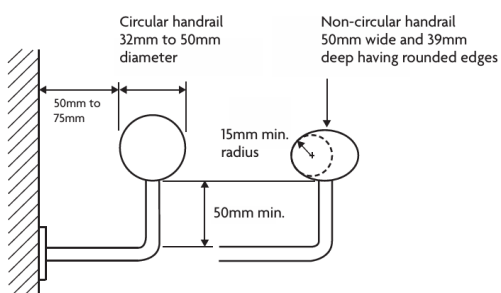


Diagram 1.12 Key dimensions for handrails for stairs in buildings other than dwellings

Diagram 1.13 defines requirements for new handrail design, including size and location in relation to walls:

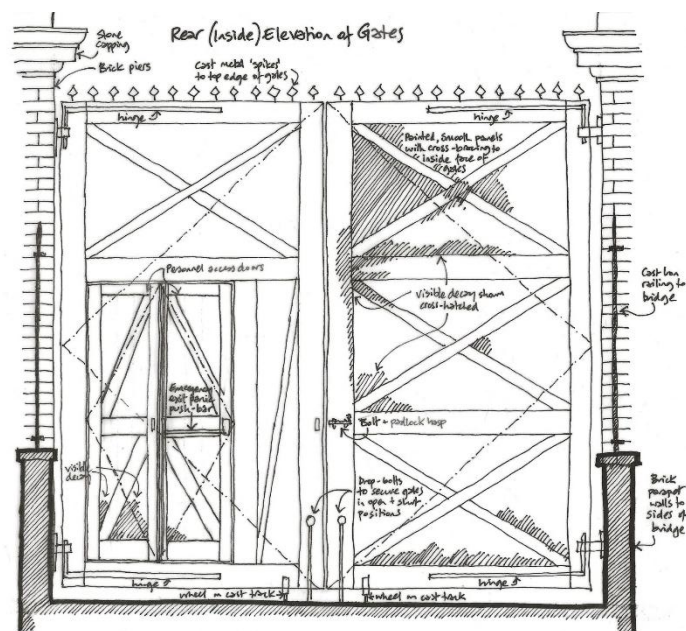
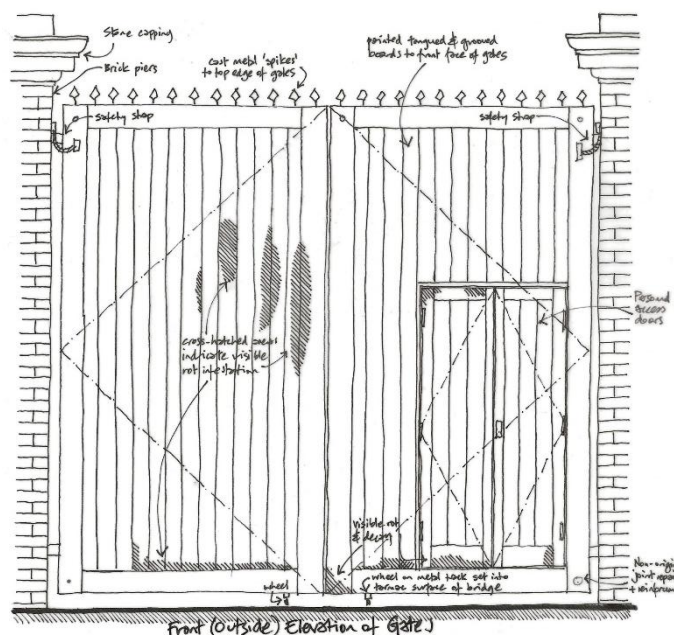


5.8 Proposed installation

5.8.1 Description of proposals

The proposal for the Auburn Street bridge gates is to install a replacement pair of timber gates replicating the existing gates exactly in appearance, scale and operation.

The existing gate leaves are affected by decay and rot infestation and require increasingly difficult manual handling to operate. The decay has affected the appearance and security integrity of the gates and they have reached the end of their useful service life.



Elevations of gates as existing showing extent of decay

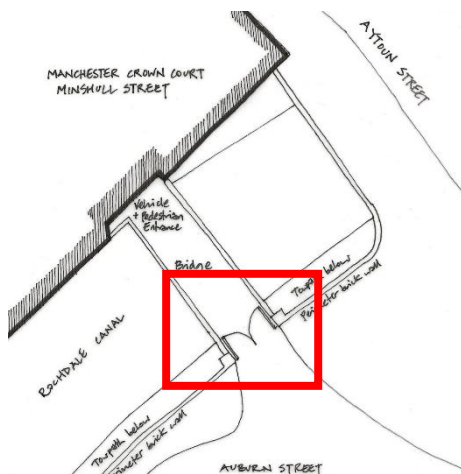
The proposal for the stepped level change within the basement Crown Prosecution Service Office is to supplement the existing original ornate carved hardwood handrail that is non-compliant with current Building Regulations and Health and Safety legislation.

The addition of a new, compliant modern timber handrail on the opposite wall of the level change opening is proposed, thus retaining the original historic handrail in situ whilst improving the protection of staff and visitors using the steps.

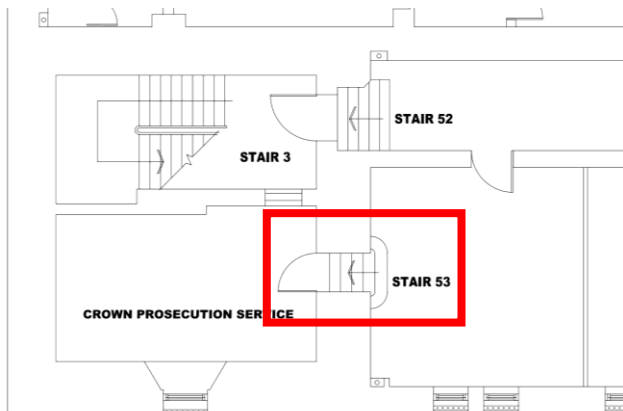
5.8.2 Proposed layout

The new replacement gates are to be installed in exactly the same location as the existing gates, mounted on the existing brick gate piers using the existing hinge mounts and supported on the existing metal floor-guide tracks.

The proposed new handrail to the stepped level change within the basement CPS Room is to be located on the opposite side of the level change opening to the existing ornate original handrail.



Location of Gates on Auburn Street Bridge

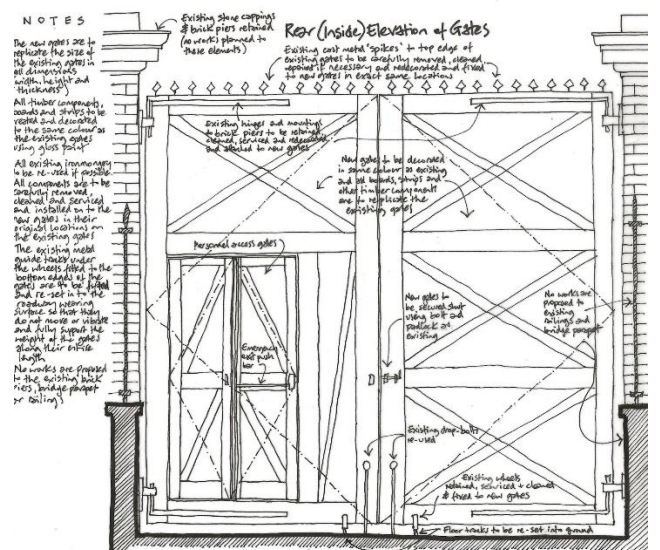
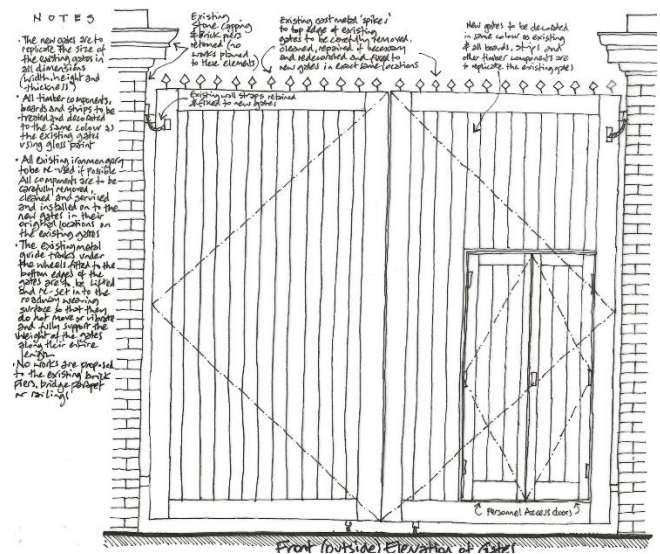


Location of steps within CPS Room in the basement

5.8.3 Installation proposals

5.8.3.1 New Gates

The new gates are proposed to match the size, appearance, construction and operation of the existing gates exactly, including the provision of pedestrian pass doors into one leaf.



Proposed elevations of new gates, matching existing exactly

All existing ironmongery, including the cast metal finials on the top edge of the gates will be carefully removed, serviced, cleaned and redecorated if necessary, before being attached to the new gates in the same positions as on the existing gates.

The pair of metal floor guide tracks will be lifted and re-set into the wearing surface to eliminate current movement of the track under the weight of the gates moving and ease manual handling of the gates when opening and closing them.

5.8.3.2 New Handrail

The new handrail will be a proprietary medium oak oval profile with a lacquer finish to replicate the finish of the existing, original handrail on the opposite wall.

It will be fixed to the wall using satin black finish cast iron brackets, similar in appearance and size to those supporting the existing handrail opposite. Where it projects beyond the face of the wall adjacent to the steps to provide the statutory requisite 300mm length of horizontal handrail at the bottom of the steps, it will be supported from the floor on satin black finish cast iron rods/struts with a similar diameter to the wall brackets.



Proposed oval handrail profile, medium oak, lacquer finish to match original handrail on opposite wall

5.8.4 Final Scheme Assessment

The final design proposed for the new gates and handrail installation is ideal in respect of providing the court with the required security at the Auburn Street bridge entrance and compliance with health and safety and Building Regulations requirements for edge protection to steps whilst minimising the visual impact on the heritage asset of both interventions.

All of the works proposed are by their nature reversible.



Proposed handrail support bracket, satin black cast iron

6.0 HERITAGE IMPACT

There is no harm to the character or appearance of Manchester Crown Court, Minshull Street as the proposed works are replacing an existing pair of external gates with an exact replica of similar construction and appearance, and the addition of a new handrail to provide protection to building users at an existing stepped level change.

The installation of new gates will make no visual change to the original building facade. The use of medium oak in an oval section profile for the new handrail will compliment the existing original ornate handrail.

The proposed changes are therefore considered to preserve the special interest and integrity of the listed building. They will protect original architectural appearance and detailing and the historic fabric.

In considering Historic England's Advice Note 2 'Making Changes to Heritage Assets' the proposals have carefully considered how new work will integrate and be fixed to historic fabric. In doing so, it adheres to the advice in Paragraph 43 which advocates particular attention to the junction between new work and the existing fabric.

Statutory listing does not exclude all possibility of alteration but requires that necessary alterations be carried out in a manner that will preserve the special architectural or historic interest that gave rise to the listing.

This scheme looks to protect and preserve the integrity of the building exterior and interior appearance.

If there is concern that alterations to the building cause harm, the harm must necessarily be 'less than substantial' (and at the lower end of the scale). For harm to be substantial, the impact on significance would have to be so serious such that very much, if not all, of the significance was eroded. That is not the case here.

6.1 Heritage Statement

This heritage statement has been prepared in connection with the proposals for installation of replacement security gates and a new handrail to a stepped level change at Manchester Crown Court, Minshull Street to uphold security operation to the existing site and building, and to protect staff and visitors from falling and to enhance accessibility when using the stepped access between differing floor levels in the basement CPS Room.

As set out in the Statement of Significance, the Manchester Crown Court, Minshull Street building maintains a very high level of architectural quality and historical interest. Its history reflects the story of continuous use for application of the justice system in Manchester for over 150 years. It is an important component of the built environment and civic function of Manchester.

Historic England's Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance accept that some change to a significant place is inevitable. It is only harmful if the significance is eroded. With this in mind, there will of course be changes but these will be minor compared to the overall benefit provided by the scheme. Furthermore, there will be no breakdown of significance.

In summary, the proposals sustain the significance of the listed building. It is also considered that the proposals accord with the NPPF that relate to heritage assets and the historic environment, while bringing public benefit. Furthermore, they fulfil policy in Historic England's guidance notes. This report finds no conservation grounds for refusal of consent.

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