



Deansgate Terrace – Stair Removal Planning and Heritage Report

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Planning and Heritage Report sets out and seeks to justify physical works to vacant units within the Deansgate Terrace. In summary, GNW Developments Limited ('The Applicant') wishes to undertake internal non-original stair removal works to currently vacant units identified in this Application. This is required to enable these units to be let out as a single ground floor and basement unit and allow the offices upstairs to operate as self-contained office space or storage for the units below.
- 1.2. This physical alteration requires Listed Building Consent ('LBC') due to the Grade II Listed nature of the Deansgate Terrace but does not require Planning Permission due to no external changes being proposed, nor any Change of Use.
- 1.3. This LBC application therefore consists of the removal of modern (non-original) staircases from the ground to first floors of units no 237/239, 241, 243, 247, 249 and 283 Deansgate. Following removal, the void space connecting the floors will be sensitively infilled and install an access hatch to allow the ground and basement floor unit to operate as a single entity whilst maintain access for storage. The description of development on the Application Form is as follows:

"Listed Building Consent for internal alterations to include strip out of staircases linking ground and first floor levels together with associated infilling of floor openings with service hatch at first floor level and making good of ceiling at ground level to Units 237-239, 241, 243, 247, 249 and 283."

The Applicant

- 1.4. The Applicant is GNW Developments Limited; a subsidiary of the Hong Kong based Peterson Group, who has partnered with Trilogy to manage the assets of Deansgate Terrace, Great Northern Warehouse and the 'Leisure Box' to deliver permanent redevelopment proposals on site. Trilogy has a proven track record as partners in property development in the UK, delivering schemes such as the London Executive Offices in St. James and Ampersand in Soho.

Site Location

- 1.5. This application relates solely to part of the Deansgate Terrace, which covers the length of Deansgate from Peter Street to Great Bridgewater Street. The 2 to 4 storey length of terraces is Grade II Listed and currently comprises a mix of retail, food & drink and commercial. The Site boundary for this Application covers Units 237-239, 241, 243, 247, 249 and 283 along Deansgate Terrace and is 0.03 ha in size.

- 1.6. The Terrace is located along the western boundary of the Great Northern Warehouse complex fronting Deansgate and ranges between 2 to 4 storeys in height. At lower levels, there are 29 retail unit frontages, some of which have been merged with neighbouring units, accommodating a mix of uses including cafes, shops, restaurants, and estate agents. The upper levels of Deansgate Terrace provide some office space and storage for the units at lower level, bars and restaurants on Deansgate Mews, as well as the Great Northern Management Suite.

Planning Context

- 1.7. In February 2023, Manchester's Planning Committee approved works to the Great Northern Warehouse estate, consisting of planning and listed building consent to refurbish and convert the Great Northern Warehouse into Grade A office accommodation.
- 1.8. The Leisure Box complex is to be partially demolished and three residential buildings (16, 27 and 34 storeys) constructed to form 726 homes. Deansgate Terrace North and Deansgate Terrace South are to be refurbished and altered to form commercial space. New public realm and highway works were also approved. There are three application references comprising two listed building consents and one application for planning permission: 135565/FO/2022, 135583/LO/2022, and 135566/LO/2022.
- 1.9. The approved proposals are split into Phase A, B and C. The intention is to deliver the proposed development in its entirety, as part of a continuous development process; however, this application allows identifies the following discrete phases of development, each of which are capable of being delivered independently. They can be broadly summarised as:
- **Phase A:** the refurbishment and conversion of the Great Northern Warehouse including the removal of modern features facilitated from the 1997 comprehensive scheme, and the refurbishment of the northern end of Deansgate Terrace for commercial use, alongside the enhancement of Great Northern Square and retention of existing ground floor occupiers;
 - **Phase B and C:** partial demolition of the Leisure Box and retention of car parking below followed by the erection of residential elements (B) and refurbishment and conversion of the southern end of Deansgate Terrace (C).
- 1.10. The works proposed in this Application are in line with the underlying permission but are to be brought forward immediately and standalone to the wider development to allow currently vacant units to be occupied. These works will not be affected longer term by the development referenced above.
- 1.11. An LBC application was submitted in August 2024 to apply for changes set out in this Statement but was withdrawn due to the need to produce further detailed drawings of the retail units as requested by the Local Planning. These drawings requested have now been produced and form part of this Application. A site visit also took place in October 2024 with planning and conservation officers at Manchester City Council, who confirmed that they would be supportive of the application provided that the relevant information requested was produced to support the application.

2. Site History and Context

- 2.1. Deansgate Terrace was constructed by the Great Northern Railway Company, forming a long and continuous range of shops and offices to hide the western aspect of the goods station from Deansgate. The ground floor was occupied by a range of general shops with one glazed frontage, a single room, and a fireplace in the corner in each.
- 2.2. The terrace of 34 original shop units, some of which have now merged to form 29 units in total, are Grade II Listed and the arched entrance into the Former Goods Yard at the junction of Peter Street and Deansgate falls within the southern boundary of the Peter Street Conservation Area. Like the Great Northern Warehouse, the terrace yields high evidential, historical, aesthetic, and communal value.
- 2.3. It is one of the longest in length listed buildings in the country, forming a unique and continual range of shops, of which the regular rhythm of its fenestration and shopfronts contributes to its significance.
- 2.4. The terrace is constructed from red brick with poured concrete floors encasing steel beams to form structural down stand beams, which were skimmed with plaster and finished with a simple chamfered edge. Examples of this original finish can only now be found in some rooms on the third floor of the building.
- 2.5. The Deansgate elevation is rhythmic across the streetscape and includes a linear stone and red brick bandings along the entire elevation from ground to third floors. Each modern shop front is similar, made up of glass and metal, however the location of entrance doors from Deansgate differs from shop to shop.
- 2.6. The rear of the shops is more functional, as this elevation was not designed to be viewed, other than from the warehouse good yard and warehouse to the rear. It is also red brick, likely a cheaper version of that used along Deansgate.
- 2.7. Although not in a Conservation Area, the Warehouse and Deansgate Terrace provide views from and into the Peter Street Conservation Area located directly to the north. The site is also located directly east of the Castlefield Conservation Area, which borders the Deansgate Terrace to the west.
- 2.8. Significant works were undertaken to the terrace in 2000, which includes a raised concrete walkway to the rear of the shops, up a set of stairs from Great Bridgewater Street, and punched through the terrace to the south of 249 Deansgate. This provided access from the rear to the Deansgate south terrace upper floors.
- 2.9. Internally, the units were stripped back in the year 2000 when the wider site was previously redeveloped. As part of these works, the units were retained as retail and active commercial uses, as per their original use, with offices and storage space occupying the upper floors of the Deansgate Terrace.

- 2.10. Although all original sash windows and timber shopfronts were replaced in c.2000, their replacements were designed using the original spirit of the design and are of high aesthetic value and contribute to the understanding of the building and its original architectural design.
- 2.11. Although the exposed brickwork and fireplaces to each shop were originally covered with plaster, their exposure in c.2000 contributes to the simplicity of each shop unit. The remaining plastered ceilings to upper floors containing the original plaster finishes and mouldings to beams are of high significance.
- 2.12. The retained original iron entrance gates, and the retention of the open entrance way from Deansgate into the Great Northern Square is of high significance, and yields high historical, evidential, and communal value.
- 2.13. Modern additions, partition walls and staircases inserted as part of the c.2000 refurbishment of the Site are of no significance. These are proposed to be removed by this Application, which relates solely to shop numbers 237/239, 241, 243, 247, 249 and 283. These units do not have any specific elements of heritage significance within them, particularly in relation to the areas to be removed (modern stair only) and the ceiling voids are to be made good with an access hatch.

3. Planning Policy

Planning Framework

- 3.1. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states:

"If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."

- 3.2. This Section of the Report sets out the Development Plan, and any material considerations, that the proposed development would be determined against.

Local Development Plan

- 3.3. Within the context of Manchester, the Development Plan comprises the following documents which are relevant to this application:
- Manchester Core Strategy (2012);
 - Manchester Proposals Map (2012);
 - Saved Policies of the Manchester Unitary Development Plan (2005); and
 - Places for Everyone (2024).

Manchester Core Strategy

- 3.4. The Core Strategy was adopted on 12 July 2012. It sets the overall strategic direction for planning in Manchester over the plan period from 2012 to 2027. The policies of the Core Strategy establish where major development and other forms of investment should be to be sustainable, meet local needs and take full advantage of opportunities.
- 3.5. **Policy SP1: Spatial Principles** says that the Regional Centre will be the focus for high quality city living, economic and commercial development, retail, leisure, and cultural activity. All development in this area must have regard for the character of regeneration areas and improving access to the river valleys (the Irk, Medlock and Mersey) and city parks are important.
- 3.6. **Policy EC1: Employment and Economic Growth** in Manchester refers to the regional centre being a key location for major employment growth and references the aim to improve the portfolio of employment premises, by providing a range of employment sites and premises for small, medium, and large businesses.

- 3.7. **Policy CC1: Primary Economic Development Focus:** identifies the City Centre and Fringe as a strategic economic location where offices and high-quality accommodation types will be supported to boost investment by local, national, and international businesses. This includes high density buildings and commercial led mixed use schemes. The site is located within The Corridor which has been identified as a focus for economic growth and high-density offices. The policy also notes development uses that support the development of a vibrant employment location attractive to businesses, employees, and visitors to the City Centre, and with a more intensive use of employment land, will be supported.
- 3.8. **Policy CC8: Change and Renewal** states that developments which significantly contribute to the City Centre's role in providing employment and promoting retail growth and improving accessibility and legibility of the Centre will generally be supported. New developments must use opportunities to improve the City Centre in terms of character and function. Schemes that contribute to the improvement of environmental, social, or economic well-being of the city will also be encouraged.
- 3.9. **Policy CC9: Design and Heritage** states that the design of new buildings should be of the highest standard in appearance and function. Development should preserve or enhance identified heritage assets. Though high density and mixed-use development is supported in the City Centre, developments must address design challenges and ensure form and function of buildings complement each other. They should contribute to a range of uses and an integrated physical environment.
- 3.10. **Policy EN3: Heritage** notes development that takes advantage of distinct historic and heritage features of its neighbourhood will be supported. New developments must preserve, and where possible enhance the historic environment, character, setting and accessibility of listed buildings, 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.

Saved Policies of the Unitary Development Plan

- 3.11. The Unitary Development Plan was adopted in July 1995. Coinciding with the adoption of the Core Strategy in 2012 significant proportions of the UDP have been replaced, however, several policies were saved on 11 July 2012 and remain extant.

Places for Everyone Plan

- 3.12. Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document (PfE) is a long-term plan of nine Greater Manchester districts (Stockport opted out of the Plan in 2020) for new homes, jobs, and sustainable growth, proposed to cover the period from 2022 to 2039. The Planning Inspector's recommendations for PfE are currently being considered by the nine councils, after which the regional planning policy document will be adopted on 21 March 2024.
- 3.13. **Policy JP-S 1 (Sustainable Development)** seeks to encourage developments to maximise economic, social and environmental benefits and highlights that previously developed (brownfield) land will be prioritised to meet development needs.

- 3.14. **Policy JP-J1 (Supporting Long-term Economic Growth)** seeks to enable a thriving, inclusive and productive economy in Greater Manchester. Notably, maximising potential expanding City Centre, which will be further strengthened as the most significant economic location in the UK outside London, providing a high concentration of jobs that are highly accessible from across Greater Manchester and beyond.

Material Considerations

- 3.15. The following published policy, executive reports and guidance documents are relevant material considerations:
- National Planning Policy and Guidance
 - National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024
 - National Design Guide
 - Historic England Advice Notes

National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (last updated in December 2024)

- 3.16. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The NPPF introduces a 'presumption' in favour of sustainable development and supports proposals that are in accordance with policies in an up-to-date Development Plan.
- 3.17. The purpose of the planning system is to achieve sustainable development. Paragraph 8 of the NPPF states that to achieve this, there are three overarching objectives, which need to be pursued mutually. Firstly, the economic role should contribute to sustainable development by building a strong, responsive, and competitive economy and ensuring enough and right type of development to support growth. Secondly, the social role is required to support communities by creating a high-quality built environment with accessible local services to reflect the needs of the community. Lastly, the environmental role should protect and enhance the natural, built, and historic environment.
- 3.18. Paragraph 10 of the NPPF outlines that, sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, with a presumption in favour of sustainable development at the heart of the Framework. Paragraph 11 states that development proposals should be approved without delay if they align with an up-to-date development plan. If plans are outdated or irrelevant, permission should be granted unless refusal is clearly justified by policies protecting significant assets in this Framework, or if adverse impacts significantly outweigh benefits when assessed against the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

- 3.19. Section 6 (paragraphs 85 to 89) is titled 'Building a strong, competitive economy'. It emphasises the Government's commitment to support economic growth, including that the planning system should help create conditions in which businesses can thrive. Local planning authorities should support existing business sectors, and foster innovation in these sectors to address the challenges of the future including being flexible enough to accommodate new and flexible working practices. In addition, local planning authorities should make provision for clusters of creative and digital industries, and for storage and distribution operations in suitably accessible locations.
- 3.20. Section 12 (paragraphs 131 to 141) is titled 'Achieving well-designed places' emphasises the importance of good design in creating sustainable and beautiful places. It encourages clear design visions in plans, community engagement in design policies, and the use of design guides and codes based on national design principles. Poorly designed development should be refused. It states that the planning process is fundamental to creating high-quality buildings and places. Good design is key to sustainable development and contributes to creating better places in which to live and work.
- 3.21. Section 16 (paragraphs 202 to 221) is titled 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' and stresses the importance of conserving heritage assets, ranging from locally significant buildings to internationally recognized World Heritage Sites. It calls for plans to include positive strategies for conservation and enjoyment of these irreplaceable resources, considering their social, cultural, economic, and environmental benefits. When assessing development proposals, local planning authorities should require applicants to demonstrate an understanding of the significance of affected heritage assets and their setting. Any harm to designated heritage assets should be justified, with substantial harm or loss requiring exceptional circumstances.
- 3.22. 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.'
- 3.23. Paragraph 215 states that: 'Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.'
- 3.24. Paragraph 218 continues 'Local planning authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible.'

4. Assessment of Impact

- 4.1. The assessment of potential impact on the heritage assets should consider both the potential physical impact of changes to the asset itself, and any potential visual impacts because of the proposals upon the setting and appearance of surrounding heritage assets and conservation areas.
- 4.2. For the purposes of describing the impact of the Proposed Development upon certain aspects of the existing building fabric, graded terminology is used as follows:
- **Beneficial:** When the Proposed Development will result in a positive change or enhancement of the heritage asset.
 - **Neutral:** When the Proposed Development will not affect the heritage significance of any of the Listed fabric, either positively, or negatively.
 - **Adverse:** Where the Proposed Development would result in a negative impact upon the fabric or character of the heritage asset.
- 4.3. The proposals are for the removal of a modern staircase from six commercial units across Deansgate Terrace, numbers 237/239, 241, 243, 247, 249 and 283. The staircases to be removed are modern additions to the units and, as such, there is no impact on the heritage significance. The infilling of the space between floors will have a minor adverse effect given the physical intervention required, however, these works are minor in scale, and reversible. The infill works will be delivered using a consistent finish to the existing ceiling through timber joists and plaster and could be easily removed if needed to reinstate the stair. An access hatch will be installed to provide access between the ground and upper floors.
- 4.4. The effects of the development proposals will be physical in nature only and will not affect any visual interest associated with the listing, save for bringing any currently vacant units back into use. Identical works have been approved as part of other units within the Deansgate Terrace (LPA Reference 119285/LO/2018).

5. Policy Assessment

- 5.1. The NPPF stresses that ‘great weight’ should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets (NPPF paragraph 199), emphasising the need to avoid substantial harm, in terms of demolition, alteration or the compromise of an asset’s setting.
- 5.2. The Proposed Development will have a direct impact on a designated heritage asset, through alteration and development within its demise.
- 5.3. In accordance with the requirements of the NPPF, the significance of the designated heritage assets which have the potential to be affected by the application proposals have been described within the Heritage Statement. The impact on this significance has been assessed.
- 5.4. It has been concluded that the proposal will result in very minor ‘less than substantial harm’ to the listed building, meaning that Paragraph 215 of the NPPF applies, as set out in Section 3 of this Statement.
- 5.5. The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) defines ‘public benefits’ as follows:

“Public benefits may follow from many developments and could be anything that delivers economic, social, or environmental progress as described in the National Planning Policy Framework. Public benefits should flow from the Proposed Development. They should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large and should not just be a private benefit. However, benefits do not always have to be visible or accessible to the public to be genuine public benefits.”

- 5.6. Public benefits may also include heritage benefits, such as:
 - sustaining or enhancing the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting; and
 - reducing or removing risks to a heritage asset.
- 5.7. The Proposed Development will result in a few public benefits, and these are summarised as follows:

Economic Benefits

- There is a finite amount of land available within Manchester City Centre and the proposals positively reconfigure vacant shop units to bring them back into use.
- Providing upgraded spaces for businesses to operate from the City Centre, enabling job creation and retention. Existing businesses located elsewhere in Great Northern will be able to occupy the reworked spaces.

Environmental Benefits

- Improving visual amenity of the site by bringing a vacant unit back into reuse.

Social and Cultural Benefits

- Continued job creation at a local level for Manchester residents.
- Securing the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long-term conservation.

5.8. It is therefore concluded that these public benefits outweigh the minor ‘less than substantial harm’ caused to the listed building. The Proposed Development therefore accords with national planning policy.

5.9. In accordance with Paragraph 210, there are three key factors when determining planning applications concerning the historic environment, meaning that heritage assets should be conserved, contribute to sustainable communities, and enhance local character. These are considered below the Proposed Development:

- The Proposed Development will sustain the significance of the identified heritage asset.
- The Proposed Development will not affect the positive contribution that the heritage assets can make to the community.
- The Proposed Development will make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

5.10. The Proposed Development is also in full compliance with MCC’s Core Strategy Policy EN3 (preserving and enhancing the historic environment) and Saved UPD Policies Citywide Development Control Policies DC18.1 (Conservation Areas) and DC19.1 (Listed Buildings).

5.11. The proposals are fully in accordance with national and local planning policy.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1. The Proposed Development consists of the sensitive refurbishment of part of the Grade II listed Deansgate Terrace, to allow the removal of modern stair internally, to ultimately ensure continued use.
- 6.2. In accordance with the requirements of the NPPF, the significance of the designated heritage asset which will be impacted has been described within this Heritage Statement. The impact on this significance has been assessed. It has been concluded that this will result in some harm to the listed building, albeit it is considered as very minor 'less than substantial harm', and in proportion with the need to ensure the commercial uses can remain active. As set out, this very minor 'less than substantial harm' is outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal.
- 6.3. The proposed stair removal, while causing minor and reversible physical alterations, significantly contributes to the economic vitality of the Deansgate Terrace and Manchester City Centre by enabling the viable reuse of vacant units, promoting job creation and retention, and enhancing the visual appeal of the area. These public benefits, coupled with the minimal and reversible nature of the intervention, clearly outweigh the minor harm, aligning with the principles of sustainable development and heritage conservation outlined in the NPPF. The proposal therefore is in accordance with national and local policy when considered as a whole.



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