



DESIGN, ACCESS & HERITAGE STATEMENT

Rev.A – AET – 11.02.25 – Options analysis for the treatment of the damp and evaluation of the relative impacts of these options on the heritage asset added.

This document accompanies a full planning and listed building application for the installation of air conditioning condensers and new damp proofing to the basement of a Grade II listed building.

Location: 74 King Street, Manchester M2 4NJ.

This Design, Access and Heritage Statement, has been prepared by MWE Architects LLP.

DESIGN, ACCESS & HERITAGE STATEMENT

1. Introduction

This Design, Access and Heritage Statement supports an application for the installation of air conditioning condensers and new damp proofing to the basement of a Grade II listed building at 74 King Street, Manchester.

The property is located within the St. Ann's Square Conservation Area, known for its historical and architectural significance reflecting Manchester's commercial heritage. King Street is characterized by grand Victorian and Edwardian buildings in neoclassical, Baroque, and Renaissance revival styles, featuring high-quality stone and brick facades.

The application site itself is a four-storey Flemish Renaissance-style building with an attic and basement, constructed circa 1900 in terracotta and stone. It includes large Flemish gables, bay windows, and intricate ornamentation. The building occupies a corner site with commercial entrances on King Street and Cross Street, and separate residential access. A shared rear lightwell accommodates existing building services, including air conditioning condensers.

The building's Grade II listing underlines its architectural significance and its group value within the conservation area. This proposal seeks to sensitively integrate new services and address ongoing damp problems while preserving the building's historic fabric in compliance with national (NPPF, 2024) and local policy requirements.

2. The Proposals

Air Conditioning Condensers

- Existing Condensers: Four air conditioning condensers, currently located on a metal gangway in the shared rear lightwell, are proposed to be replaced with five smaller, more efficient units.
- Positioning: The new condensers will occupy the same area to ensure minimal visual and physical impact, improving overall system performance.
- Noise & Efficiency: The replacement units have been chosen for compact design, low noise output, and energy efficiency. A Noise Report accompanies this application, concluding that the sound level of the proposed AC units represents a low impact, compliant with Local Planning Authority criteria.
- Wall Penetrations: Two small penetrations through the external wall of the lightwell at ground-floor level will accommodate mechanical ventilation louvres, powder-coated to complement the cream-glazed brickwork.



Damp Proofing Strategy

The basement has tested positive for damp, necessitating the introduction of a specialist damp proofing system. The proposed solution is a proprietary cavity drainage system, designed to manage water ingress while preserving the historic integrity of the Grade II listed building. Key elements include:

1. Careful Removal of Existing Wall Linings: The inside face of the external walls will be exposed.
2. Proprietary Tanking (Visqueen):
 - o Anti-lime paint applied to the walls to prevent alkali leaching.
 - o Visqueen CM8 membrane installed, creating an impermeable barrier.
 - o A water channel at the base of the wall, connecting to a sump and pump system. This directs any water ingress to the rear lightwell via existing drainage connections.
3. Floor Treatment:
 - o Anti-lime paint on the existing concrete slab.
 - o CM20 membrane over the floor.
 - o 75mm fibre-reinforced screed, followed by a floating timber floor (total 170mm build-up).
4. Lift Door Adjustment: The lift door will be raised by 170mm to accommodate the new floor height and ensure seamless access.

This approach mitigates moisture ingress while minimizing harm to the historic fabric. It is reversible, should future conservation strategies require alterations.

3. Options Analysis for Damp Treatment

While the chosen cavity drainage system is the proposed solution, alternative methods were considered and evaluated for impact on the historic building:

1. Chemical Injection DPC
 - o Advantages: Less visible alteration to interior finishes if successfully installed; can be carried out entirely from inside.
 - o Disadvantages: Effectiveness can be inconsistent in older masonry with complex construction. Injected chemicals may risk altering or damaging the terracotta/stone fabric if not meticulously controlled. Long-term maintenance and performance can be uncertain.
2. External Tanking / Waterproofing
 - o Advantages: In some cases, external tanking can protect masonry from external moisture without altering internal finishes.
 - o Disadvantages: Would require interventions to the exterior of the Grade II listed structure or potentially excavating around the foundations. This could



significantly disturb the historic external elevations, street setting, and potentially undermine the building's footings.

3. Cavity Drainage System (Proposed)

- o Advantages:
 - Reversible and minimally intrusive to historic fabric once internal linings are carefully removed.
 - Uses a mechanical pump system to evacuate water, offering effective long-term management of damp.
 - Preserves the external appearance of the building, avoiding changes to the listed façade.
- o Disadvantages: Requires ongoing maintenance of the sump and pump; a small loss of internal floor space due to the build-up.

Conclusion of Options Analysis:

The cavity drainage system (Option 3) provides the most balanced approach, delivering effective damp proofing while minimizing irreversible changes to the building's historic fabric. It avoids significant disturbance to the exterior (which contributes to the building's special interest) and is the preferred method to ensure both preservation and functionality.

4. Policy Context and Heritage Impact

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024)

- Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment (Paragraphs 197–210):
The NPPF highlights that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource. Proposals that could affect a heritage asset must preserve or enhance its special character.
 - o The air conditioning condensers are positioned in the rear lightwell, ensuring minimal visual impact on the building's principal elevations.
 - o The damp proofing approach is reversible and internally focused, avoiding harm to the exterior architectural features.
- Less than Substantial Harm and Public Benefits (Paragraph 204):
Where any harm is considered less than substantial, it should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. In this case:
 - o The works secure the long-term integrity and continued viable use of a Grade II listed commercial building, benefitting the wider conservation area by ensuring the building remains in an active and well-maintained condition.
- Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change and Flooding (Paragraphs 152–160):
 - o The upgrade to more efficient condensers supports national objectives for sustainable development.
 - o The cavity drainage system proactively addresses basement damp issues, safeguarding the heritage asset from ongoing or future water damage.



Local Planning Policy

- Manchester Core Strategy & St. Ann's Square Conservation Area Guidance: Local policies emphasize the preservation or enhancement of the city's heritage assets. Development proposals in conservation areas or affecting listed buildings must ensure that significance is not compromised by alterations.
 - o Locating the new AC condensers within the existing service zone (rear lightwell) ensures compatibility with local design and heritage guidelines, which promote minimal disruption to the character of listed buildings.
 - o The chosen damp proofing system aligns with conservation principles by focusing on internal interventions, preserving the historic elevations that contribute to the building's significance within the conservation area.

5. Assessment of Heritage Impact

1. Physical Impact

- o External Elevations: No significant alteration is proposed, with the exception of two small ventilation louvres in the rear lightwell. The building's principal façades, detailing, and ornamental features remain unaffected.
- o Interior Fabric: Damp-proofing measures occur behind existing wall linings, designed for reversibility and minimum disruption to original masonry.

2. Visual Impact

- o The new air conditioning units are contained within an area already used for building services. Any visual impact is limited to the internal courtyard of the lightwell, with no adverse effect on the street frontage or the public realm.
- o Louvres are colour-matched and minimally sized, harmonizing with the existing cream-glazed brickwork.

3. Noise and Disturbance

- o A Noise Report confirms the proposed equipment will not exceed acceptable noise thresholds, thus preserving the amenity of occupants and the surrounding environment.
- o Reduced mechanical noise output compared to older units further mitigates potential disturbance.

Overall, the proposals deliver necessary maintenance and modernization without undermining the building's listed status or the special character of the St. Ann's Square Conservation Area.

6. Conclusion

The proposed works at 74 King Street, Manchester represent a carefully considered and policy-compliant approach to:

- Upgrading essential building services (air conditioning)
- Addressing basement damp issues with a cavity drainage system

- Preserving and enhancing the historic and architectural significance of this Grade II listed property

Through an options analysis, the chosen cavity drainage system has been demonstrated to be the least intrusive and most effective solution for damp management, ensuring reversibility and preservation of the building's fabric. The replacement condensers are smaller, more efficient, and positioned to minimize visual and physical impacts on the listed structure.

In alignment with NPPF (2024) and local planning policies, the proposals:

- Conserve the historic and architectural value of the asset by limiting changes to non-prominent areas and using reversible interventions.
- Enhance the building's long-term sustainability, ensuring it continues to serve a viable commercial function in the heart of Manchester.
- Fulfill broader environmental goals by selecting energy-efficient equipment and mitigating damp-related deterioration.

The accompanying Noise Report confirms low impact from the new AC units, satisfying Local Planning Authority criteria. Collectively, these works will secure the building's future, safeguard its heritage significance, and maintain the character of the St. Ann's Square Conservation Area.