Claremont

ARKWRIGHT

PARSONAGE GARDENS • MANCHESTER



Arkwright House

Design & Heritage statement

November 2024

Design statement

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This Design & Access statement has been prepared by Claremont on behalf of Hillcrest for Arkwright House, Parsonage Gardens, Manchester.

The proposed works are to create an inviting journey throughout the building, from the external entrance and wayfinding through the reception and common areas, bringing the look and feel in line with the original building style and design intent. We want to highlight the building's history and architectural features.

In this document we have shown some historical images as well as the current fitout proposals to preserve & enhance the historic character of the building. Currently the main entrance is not clear with multiple archways and our aim is to retain the visual consistency and use lighting, planting & signage to highlight the entrance.

Internally, we want to provide a welcoming elegant hotel style reception area that reflects the neoclassical & art deco styling and provides an aesthetically pleasing and functional space with a variety of seating areas and coffee facilities. This follows through from the reception with wayfinding guiding you through the lift/stair lobbies towards the wellness suite, all of which are to have a consistent theme and colour palette which complements existing features such as the tiled staircase.

Following the HPA guidelines, we have put together the following document with our proposals, alongside the attached drawings and a spreadsheet to confirm approvals required.

Within our proposals, We are looking to minimise works to the original building fabric so all partition and curtain fixings are designed to be built along beam lines and fixings to the underside of existing structure will be using agreed fixing methods. New feature light fixtures will use existing cable run locations.

External relocation of signage & lighting and new planters are subject to a full planning application which is being submitted for consideration alongside the Listed Building Application.

These proposals are to improve the public face of the building, and ultimately to make it more lettable for new tenants as well as giving it longevity of design, maintaining the character and quality of this important building.



Heritage statement

Introduction

This statement is submitted to Manchester City Council (MCC) on behalf of Hillcrest Ltd to support the Listed building & planning application for the works to the ground floor, core areas and basement.

The existing building is Grade II listed and is presently in office use. The redevelopment of -the entrance and ground floor of the building will create a high status entrance befitting a building of this quality. These proposals do no affect the current accessibility access of the site, internally or externally.

This statement sets out how the proposal accords with all tiers of policy and in particular how the proposed works to a listed building are appropriate following Government guidance given in Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework para.196 taking into account:

(a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;

(b) the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;

(c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and

(d) opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

The proposals are viewed to have a minor negative impact on the Grade II listed asset due to limited impact on floorplans and historic fabric (i.e. fixings), which would be outweighed by the benefits of the scheme to bring more occupants to be building.

The improvements to the visitor journey and enhancement of the entrance will take the opportunity to enhance the special significance and improve the appearance of the Grade II listed asset.

In these proposals, we set out the history and importance of Arkwright, including materials and areas of special interest. The existing building is use as office spaces, and our proposals set out to improve the quality of available facilities and encourage new life to the space.

We have refined the scheme to enhance the architectural details and improve the areas within scope with minimal impact on the key areas. We have also proposed where possible works covered under the HPA and associated Confirmatory agreement.

Our aim is to sustain and enhance the special interest of this Grade II listed building and the contribution of its setting as well as upgrading the facilities and repairing where required. This will ensure that the building can continue in its use as an office, securing future tenants and occupiers.

Over the years, the site has been subject to a number of changes and planning applications. This application sees changes to some of that work in order to create a more appropriate and up to date scheme.

Summary of Historic Significance

Information taken from LBHPA and Certificate of Lawfulness

The following points can be summarised from the Heritage Statement in relation to the history and heritage significance of Arkwright House:

Arkwright House was designed by Harry S Fairhurst in 1927 as the Headquarters for the English Sewing Cotton Company and completed in 1929. Arkwright House was statutorily Listed in March 1982 as Grade II and is located within the Parsonage Gardens Conservation Area.

Its significance can be classified as follows: in terms of aesthetic or architectural significance – its design and appearance, and specifically the grand neo-classical architectural style of the building as influenced by Art Deco ideas in the inter-war period. This is expressed in the overall scale and massing of the building, the nature of its elevations and its roof forms including dormers and tall chimneys, its use of Portland Stone, the design and materiality of its fenestration, the symmetry of its main elevation to, the use of classical detail, etc. It is also found in its position in relation to Parsonage Gardens and neighbouring buildings. Arkwright House powerfully defines the southern side of Parsonage Gardens, and this is perhaps the most important aspect of its aesthetic significance.

Secondly, the significance can be defined in terms of evidential or historic significance. The place the building has in the overall development of this part of Manchester and its role in inter-war change in the area. The development is associated with a noted architect and with a significant north-western industrial company.

The heritage significance of Arkwright House is not uniform in the building. It lies principally in in main elevation to Parsonage Gardens, where the contribution to the overall Parsonage Gardens Conservation Area is most clearly seen.

Following this, the elevations to St Mary's Parsonage and Southgate have considerable quality and assist in extending the visual influence of this very large building into the streets around Parsonage Gardens. It is in these elevations where the original architectural intention of the architect is most clearly expressed is most intact, and where it is most perceptible.

Internally the building retains some features from its original design. Some of the common areas retain a certain amount of Art Deco detailing, but the building has been substantially altered and is now largely plain and recent in character. The floor slab around the cores is not significant in its own right. The report notes that the present fully open nature of each office floor of Arkwright House is very unlikely to have been its original condition. Office buildings of the period of its construction may have had some large open office areas (for clerks or typing pods) but the nature of office work at the time means that it is highly likely that the floor was not completely open. Fully open-plan offices are a feature of a much later, post WWII period. An original plan of the second floor (contained within the Heritage Statement) shows a corridor running centrally along part of the building and into each of the wings. Such a corridor would have had no purpose were it not to facilitate access to (at least partially) sub-divided offices. Ultimately, the space as designed and as now found was designed to be flexible space, to suit the ongoing needs of office use, whether sub-divided or left open.

In light of the evidence above, the current 'openness' of the floors is not therefore regarded as being of significance.

The rear of the building was when built, purely utilitarian in design and character. The lightwells have now been filled in as part of the refurbishment works from 2015-2017.

In summary, the key importance of Arkwright House lies in its powerful presence in the Conservation Area and the quality of its main elevations to Parsonage Gardens, St Mary's Parsonage and Southgate. Its rear parts and its roof have negligible architectural and historic interest. Internally the building retains some features from its original design.

Site & surroundings

Arkwright House is within the Parsonage Gardens conservation area. This was designated in June 1985 and its boundaries are Blackfriars St, Deansgate, Bridge St & ST Mary's Parsonage.

Arkwright House is a Grade II listed building and was constructed in 1929. The front elevation of Arkwright House fronts into Parsonage Gardens, an attractive and rare piece of outdoor greenspace within the city centre. The site is set within an area containing buildings of a similar height and scale mainly in office use although there are some residential retail and leisure uses within the vicinity.

The front and sides of the building is clad in white Portland stone and has impressive 3 storey Corinthian pilasters. The main facade facing Parsonage Gardens is of high quality.

The Parsonage Gardens Conservation Area contains a number of large and impressive buildings. Most buildings are in orange-red brick or terracotta.

The front and side elevations are the attractive frontages. The rear elevation is plain. There is a considerable difference in attractiveness between the rear facade and the front/side facades.

The gardens are part of the Strategic Regeneration Framework set out in August 2020 by KPF and the proposals we are setting forward for Arkwright House would improve the relationship between the building and the gardens to aid the sense of place as defined in the Guide to Development in Manchester.

The distinct character and style of Arkwright already reflects its intended function as an office building and these proposals are to enhance this purpose by making it more attractive to potential tenants which will also make a positive contribution to local character & distinctiveness [NPPF.16, 203 (c)].



Scope

External scope:

External signage & lighting:

- Gas style lamps to be relocated to main entrance archways utilizing existing penetrations and making good where required to original building fabric.
- Relocation of existing Arkwright plaque signs to either side of main entrance arch into previous locations utilizing existing penetrations and making good where required.
- Low impact as using existing locations where possible and the relocation of both signage & lighting will help to make a clearer entrance route into the building and enhance the special significance and improve the appearance of the Grade II listed asset.

Planting:

- Freestanding planters to be added either side of main entrance, not obstructing any significant architectural details, no impact to heritage assets. The final specification of the planting will be selected to best suit the location and maintained by the building management.

Fire escape

- Existing inner glass modern doors to be replaced with solid panelled outward opening doors in keeping with existing outer doors. Existing outer bifold doors to be retained and only closed at night due to fire regulations. In removal of the modern glass doors this will ensure that the side doors are not considered an entrance and the new doors being in keeping with the outer doors will retain the overall appearance. Existing fixings will be used where possible, with any redundant being made good in keeping with original fabric.

Vestibule

- New side door to east end of modern glass entrance lobby (installed 2008) to allow for access directly into reception, mirroring the existing door at the west end of the vestibule. This allows for the central sliding doors to be locked off in inclement weather to retain heat in the reception area, whilst still allowing clear accessible routes into reception. No impact to heritage assets.
- Replace existing barrier matting in existing matwell, no impact on heritage assets, provides a new mat with colour in keeping for walkoff area before entering entrance area.
- Clean existing lighting, walls & ceiling, no heritage impact, makes entrance area more welcoming and fresher.
- The pavement lights are not included in this submission as they are being reviewed on site for a suitable solution due to the quantity and current condition, but where possible will be repaired sensitively in keeping with the original intent, with the light fittings located in the basement below reinstated.

Scope

Reception scope:

Proposed reception works are to bring the look & feel in keeping with the age and style of the existing building intent as well as making it a more welcoming and warmer space for visitors to use:

- New porcelain tiled floor to reception and lobbies with inset carpet in lift lobbies and under seating areas. This will replace the current floor tile which is not original and will be designed with underfloor heating to aid the functionality of this area. This will not affect any heritage assets and care will be taken around skirtings to retain and repair where required.
- New reception desk provides a welcoming face. To sit on top of the new floor with power cable routes down through into the basement so to avoid chasing out walls.
- New loose soft seating and freestanding planting with loose rugs to lounge areas
- Carefully remove existing seating alcoves to open up the space and make it more inviting. Any fixings into the existing fabric will be repaired and a new coffee point & banquette seating areas to be in keeping with new look & feel. These include heaters built in underneath the seats and will have minimal fixings into the fabric. The existing coffee machine will be reinstated using existing pipework routes so no change to the building fabric.
- New feature lighting in existing locations, utilizing existing penetrations and making good where required to original building fabric.
- Add coffered concealed LED lighting, this will provide more light in the reception area and accent ceiling architectural detail. A slimline channel will be created to hold the concealed LED strip, attached as per drawing detail. Medium impact with fixings but a high impact impression.
- Removing the panelling & cladding to the reception to reveal the original walls & features, we will make good and then create some arched panel /mirrored detail to walls with wall lighting to pick up on the shape of the external windows and reflect back the gardens. These will be attached using discrete fixings with the minimal depth to limit impact on plasterwork.
- Metal fretwork dividers & signage/logo sprayed in RAL 1036 Brass colour will be created at each end of the reception to bring detail & texture to the space, as well as reinforcing the Arkwright identity & brand. These have small discrete fixings as noted on drawing details with minimal impact.
- Wayfinding signage will be mounted at various points throughout the space, starting in the reception area with tenant names and directing through to facilities like the wellbeing suite. These will be made to match the logo with the same discrete fixings.
- We will retain the existing fan convector units to each side of the reception area and install an additional heater into the bespoke reception desk. In addition we propose to install electric under floor heating to the central area of the reception under the new tiled finish with cabling through the floor to the desk position. There is an option to also install an overdoor Air Curtain to the Existing glass sliding Automatic Doors (Electric). With a 'Goal Post' Mounting cabled through floor controller at the Reception Desk. This will be finished to match existing door controls.
- Voile Curtains around the existing modern glass front entrance to soften the space and make more inviting. These will be attached using a fixing detail to the underside of the structural beam, as agreed in the HPA and used for partitions elsewhere to minimise impact to existing fabric.
- All walls, ceilings, columns and woodwork throughout will be painted with breathable paint as noted in the finishes schedule and on drawings. The columns will be painted in 2 tone paint to add a painted panel type detail whilst still retaining the existing features.
- In the lift lobbies, there will be future locations for Artwork on each floor by local artists noted on drawing GF300. Fixings for this will be discrete and minimal. The final brief for the art is still to be finalised, but based on the building, history & surroundings in abstract form.

Scope

Wellness suite scope

- To open this space up, we propose to demolish the existing partitions that currently divide the space including the MF ceiling to expose the base build raft detail & make good original beams and ceiling details. The building managers office will be retained as per existing.
- In addition, the proposal is to reduce height of the wall on the ramp to make more inviting & connected to reception. This new half height wall will be retained to with a new topcap detail and clad in tiles as a feature linking it to the central feature staircases.
- New partitions will be built on the on beam line to create a treatment room & gym space, including folding wall (see options in detail) to allow this space to be opened up for events as a multi use space. The partition walls are in line with the HPA recommendations for positioning and will utilize the same fixing detail.
- The wall between the ground floor tenant and the new wellness suite will be upgraded to ensure a fire & acoustic separation between the spaces. This is detailed out on drawing GF 102 including the makeup of the partition from an acoustic & fire perspective.
- The existing fresh air & mechanical systems will stripped back and new ductwork and extract systems for the newly created wellness suite, providing a new extract system to the lounge, gym, shower & treatment rooms, all routed through existing service spines and utilizing existing external louvre above the car park roller door on the rear elevation so no visual change to the external. The units will all be located within the existing ceiling rafts so no visual change.
- The lounge space will include a coffee bar with hot water tap & fridges with design to follow on from the reception area. It will also have freestanding soft seating, storage and rugs to provide a welcoming space.
- The new gym space will have built in storage for loose gym equipment, and include a Flotex flooring on the existing raised access floor in a wood effect print for a hardwearing and practical flooring suitable for both gym and lounge use.
- The new treatment room is designed to be multi use and can also accommodate faith/wellbeing and first aid function. Internally it will have a unit with sink, fridge and space to store prayer mats, as well as we as a cardinal indicator/directional signage. There is a changing screen and loose furniture, with floor lamps to create a cozier feel alongside the darker colour palette.
- The existing kitchen area will be converted into new showers including a vanity area and towel service. The existing kitchen units are to be reused in the new facility in the basement. This space will retain the existing modern MF ceiling, redecorated with suitable paint and the layout allows for access to the existing DB boards etc. The new partitions will be to the underside of the MF so not affecting any existing building fabric.
- Throughout the suite, voile style curtains will be to all windows and within the gym space to screen externally and help soften. The fixing detail will be to the underside of the structural beam, fixing method as previously noted
- All walls, ceilings, columns and woodwork throughout will be painted with breathable paint as noted in the finishes schedule and on drawings. The columns will be painted in 2 tone paint to add a painted panel type detail whilst still retaining the existing features.
- Wayfinding signage continuing the reception style will be mounted at various points throughout the space. These will be made to match the logo with the same discrete fixings.

Scope

Cores scope

- This includes all core areas on the floors from the basement up to 7th floor. This has been shown as a typical design which will be followed throughout. The original lobby area with the staircase and 2 lifts is to have redecoration, signage & artwork only. The modern extended lobby with the single lift and WCs is to be upgraded to have a similar look & feel to the original space.
- The walls will be redecorated in breathable paint with woodwork painted as per finished schedules. There is existing panelling in the original lobby area which will be replicated in the new lobby by the WC's, as this the newer part of the building so no impact on the original building fabric.
- The lobby doors into the demise areas will be replaced to match throughout, these are all newer areas and not original features, and will utilise existing fixings where possible to minimise impact to woodwork. Subject to building control, there will be new glazed doors & side panels into the demises from the north side of the cores on levels 3, 4, 5 & 6, with a lobby door on hold backs to comply with fire regulations.
- The existing cast iron metalwork on balustrade will be repainted with the top bronze/brass handrail to be polished. Any recent/modern signage will be removed and made good.
- The existing tiled floor will be retained throughout the upper floors with a new inset rug on landings to accent the lift areas to aid wayfinding. As this is not original flooring then no impact to original fabric.
- The staircase existing terrazzo flooring & wall tiling is not to be altered or touched in any way as this is a key feature.
- In the lift lobbies, inset into the panelled areas there will be future locations for Artwork on each floor by local artists noted on drawing 1-6F300. Fixings for this will be discrete and minimal. The final brief for the art is still to be finalised, but based on the building, history & surroundings in abstract form, following on from the reception pieces.
- Wayfinding signage continuing the reception style will be mounted at various points throughout the space. These will be made to match the logo with the same discrete fixings.
- The new floor numbers will be located between the lift doors on each floor, & new tenant signs to be in keeping with look & feel and the same discrete fixings as before.
- The existing light fittings under the stairs are to be re-lamped only as asbestos is present in this area.

Scope

WC scope:

- There is no proposed changes to the layouts of any of the WCs, but the aim is to bring the look & feel in line with the rest of the common areas and the style of the building for an improved experience throughout. These are all in the modern section of the building so no impact on any original building fabric.
- Generally retain existing wall tiles and cleaned. The existing taps are to be carefully removed and stored, the tiles behind removed and a new solid core panel to be installed and the taps reinstated. The existing grout is to be repaired and area made good.
- The areas are to have new decoration throughout including woodwork and radiators with colours to fit with the overall scheme.
- The artwork theme will be followed through with framed images on the walls.
- The existing mirrors will be replaced with brass effect and new wall lights in similar finish to complete the look.
- Replacement of flooring to ground floor WCs only to suite in with reception porcelain tiles. Upper floors to all retain existing flooring.

Basement scope:

To improve the facilities in the basement, making the journey in clearer with improved wayfinding.

- There will be a new staff breakout /kitchen built on new partition wall (retaining existing brickwork with new painted decoration only) The units will be relocated from the ground floor area and located on the new partition wall. This will have
- The route into the showers is to be redirected by blocking the existing gate and installing a new entrance in through the bike cage area which will have access control and mean the route is clearer.
- The existing showers are to be amended to make fewer cubicles which are larger to allow for changing space within each cubicle. A WC has also been added into this area, located for plumbing nearest the door. The existing heat recovery, supply & extract ventilation systems will be amended to suit the new layout
- The drying room will have the existing radiators replaced and a new drying cabinet installed within the space. The existing extract ventilation will be increased for improved air flow.
- In the lobby area, the floor levels will be made good and a new lockable storage cupboard built into the alcove.
- The shower area will have the radiators removed and the alcove extended and overclad so include a new vanity unit including towel pick up & laundry bins, hard wired hairdryers and a small sink with a mirror over. This sink will be serviced by amended existing domestic ho
- The lighting in the showers will be upgraded with re-lamed fittings in existing locations.
- Branding/wayfinding to be in keeping with the reception style, ensuring there is a clear signposted route for pedestrians, cyclists & drivers. This will include vinyl graphics to the external of the lobby areas, directing into the core entrances and the cycle entrance. There will also be core signage showing West or East for clarity along with floor/tenant signage by the stairs & lifts. This will all be fixed with discrete & minimal attachments to the walls for low impact to the building fabric.
- The existing cycle cages will be resprayed in black finish and a new entrance gate with access control added.
- Walls throughout the basement car park area will be repainted with a black lower half and white upper, ensuring the recommended precautions are taken where asbestos is present. The Lobbies and core areas will be repainted as noted in the Cores section.

Context & conclusion

Social and Economic Context

The proposed development will form part of the overall refurbishment of Arkwright House, providing a high-quality office development within an important listed building. The proposed works will make Arkwright House more lettable.

Consultation

Various discussions and correspondence were held in pre-application discussions with Paula Burbicka and Danielle Cooper from Manchester City Council from July 2024, plus a site visit with them on 8th August 2024.

Evaluation

The building has an impressive external façade to Parsonage Gardens however the visibility externally and internal appearance and layout at ground floor level need to be improved to provide a welcoming reception and visitor suite with suitable facilities for new occupiers.

The Grade II listed status of the building has been an important consideration in determining the proposed alterations. Much of the works will see previous alterations not in keeping removed, retaining and repairing the important and attractive architectural features to enhance the character of the building.

Design

The Original ground floor was not designed for use as a reception area and over the years this has been adapted with some unsympathetic alterations. No additional floorspace is proposed but making a better use of the space that is available, with a design scheme to highlight the architectural features.

The proposal alterations will see a new location for the reception desk and a variety of seating areas for visitors. The journey will continue through the ground floor lift lobbies with consistent colour palette through to a new Wellness suite including treatment room, lounge, gym & showers in a currently unused area of the ground floor. The lift/stair cores including the WCs on the upper floors will follow this consistent palette, with a more limited scope including decoration and signage.

The existing layout is fully accessible, and this will be maintained. The new proposals will also take into consideration neuro-diverse requirements in addition, particularly looking at wayfinding and signage.

Appearance

The external appearance will be maintained with minor changes to relocate signage & existing light features to highlight the entrance.

The internal works will see the replacement of historic schemes with new in keeping with the building to improve the appearance of the public spaces.

Conclusion

As this statement and associated information demonstrates, the proposed scheme has been thought through to address usage of the space including sustainable design, neurodiversity and accessibility. In encouraging new occupiers to Arkwright house, this scheme will help with the future regeneration of the area.



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