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HERITAGE STATEMENT

27 GUN STREET, ANCOATS

REVISION	-
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PROJECT REF.	2062

ARCHITECTURE + HERITAGE

AMAZON HOUSE • BRAZIL STREET
MANCHESTER • M1 3PW

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Image: Photograph of Gun Street elevation.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.0

INTRODUCTION

This Heritage Statement accompanies a planning application for the site of Blossom Motor Company, 27 Gun Street and Henry Street, Ancoats, Manchester. It has been produced in September 2024 by Atelier MB and its author is Laura Jessup, MA History and Theory of Architecture, PGCert. Conservation of the Historic Environment.



Image: Photograph of Blossom Motor Co, Henry Street, 1962, taken from Manchester Archives.

2.0 LOCATION + DESCRIPTION

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The site sits on Gun Street, also accessible from the parallel Henry Street. Gun Street is situated in Ancoats, on the north-east edge of Manchester City Centre, and is the first street running parallel with the thoroughfare of Great Ancoats Street. 27 Gun Street is within a larger block, with George Leigh Street running to the west and Blossom Street to the east.

The existing building is a vehicle garage consisting of a single-storey brick property under a pitched roof of corrugated metal, with roof lights. Access is through large doors from both Gun Street and Henry Street which are of a size large enough to allow for vehicles to enter. The entrance on Henry Street has a timber sliding door, fitted to the interior side. From above, the property can be seen as two adjoining spaces with the metal roof frame exposed. Walls are red brick with some areas of block work. It has been functioning as Blossom Street Motors since at least the 1940s and its form reflects this utilitarian use.

The building is not listed, but is within the Ancoats Conservation Area, designated in 1989.



Image: Map of Ancoats Conservation Area from MCC website, with site in orange.

3.0 HISTORY

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Image: Gun St. from Blossom St., 1901, from Manchester Archive.



Image: Map, 1922

CONSERVATION AREA

Ancoats is the former industrial quarter of Manchester which developed rapidly from semi-rural to industrial hub from the late 18th century onwards. Although primarily the home of the city's large-scale mills, it also housed a number of subsidiary and smaller industries including foundries, steel, glass, wire and machine works, workshops and warehouses, alongside swathes of workers housing—all being served by key transport routes. The area is globally recognised for its pivotal role in the Industrial Revolution, key developments including early use of steam power in mills and the completion of the Rochdale and Ashton canals.

When manufacturing subsequently declined in the later part of the 20th century, the area was left without a purpose and many buildings were abandoned and left to dereliction.

Ancoats has undergone substantial regeneration in the past 25 years, with refurbished and re-used historic buildings now sitting alongside extensive new build and public realm schemes. Despite some large losses to demolition, Ancoats retains its distinct post-industrial character with a network of canals, tight-knit streets, some large-scale mill complexes and the extensive use of red brick, slate, stone detailing and

industrial styled architecture. It was designated a Conservation Area in 1989 for its historical importance and its aesthetic and evidential character.

SITE

Mapping from 1851 shows that the site did not originally run straight through from Gun to Henry Street, with the front Gun St portion being one industrial use, and residential Henry St. side—see 1901 photograph.

The 1942 Goads plan identifies the Gun Street portion as a garage, and by 1958 the site is in a form close to that evident in 2024.

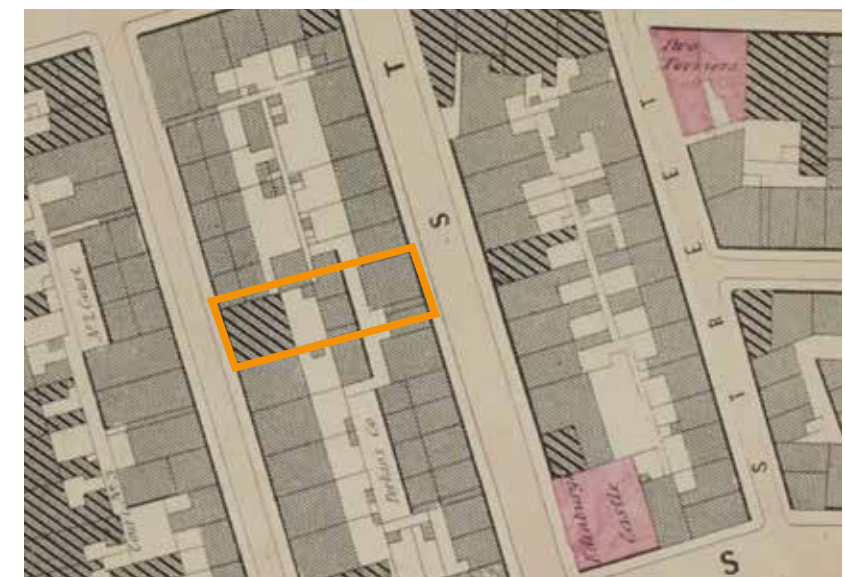


Image: Map, 1851, with site highlighted in orange, the thicker stripes indicate an industrial/commercial use, the thinner striped blocks represent residential use.



Image: Aerial image, 1927, taken from Manchester Archive.

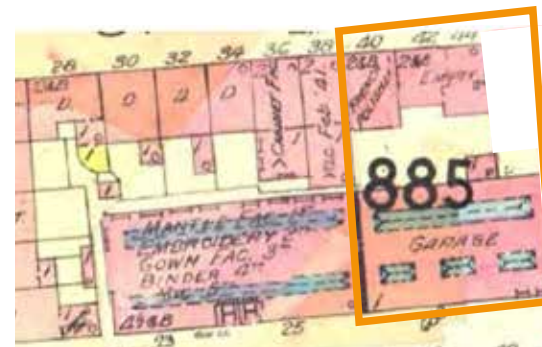


Image: Goads Insurance Plan 1942/43, site highlighted in orange, showing the garage with rooflights, and separate properties to Henry Street (numbers 40-44).



Image: Photograph of Henry Street, 1962, from Manchester Archives, with signage for garage and timber doors evident.



Image: Map, 1934, showing site highlighted in orange with infill to Henry St.



Image: Aerial photograph, 1958 showing Gun and Henry St. site in joined form.



Image: Aerial photograph, 1972 from Manchester Archives.

4.0 SIGNIFICANCE

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Image: Existing view, Gun Street.

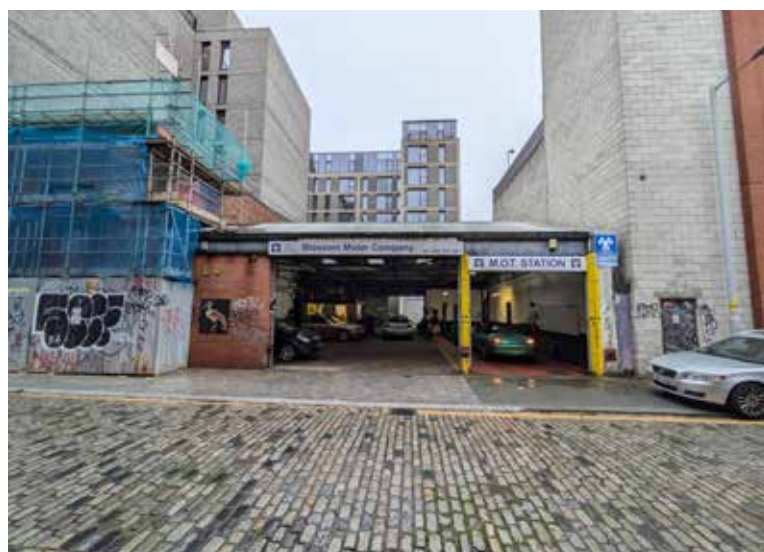


Image: Existing view, Henry Street.

The building is not listed and is of lower significance than the majority of former industrial sites in the area, particularly the listed mill structures towards the Rochdale Canal. It is not considered a principal building within the Conservation Area and has no architectural, historical and aesthetic value, being low quality in design and form. It is however, a reminder of the former character of Ancoats and has some limited value as evidence of the evolution of the area.

Ancoats Conservation Area is considered to be the 'first industrial estate in the world' and of very high historical significance. It has some identifiable key characteristics including the juxtaposition and diversity of building types and scale; the tight street-grid; the use of typical materials such as red brick and slate; the use of functional design; and the back of pavement situation of buildings. The garage adds to the mix of typologies and its employment of utilitarian materials references the industrial past of the area. The standard of build and design however, is low and it does not make a particularly positive contribution to the Conservation Area in its current form.

Gun Street is now almost exclusively lined with new-build properties and the site sits between a modern multi-storey car park and a contemporary apartment building.

Other listed buildings in proximity include an early local authority housing development (Victoria Square, Grade II); Derros Building (Grade II); St Peter's Church (Grade II); and the landmark Daily Express building (Grade II*). Of these buildings the latter is experienced in long views, separated by quite a distance. It is not considered that the site contributes to or impacts upon the significance of the Express Building.

The MCC website states that 'development control in Ancoats is aimed at encouraging development which ensures the continued prosperity of the area whilst paying attention to its special architectural and historic quality.' It also states that 'the use of unused and under-used buildings and spaces for appropriate purposes will generally be considered as a priority in order to ensure continued activity in the area and its local economy.'

5.0 PROPOSALS + IMPACT

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The changes proposed to the building relate to the closure of the garage business and re-use of the existing space as an independent market, housing individual stalls. Internally the inserted units fit within the existing footprint of the garage. Externally, there is little structural alteration and brick walls, roof covering and rooflights are retained. Screens and partitions have been added to the ground floor elevations to provide security and enable the most flexible use of the spaces.

The single-storey height will be retained, as will the access from both sides.

Henry Street elevation: Retention of existing sliding timber doors, moving from current position to hang on the outer face of the same opening. A security shutter will be fitted behind the doors.

Impact upon Conservation Area: Moderate positive. The aesthetic character will be retained by keeping the historic doors, whilst providing a higher level of security. The impact upon the Conservation Area is considered to be beneficial by ensuring an increased level of security to safeguard the building.

Henry Street elevation: New large window openings to either side of door opening with metal frames.

Impact upon Conservation Area: Moderate positive. The existing elevations do not display any specific architectural or historic values. The new interventions create added visual interest. They are considered to be an enhancement to the existing streetscape and sympathetic to the Conservation Area in their use of materials and utilitarian form.

New serving hatch window in timber surround.

Impact upon Conservation Area: Moderate positive. The hatch creates animation to the street and its form is in-keeping with the utilitarian nature of the surrounding area.

Gun Street elevation:

Two large windows to be fitted to either side of the entrance, both with aluminium linings.

Impact upon Conservation Area: Minor positive.

The openings will give animation to the street and their simple form is considered in-keeping.

Roof alteration: A small section of existing roof covering will be removed and rooflights fitted to allow daylight into the internal space.

Impact upon Conservation Area: Neutral. The proposals to the roof are limited to a small section and will not be evident from the street level viewpoints. The internal space will be improved by the addition of daylight. There is no proposal for alteration to the roofline and the roof itself has no particular historic or architectural value. Aerial views show rooflights are not an uncommon feature within the area historically and the alteration is not considered to exert any level of harm upon the Conservation Area.

Overall Impact

27 Gun Street is sited on the fringes of the Ancoats Conservation Area, away from the larger listed mill complexes to the canal-side. The historic street scape has been significantly altered in recent years by the construction of various new developments. The scale



Image: Existing interior with large timber doors (to be retained and re-hung).



Image: Existing interior with rooflights.

and form of the garage, along with existing historic lettering, will be retained as a memory of its former use. There are no major structural alterations or increase in massing or height. Views and experience of the street scene and Conservation Area will be enhanced by the re-purposing of the site. Proposals are considered appropriate and positive in impact.

The only identified listed asset within the same view as the site is the Express Building which can be seen in the same long view. There is a distant proximity and the two buildings are perpendicular. The proposals are not considered to impact the setting of this building to any meaningful extent.



Image: Existing elevation with original signage (to be retained).

6.0 PLANNING CONTEXT

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National Policy

The main heritage planning consideration affecting this site is its position within a Conservation Area. The legislation concerning built heritage is contained within Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Government Policy is set out within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, updated 2023). Local planning policy is set by Manchester City Council.

Statutory legislation states that special regard should be given to 'the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any feature of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.' Clause 66. Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990.

The NPPF recognises that sympathetic changes to heritage assets are necessary to ensure their viable ongoing use, but that alterations must be justified and their impact upon significance assessed. This report meets the requirements of NPPF, paragraph 200, 'In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting'. Paragraph 203 states, 'In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to uses consistent with their conservation;
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.'

The significance of the Ancoats Conservation Area will be enhanced by the improvements to the site, which currently makes no positive contribution. The architectural intervention is considered to encourage sustainable re-use and economic vitality beyond the current use. The proposals are considered to be an enhancement to the existing condition of the building.

Paragraph 212 states that local authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas to enhance or better reveal their significance and those that preserve elements that make a positive contribution should be treated favourably. It is considered that the proposed changes to re-purpose the site will have a wholly positive impact upon the Conservation Area.

Local Policy

Sustainability is a key overarching aim of NPPF and this



Image: Existing view of garage interior.



Image: Existing single-storey garage site (right hand side) with long view towards Express Building, Gun Street.

application is a positive response to that, seeking to re-use existing fabric and to make sensitive repair. Local Manchester City Council policy follows the principles established in the NPPF and is contained within the Local Development Framework Core Strategy, 2012-2027. Of particular relevance is EN3 which indicates that development which complements and takes advantage of historic and heritage features of districts and neighbourhoods will be encouraged.

Places for Everyone is Greater Manchester's joint development plan. Policy JP-P2 relates to heritage and states that particular consideration will be given to ensuring 'the significance of key elements of the historic environment which contribute to Greater Manchester's distinct identity and sense of place are protected from harm' and that positive management and integration of heritage should be informed by 'delivering positive benefits that sustain and enhance the historic environment as well as contributing to the economic vitality, accessibility and environmental quality of a place.'

The proposals are considered to accord with local and national policy.

7.0 CONCLUSION

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The site has been in use as a garage for several decades. The existing building is of limited historic and architectural quality, though it does have a small degree of value as an example of a previous period of Ancoats' history.

The plans for retention and improvement of the existing building are considered to be wholly appropriate. The new street-facing alterations are contemporary with a reference to the industrial nature of the Conservation Area and enhance the current situation, giving new interest and vitality to this site.

Proposals are considered to be sympathetic to the significance of the designated asset (Ancoats Conservation Area). They are considered appropriate in their use of materials and form. The overall scale and height of the building will be retained, with new interventions limited to internal layout and new external facings in parts. There is no level of harm to the Conservation Area as a result of these proposals and they are considered to be a positive response to both national and local policy, representing an enhancement to the Conservation Area and the streetscape in this area of Ancoats whilst preserving the positive elements of existing character.



Image: Existing long view of site on Henry Street (to right hand side of scaffolded building) from outside The Edinburgh Castle, Blossom Street.

OLD PLACES • NEW STORIES

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