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Design & Access Statement
12.11.24 DRAFT 1.1

*Freetrade Exchange
37 Peter Street
Manchester
M2 5GB*



ARCHITECTURE X INTERIOR

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Company No: 11847325

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Introduction to the Design and Access Statement

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by AXI to describe the design process accompanying the drawings submitted with this application.

The statement outlines how the proposed development has emerged from a comprehensive assessment of the site's circumstances and characteristics, as well as the needs of its end users. It should be read alongside the separate Heritage Addendum by Paul Butler Associates.

The proposals involve the installation of the fourth floor for workplace amenities for Zurich Insurance to facilitate office use within the existing building demise and ensure the continued use of this significant building in the heart of the City Centre.

1.2 Development Team and Relevant Experience

Client: Zurich Insurance

Architects: AXI

Quantity Surveyor: JLL

Planning Consultants: Paul Butler Associates (PBA)

Relevant Experience:

Zurich Insurance Group's UK operations offer a comprehensive range of insurance services, including property, liability, motor, and life insurance. With a strong focus on risk management and sustainability, Zurich UK supports both individuals and businesses with tailored policies. Known for its financial stability and customer service, it plays a significant role in the UK insurance market, providing reliable coverage and innovative solutions to meet diverse client needs.

AXI is a Manchester based architectural practice that has extensive experience working with listed buildings and is committed to producing architecture of the highest quality. AXI have most recently been working with Bruntwood on the refurbishment works at the Manchester Club and Union building adjacent to the town hall, as well as the former RBS building at 38 Mosley Street.

Paul Butler Associates was established by Paul Butler in 1992 to provide professional, independent, cost-effective and creative planning advice to our clients, and this remains the motivation of our committed and experienced team of qualified professionals today. We advise on all aspects of the statutory planning system, including development control, planning applications, negotiations, planning appeals, inquiries and enforcement matters. The practice has been instructed by a broad range of public and private sector clients across a variety of sectors, within the northwest of England and beyond.

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2.0 Assessment

2.1 Site Description

Freetrade Exchange, also previously known as Harvester House, is a Grade II listed building, within the Deansgate-Peter Street Conservation Area. It is bounded by Peter Street, Southmill Street and Bootle Street. The building was originally a merchant's warehouse, constructed in 1868 and designed by Clegg and Knowles in the Italian Palazzo style in with ashlar facing stone to the external faces to Peter Street and Southmill Street, and in red brick to Bootle Street. The building has five storeys plus basement and is roughly square in plan to the site. Features noted by Historic England include a vermiculated plinth, rusticated detailing, moulded sill bands and balustraded parapet. The round headed doorway to the right-hand side noted in the listing will form an entrance to the unit for these proposed works. All noted features are external to the building. For further information on the historical aspects please refer to the Heritage Addendum by PBA.

Recent modifications have been undertaken by the landlord including enabling shell works to the Lower Ground Floor for conversion into a restaurant unit as well as overall refurbishment of the building in its entirety to create 6 floors of office space. Minor external alterations have taken place to the Peter Street entrances and the Bootle Street elevation to improve its arrival and street frontage.

Within the proposed office floors new openings have been formed allowing access to the lift core and risers. Additionally, new M&E services and raised access decking has been installed throughout by the landlord.

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3.0 Architectural Method Statement

3.1 Design Objectives

- To adapt the current space to meet the needs of Zurich Insurance and enable the use of floor four as high-quality office space, we propose a design that respects both the building's character and heritage as well as the philosophy of Zurich Insurance.
- Our design is informed by the existing building structure. We aim to minimise disruptions to the existing historical fabric by placing cellular spaces, such as meeting rooms, in the centre of the floor plan. This approach allows open spaces to occupy the external walls, increasing depth of daylight into the floor plate and reducing the need for partitions along these elevations.
- To further minimise disruption to the existing fabric, we propose running power services for the new workspaces through floor boxes. In instances where this may not be suitable, these power systems will run through proposed partitions to avoid impacting the existing external walls.

3.2 Design Proposals

3.2.1 Entrance and Level access from Peter Street.

The existing entrance door, which historically facilitated coach access, is entirely glazed, featuring dark mullions and transoms (Figure 1). This entrance, installed as part of the general works by the landlord, creates a welcoming and easily navigable entrance.

A new, larger, split-level reception area offers level access from Peter Street, leading to a lift, which services all six levels of office space and direct access to the level 00 office space.



Figure 1: Existing Peter Street Entrance to Reception

3.2.2 WCs

WCs to each floor were delivered under the general works package by the landlord, we propose no alteration to the existing layout.

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3.3 Principles of the Design

3.3.1 Use:

The existing use class of the building is mixed between Class E (commercial, business and service) on the upper floors and Basement. Use to the Lower Ground Floor is restaurant, where a restaurateur has taken over the lease of the space. This application is only relating to business floors at level 04.

Operational allowances (i.e. riser spaces) have therefore been previously allowed for within the landlords' prior application as enabling works to ensure feasibility to fit out this space.

3.3.2 Layout

The proposed design largely retains the building's existing configuration, with the addition of minor non-structural partition walls to better accommodate Zurich's needs. The layout has been carefully developed to remain predominantly open plan, preserving much of the original warehouse character while meeting the client's spatial requirements. A key priority for the client is ensuring privacy in the meeting and board rooms and separating client facing activity's from internal day to day activities, where sensitive discussions with clients will take place. To balance this need for privacy with the desired openness, we have maximised the use of glazing in screens and doors, allowing the layout to feel seamless and transparent while still providing the necessary separation.

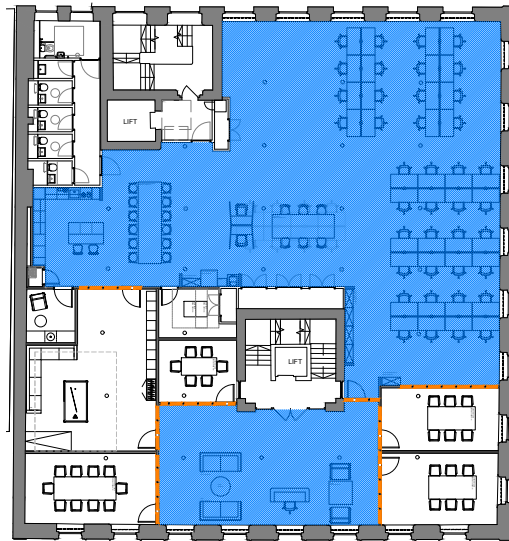


Figure 2: Open plan office (Blue hatched) glazed screens (Orange dashed)

The proposed partition layout has considered features such as column finals to avoid clashes with these existing features. A minimum of 50mm spacing between the column capitals and partitions has been included to allow for the existing features to be celebrated and ease of decoration of the proposed partitions.

For the general arrangement layouts of the scheme please refer to drawings 24-213 AXI 104.

3.3.3 Scale

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There is no change to the overall scale or footprint of the unit with selective internal non-structural modifications to form new rooms.

3.3.4 Materials

Internally, the new walls have been designed in harmony with the building's character, faced with plasterboard and fully decorated. At junctions with existing structural beams or walls, shadow gaps will be incorporated to ensure a refined, seamless transition. Exposed finishes on existing columns and beams will maintain the building's raw aesthetic, while new floor finishes will be installed over the existing raised access deck.

The glazed doors and screens within the new partitions will feature minimal timber frames, softening their appearance and allowing the expansive glass to take visual precedence. This design choice reflects the building's industrial heritage, creating long, open views through the office space where partitions are introduced.

Across the floor plates, accent walls and a striking feature reception desk bring energy to the space, complemented by warm upholstery and curated artwork to foster a welcoming, relaxed atmosphere.

The boardroom and meeting rooms will feature a bespoke panelled wall for the TV, incorporating integrated acoustic panels and a woven floor finish to soften the room's ambience. In the open workspace, flexible furniture arrangements allow the historical architectural elements to remain focal points. The furniture palette will be light and neutral, with warm off-whites accented by deep, soft tones and varied flooring finishes to subtly differentiate zones.

Meeting rooms are designed for optimal acoustic performance, with custom-panelled TV walls, textured carpets, and muted colour-block walls for a calming effect. Timber-framed, largley glazed partitions separate the meeting spaces, providing a light, unobtrusive enclosure.

For further details on finishes and specific construction elements, please refer to the relevant drawings for walls, ceilings, flooring, and partitions.

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4.0 Access

4.1 Movement Through and To the Site

Employee and visitor access the office floors are illustrated in Figures 3, 4, and 5 below. Inclusive access to the reception is available from Peter Street, which is secured by access-controlled doors and monitored by a staff member at the reception desk. From the reception, both employees and visitors can use the lift or stairs to reach the office spaces. Once through the reception, signage is implemented to guide visitors to the fourth floor, which serves as the arrival area for visitors of Zurich Insurance.

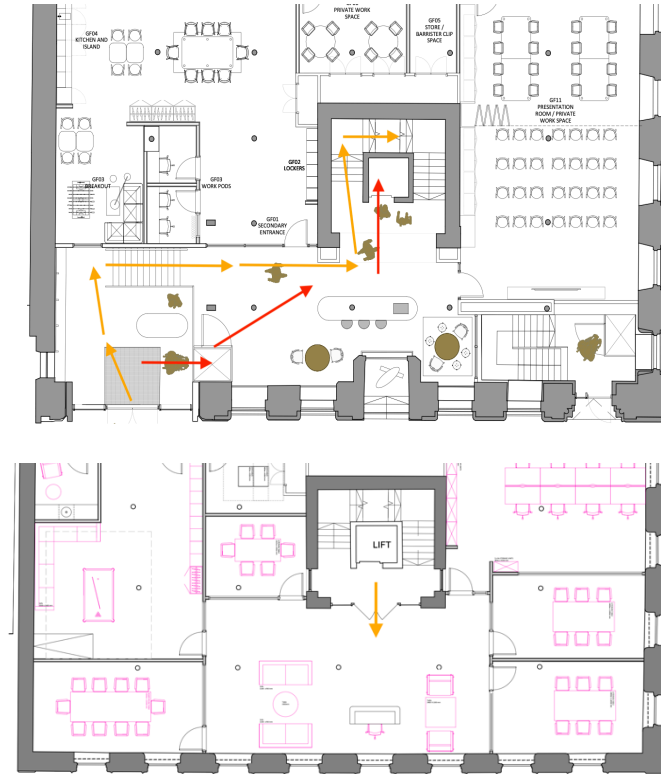


Figure 3 (Top): Peter Street Entrance at Ground Floor Level & Figure 4 (Bottom): Fourth floor Arrival

- Lift access RED
- Stair access / general access ORANGE

Upon entering Zurich's office, visitors are greeted by the reception desk and a light space with large expanses of glass.

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4.2 Exit In The Event Of Fire

The existing fire strategy for the building denotes there are two main exits, the front entrance through reception and to the rear, through a secondary staircase with ends onto Bootle Street (See figure 5 below).



Figure 5 Fourth Floor, exit into stairwell, onto Bootle Street Elevation

For additional information on the existing strategies, please refer to the landlord's fire strategy for the building.

5.0 Building Services

5.1 Waste Management

Waste management for the office spaces has been accounted for in the current layouts provided by the landlord as part of the shell and core works/planning application. Bins will be emptied by the building operator will be taken for collection via the rear lift and via the Bootle Street entrance, with main collection to be arranged by the operator.

Please refer to the approved waste management pro forma for further details.

5.2 Servicing

The proposed layout aims to cause minimal changes to the existing services layout. Partition setting out has been informed by the existing services and structural beam layout into consideration.

Risers have been provided as part of the existing shell unit inherited from the landlord which was upgraded as part of their recent works.

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6.0 Summary

In conclusion, the location and current use of the building and site have been summarised and proposed plans have been introduced. The scheme seeks to ensure the continued use of the building and provide a new home for Zurich Insurance. This will be achieved alongside the ability to reinvigorate original features of the building within the fourth-floor office suites.

Please see Appendix for proposed layout

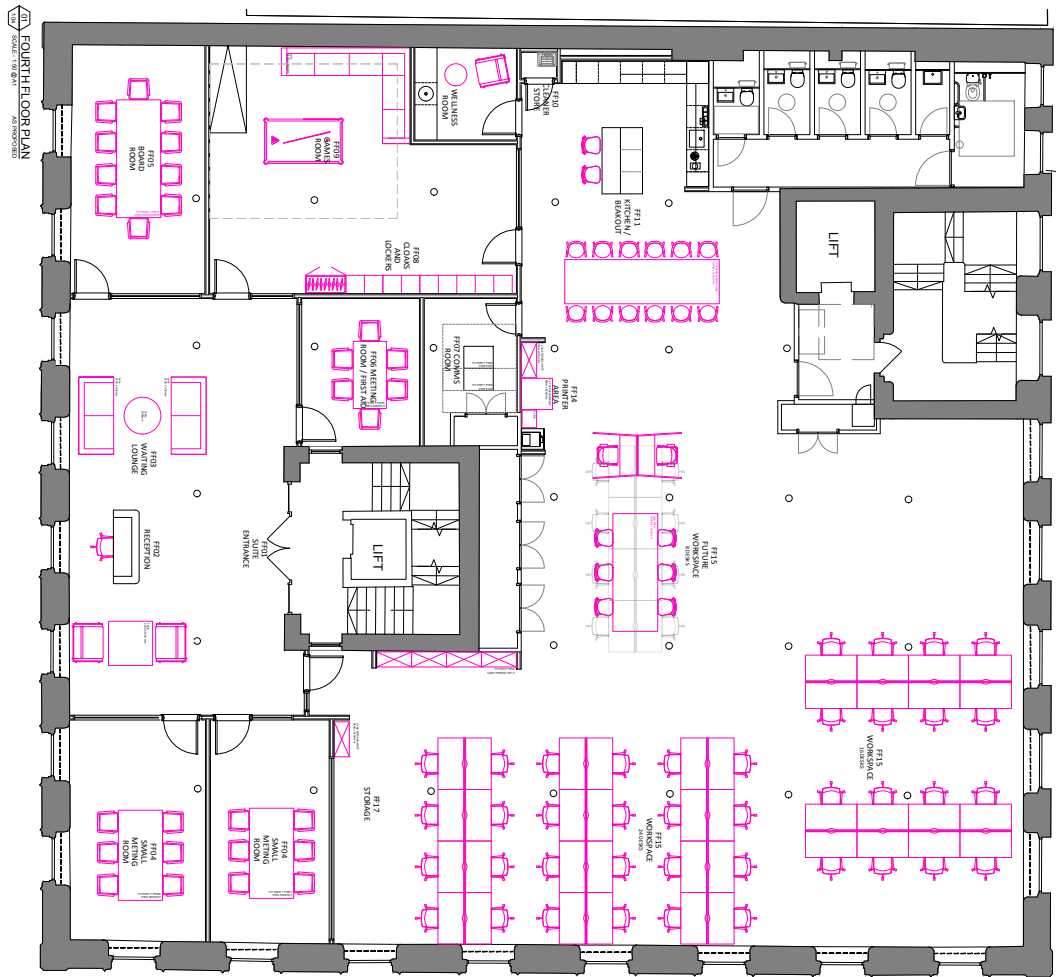
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APPENDIX 1

Proposed Fourth Floor Plan



NOTES

1. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE IN METRES UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED.

2. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE TO FACE UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED.

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CONSULTANT'S RESPONSIBILITIES

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STANDARD NOTES

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AXI

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