DESIGN, ACCESS & HERITAGE STATEMENT

This document accompanies a listed building application for alterations and fit out of a Grade II listed building to accommodate Manchester Building Society main branch and office accommodation.

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 and Access Statement has been prepared for the alterations and fit-out of a Grade II listed building to accommodate Manchester Building Society's main branch and office accommodation, located at 74 King Street, Manchester, M2 4NJ.

The existing building is a Grade II listed property situated on King Street, a prominent location in the heart of Manchester city centre and within the St. Ann's Square Conservation Area. This area is known for its architectural and historical importance, with many buildings reflecting Manchester's rich commercial past and contributing to the overall character of the conservation area.

The St. Ann's Square Conservation Area is one of Manchester's most historically significant districts, known for its concentration of architecturally important buildings. It reflects the city's development as a prominent commercial centre from the 18th century onwards. The area is characterized by a variety of architectural styles, including neoclassical, Baroque, and Victorian, which contribute to its rich visual and historical fabric. The King Street section, in particular, showcases grand commercial buildings with finely detailed stone facades, creating a strong sense of place and continuity.

King Street forms part of the St. Ann's Square Conservation Area, which is recognized for its collection of architecturally significant buildings that embody Manchester's commercial heritage and contribute to the area's distinctive character. The street is celebrated for its diverse architectural styles, reflecting its long-standing role as a key commercial and financial hub. It is lined with distinguished Victorian and Edwardian buildings, many of which are listed, featuring a blend of neoclassical, Renaissance revival, Baroque, and Art Deco influences. The use of high-quality materials such as stone and brick, combined with ornate detailing and grand facades, reinforces the unique character of the street and its importance within the conservation area.

The application site at 74 King Street is prominently situated at the corner of King Street and Cross Street, comprising a four-storey building with an attic and basement. The main entrance to the commercial unit is accessed via a set of double doors at the corner, with an additional entry point along King Street providing direct access from the street. Along Cross Street, a separate set of double doors leads to a stairwell and lift that serve a number of apartments on the second and third floors. Further south on Cross Street, two additional retail units are accessed direct from the street. Both the apartments and retail units on Cross Street fall outside the scope of this application.

At the rear of the building, there is a shared lightwell with adjacent properties, providing natural daylight to the rear areas of the building. This space also accommodates essential building services, such as air conditioning condensers and drainage systems.

The building itself is designed in the Flemish Renaissance style, a fine example of early 20th-century architecture. Constructed primarily from terracotta and stone, the building is distinguished by its large Flemish gables, intricate ornamentation, and multiple bay windows extending across its facades.

The building is a Grade II listed property, as identified on the National Heritage List for England. It is described as follows:

> *Offices. c.1900. Terracotta and stone (roof not visible). Flemish Renaissance style. Corner site. Four storeys and attic; 4-window range including corner bay. Sashes and casements linked between storeys and with dividing columns at first floor and columns and blind arcading above. Large Flemish gables to attic. 2-storey oriel bay to corner supported on decorative panels and corbels. Ground floor has corner entrance, windows separated by small attached columns and a further doorway to left with elaborate doorcase, overlight and curved pediment. Included for group value.*

The main entrance, located at the prominent corner of King Street and Cross Street, is framed by ornate stonework in the Flemish Renaissance style, consistent with the building's early 20th-century architecture. The double doors, which are a more modern installation, are relatively simple in design, framed with wood and featuring four glass panels. These doors are recessed and accessed via a short set of steps. Sculptural details above the entrance blend seamlessly into the decorative façade. Positioned at this key corner, the entrance serves as the primary public access to the ground floor commercial unit, providing a prominent and inviting entry point from the street.

The secondary entrance, located to the east along King Street is accessed via a small sloping threshold to the street and features a pair of solid wooden double doors, recessed into the façade and flanked by fluted stone columns. The doors are panelled in the lower section, with the upper portion containing small, rectangular leaded glass panes arranged in a grid pattern. The woodwork is further embellished with intricate carved detailing at the top of each door, adding a level of craftsmanship that complements the building's overall architectural style. The entrance is framed by highly decorative stonework, including a pediment above the doors. This pediment is adorned with a sculpted coat of arms, which enhances the grandeur of the entrance and ties it to the building's rich historic character. The fluted stone columns and vertical framing integrate the entrance seamlessly into the façade, while the careful detailing ensures it remains an ornate and significant feature of the building's design.

The shop front windows are white-framed, single-glazed timber windows, offering extensive frontage along both King Street and Cross Street. These large windows are framed by ornate stone detailing in keeping with the building's Flemish Renaissance style. Vertical pilasters, with subtle detailing at the base and capital, visually divide the windows into distinct sections, adding architectural rhythm to the façade. Additionally, the windows are equipped with openable slotted vents integrated within the head of the frames, providing ventilation while maintaining the overall aesthetic of the historic façade.

Above the ground floor, the windows are set within intricately detailed stone surrounds that reflect the building's Flemish Renaissance style. The stone frames feature subtle decorative elements, including scrollwork and geometric motifs, with smaller glazed openings above the first-floor windows, adding rhythm and richness to the façade. The window openings are fitted with dark grey painted, sliding sash, single-glazed timber framed windows.

The building's well-preserved historic details, combined with its prominent corner position, make it a key architectural landmark within Manchester's urban landscape. Its Flemish Renaissance style and fine craftsmanship contribute significantly to the surrounding conservation area, where a mix of historic and modern buildings reflect the evolving character of the city.

Internally, the ground floor space is approximately square in form and open plan, offering high ceilings for flexible use. The main feature of the ground floor is the high coffered ceiling, adorned with intricate geometric plasterwork typical of early 20th-century design. The ornate mouldings around the perimeter further highlight the building's historical character, giving the interior a sense of grandeur. Supporting the first floor are slender, white-painted columns with simple capitals.

Towards the rear, a utilitarian metal staircase, modern in contrast to the historical context, connects the ground floor to both the basement and first floor. The staircase's simple design appears dated compared to the rest of the interior detailing

The entrance areas are framed by small internal lobbies constructed with stud partitions of modern construction, terminating well below the listed coffered ceiling. These partitions are aligned with the stall risers below the shop front windows, providing structural support for suspended signage behind the shop front windows.

Throughout the space, various shop fittings remain installed, and modern light fixtures are suspended from the ceiling. The walls are generally plastered, though certain sections of exposed brickwork remain visible. The skirting boards, consistent with the building's external detailing, appear to be original and feature ornate profiles that add to the interior's historical charm.

The first floor is predominantly open-plan, similar to the ground floor. This area is large and spacious, featuring high ceilings with detailed plasterwork that reinforce the building's historical character. However, the ceiling here is less ornate than the ground floor, with flush plastered ceilings between the downstands. Track lighting, suspended from the ceiling, is the primary source of illumination. The floor above is supported by metal columns, similar to those found on the ground floor. As with the ground floor, the space is currently fitted out with various shop fittings, including changing rooms located toward the rear.

The windows at the front of the building have relatively high cills and are single-glazed, sliding sash timber frames. These windows include smaller decorative arches within the upper glazing and are framed with timber mouldings, adding a traditional appearance.

Toward the rear of the first floor, the space is subdivided into a series of ancillary rooms, including storage areas, staff facilities, and WCs. These areas are more utilitarian in design, with simple plasterboard ceilings, some visible ductwork, and fluorescent lighting. A corridor in this section provides access to a shared fire exit at the south end of the building and located outside the demise of the site and application area.

The basement is accessed via the accommodation stair at the rear of the ground floor and, like the floors above, features an open-plan space toward the front. The layout includes a series of voids and ancillary rooms around its perimeter, housing functional areas such as changing rooms, storage facilities, M&E services, and a corridor leading to a shared fire escape.

While the ceilings are relatively high, they differ from the ornate coffered designs found on the ground and first floors, adopting a simpler, modern aesthetic. The flush plasterboard ceilings incorporate various drop ceilings incorporating essential services, such as recessed lighting and ventilation ductwork. The floor above is supported by metal columns, reflecting the structural arrangement seen on the ground and first floors.

2. The Proposals.

The building, previously occupied by a retail tenant, has been leased by Manchester Building Society, requiring a full internal strip-out of the modern shop fittings, and subject to a full refurbishment. The proposed works will transform the ground floor into the main branch for the Society, offering direct public access from King Street. The basement will be adapted to provide flexible meeting spaces, with provision to provide a warm welcome to local community ground and charities who can use the space to meet. The first floor will be fitted out to serve as the Society's city centre accommodation, in addition to meeting rooms, and associated ancillary facilities.

Due to the building's sensitive listed status and its location within the St. Ann's Square Conservation Area, the design approach has been carefully considered to minimize any impact on the historic fabric. Every effort has been made to ensure that the alterations not only respect the building's heritage but also enhance and celebrate its internal spaces, transforming them into functional, contemporary environments while preserving their historical significance.

3. Pre-app advice.

Pre-application advice was undertaken as part of a two-stage process, including written feedback and a site meeting with the local planning authority case officer and conservation officers.

During the site meeting, the building's condition and proposed interventions were reviewed to ensure they respected the historic fabric. The conservation officers provided detailed guidance on sensitive areas, such as the shopfront and interior features, which helped refine the proposals. This collaborative process ensured that the final design aligns with both heritage conservation principles and the operational needs of Manchester Building Society.

4. Use.

The existing use of the building is a shop, which falls under Class E(a) of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended). This class covers retail premises used for the sale of goods to the public.

The proposed use of the building as a financial service for Manchester Building Society falls under Class E(c)(i), which covers financial services such as banks, building societies, and similar institutions.

The first floor will accommodate offices which falls under Class E(g)(i) for office use, while the basement will be fitted out for meeting rooms. These meeting rooms, intended for both the Society's internal use and the broader community, would also fall under Class E.

As all the proposed uses—financial services, offices, and meeting spaces—fall within Class E of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended), no change of use application would be required.

5. Amount

The area identified by the red line on the proposed drawings has an internal floor area as follows:

- Basement 179m2
- Ground 132m2
- First 216m2

Total internal floor area = 527m2

Note no extensions are proposed to the existing building and therefore the area of the existing building will remain the same.

6. Impact on Heritage Assets.

Manchester Building Society's main branch will be located on the ground floor, with direct access from the street. The basement will be adapted to provide flexible meeting spaces, with provision to provide a warm welcome to local community ground and charities who can use the space to meet. The first floor will be fitted out to serve as the Society's city centre accommodation, in addition to meeting rooms, and associated

ancillary facilities. Each floor has been carefully designed to balance the operational needs of the Society while respecting the building's listed status. A breakdown of each floor and its impact on the listed buildings is described as follows:

6.1 Ground Floor

The primary entrance will be via the existing external double doors at the prominent corner of King Street and Cross Street, providing stepped access into the ground floor branch. The existing timber-framed double doors will be retained and refurbished, with the ironmongery replaced to meet the branch's requirements using similar materials. The timber frames will be prepared and re-stained to match the existing finish, ensuring they remain in keeping with the building’s historic character.

To provide level and accessible entry, the secondary double doors located along King Street to the east will be utilized. Minor alterations to the pavement outside the building will be required to achieve a level threshold for disabled access. This will involve carefully sloping a small area of the pavement to a maximum gradient of 1:20, ensuring compliance with accessibility standards, subject to advice and approval from the highways department. Similar to the main entrance, this door will be retained and sensitively refurbished as needed, including the replacement of ironmongery with materials to match existing.

The existing shopfront windows will be carefully refurbished, with the frames both internally and externally prepared, addressing any areas of deterioration, and re-painted white to match the existing finish. The openable vents at the head of the windows will be re-commissioned and reinstated to provide natural ventilation for the ground floor branch.

Internally, the existing shop fittings will be carefully stripped out to facilitate the new fit-out, ensuring that none of the building's listed features are impacted. This will include the removal of stall risers, suspended signage, shop counters, and changing rooms. However, the internal entrance door lobbies will be retained in the new design, with new internal glass double doors incorporated. During working hours, the existing external doors will remain open, allowing the glass doors to serve as the main entrance to the branch. This design approach will provide transparent views from the street into the building, enhancing the visual connection between the interior and exterior.

Following stripping out, the interior will be subject to a full refurbishment and fit-out of the new shop fittings to suit a layout which is primarily open-plan in the public areas, with designated areas that facilitate customer movement and branch operations. Adjacent to the main entrance, a meet-and-greet desk will serve as the initial point of contact for customers, assisting with orientation and directing them to the relevant services within the branch. A freestanding enquiry bar will be positioned near the secondary entrance, offering a convenient space for quick questions and support. Both elements are strategically placed to enhance customer flow and accessibility throughout the branch.

A centrally located queue barrier is positioned to manage customer flow as needed, directing visitors to two transaction desks at the front of the unit. These desks are partially enclosed by 1.5m high freestanding screens, glazed at the top and incorporating manifestation film to promote transparency of the new elements while offering a level of privacy. The transaction desk nearest the main entrance will facilitate quick, small transactions, while the adjacent transaction desk provides increased privacy for more detailed account-related transactions.

Two additional meeting rooms are proposed at the rear of the branch, enclosed by 3.1m high crittal-style glass partitions with thin black metal frames to provide privacy for account openings and similar services, whilst maintaining a level of transparency to the new elements within the listed building. The partitions will terminate approximately a meter below the existing coffered ceiling, ensuring the historic ceiling remains intact. Meeting Room 1 will feature a ceiling that conceals an air conditioning cassette and services, with discreet louvres incorporated into the partition for ventilation. Meeting Room 2, located adjacent to the shopfront windows, will remain open at the top to avoid any impact on the listed features.

Additionally, a small secure area for storage will be created adjacent to the lift, formed using stud partitions and fitted with solid oak doors, complete with antique bronze ironmongery. Similar to Meeting Room 1, the partitions will terminate approximately a meter below the existing coffered ceiling to avoid impacting on the listed features and will include a separate ceiling to conceal an air conditioning cassette and services. Ventilation louvres will be subtly integrated into the partition system to maintain a seamless appearance.

The existing service riser will be used to route new services through the building, making use of the current structural openings for efficient distribution. A new flush door, finished with plasterboard and a concealed frame, will be installed at the front of the riser, providing adequate access to services while maintaining a seamless appearance within the modern partitions forming the riser, resulting in a negligible impact on the original listed building.

The existing lift and accommodation stair are located at the rear of the building, providing access to the first floor and basement levels. While minimal works are proposed for the lift, the stair appears dated. Constructed of white-painted metal, it features open treads, metal balustrades, and a stainless steel handrail, which contrasts sharply with the listed building's historic character, detracting from the overall aesthetic. To harmonize its appearance with the new branch design and enhance the architectural integrity of the space, alterations to the stair are proposed as follows:

The existing balustrades and handrail will be replaced with glass guarding and a new metal handrail. The finishes and nosings on the treads will be re-newed, while the remaining structure will be prepared and re-decorated. These changes will give the stair a contemporary appearance with transparent balustrading that complements the backdrop of the listed building.

The existing masonry walls are primarily finished with solid plaster lining, with some areas of exposed brickwork which will be patched with a lime based solid plaster liming flush with existing and applied by a plaster specialist. The remainder of the walls will be made good and re-decorated using a breathable paint to approval of the local authority to ensure the listed materials are properly protected and conserved.

The existing loose floor coverings and any underlay will be stripped out completely and subject to installation of new floor finishes timber appearance LVT click vinyl flooring within the main public area, carpets within meetings rooms and non-slip vinyl floor covering in the ancillary areas.

The existing decorative skirtings will be retained wherever possible, but extended with new timber skirtings where necessary to exactly match the existing profile, ensuring the listed features of the building are preserved and remain consistent throughout.

The existing M&E installations will be fully stripped out, with care taken to avoid any damage to the building's fabric. To minimize the impact on the listed elements, some existing ceiling fixings will be retained and reused for installing a new suspended track lighting system, as detailed in the proposed M&E drawings. Cable trays will be suspended using similar fixings, anchored into the floor structure above, ensuring that no fixings penetrate the decorative plaster mouldings on the underside of the ceiling. These trays will provide routes for services, including new M&E fixtures, smoke detectors, and similar components, and will be painted white to match the existing ceilings. Any redundant penetrations in the listed ceilings will be carefully repaired using materials that match the original fabric, such as lime-based solid plaster for walls and ceilings, with work carried out by a plaster specialist, to protect and conserve the existing heritage feature

A separate advertising application will be submitted for the signage, which will be installed behind the shop windows using minimal fixings to ensure it does not negatively impact the character of the listed building or obscure the historic shopfront. The signage will be carefully designed to complement the building's aesthetic without being overbearing, thereby maintaining the visual integrity of the façade.

Within the branch, a series of poster boards will be installed to provide essential information and advertising for customers. These will be thoughtfully positioned, with their size minimized to avoid excessive obstruction of the shopfront windows, allowing natural light to enter the space and preserving clear views of the interior from the street.

6.2 First Floor

The first floor will be fitted out to accommodate office accommodation for the building society, including a large meeting room, offices, and ancillary spaces. Similar to the approach taken on the ground floor, the design will remain sympathetic to the fabric of the listed building.

To subdivide the existing open-plan space at the front, Crittal-style glass partitions, similar to those proposed for the ground floor, will be introduced to enclose a large meeting room, office space, and circulation areas. These partitions will align with the existing downstands of the coffered ceiling and be fixed to the beam edges, avoiding interference with the existing metal columns. This approach ensures minimal impact on the building's historic fabric while maintaining a sense of openness and transparency. While the glass partitions enclosing the meeting room will extend to full height for privacy reasons, the partition between the circulation area and the main office space will be kept at 1.5m high, avoiding any impact on the existing coffered ceiling above.

Two full-height stud partitions, as indicated on the stripping-out plan, will be removed to enhance the open-plan space, with existing finishes carefully repaired to match the original materials. The proposed ancillary rooms will be situated within the existing partitioned area, which is of more recent construction at the rear of the building, with most partitions remaining unchanged. A small number of new partitions will be added to create a separate staff room adjacent to the WC area; however, due to the more recent construction, the impact on the listed building will be negligible. Where necessary, the existing plasterboard partitions will be repaired with materials that match the existing, and all internal doors will be replaced with solid oak shaker doors featuring antique bronze ironmongery. Although relatively modern, the existing plasterboard ceilings will be retained and refurbished as needed.

Similar to the ground floor, stud partitions will be constructed to enlarge the existing service riser; however, these partitions will terminate well below the listed ceiling coffers, ensuring that the historic features remain untouched. This design accommodates the increased M&E service requirements for the building's new use, providing the service riser with sufficient capacity to manage the additional mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems while preserving the integrity of the original architectural details.

The existing decorative skirtings will be retained wherever possible, but extended with new timber skirtings where necessary to exactly match the existing profile, ensuring the listed features of the building are preserved and remain consistent throughout.

The existing timber-framed sliding sash windows at first-floor level will be refurbished, ensuring that all operable sashes are restored to full working order. This process will include carefully preparing the timber frames, addressing any areas of deterioration, and re-painting both the interior and exterior to match the existing color scheme, preserving the building's original character while improving functionality.

As with the ground floor, the existing M&E installations on the first floor will be fully stripped out, with care taken to protect the building’s fabric. Where possible, existing ceiling fixings will be retained and reused for the installation of a new suspended track lighting system, minimizing the impact on the listed features. Similar to the ground floor, white-painted cable trays will be suspended using cables, fixed to the existing floor structure above the flush ceilings, to avoid interference with the decorative downstands. These trays will provide routes for services, including additional M&E

fixtures, smoke detectors, and other essential components. A similar approach will be used in the ancillary rooms, where the high ceilings allow for suspended services beneath the modern plasterboard ceilings. The new WCs will connect to the existing drainage system, eliminating the need for new penetrations or alterations to the building's structure.

The existing lightwell at the rear of the building features a metal gangway on multiple levels, supporting four air conditioning condensers. The proposal involves replacing these with five smaller units in the same location, utilizing the existing gangway for support. Additionally, two small openings will be created at the base of the lightwell's masonry wall to install ventilation louvres, providing the necessary airflow for the basement's mechanical ventilation system. The penetrations are designed to have minimal impact on the listed building, ensuring that the intervention is limited to what is necessary to comply with current building regulations for ventilation.

6.3 Basement.

The basement will be fitted out to accommodate flexible meeting rooms, which can be used for customer meetings when the ground floor rooms are occupied, as well as for business and community use, further enhancing the building's contribution to the vibrancy of the local area. Additional ancillary spaces, including a kitchenette, WCs, and storage areas, will also be provided to provide functional facilities for the space.

In addition to stripping out the existing shop fittings, the partitions enclosing voids around the perimeter will be investigated and removed where possible to maximize the usable space and the finishes reinstated to match existing materials conducive to the listed status of the building. A small area of raised floor will also be assessed for removal, with the aim of ensuring that the floor finishes run flush throughout the basement area.

The drainage from the new WCs and kitchenette will be pumped to an adjacent drainage point at ground floor level, ensuring all plumbing services are integrated without affecting the building's structure.

The existing modern plasterboard ceiling will be removed and replaced with a new suspended ceiling system, finished with plasterboard and installed at a similar level and fixed to the underside of the existing concrete soffit. Existing fixings will be utilized or minimized where possible to avoid undue impact on the listed building. This will create a service void, particularly for the mechanical ventilation required due to the absence of windows and natural ventilation in the basement. Light fixtures and associated services will either be surface-mounted or recessed within the new suspended ceiling system.

Similar to the floors above, Crittal-style glass partitions will be installed to subdivide the space, creating flexible meeting rooms along the perimeter while keeping circulation and seating areas in the central zone, preserving the openness of the original layout.

Additional stud partitions will be incorporated to enhance privacy between rooms, ensuring the space remains both functional and adaptable.

Again, the proposed floor finishes will reflect the use of floor finished on the levels above utilising timber appearance LVT click vinyl flooring at within the main public area, carpets within meetings rooms and non-slip vinyl floor covering in the ancillary areas.

The existing decorative skirtings will be retained wherever possible, but extended with new timber skirtings where necessary to exactly match the existing profile, ensuring the listed features of the building are preserved and remain consistent throughout.

Throughout the interior, the building will undergo re-decoration. Before any paint is applied, the existing paint on the listed walls and ceilings will be tested by a specialist to ensure compatibility. The proposed paint will be carefully selected and approved by the local planning authority and listed building specialists prior to application.

The existing paint will be tested to ensure compatibility with the new application, with approval sought from the listed building authorities prior to use. The existing plaster ceilings, particularly the listed ones, will be repainted with approved white paint to match the original finish. To introduce contrast and warmth to the interiors, the walls will be painted in neutral tones, creating a balanced and inviting atmosphere. Additionally, the existing solid plaster linings will be finished with an approved paint compatible with the existing surfaces, ensuring that the listed materials are properly protected and conserved.

7.0. Justification in line with NPPF (Paragraphs 195, 197, 202)

Alignment with NPPF Paragraph 195: The proposed works have been designed with a focus on conserving the heritage significance of the Grade II listed building, respecting its historic character, architectural features, and fabric. The reuse of 74 King Street as a financial institution ensures a viable long-term use, supporting the building's continued maintenance and conservation. By adapting the space for modern needs while retaining its historic fabric, the project contributes positively to the St. Ann's Square Conservation Area, ensuring the building remains an active and relevant part of Manchester's city centre.

Public Benefits and Justification (NPPF Paragraph 202): The proposal will deliver substantial public benefits that justify the minimal and reversible alterations to the building’s historic fabric. These include providing modern financial services to the local community, creating flexible meeting spaces that can also accommodate community groups, and supporting the overall vitality and economic activity of the city centre. In line with Paragraph 202, the benefits of bringing this heritage asset back into active use, revealing original architectural elements, and maintaining its role within the conservation area outweigh any minor impacts on the building's historic character.

Impact on Heritage Assets (NPPF Paragraph 197): A detailed assessment of the proposed alterations confirms that they have been designed to sustain and enhance the building's heritage significance, in accordance with Paragraph 197. Each intervention has been carefully considered to ensure that the special architectural and historical interest of the building is preserved. A summary of the specific impacts by floor is provided below:

7.1 Ground Floor:

Entrance Doors: The existing timber-framed double doors at the prominent corner will be retained and sensitively refurbished, with ironmongery replaced in like-for-like materials to respect the original design. Minor alterations to the secondary entrance will achieve level access while maintaining the integrity of the historic fabric.

Shopfront Windows: The shopfront windows will be carefully refurbished, addressing areas of deterioration and repainting to match the existing finish. The reinstatement of openable vents for natural ventilation will enhance functionality while preserving the character of the historic shopfront.

Interior Fit-Out: Modern shop fittings will be removed, allowing the original coffered ceilings and internal lobbies to be fully revealed. The installation of new Crittal-style partitions, which terminate below the coffered ceilings, ensures that key architectural features remain intact. Freestanding elements, such as desks and screens, have been selected to minimize physical interventions, allowing the building's historic character to remain visible. Additionally, the removal of modern stall risers and the reinstatement of timber window boards and skirtings with a matching decorative profile will further reveal the building’s original features.

Existing solid plaster lining: Some areas of the existing solid plaster lining have previously been removed in the locations identified on the existing drawings. These areas will be patched using lime-based solid plaster, applied by a specialist to ensure consistency with the original materials. The work will reinstate the plaster lining flush with the existing finishes, ensuring a seamless appearance as indicated on the proposed wall finishes plans.

Service Riser and M&E Installations: The existing service riser at the ground floor level will be utilized, allowing services to be ducted through the existing structural openings, thereby avoiding the need for new penetrations into the building’s historic fabric. To provide access to the riser, a new flush door finished with plasterboard and a concealed frame will be installed at the front of the riser. This door will maintain a seamless appearance within the modern partitions surrounding the riser, ensuring minimal visual impact and maintaining the integrity of the original listed building.

Additionally, new cable trays will be installed below the coffered ceiling, supported by suspension cables, as specified in the M&E drawings. This approach has been carefully designed to avoid any interference with the building's historic plaster mouldings, preserving the original architectural details. For the new track lighting, existing ceiling fixings will be used wherever possible to minimize any alterations or impacts on the historic plasterwork, further ensuring that the building's character and heritage features remain intact. These measures have been taken to ensure that the new installations are sympathetic to the building's listed status, maintaining its historical value while accommodating the necessary modern updates.

7.2 First Floor:

Office Accommodation: Two existing full-height stud partitions will be removed to reveal the full extent of the listed ceiling, as shown on the proposed first-floor stripping out plans. The open-plan space will then be subdivided using Crittal-style glass partitions, carefully aligned with existing structural elements to avoid damage to the historic fabric. These partitions maintain the openness and volume of the original space while introducing necessary functional divisions. The remainder of the works are contained within areas defined by later additions, ensuring that the impact on the listed building remains negligible.

Service Riser and M&E Installations: The service riser will be enlarged using stud partitions that terminate below the coffered ceiling, preserving the appearance of the original architectural detailing. Cable trays will be suspended on wires between the ceiling coffers, reducing the need for fixing points. Track lighting will be installed using existing ceiling fixings, minimizing interventions in the plasterwork and maintaining the integrity of the building's original features.

7.3 Basement:

Meeting Rooms: The basement will be reconfigured to include flexible meeting rooms, using Crittal-style glass partitions fixed to the underside of a new suspended ceiling system. These partitions are designed to maintain the visual openness of the original space, ensuring that the sense of openness and continuity within the historic fabric is preserved.

Ceilings, Ventilation and Drainage: The existing modern suspended ceiling system will be renewed using minimal fixing points, preserving the integrity of the original fabric while accommodating necessary M&E services. Mechanical ventilation and pumped drainage systems will be integrated to meet modern requirements with negligible impact on the existing listed building, without altering the building's historic fabric. This approach ensures the provision of necessary functionality while maintaining the space's historical integrity.

Two additional penetrations will be created in the base of the existing lightwell masonry walls to install ventilation louvres, providing the necessary increase in

ventilation for the basement area. Details of the louvres, including their sizes, are provided on the enclosed lightwell elevation drawing. The penetrations are designed to minimize their impact on the listed building, ensuring that interventions are limited to only what is necessary to meet current ventilation regulations.

In summary, the proposed works align with the objectives of the NPPF, focusing on the conservation and enhancement of the heritage significance of 74 King Street. The project ensures a sustainable, long-term use for the building that respects its historic character while providing modern functionality. The minimal and reversible nature of the interventions ensures that the building's architectural integrity is preserved, with any alterations carefully designed to maintain or reveal key historic features, rather than alter, remove, or conceal them. These enhancements will bring substantial public benefits, including improved community engagement and support for the city's economic vitality, while ensuring the long-term protection and relevance of this important heritage asset within Manchester's city centre.

8. Conclusion.

The proposed alterations and fit-out of 74 King Street have been designed to align with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), ensuring minimal intervention while meeting the operational needs of Manchester Building Society. The design emphasizes the conservation and enhancement of the building's historic fabric, character, and architectural integrity, securing its long-term use as a financial institution.

Key heritage elements, including the ornate plaster ceilings, timber-framed windows, and decorative skirtings, will be retained and sensitively refurbished where necessary. Modern interventions, such as the installation of Crittal-style glass partitions, replacement of air conditioning units, and the upgrade of M&E services, are integrated in a way that respects the building's historic character, avoiding undue impact on its features. The partition systems have been designed to terminate below the coffered ceilings, ensuring that listed details remain intact and visible.

The proposals represent minimal alterations, focusing on preserving and revealing the building's historical assets rather than concealing or removing them. Freestanding elements, including transaction desks, meeting areas, and privacy screens, have been selected to avoid altering the building's historic structure or finishes. This approach ensures that key architectural features—walls, floors, and ceilings—remain undisturbed, with any interventions designed to be lightweight and reversible, thus maintaining the building's heritage value.

The design has been developed with sensitivity to the surrounding St. Ann's Square Conservation Area, ensuring that exterior refurbishments, including the shopfront windows and doors, contribute positively to the streetscape. The restrained use of signage and advertising further ensures that the building's historical prominence is respected and integrated into the architectural fabric of King Street.

The proposals align with NPPF paragraphs 195, 197, and 202. In accordance with Paragraph 195, the project conserves the heritage significance of the building while adapting it for modern use, supporting its ongoing maintenance and conservation. Paragraph 197 is addressed through careful consideration of each intervention to sustain and enhance the building's significance, while Paragraph 202 is met through the substantial public benefits provided, such as community-accessible meeting spaces and contributions to local economic activity. These benefits justify the minimal and reversible alterations to the historic fabric.

In conclusion, the proposed works strike a balance between the operational needs of a modern financial institution and the preservation of this significant listed building's heritage. The project will have a negligible impact on the building's historic character while revealing and highlighting its unique architectural features, contributing positively to the conservation area and ensuring the long-term protection and continued relevance of 74 King Street as a key landmark within Manchester's city centre.