26th September 2024

**Heritage Statement for the installation of two retractable rooftop canopies to the Grade II listed Great John Street Hotel, Great John Street, Manchester.**

## 1. Introduction

Stephen Levrant Heritage Architecture (SLHA) have been commissioned to prepare a Heritage Statement for the addition of rooftop canopies to the Grade II listed Great John Street Hotel (**the Site - Figure 1**) in order to introduce roof top canopies and minor changes to basement comms room/keg store.

Please refer to drawings and D&A statement by EPR Architects for full details.

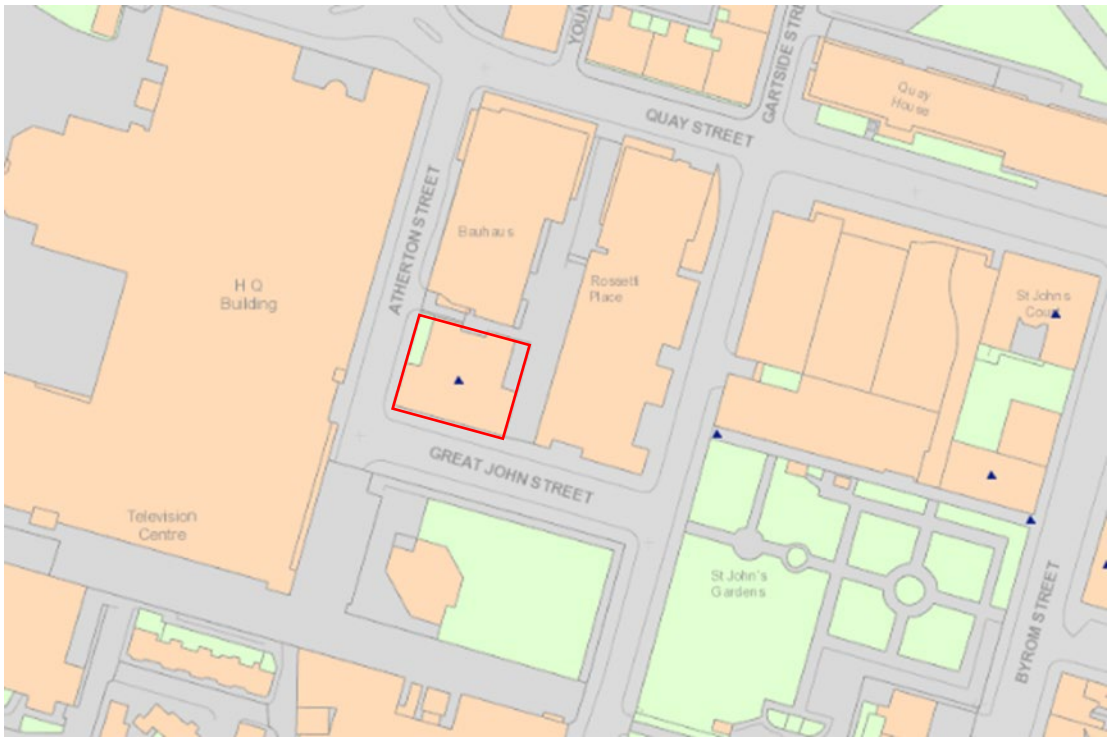



**Figure 1** – Map showing the location of the Site outlined red. (Source: Historic England)

Following the approval of the current Listed Building Consent application for the refurbishment and extension of Great John Street Hotel in December 2020 *(REF NO: 126751/LO/2020 - Listed Building Consent for external works comprising a single storey, glazed ground floor extension; external lighting; replacement rooftop extension, with associated rooftop plant; associated internal refurbishment works; and other associated works)*. The consented scheme was implemented in 2021, however these works were subsequently paused on site until recent months.

## 2. Statutory Designations

The Site was listed Grade II on the 6th June 1994 as 'St Johns College of Further Education'. The Site is located within the Castlefield Conservation Area and close to the St. John's Street Conservation Area (See Figure 2).

Consequently, this Statement, and the preceding conservation advice to the project team, has been prepared in the context of relevant national and local heritage planning policy.




**Figure 2** – Map of the area surrounding the Site (indicated by star), showing the Castlefield Conservation Area shaded purple, and the St John Street Conservation Area shaded red. Surrounding listed buildings are outlined blue. (Source: Manchester City Council)

## 3. Planning Policy and Guidance

The key planning policy documents are respectively, the: Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2021), and Manchester City Council's Core Strategy (2012).

With regards to the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Section 72 of the Act is of relevance as it requires the Local Planning Authority to pay special attention to the 'desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance' of the designated conservation area.

Section 66 of the 1990 Act is also of relevance, as it requires the Local Planning Authority to "have special regard to the desirability of preserving [a listed building] or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses" when considering whether to grant planning permission.

The policies in the NPPF constitute the Government's view of what sustainable development means in practice. The analysis of heritage significance in this Heritage Statement accords with the requirements of paragraphs 194 and 203 of the NPPF (2023) as it presents sufficient and proportionate evidence to enable the Council, "to reach an informed decision". The conclusions of this Heritage Statement are thus based on the "need to be proportionate to the significance of the heritage assets [potentially] affected, and the impact on the significance of those heritage assets".

The structure of the document is consistent with the requirements of the NPPF 2023 and Historic England's guidance on the form of 'Statements of Heritage Significance' (Oct 2019). This report also utilises a tailored form of the ICOMOS heritage impact evaluation method to ensure the conclusions are evidence-based and consistent (refer to Appendix i).

## 4. Historic Development

The building was designed in 1910 and opened as 'The Atherton Street County School' in 1912 for the Manchester Education Committee (Figure 3). The school later became part of the Granada TV complex during the 1960s, and in 2004 the building was converted into a boutique hotel named Great John Street Hotel, resulting in a number of internal alterations to the building.

The original plans of the building illustrate that the school was constructed using a 'T-shaped' plan at the corner of Atherton Street, Great John Street and Little John Street. The school was built of red brick with red terracotta and buff stone dressings and comprised three storeys with a playground to the roof. The school was designed with a mezzanine level to the east side at both ground floor and first floor, allowing for teacher's accommodation.

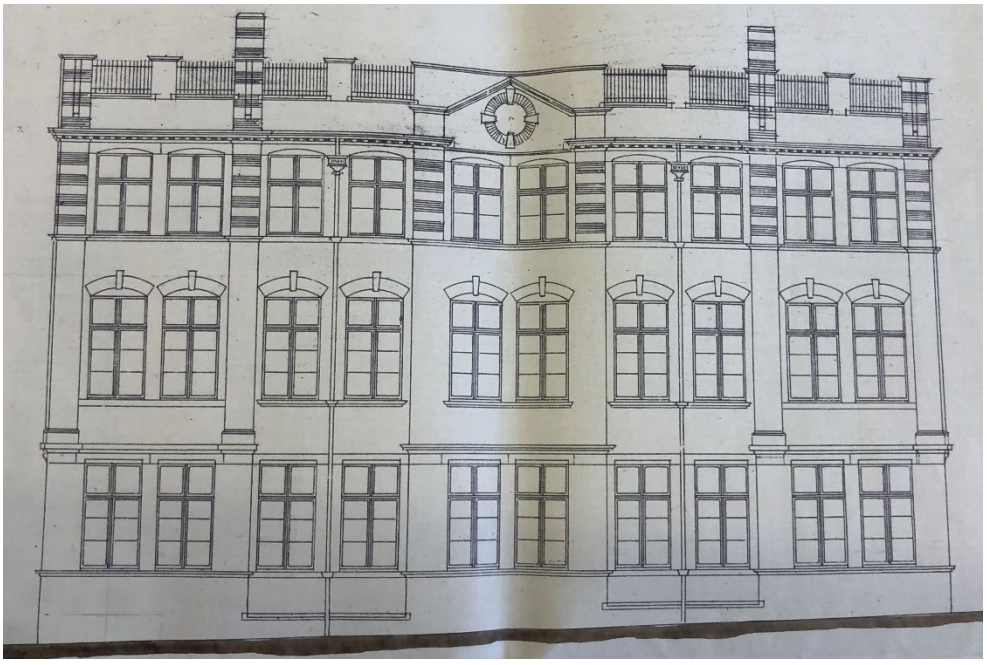


**Figure 3:** 1910 Proposed Great John Street elevation plan of the Atherton Street School, shown to have originally comprised only windows, with no doors. The large windows were designed to provide enough light to the double-height classrooms. (Source: Manchester Archives)

The principal elevation onto Great John Street remains largely as built in 1912, comprising five bays, however, the building was not designed to be entered from Great John Street (which today serves as the principal hotel entrance), instead, segregated circulation demanded separate entrances for boys and girls, with a boys' entrance entered from Atherton Street, and girls' and infants' entrance from Little John Street.

Playground areas were also shown to have been separated, with the girls' and infants' playground situated at street level to the north of the Site, and the boys' playground covering the flat roof area.

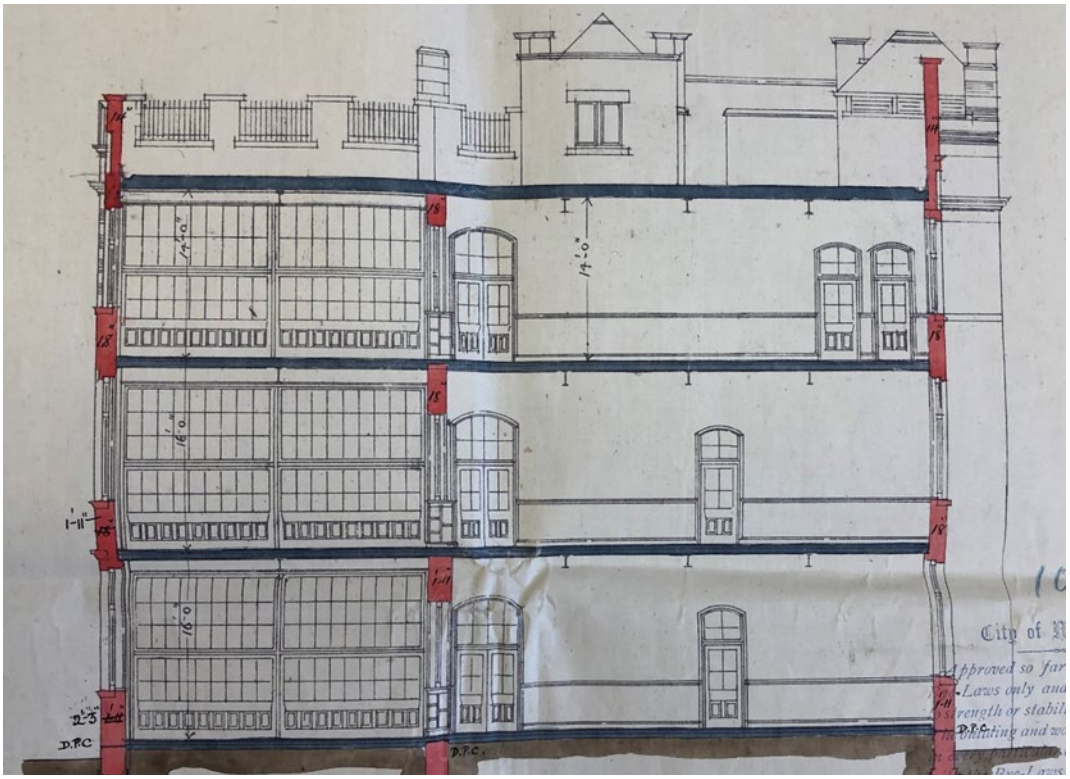


**Figure 4:** 1910 Proposed section of the school showing classrooms to the left (south), school halls to the right (north). The roof level illustrates the boys' playground. (Source: Manchester Archives)

The Interior of the school was designed to accommodate an infants' department to the ground floor, a girls' department to the first floor and boys' department to the second floor, each being separated from one another. Separate boys' and girls' entrances were located externally to the west and east elevations, leading into segregated boys' and girls' staircases.

The interior of the school was simple, with the only decoration being found in the treatment of the walls. To the corridors and staircases, full-height glazed brick was used in cream, turquoise and brown tones forming skirting, dado, dado rail and upper walls. In classroom this treatment only extended to dado rail level, with painted plaster above. To the school halls it appears full-height painted plaster was used with a painted timber dado rail.



**Figure 5:** 1930 – Aerial image of the Site, looking north-west, showing the original boys' rooftop playground. Source: Manchester Image Archive.

During the 1950s, the school was turned into the 'St. John's College for Further Education'. The college constructed a new, purpose-built building within the former girls' playground to the north of the Site, at Lower Hardman Street. During the early 1960s the college use ceased, and the building was utilised as a storage facility for the adjacent Granada Studios complex.

In June 1994 the building was Grade II listed, and in 2004 the building was converted into a boutique hotel, called the Great John Street Hotel. Changes included the insertion of a new principal entrance to the centre of the Great John Street elevation, the conversion of the classrooms into a reception area, and the introduction of mezzanine levels to form duplex bedroom suites within the former double-height classroom and school hall spaces. The former boys' playground to the roof formed the hotel's roof garden, terrace and bar with a large new single-storey roof extension constructed across the north and middle area pf the flat roof, with outdoor seating within the southern part of the roof.

In December 2020 listed building consent was granted for the refurbishment/alteration of the existing hotel and the construction of a new feature rooftop bar with curved roof system, replacing the existing, single-storey bar area, which is currently under construction.

The roof level of the building was consented to receive a new bar/events space which would be located on the site of the earlier, 2004 hotel bar and events space. The southernmost side of the roof level is to remain an area of open-air space which will be utilised with movable seating/tables for hotel and bar guests. This area was previously utilised as external seating with a fixed canopy attached to the 2004 rooftop extension, and a number of large free-standing umbrellas.




**Figure 6:** Looking south-east across the roof level as it appears currently – showing the demolition of all 2004 hotel bar structures and the construction of the consented framework for the proposed additions.




**Figure 7:** Looking north-west across the roof level as it appears currently from the location of one of the two proposed new canopy structures.

## 5. Significance Assessment

*Please refer to the submitted 2020 Heritage Statements by SLHA for a full assessment of significance of the Grade II listed building – 'St Johns College of Further Education'.*

This significance assessment uses recognised criteria to assess the heritage significance and interest of the Site. The assessment of significance accords with the requirements of the NPPF (2019) and uses Historic England's methodology outlined in its 2019 document, "Statements of Heritage Significance". Historic England's "Conservation Principles. Policies and Guidance," 2008, has also been utilised as part of the following assessment.

**High significance** relates to those parts or elements of the Site deemed to be of particularly special interest. These components are *fundamental* to the understanding of the building and its architectural design concept and play a major role in reflecting its historic, artistic/architectural or archaeological interest.

**Medium significance** relates to those components of the Site deemed to be of special interest. They are *important* to the understanding of the architectural design concept and play a considerable role in reflecting its historic, artistic/architectural or archaeological interest.

**Low significance** relates to those components of the Site deemed to be of more modest interest. They provide a relatively minor contribution to the understanding of the architectural design concept and a modest role in revealing its historic, artistic/architectural or archaeological interest.

**No significance/Detrimental** features and elements that do not contain any special interest. These can detract from the significance of the building and maybe evidence of modern or ad-hoc refurbishments, or poor craftsmanship.

The special architectural and historic interest of the Site is recognised by its Grade II listed designation. The below statement of significance provides further details and a summary of the Site's special interest:

- The building is located within the Castlefield Conservation Area and adjacent to the St. John's Street Conservation Area.
- The building yields **considerable historic interest** as it conveys the changes and continuing development in school building typology in Manchester post 1902.
- The building represents a good example of Manchester school building typology, which emerged in the Edwardian period following the 1902 education act. Despite the alterations made to the building since its initial hotel conversion, the retention of much of the original planform; the girls and boys separated entrances and staircases, and double height spaces allow for the Site to be understood as a former school.
- The building yields **low/considerable architectural/artistic interest** through its simple, and largely functional design.

**Elements considered to be of high significance include:**

- The remaining planform.
- The two segregated original staircases, designed to segregate boys from girls.
- The principal front elevation on Great John Street.
- All original windows and doors.
- Spatial quality of the original double height classrooms and school halls.
- Remaining open space to former roof playground (to the southern side), including cast iron railings, perimeter walls and chimney piers.
- Original glazed brick to former classrooms, staircases and corridors (now painted over).
- All remaining original glazed brick fireplaces.

**Elements considered as having Considerable Significance are:**

- The less decorative, and partially altered north, east and west elevations.

- Remaining original plaster dado rail and plastered walls to former ground floor infants' hall and adjacent corridors.
- Original, plain double doors to girls' staircase.

**Elements considered as having No Heritage Significance are:**

- All elements relating to the 2004 and current on-site hotel fit-out.

## 6. Proposals

The current proposals comprise the introduction of two retractable canvas canopies to the external rooftop seating area (refer to Figures 8-9 below).

Canopies

Following review of the operation of the hotel it has become clear that there is a requirement for the external roof bar spaces to be useable/comfortable all year around by the introduction of extendable canopies, which will be fixed to the consented new rooftop structure.

A number of options for the design and fixing locations were explored, with the chosen option comprising two contemporary, retractable, fabric canopies to be entirely cantilevered form the modern rooftop extension to allow for all-year-round rooftop bar usage for guests.

The canopies will have a static metallic lightweight frame that hosts a mechanically operable retractable fabric shading system, continuing the use of the bronze colour-palette at rooftop level, and ensuring that no impact will be made to any historic fabric of the Grade II listed building.

The current cantilevered canopy proposals ensure that the former boy's rooftop playground continues to be viewed with no vertical obstructions, allowing for fully, un-interrupted views across the former open-air playground, and maintaining a sense of the character of this originally open space.

The proposed canopies will not be fixed to any historic fabric and will be entirely cantilevered from the consented rooftop additions. The canopies will have a lightweight appearance due to the slimline nature of its components that echo those used in the consented rooftop additions, and which will be understood as an imperceptible continuation of those consented additions.

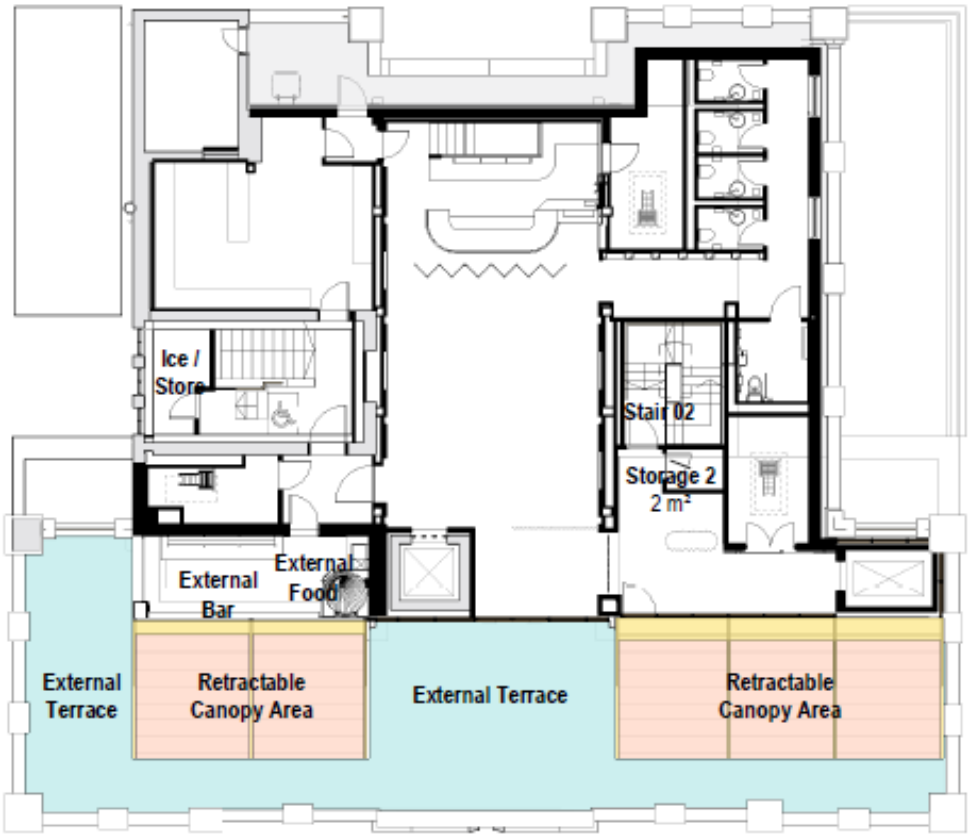



**Figure 8:** Proposed rooftop plan showing the location of the two retractable canopies shaded red. (Source: EPR Architects)



**Figure 9:** East elevation of the Great John Street Hotel, showing the side of the eastern canopy structure (bubbled red). Please note that this view is only seen fully on plan and not from the narrow, enclosed Little John Street. (Source: EPR Architects)

## 7. Heritage Impact

The proposed minor changes to the Grade II Listed Great John Street Hotel have arisen from further operational changes.

The proposed lightweight canopies will be fixed to the consented modern rooftop additions. The canopies' lack of vertical supports and their operable retraction allow for the lightweight canopies to be largely imperceptible from surrounding streets, which is aided by the narrow width of streets surrounding the building, the height of the building itself, and the set back level of the proposed structures.

The canopies will be understood and viewed as an extension to the existing consented extensions, with only fleeting sections being able to be obliquely glimpsed when passing by from isolated locations when moving kinetically around the surrounding streets, and will therefore have a neutral impact on the character and appearance of the Castlefield Conservation Area, a neutral/negligible adverse impact on the special interest of the Grade II listed Great John Street Hotel and no impact on St John Street Conservation Area or any surrounding heritage assets.

It is therefore considered that the proposals will result in a neutral/negligible adverse impact on the special architectural or historic interest heritage interest of the building. This statement addresses and accords with the relevant policies within the NPPF concerned with the historic environment (principally Section 16 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment).

As per the definition outlined in Appendix i below, a negligible adverse impact does not mean that there will be no physical or visual change, rather that the resultant difference would not diminish the value of the heritage assets' significant physical fabric, their settings or significance to any appreciable degree. Please refer to the planning statement by Euan Kellie for the planning benefits relating to the proposed scheme.

Please refer to Appendix i below for the criteria used in this Heritage Statement for assessing heritage impact.

Appendix i – Heritage Impact Assessment Criteria (developed from ICOMOS Guidance)

| Table 1: Criteria for defining the effect and degree of direct and indirect heritage impact | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Definition of magnitude and nature of heritage impact.** | **Direct heritage impacts**<br>**(physical alteration or change to the site's character)** | **Indirect heritage impact**<br>**(visual change to the experience or setting of the site and its context).** |
| **Major adverse Impact.**<br>*Substantial harm of this nature, which results in total loss of significance or fundamentally affects the significance of defined heritage assets, should normally be avoided.* | Development resulting in demolition of a significant historic fabric component which results in total loss of significance, or fundamental compromises the setting of a designated heritage asset. | Substantially harmful change to the fabric and character of a designated heritage asset, or the setting of the identified designated heritage assets.<br>Where the development severely erodes the heritage interest of the identified heritage assets in the view, or the ability to appreciate those values and thus results in total loss of significance. |
| **Moderate Adverse Impact.**<br>*Less-than-substantial harm will need to be demonstrably mitigated and justified by clear public benefits.* | Development resulting in extensive harmful alterations (but not total demolition) of a designated heritage asset or its setting. | Less than substantial harm to the fabric and character of a designated heritage asset, or the setting of the identified designated heritage assets.<br>Where the development erodes to a clearly discernible extent the heritage interest of the heritage assets in the view, or the ability to appreciate those values. |
| **Minor Adverse Impact.**<br>*The negative impact on the setting or overall character will need to be clearly balanced by appropriate mitigation.* | Development resulting in alterations to a designated heritage asset which result in minor compromise of its fabric or erosion of its character. | Minor compromise to the fabric and character of a designated heritage asset, or the setting of the identified designated heritage assets.<br>Where the development erodes to a minor extent the heritage interest of the assets in the view, or the ability to appreciate those values. |
| **Negligible adverse impact.**<br>*This does not mean that there will be no physical or visual change, rather that the resultant difference would not diminish the value of the heritage assets' significant physical fabric, their settings or significance to any appreciable degree.* | Development resulting in negligible direct impact on a designated heritage asset which results in the removal of a minor, original fabric component, but avoids diminishing its character and its special architectural or historic interest. | Negligible perceptible change to the character of a designated heritage asset, or the experience and understanding of its special interest.<br>The degree of change would alter, but not diminish, the intrinsic values of the identified heritage assets, or the experience and appreciation of the buildings or the designated area to any appreciable degree. |
| **Neutral Impact.**<br>*This does not necessarily mean that there will be no physical or visual change, rather that the resultant* | Development which comprises an imperceptible physical impact resulting in no apparent change or achieved by removing a component of no heritage value | Imperceptible change to the fabric and character of a designated heritage asset, or the setting of the identified designated heritage assets. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *difference will be imperceptible or appropriately balanced.* | which detracts from the special interest of the building fabric. | A neutral impact occurs when the development does not affect the values of the heritage assets in the view, or the ability to appreciate its significance. |
| **Negligible beneficial impact.**<br>*The resultant difference will be imperceptible but have a positive impact on the understanding or appreciation of the heritage asset.* | Development resulting in a negligible beneficial direct impact on a designated heritage asset which results in the removal of a minor non-original fabric component which is detracts from the character and its special architectural or historic interest. | Negligible perceptible change to the character of a designated heritage asset, or the experience and understanding of its special interest. The degree of change would imperceptibly enhance the intrinsic values of the identified heritage assets, or the experience and appreciation of the buildings or the designated area. |
| **Minor Beneficial Impact.**<br>*The proposed change would result in a demonstrable improvement to the overall character or setting of a heritage asset.* | Development resulting in alterations to a built heritage asset which deliver a minor beneficial physical impact or enhancement of the site's special interest. | Minor enhancement to the fabric and character of a designated heritage asset, or the setting of the identified designated heritage assets.<br>Where the development enhances to a minor extent the values of the heritage assets in the view, or the ability to appreciate its significance. |
| **Moderate Beneficial Impact.**<br>*The proposed change would result in a considerable improvement to the overall character and appreciation of a heritage asset with clear beneficial enhancement of its heritage interest.* | Development resulting in alterations to a built heritage asset resulting in moderate beneficial physical impact, or an enhancement of the site's character. | Evident improvement of the fabric and character of a designated heritage asset (or the setting of the identified designated heritage assets) resulting in an enhancement of its cultural heritage interest.<br>Moderate enhancement to the setting of the built heritage asset. Where the development will enhance to a clearly discernible extent the heritage interest of the heritage assets in the view, or the ability to appreciate its significance. |
| **Major beneficial Impact.**<br>*The proposed change would result in substantial improvement to the overall character and appreciation of a heritage asset, revealing and/or enhancing important characteristics of its heritage interest.* | Development resulting in restoration or alterations to a designated heritage asset which comprises substantial restoration of its fabric and historic character and an enhancement of its cultural heritage interest. | Substantial improvement of the fabric and character of a designated heritage asset (or the setting of the identified designated heritage assets) resulting in a significant enhancement of its cultural heritage interest.<br>Substantial restoration or enhancement of the setting of the built heritage asset where the development will enhance to a fundamental extent the heritage interest of the heritage assets in the view, or the ability to appreciate its significance. |