

# Heritage, Design, Access and Significance Statement

Manchester Oxford Road Station, Manchester, M1 6FU

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Heritage, Design, Access and Significance Statement (HDASS) supports an application for listed building consent for alterations to a passenger waiting area and former servery / kitchen within Manchester Oxford Road Station (MORS) to facilitate occupation by Costa as a coffee shop.
- 1.2. This would be a replacement and relocation of the existing Costa Coffee shop within the Railway Station for which listed building consent has previously been granted under planning reference 120703/LO/2018.
- 1.3. This Heritage Design and Access statement is structured as follows:
  - Section 2-** Describes the site;
  - Section 3-** Outlines the nature of the proposals;
  - Section 4-** Considers the impact of the proposals on issues relating to design and access;
  - Section 5-** Sets out the pertinent planning policy context; and
  - Section 6-** Justifies the proposed internal alterations.
- 1.4. Schedule 2, Part 8 The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) grants permitted development rights for 'development by railway undertakers on their operational land, required in connection with the movement of traffic by rail'. Network Rail, as the railway undertaker, have exercised their permitted development right to change the use of the unit to allow occupation by Costa as a coffee shop. Given that the customer information kiosk is internal and given the above permitted development, there is no requirement for planning permission for the alterations or to allow Costa's use. Likewise, given that the kiosk is internal and enclosed land there is no requirement for express advertisement consent.

## 2. Site Description

- 2.1. MORS was opened in 1849 as the headquarters of the Manchester, South Junction and Altrincham Railway. Subsequently to this, the Station was re-built between 1958 and 1960 and subsequently altered in 1969 and 1971. MORS is Grade II listed under entry number 1255053 and was added to the national list in 1995. The listing description is extensive and therefore, rather than being repeated here, is included at Appendix 1. It is clear from the listing description that much of the heritage value of MORS centres around it being a rare and high quality example of post-war pre-fabricated station architecture. This is reflected in the listing description which identifies five reasons for the designation. These are replicated below:
1. *'Architectural interest: it is one of the best post-war railway stations in the country, with a striking and highly elegant design constructed of laminated timber;*
  2. *Design interest: the station's unique design employs a high level of sophistication and innovation through its use of conoid shells supported on a cruck-like frame, which not only create a dramatic aesthetic form, but endow the building with a light and spacious interior;*
  3. *Architect: it was designed by Max Clendinning of British Railways' Midland Region and Hugh Tottenham of the Timber Development Association, and represents Tottenham's finest work;*
  4. *Technological interest: it is the most dramatic example of the use of timber-shell roofs in England; utilising techniques pioneered and developed by the Timber Development Association; and*
  5. *Rarity: it is the only large station in Britain to have been re-built in prefabricated materials.'*
- 2.2. The application relates to a current passenger waiting area and former kitchen / serverly which sits to the rear of the waiting area. The unit sits within MORS to the southeast of Costa's existing unit and only visible and accessible from inside the MORS building.
- 2.3. A series of photographs of the unit's interior are included as part of the submission which show the interior to have been refurbished on a number of occasions previously such that there is little original historic fabric whilst the on and off nature of the use means that its interior is in a poor condition subject to little ongoing maintenance. The exterior, however, is formed of the timber that is typical of MORS and is in situ both in the interior and exterior of MORS.

## 3. Policy context

- 3.1. This Section of this Heritage, Design and Access Statement will consider the pertinent national and local planning policy.

### **National Policy**

- 3.2. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2023) which is supported by National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) (March 2014) replaces a series of previously adopted national planning policy documents.
- 3.3. Chapter 16 of the NPPF relates to conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework determines that local planning authorities (LPA) should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, particularly where they are at risk of neglect.. LPAs should conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance and recognise that they are an irreplaceable resource.
- 3.4. Paragraph 201 recognises that Local Planning Authorities should consider the impact of the proposals in terms of their impact on the value of the heritage asset whilst Paragraph 205 states that the greater the heritage value of the heritage asset, the more weight should be given to its conservation.

### **Local Planning Policy**

- 3.5. Whilst the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan 2022-2039 to cover nine Greater Manchester local authorities, it is considered to be of such a high and strategic level not to be applicable to the consideration and determination of this planning application.
- 3.6. The application site is located within Manchester City Council. The planning policy context is formed by the Core Strategy (July 2012) and saved policies from the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (July 1995) which together form the Local Development Framework (hereinafter LDF).

Policy CC9 of the Core Strategy relates to design and heritage, requiring that development either preserves or enhances identified heritage assets.

Policy EN3 of the Core Strategy relates specifically to heritage. Much like Policy CC9, it supports development that compliments heritage features and preserves or enhances the historic environment.

Saved Policy DC19.1 relates to Listed Buildings, seeking to preserve and enhance the setting of listed buildings whilst resisting proposals that would have an adverse effect on its architectural or heritage character.

## 4. Proposals

- 4.1. Shown in more detail in the plans submitted as part of the application, the proposals are for internal and external alterations to unit to facilitate occupation by Costa for the sale of hot drinks and cold food.
- 4.2. As noted in Section 1, the application kiosk is enclosed within MORS and therefore planning permission is not required for alterations to the exterior of the unit. In this sense, the term 'External Alterations' is used to describe works to the exterior of the kiosk. Likewise, by virtue of the unit's location within MORS, advertisement consent is not required for the installation of any signage.

### External Alterations

- 4.3. Any alterations referred to as 'External Alterations' do not refer to the outside of MORS itself, but to the outside of this particular unit within MORS building.
- 4.4. A significant element of the external alterations relate to the display of Costa's signage. It is proposed to install a an aluminium non-illuminated fascia tray centrally above the entrance door, an opening hours vinyl, and a double sided digital poster sign at the entrance point into the unit, as well as re-decorating and rebranding the existing timber projecting sign.
- 4.5. The exterior of much of the unit is fading to various degrees and, by virtue of the large number of people that pass by it on a daily basis, its condition is starting to deteriorate. The proposals seek to respond to this by doing any ad-hoc repairs / restoration that are required, re-staining the exterior, and making good.

### Internal Alterations

- 4.6. The works to the interior of the unit are required to allow for is conversion from, what is presently, a waiting area and kitchen servery, to allow occupation of the unit as a coffee shop by Costa.
- 4.7. This consists of a mix of removing much of the interior of the unit, none of which, as shown in the photographs submitted as part of the application, is original historic fabric, instead consisting of modern additions over an extended period of time reflecting how the way the unit has been used has changed over time. This includes various internal partitions which, again, are modern and have been added over time.
- 4.8. Internally, this consists of a mix of new ceiling, floor and wall treatments, as well as the insulation of the counter, servery, and other equipment to allow for use of the unit as a coffee shop.

## 5. Design and Access

### Access

- 5.1. The proposals will have no impact on access to MORS, nor will they impact the ability of passengers to move within the station.

### Amount

- 5.2. This is not applicable given that the proposals do not include the creation of any new floorspace. Instead, the proposals seek to make use of existing vacant floorspace.

### Layout

- 5.3. The proposals seek to fit the kiosk to match Costa's brand and allow for the full menu of goods to be offered. Issues relating to the layout of the unit are shown in the plans submitted as part of this application and justified in the following section.

### Scale

- 5.4. The proposals seek to re-fit an existing space to allow Costa's occupation. No changes to the scale of the unit are proposed.

### Landscape

- 5.5. There are no landscape proposals that require assessment.

### Appearance

- 5.6. The changes are considered to be appropriate to the character of the building and preserving its listed status. Again, issues relating to the appearance of the unit are shown in the plans submitted as part of this application, submitted in the previous section and justified in the following section.

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## Appendix 1 – Listing Description

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### **Summary of Building**

Railway station building and platform structures, 1958-60, by Max Clendinning of British Railways' Midland Region with Hugh Tottenham of the Timber Development Association. Laminated-timber structure of three conoid shells, with hardwood strip ceilings to the shell roofs and canopies. Single-storey. .

### **Reasons for Designation**

Manchester Oxford Road Station, including platform structures, is designated at Grade II for the following principal reasons:

- Architectural interest: it is one of the best post-war railway stations in the country, with a striking and highly elegant design constructed of laminated timber;
- Design interest: the station's unique design employs a high level of sophistication and innovation through its use of conoid shells supported on a cruck-like frame, which not only create a dramatic aesthetic form, but endow the building with a light and spacious interior;
- Architect: it was designed by Max Clendinning of British Railways' Midland Region and Hugh Tottenham of the Timber Development Association, and represents Tottenham's finest work;
- Technological interest: it is the most dramatic example of the use of timber-shell roofs in England; utilising techniques pioneered and developed by the Timber Development Association;
- Rarity: it is the only large station in Britain to have been re-built in prefabricated materials.

### **History**

The creation of British Railways in 1948 amalgamated four companies: the Great Western Railway (GWR), London, Midland & Scottish Railway (LMS), London & North Eastern Railway (LNER) and Southern Railway (SR). Each company had its own architects' department, and this did not change after nationalisation. Leslie Martin established the LMS as the 'cradle of prefabrication' when he designed three stations in 1945, which was followed by his successors adopting a lightweight steel system for a series of small stations north of Crewe when the lines between London, Manchester and Liverpool began to be electrified in 1957.

Manchester Oxford Road Station, which was constructed in 1958-60 on top of the Manchester South Junction & Altrincham Railway viaduct and replaced an earlier station of 1874, was the only large-scale station in England rebuilt using prefabricated methods. The station building and platform structures were designed by Max Clendinning of British Railways' Midland Region in conjunction with the engineer, Hugh Tottenham of the Timber Development Association who had been researching timber-shell roofs since 1956; the building's lightweight roof structure partly being designed to reduce loads on the viaduct beneath. Following his work with British Railways' Midland Region, Clendinning went on to become a successful interior and furniture designer.

Since its construction the station has been subject to improvements works, including the installation of new passenger shelters and disabled toilets, the erection of a new customer information point, and re-surfacing of the concourse area and footbridge steps, predominantly in the early-C21.

### Details

Railway station building and platform structures, 1958-60, by Max Clendinning of British Railways' Midland Region with Hugh Tottenham of the Timber Development Association. Laminated-timber structure of three conoid shells with hardwood strip ceilings to the shell roofs and canopies. Single-storey.

**DESCRIPTION:** the main station building is covered by three shell roofs of diminishing size (the largest being at the eastern front and the smallest at the western rear) that range between 13m and 29m in span and are supported on a cruck-like frame. The front (east) elevation is reminiscent of the styling of Sydney Opera House and has a recessed, glazed upper section, underneath which lies the main entrance and eastern end of the booking office. The station's booking office, buffet, toilets and staff facilities are constructed of timber and concrete, with the two former facilities forming a lozenge-shaped island along the southern side of the main building.

The main building sits between two railway tracks with tall, curved canopies that extend out over the platforms and are supported by similarly styled crucks to the main building. Similar canopies incorporating a central spine with raised, arched glazing cover the station's two central island platforms, which, along with a far platform, are accessed via an enclosed footbridge, which is not of special interest. All the canopies have lozenge shaped skylights that echo the lozenge shape of the booking office and buffet in the main building, and deep fascias to their front edge. The main concourse incorporates an original semi-circular, concrete and timber bench and two curved, back-to-back timber benches exist to the central island platforms. Two sympathetically styled waiting shelters of c2011 located on the central island platforms and far platform are not of special interest.