

METHODIST CENTRAL HALL, MANCHESTER

Heritage Statement & Impact Assessment

Chambers Conservation Ltd.

Issue

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DALE STREET
Travelling
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FIYAIOL
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1.0 Introduction

1.1.1 Chambers Conservation Ltd have been appointed to write this brief Heritage Statement to help inform the development of the site, which is the subject of an Options Appraisal being developed by OMI Architects.

1.1.2 This report is intended as a basic summary to inform the development and conservation approach to the site, it is not a fully detailed assessment of all the aspects of the site.

1.1.3 A Heritage Impact Assessment has been prepared, drawing up on the Heritage Statement's conclusions and on OMI Architect's proposed planning drawings (March 2024).

1.1.4 It is understood that the site is currently owned by the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes (TMCP). Chambers Conservation are appointed via OMI Architects.

2.0 Context

2.1 Description of the Heritage Asset

2.1.1 The Methodist Central Hall is a substantial late Victorian building (dated 1886), designed by the architect George Woodhouse of Bolton. The original Central Hall was substantially damaged during the Blitz, and extensive repairs were undertaken allowing the building to be re-opened in 1953.

2.1.2 The building sits in Manchester's Northern Quarter, an area which is well known for its art, music and youth culture and wide variety of independent shops, bars and restaurants.

2.1.3 The primary façade is on Oldham Street, with a secondary façade off Dale Street. These two facades are of stone construction with an Egyptian-revival character.

2.1.4 Access to the rear elevation of the building is via Spear Street. This elevation is of brick construction, with a bay of stone construction where the corner meets Dale Street.

2.1.5 The Methodist Central Hall is unlisted but sits in the Stevenson Square Conservation Area. The building is also noted as a building of interest in the



Figure 1 – View of Central Hall from corner of Oldham Street and Dale Street (Google Maps, 2023)



Figure 2 – View of Central Hall from further south along Oldham Street (Google Maps, 2023)

English Heritage Report '*Manchester's Norther Quarter – The greatest meer village'.*

2.2 Surroundings

2.2.1 The building sits in a primarily retail focused area, with a variety of shops, food outlets and services nearby. The Arndale Centre sits further west down Church Street, off Dale Street.

2.2.2 Further south down Oldham Street sits Piccadilly Gardens, an open plan green space within the centre of the city.

2.2.3 Next door to the building further east along Dale Street sits a group of trees within an outdoor eating space called Mala.

2.2.4 Opposite the Central Hall on Oldham St. is Affleck's Arcade, an indoor market with collection of independent traders that focus on young people.

2.2.5 The building is an equal distance from Manchester Victoria to the north west and Manchester Piccadilly to the south east, about a 10 minute walk.

3.0 History

3.1 Context

3.1.1 The city of Manchester can be dated back to the Roman fort Mamucium, located near a crossing point of the River Medlock.[1] However, the area that the Central Hall sits on was not developed until the 17th century and was previously agricultural land.

3.1.2 Today the building is known as being in the Northern Quarter, an area of Manchester that is focused on Oldham Street and Piccadilly Gardens. The term 'Northern Quarter' was coined in the 1990's as part of a regeneration scheme of this area of Manchester.[2]

3.1.3 Oldham Street was described as an "*ill-kept muddy lane, held in place on one side by it's wild hedgerows*" in the early 18th Century.[3] The first known record of buildings in this area is shown on the first Town Directory of Manchester, which was published in 1772, showing a collection of buildings on Tib Street and Oldham Street. By 1794, a map by William Green shows the whole Northern Quarter as a developed urban area (see figure 5).[4]

[1] https://manchesterhistory.net/manchester/history/earlyhistory.html
[2] https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/manchesters-northern-quarter/manchesters-northern-quarter/



Figure 3 – View of Central Hall from further east along Dale Street (Google Maps, 2023)



Figure 4 – View of Central Hall from corner of Dale Street and Spear Street (Google Maps, 2023)

[3] https://modernmooch.com/2016/01/25/oldham-street-manchester/
[4] https://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/511/conservation_areas/1208/stevenson_square_conservation_area/2#:~:text=The%20road%20took%20its%20name,replaced%20the%20Chapel%20in%201885

3.1.4 Oldham Street is named after Adam Oldham, a wealthy felt maker and associate of John Wesley, the founder of Methodism. At this time, Oldham Street was a privately owned track, but in 1772 it was given to the public.[5]

3.1.5 In the 1780's, the surrounding land was owned by Sir Ashton Lever, but he was under pressure from property developers to sell the land due to the ever-growing popularity of Manchester. Conceding to the pressure, he then sold the land to William Stevenson.[6]

3.1.6 Stevenson went on to sell the land piece by piece to entrepreneurs, many of whom are immortalised in the various street names. It was intended that the area become a residential settlement, but it soon became commercialised as the industrial revolution took over Manchester.[7]

3.1.7 Manchester was at the forefront of the industrial revolution and is often considered the first truly 'industrial' city. The Northern Quarter was at the centre of this, and several cotton mills were opened in this area. Throughout the 19th century, the area became popular with shoppers due to its close relationship with textiles and fashion.[8]

3.1.8 The decline of the cotton trade in the late 20th century saw the closure of many mills across the city, leading to wider decline and displacement of communities. Alongside this, the focus after WW2 was to re-build the city centre, meaning areas further outside became secondary spaces.[9]

3.1.9 Improvements in public transport in the city centre, such as trams and trains in the 19th Century, resulted in many residents moving out of the city and into the suburbs, reducing the population in the city centre.[10]

3.1.10 Alongside this, the nearby Arndale Centre opened in 1975, which changed the way visitors shopped and reduced demand on the high street. The development of the Arndale led to a decline in demand for retail space in the surrounding areas.

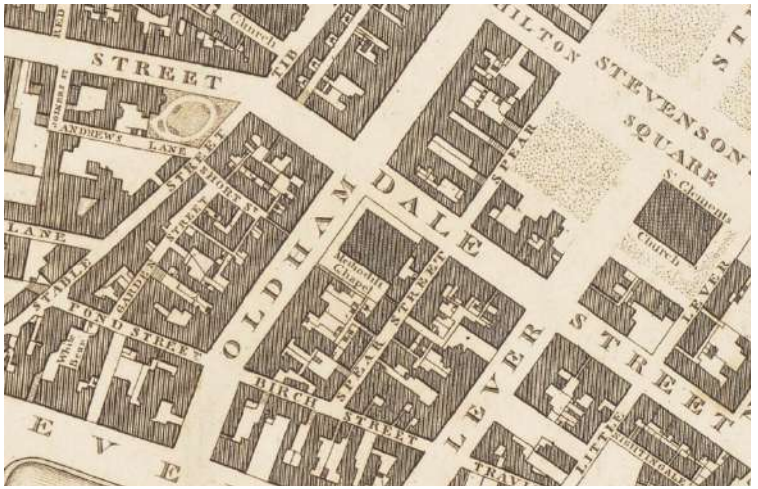


Figure 5 - Map showing the Northern Quarter in 1794 drawn by William Green. The original Oldham Street Chapel is shown on this map (The John Rylands Library).



Figure 6 – Same view as figure 5 on an OS Map from 1848 (National Library of Scotland).

[5-7] https://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/511/conservation_areas/1208/stevenson_square_conservation_area/2#:~:text=The%20road%20took%20its%20name,replaced%20the%20Chapel%20in%201885
[8-9] https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/manchesters-northern-quarter/manchesters-northern-quarter/
[10] Banks, J. (1986) *The Story So Far*. Manchester: The Manchester and Salford Methodist Mission.

3.1.11 The IRA bombing of the Arndale Centre in June 1996 devastated the city centre, and over 1,200 buildings were impacted by the blast. However, Richard Williams was in Manchester at the time, and noticed that *"after the bombing, was a widespread enthusiasm to repopulate the central city on an unprecedented scale".*[11] This resulted in large areas of the city being re-developed, including the area around the Central Hall.

3.1.12 Today, the surrounding area is still focused on commercial, but low rent prices have attracted a variety of independent shops, bars, and restaurants.

3.2 John Wesley and Methodism in Manchester

3.2.1 Methodism was founded by Church of England minister John Wesley (1703 – 1791) and his brother Charles (1707 – 1788) whilst they were studying at Oxford University. Methodism aimed to reform the Church of England from inside but resulted in the creation of a new movement. They became known as 'Methodists' because of the methodical way in which they carried out their Christian faith.[12]

3.2.2 The first Methodist society in Manchester was formed in 1747 but had no permanent home. The first proper Methodist chapel was opened in 1751 in Birchin Lane off Church Street. However, within two years of construction the chapel had a congregation of over 250 people, and it was decided that a new, larger chapel needed to be built.[13]

3.2.3 The popularity of Methodism grew throughout the late 18th Century, particularly because of Wesley's newly built City Road Chapel in London. In 1765 Manchester joined London, Bristol and Leeds as a 'conference town', a town where the annual Methodist conference, the most senior body of the Methodist church, could be held. As a result, the Methodists of Manchester wanted a similarly impressive chapel, and William Brocklehurst, a wealthy cotton merchant and leading Manchester Methodist, bought the land on the corner of Oldham St. and Dale St., where the Central Hall sits today

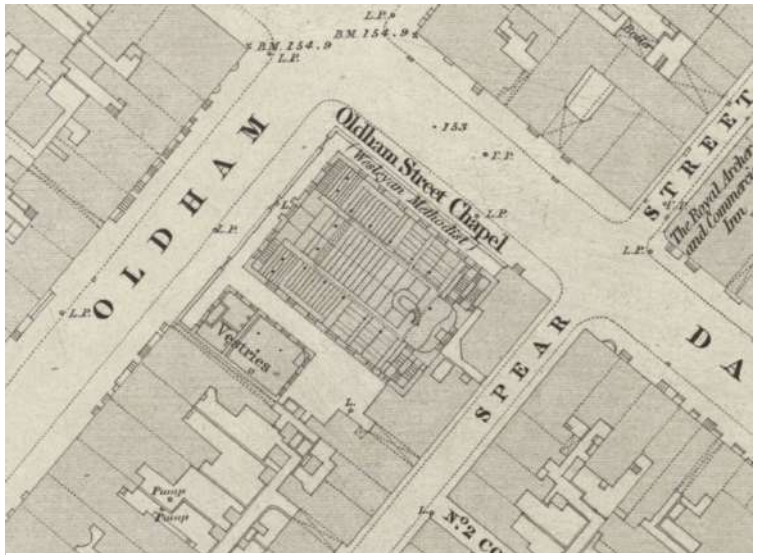


Figure 7 – OS map showing plan of Oldham Street Chapel in 1849 (National Library of Scotland).



Figure 8 – View of the original Oldham Street Chapel in 1781 (from The Story So Far, John Banks)

[11] https://placesjournal.org/article/manchester-after-engels/?cn-reloaded=1
[12] https://www.britannica.com/topic/Methodism#:~:text=Methodism%2C%2018th%2Dcentury%20movement%20founded,developed%20into%20an%20autonomous%20church
[13] Manchester and Salford Methodist Mission (1981) *Tell it how it was.* Manchester: Manchester and Salford Methodist Mission.

3.2.4 John Wesley opened the new chapel on the Good Friday 30th March 1781, and *"on easter Sunday he records administering communion to 1100-1200 people".*[15]

3.2.5 In contrast to the Birchin Lane chapel, the new Oldham Street Chapel was decorative and embellished. One preacher at the time declared that "*Birchin Lane was only the tabernacle in the wilderness, to be worshipped until the temple should be built".*[16] As a result, the Birchin Lane chapel became redundant, and the site was sold some 30 years later.

3.2.6 The Oldham Street Chapel consisted of a "*two storey brick box*", although some effort was made to decorate the building by adding "*pinnacles to the corners, battlements along the gable and parapet, Gothic type glazing to the windows and almost Oriental decoration to the entrance doorway and central window*".[17]

3.2.7 Inside, there was more decoration – *"a gallery ran around three sides, fronted by elaborately carved gothic panels, the three-decker pulpit was similarly decorated, whilst suspended from the walls were several shields emblazoned with the national coat of arms".*[18]

3.2.8 Initially, the Methodist services at the Chapel were carefully planned to avoid clashing with services at the Parish Church, to encourage people who also supported the Church of England. However, as Methodism became more popular in Manchester, more places of worship needed to be built. This included Gravel Lane Chapel in Salford, which was focused on people who wanted *"a separate existence for Methodism and from Christmas Day 1791 services were held in Church Hours".* [19]

3.2.9 However, due to the improvements in transport, the richer members of the congregation began to move to the suburbs and out of the city centre. As a result, new chapels were built in these areas, namely Grosvenor Street and Oxford Road. However, this resulted in the chapel in Oldham Street being surrounded by "*stifling alleys, reeking gin palaces, and by slatternly and dishonoured women, and sallow-faced, degraded men…".*[20] By the 1870's, it was noted that "*far more pews were unoccupied than filled*".[21]



Figure 9 – Painting of Central Hall in 1886 (Methodist Central Hall, Manchester)



Figure 10 – External view of the Central Hall, undated (Methodist Central Hall, Manchester)

[15-19] Manchester and Salford Methodist Mission (1981) Tell it how it was. Manchester: Manchester and Salford Methodist Mission.
[20] Banks, J. (1986) *The Story So Far*. Manchester: The Manchester and Salford Methodist Mission.
[21] Manchester and Salford Methodist Mission (1981) Tell it how it was. Manchester: Manchester and Salford Methodist Mission.

3.2.10 Methodism in Manchester was historically aimed at the middle-class, who could afford to rent pews and support the work of the mission. However, "*slowly*, *the neighbourhood changed its character. Shops and warehouses replaced houses, as the middle class abandoned the city centre".*[22] Now, the reduced congregation mainly consisted of workers, and few of the poorer society were encouraged into methodism. With its dwindling congregation and unsavoury surroundings, it was decided that something needed to be done.

3.3 The Central Hall

3.3.1 It is noted that "*the decline in congregations and membership accelerated in the 1870's until by the end of the decade it was clear that the chapel could not continue in its old form".*[23]

3.3.2 There were many opinions on what should happen to the Oldham Street chapel. Due to the city centre location, some thought the land should be sold off, and *"a more modest premises might be found nearby for the small congregation and the money used for other purposes".*[24] John Bedford, Chairman of the District, had a different view. He suggested a new scheme that would provide:

- *"A chapel to seat 600 for the present congregation and for lectures on Theology, Ecclesiastical history and Methodist doctrine.*
- *A hall, dividable by screens, to seat up to 1,500 for district meetings and meetings of a religious, philanthropic, or scientific kind.*
- *Rooms for the Oldham Street Society*
- *Rooms for the agents of the Wesleyan Lay Home Mission and certain caring agencies*
- *Room for the Chapel Committee*
- *Room for the Connexional Sunday School Union*
- *A library and reading room".*[25]

[22-23] Manchester and Salford Methodist Mission (1981) Tell it how it was. Manchester: Manchester and Salford Methodist Mission.
[24-25] Banks, J. (1986) *The Story So Far*. Manchester: The Manchester and Salford Methodist Mission.

3.3.3 There was some resistance to the scheme suggested by Bedford, and a meeting was held in 1875 with Trustees from around Manchester. They concluded that the proposal could go ahead, but with certain stipulations. These included:

- *"First, that on a portion of the site a Church with vestries should be built, plus warehouses and shops to supply revenue to the Circuit, and vested exclusively in the Oldham Street Circuit.*
- *Second, that the management of such shops and warehouses should be in the hands of the Trust.*
- *Third, that £700 a year be guaranteed to the Circuit.".*[26]

3.3.4 Once these resolutions were agreed, it was decided that the build would go ahead. The proposal became known as the 'Central Hall', and was a new type of religious building that reflected the changing nature of the city and its people. Alongside the accommodation within the building, shops were built at ground floor level which would provide income for the Central Hall, reflecting the more commercialised nature of this building.

3.3.5 The final services at the Oldham Street Chapel were held on Thursday, February 1st 1883 (see figure 12). The first stones for the new Central Hall were laid in 1885, and the building was completed the following year.

3.3.6 Whilst the Central Hall was being built, Rev. Samuel Francis Collier was responsible for the small congregation at the former Oldham Street Chapel, who were in the Lever Street Sunday School temporarily until the new Central Hall was completed.

3.3.7 Despite excitement within the Methodist Church for the Central Hall, it is said that Samuel Collier "*never once…did he go inside the hoarding which surrounded the big building being put up on Oldham Street. It was not for him, and his curiosity was not aroused. Then, Henry J. Pope proposed to conference that Collier should be the man for the job. Many objected but Pope carried the day. Collier, in the meanwhile, had discovered what God wanted him to do. On his first day at Lever Street he had taken morning service. In the afternoon he taught a Sunday School Class and ventured out into the streets to an open-air meeting held by Mr Sackett. There he saw the teeming poor and the Manchester Mission was born".* [27]

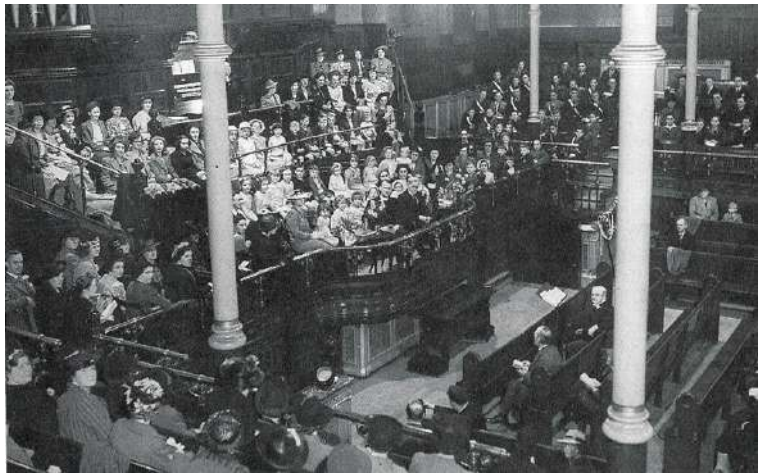


Figure 11 – Interior of the Central Hall in 1940 (from The Story So Far, John Banks)

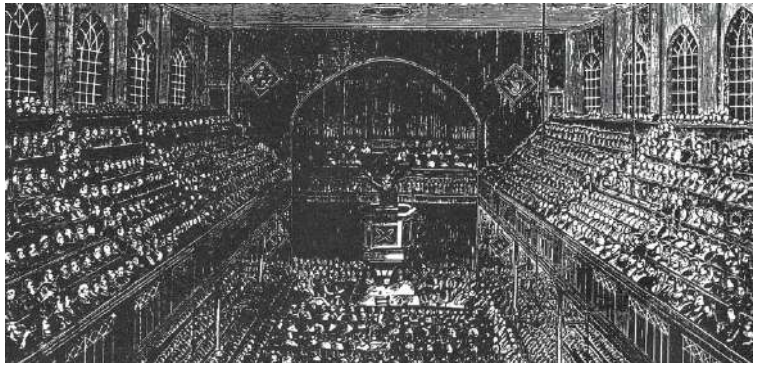


Figure 12 – Final service at the Oldham Street Chapel, 1883 (from The Story So Far, John Banks)

[26-27] Banks, J. (1986) *The Story So Far*. Manchester: The Manchester and Salford Methodist Mission.

3.4 Samuel Francis Collier

3.4.1 Samuel Francis Collier was born in Runcorn in 1855. His father was a grocer, alongside being an evangelist and local preacher. He had previously been a preacher for the Primitive Methodist Church, but transferred to the Wesleyan Methodist church when Samuel was born.

3.4.2 By 1875, Samuel was accredited as a preacher. He had previously considered teaching or the law but was offered as a Candidate for the Ministry in 1877. Throughout his early years, he had an "*unremarkable career"* and was described as "*no great preacher".*[28]

3.4.3 Despite this, Samuel then became responsible for the small number of people who were part of the original congregation of the Oldham Street Chapel. It is said "*he hesitated, but in September 1885 [he] found himself in charge of a Church of 45 members".*[29] It is reported that he took "*these few…out onto the streets. They held open air meetings and raided public houses, they talked to the cabbies and horse bus drivers in Stevenson Square".*[30]

3.4.4 In October 1886, the Central Hall was complete, and Rev. Henry J. Pope put Samuel up for the role of Superintendent, against "*the better judgement of many wiseacres in the conference".*[31] It was not till November that Collier was allowed to preach, as many 'star' preachers were asked before him, to help encourage visitors. Allegedly a list of 'star' preachers had been drawn up to replace him if he failed. However, Collier was successful, and the Manchester and Salford Methodist Mission was born.

3.4.5 Under Collier's direction, the Mission grew substantially. Collier prided himself on an "open door" policy, meaning that *"there was no hinderance to anyone (even a drunken man) in finding an entrance".*[32] The phrase 'Need not Creed' became a tagline for the mission, and Collier was determined to help all that turned to him in any way possible. He had a small team of men who helped him run the Mission, due to the enormity of the task at hand.



Figure 13 – Samuel Francis Collier (from The Story So Far, John Banks)



Figure 14 – The Mission's first emblem (from The Story So Far, John Banks)

[28-32] Banks, J. (1986) *The Story So Far*. Manchester: The Manchester and Salford Methodist Mission.

3.4.6 One of Collier's key skills was his ability *"to press others, and their money, into the service of the Mission and the poor".*[33] Despite this, Collier's salary was no higher than any other minister. Alongside encouraging wealthy patrons to give to the Mission, Collier had other tactics to make money. He introduced the idea of a Saturday night 'penny concert', which showed both films and live entertainment within the Central Hall. It is reported that people used to pass by their local parish churches to head towards the Central Hall in the city, where there was more going on.

3.4.7 Collier went on to be Superintendent until 1913, when he was appointed to President of the Conference after his old friend Rev. Henry J. Pope passed away. When WW1 was over, it was decided that Collier would travel to Australia to celebrate the Centenary of Methodism in their country. He continued to work throughout and after this trip, but his declining health resulted in his death in 1921.

3.4.8 Due to the popularity of the Central Hall, the building began to overcrowd, and it could no longer accommodate Sunday services. The services were moved to the Free Trade Hall until 1910, when the new Albert Central Hall was built on Peter Street.

3.4.9 The Albert Hall was designed to function the same way as the Oldham Street Central Hall, with a large 2000 seat central chapel alongside smaller ancillary spaces, such as a reading room and boys and girls club rooms. The building also held other events, such as concerts and political speeches.[34]

3.4.10 After Collier's death, the Central Hall continued to thrive and continue Samuel Collier's legacy. Rev. Herbert Cooper took over the role of Superintendent, as he had done when Collier was travelling in Australia.

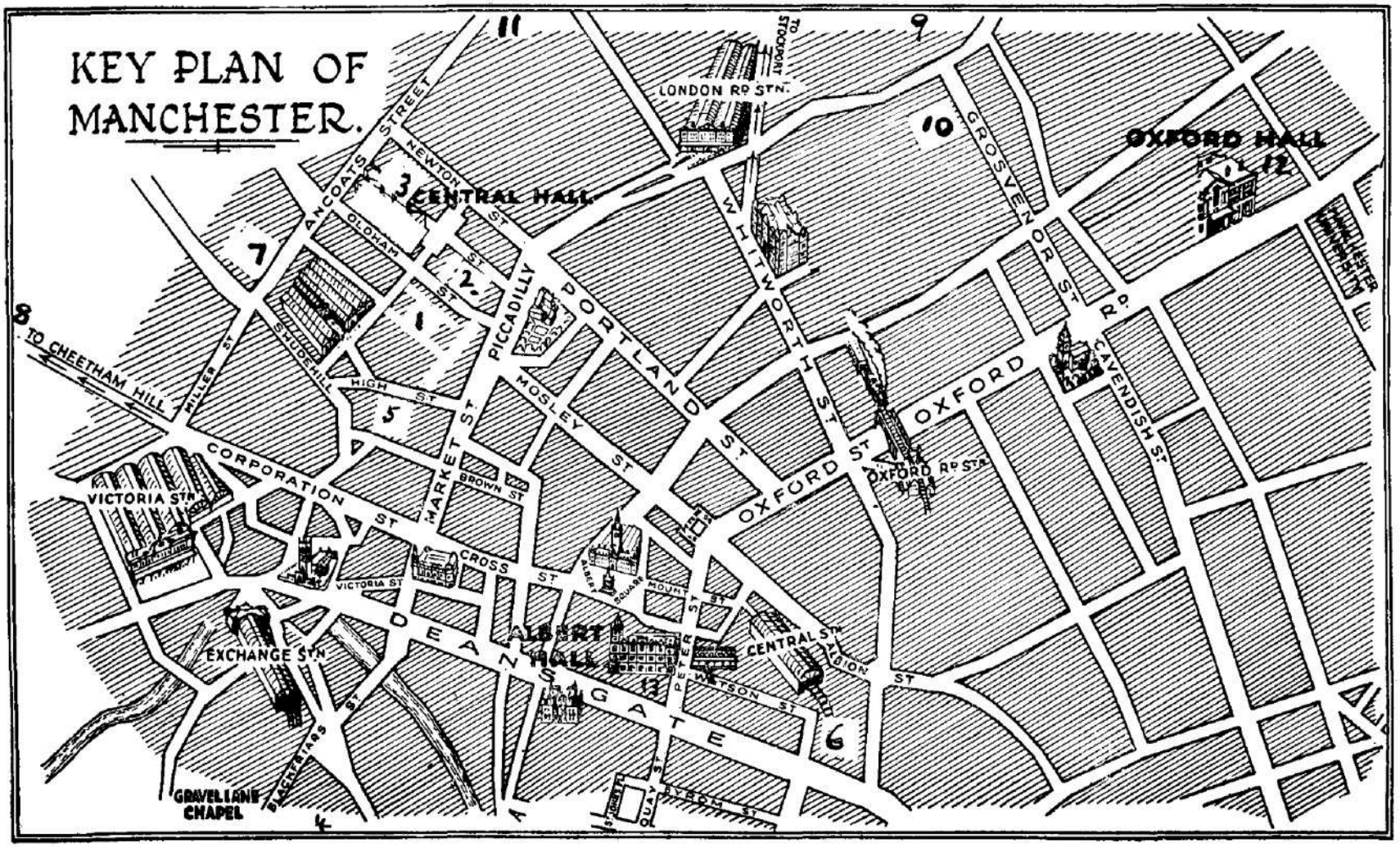


Figure 15 – Collier in his study (from The Story So Far, John Banks)



Figure 16 – Albert Hall on Peter Street (Manchester Libraries)

[33] Banks, J. (1986) *The Story So Far*. Manchester: The Manchester and Salford Methodist Mission.
[34] https://www.alberthallmanchester.com/the-history-of-the-albert-hall-manchester/



1 Birchin Lane 1750 2 Oldham Street 1781 3 Lever Street Sunday School 1787 4 Gravel Lane 1791 5 Mount Zion (MNC) 1797
6 Great Bridgewater Street 1800 7 Swan Street 1808 8 Cheetham Hill 1817 9 Chancery Lane 1817 10 Grosvenor Street 1820
11 Ancoats 1826 12 Oxford Street 1826 13 Albert Hall

From the Methodist Conference Handbook, 1942, adapted.

Figure 17 – Plan showing all Methodist related buildings in Manchester by the start of the 20th Century (The Origin of Methodism in Manchester)

3.5 After the Blitz

3.5.1 The Central Hall continued to function as Collier intended for the next few decades. However, in 1941 an incendiary bomb fell and destroyed the entire rear section of the hall.

3.5.2 The bomb fell at roughly midnight on Whitsunday 1941. It is said that *"almost everything, except the basement rooms, and some of the shops and offices, was destroyed".*[35] The congregation quickly got together to help where they could, but the building remained empty and open to the elements until for at least another decade before the re-build began.

3.5.3 Unfortunately, many of the historic records of the mission were destroyed in the fire, resulting in the loss of many of the early records regarding the early chapel.

3.5.4 Local builders were employed for the reconstruction of the hall, which was extensive and involved new concrete and steel beams throughout. On 25th November 1953, the foundation stone was laid by the Earl of Derby, and the building was opened a year later.

3.5.5 In contrast to the Oldham Street Chapel, the new Main Hall could only hold about 600 people, rather than the original 1200, and it was rotated 90 degrees from the original design. However, this made *"possible the construction of other useful rooms".*[36] At ground floor, retail units were built which could help to supplement the income of the Central Hall. The construction of the Morning Chapel was also gifted to the mission from American Methodism.

3.5.6 Towards the end of the 20th century, the area began to struggle due to the building of retail centres such as the nearby Arndale Centre. Industrial decline led to a reduction in population and hence a reduced demand for the associated retail space. The Methodist Central Hall was still used as a standard church, but the area had a lot of derelict units and one of the Central Hall units was empty for a period.

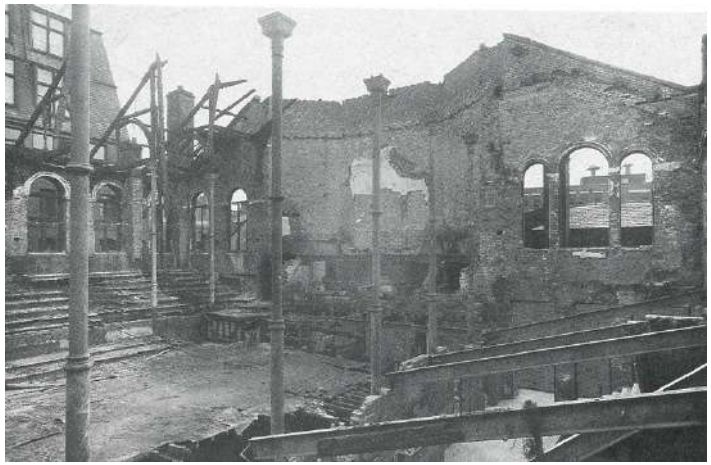


Figure 18 – Image of the hall after the bombing (from The Story So Far, John Banks)



Figure 19 – Image of the interior of the hall after the bombing (Methodist Central Hall, Manchester)

[35-36] Banks, J. (1986) *The Story So Far*. Manchester: The Manchester and Salford Methodist Mission.

3.5.7 In 1971, the Methodist Central Hall decided to allow the various spaces to be rented for different community functions, rather than just a focus on Methodism. This provided income for the hall, which allowed it to support itself over the coming decades. It is understood that the first-floor rooms along Oldham Street were connected to the retail units below, but these were taken back by the Central Hall in the 1990's to become spaces available for hire.

3.5.8 The surrounding area also improved due to the creation of the 'Northern Quarter' – a term coined to help regenerate the area and give it a new identity. Today, this area is known for its wide variety of independent shops, restaurants, and bars, and is one of the most sought-after places to live in the city.

3.5.9 The Oldham Street Methodist Central Hall is the only one remaining in Manchester, as the Albert Hall on Peter Street was sold and is now a music venue.



Figure 20 – Image of the reconstruction of the hall in the 1950s. (Methodist Central Hall, Manchester)



Figure 21 – Image of the completed Central Hall after the re-construction in 1953 (from The Story So Far, John Banks).



Figure 22 – Image from 1990 of the completed entrance door after the re-construction in 1953 (from The Story So Far, John Banks).

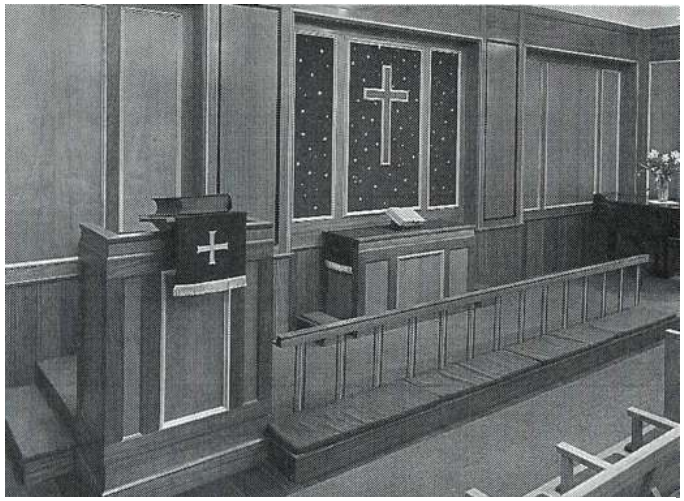


Figure 23 – Image of the completed Morning Chapel after the re-construction in 1953 (from The Story So Far, John Banks).

4.0 The Central Hall Today

4.1 Description

4.1.1 Today the Methodist Central Hall remains an active hub for the Christian community within Manchester hosting 9 separate worshipping congregations. The building is home to a variety of charities working in the social justice field covering areas such as homelessness, refugee support, food security and ex-offenders to name but a few. The building also works alongside many other charities, training organisations, NGOs, and statutory bodies by providing meeting and conference space at rates below commercial prices. There are also many one-off meetings and community events from choirs to drama groups to polling stations and from national conferences to 1 to 1 counselling and the building acting as the "village hall" to the city centre.

4.1.2 Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes (TMCP) also operate from an office space in the building on the second floor. The TMCP were introduced in 1939, and act as 'Custodian Trustees' of all property held by the Methodist Church. They also aim to support the Managing Trustees, who are responsible for the day-to-day running of the Methodist properties.[37]

Exterior

4.1.3 The external elevations of the building remain largely unaltered.

4.1.4 The building comprises ashlar stone elevations facing Oldham and Dale Street. These have a slightly Egyptian-revival character. To Spear Street, the elevation is largely brick with a stone bay where the corner of Spear Street meets Dale Street. Spear Street also features iron balustrades at low-level window locations. The lightwell is a combination of brick and glazed brick, with some rendered areas.

4.1.5 The Oldham Street elevation forms the primary façade with the main entrance centrally. The elevation has shops at ground level, these are generally separated by rusticated piers, now much disfigured with graffiti and signage. The main entrance is central and is enriched with a projecting balcony and balustrade with an arched window above, extending into a pediment above the upper cornice, generally Egyptian in character.

[37] https://www.tmcp.org.uk/about/what-we-do

4.1.6 Much of the high-level stonework to Dale Street was replaced in the post war remodelling and repair. The ashlar stonework returns around the south-east elevation for a bay, onto Spear Street. The remainder of the elevation is a combination of C19 and mid C20 brickwork, widely pointed in cement, with concrete coping stones.

4.1.7 The building surrounds a light well which abuts the adjoining property to the south west. The light well is predominantly brick, although there is a projecting section at the first floor which is rendered. The facing brickwork (lining the wall of the adjacent building) is glazed brick. The light well is surfaced in concrete.

4.1.8 The Roof evidences the changes in the building following the post-war reconstruction. The roof surrounds a light well which abuts the adjacent building to the south-west. And comprises a series of flat roofs, which were re-roofed in a rubber roofing c 25 years ago, and pitched roofs finished in concrete tiles.

4.1.9 The rainwater goods are a mix of uPVC guttering, parapet gutters and a significant number of internal rainwater pipes. There are internal rainwater pipes to the Spear Street and Oldham Street, this sits to the internal face of the respective elevations.

4.1.10 The building has a variety of different window types. The prevalent type in the primary spaces (primarily on the Oldham Street elevation where C19 windows remain) is a pair of outward opening casements with a fanlight over (sometimes arched, sometimes not) taking the form of an inward-opening hopper. These originally had interesting inward opening secondary glazing, including a dual operating lining to the hopper.

4.1.11 The windows to the Dale St elevation are more generally from the post-war period. A significant number of the later C20 windows to Spear Street have unfortunately been replaced with inappropriate uPVC windows.

4.1.12 There are a relatively limited number of external doors. The main entrance has original double panelled doors, although it is understood these may have been adjusted when the steps and platform lift were inserted. There are various modern flush or flush/glazed doors to the lightwell. The doors leading to the roof (third floor) are also a mix of modern flush and flush/glazed doors – some uPVC.

Interior

Basement Level:

4.1.13 At basement level, the building hosts an open plan multi-purpose space with access to the lightwell courtyard. The space has no particular function and the decoration is quite tired. The courtyard is in poor condition and has extensive areas of water ingress and vegetation growth.

Ground Floor:

4.1.14 The building is still accessed via the original entrance from Oldham St. Either side of the entrance way features decorative glazed terracotta panels, which were covered and recently exposed.

4.1.15 Once inside the building, a staircase and lift are to the left, with an office/reception area to the right. The lift was installed recently and goes from basement up to third floor. The reception area is divided from the entrance space using a thin partition wall, which creates a disjointed area in the foyer.

4.1.16 Off the main entrance area at ground floor is the café, which you must pass through to get to the rear of the building. The café is modern, but having a main access route through the centre of the seating area can create difficulty with movement.

4.1.17 The Morning Chapel runs alongside the café. Much of the original 1950's decoration has been removed, resulting in an open plan space that is used for a variety of services weekly.

First Floor:

4.1.18 To the First Floor there are a range of rooms along Oldham Suite which survived the bombing. These feature 1950's details such as timber windows, timber secondary glazing with ironmongery, timber panelling and decorative ceiling designs.

4.1.19 The Central Hall remains the focus of the building, but like the Chapel, much of the original (1950's) detailing has been removed over the years. The space features a stage, with seating at the lower level and a seated balcony above.

4.1.20 The 1950's rebuild resulted in the original wide-open space being divided up into smaller rooms so a variety of events could be hosted at one time. This occurs on each floor, particularly on the Spear Street and Dale Street elevations. In some cases, partition walls divide up windows, including in some of the offices for the TMCP. This creates disjointed rooms and extensive circulation routes. Several staircases were also put in, but some of these are hardly used.

Second Floor:

4.1.21 The main office for the TMCP on the second floor features a double-height space with a vaulted ceiling. This space is highly decorated and retains its original windows but with modern metal secondary glazing. However, a modern mezzanine sits in this space which takes away from the traditional decorative detailing.

Context

4.1.22 The wider context of the Methodist Central Hall has changed over the centuries. Since the demolition of the Oldham Street Chapel, the area has always been a built-up section of the city. However, the economic climate of this area has been through various changes, from the boom in the industrial era to the decline of the high streets in the 1970's.

4.1.23 When the original Oldham Street Chapel was built in the 18th Century, the land surrounding the chapel was mainly agricultural, and John Wesley was concerned that the chapel may be too far out of the city centre to attract a congregation. However, Manchester's industrial boom resulted in the city growing around the site.

4.1.24 Much of Manchester's architecture has a 'corner-emphasis' characteristic, which is shown in the Stevenson Square conservation area and particularly on the Methodist Central Hall.

4.1.25 The original chapel was a free-standing structure (figure 24), with terraces adjoining the vestries to the southwest. However, when the Central Hall was built in the late 19th Century, it was built to adjoin the existing terraces excluding an area at the rear where the lightwell remains today (figures 25 & 26).

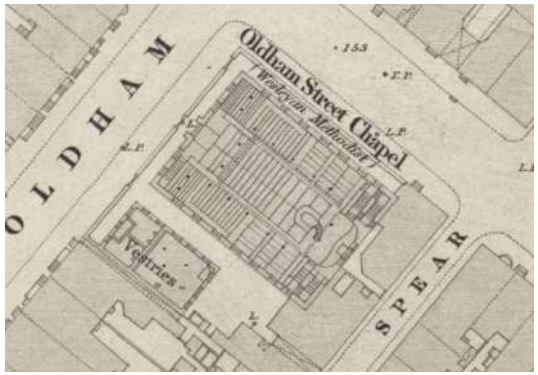


Figure 24 – OS map showing plan of Oldham Street Chapel in 1849 (National Library of Scotland).

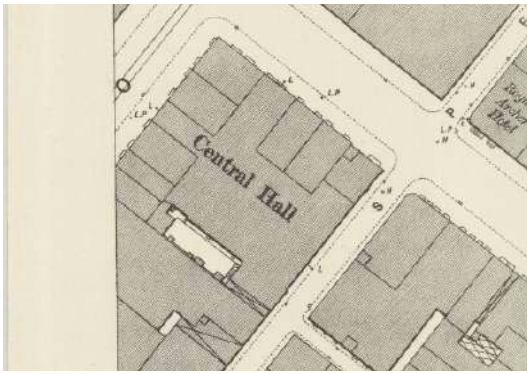


Figure 25 – OS map showing plan of Methodist Central Hall in 1888 (National Library of Scotland).

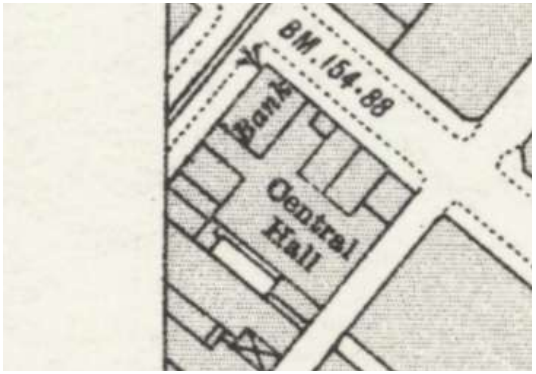


Figure 26 – OS map showing plan of Methodist Central Hall in 1931 (National Library of Scotland).

4.2 Condition

4.2.1 Chambers Conservation Ltd were appointed by OMI Architects in June 2023 to undertake a high-level summary assessment of the external condition of the Methodist Central Hall in Manchester.

4.2.2 From this, the predominant issues are based around water damage to the external elevations, replacement of modern/damaged windows and alterations to the roofscape to prevent pooling water. Particular areas of note include:

- The stonework is generally in reasonable condition, but has suffered from water damage at high level due to the condition of the adjacent gutters and lack of protective flashings.
- The ground floor retail units have poor quality shop fronts, shutters etc, which have been affixed to the original fabric, causing damage to the rusticated stone piers and adjacent masonry. The piers are also disfigured by graffiti, and some have been damaged by later fixtures and fittings.
- There is extensive pooling of water on the flat roofs, causing water ingress into the building, and it is noted that the roof does not appear to slope towards the outlets.
- There is general evidence of water ingress from the internal downpipes which are believed to be a mix of modern uPVC and iron.
- The remaining timber windows are in good condition, and there is very little rot or associated decay, but they are now in need of conservation and repair. Many have lost their original internal secondary glazing, and most hoppers are fixed-shut/painted over.

For more details refer to Chambers Conservation outline repair drawings and schedule.



Figure 28 – Image of main entrance, note dark algal staining above main entrance.



Figure 28 – View from balcony showing saturated stone and associated growth. The cabling above the cornice levels also serves to retain moisture.



Figure 29 – General view of roof area, Note extensive ponding and water retention and 'rippling' of surface to rubber roofing. The guttering to the right can be seen to be visibly distorted and allowing water to surcharge.

5.0 Significance

5.1 Defining Significance and Levels of Significance

5.1.1 Historic England's '*Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance*' (2008) sets out six high-level principles:

- The historic environment is a shared resource
- Everyone should be able to participate in sustaining the historic environment
- Understanding the significance of places is vital
- Significant places should be managed to sustain their values
- Decisions about change must be reasonable, transparent and consistent
- Documenting and learning from decisions is essential.

5.1.2 The idea of 'significance' lies at the core of these principles. Significance is a collective term for the sum of all the heritage values attached to a place, be it a building an archaeological site or a larger historic area such as a whole village or landscape.

5.1.3 Significance is understood by defining value in the context of the four established heritage values:

- ***Evidential Value*** *is the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity.*
- ***Historic Value*** *Derives from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present.*
- ***Aesthetic Value*** *Derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulations from a place.*
- ***Communal Value*** *Derives from the meaning of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory.*

5.1.4 It is useful to define the relative significance of the various aspects are elements of the building to help guide future change. It should be noted

that this assessment should be expected to change as the understanding of the historical development and importance of the fabric inevitably evolves over time. It will also be developed as the building is investigated further.

5.1.5 In summary, the following categories are used to define significance levels for this site:

- **High significance (sometimes Very High)**: a space of architectural, historical or social interest, that plays an important role in the significance of the building as a whole
- **Moderate significance**: a space with some general architectural, historical or social interest but with few specific features
- **Limited / Neutral Significanc**e: a space without features of interest or known specific historic or social interest
- **Detrimental**: a space that is detrimental to the significance of the building as a whole

N

5.2 Significance Plans

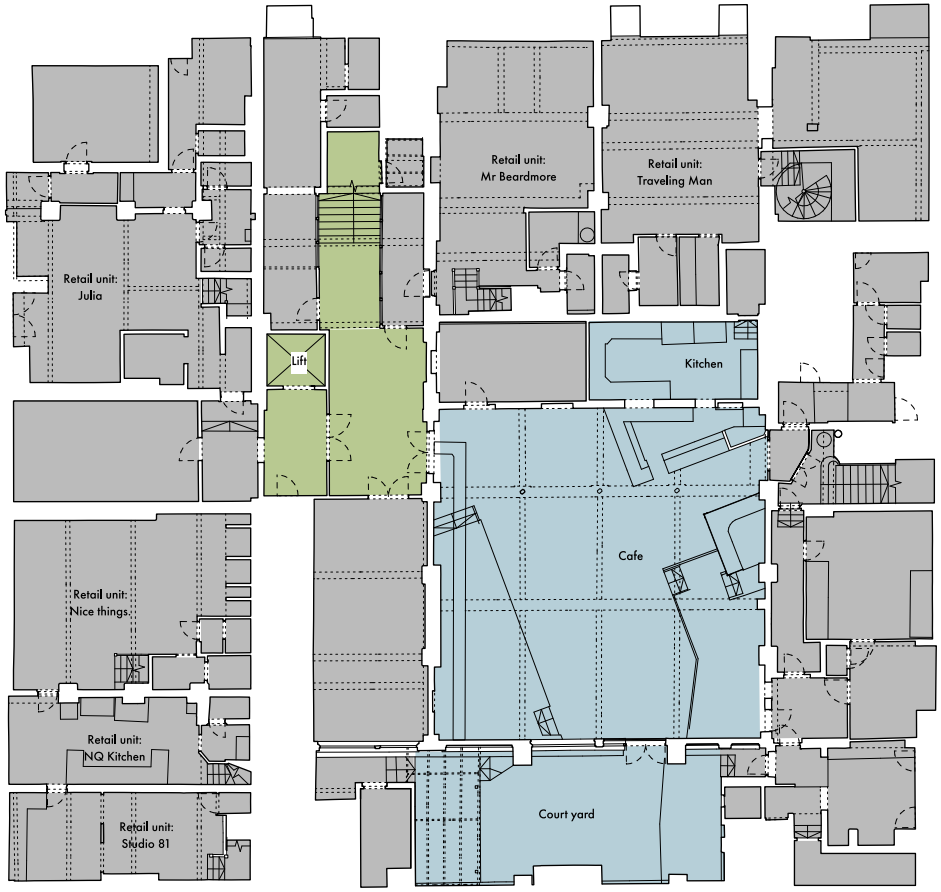
High Significance (space of a high level of interest)

Moderate Significance (simpler space or one that has been more altered)

Neutral Interest

Negative Significance (detracts from the significance of the building as a whole)

Not Assessed



Basement Level Plan (1:200 @ A3)

N

High Significance (space of a high level of interest)

Moderate Significance (simpler space or one that has been more altered)

Neutral Interest

Negative Significance (detracts from the significance of the building as a whole)

Not Assessed



Ground Floor Plan (1:200 @ A3)



High Significance – Glazed panels in entrance way
These highly decorative panels were covered up and have only been exposed recently. They define the entrance to the building and are of great architectural quality.



Medium Significance – Staircases
The existing staircases were added in the 1950's, but there remain some good examples of moderne decorative detailing, such as the metal balustrades.



Medium Significance – Chapel
Much of the original timber detailing of the chapel has been removed through various accretions over the decades. However, the space has communal significance as a community hub where several religious groups attend services.

N

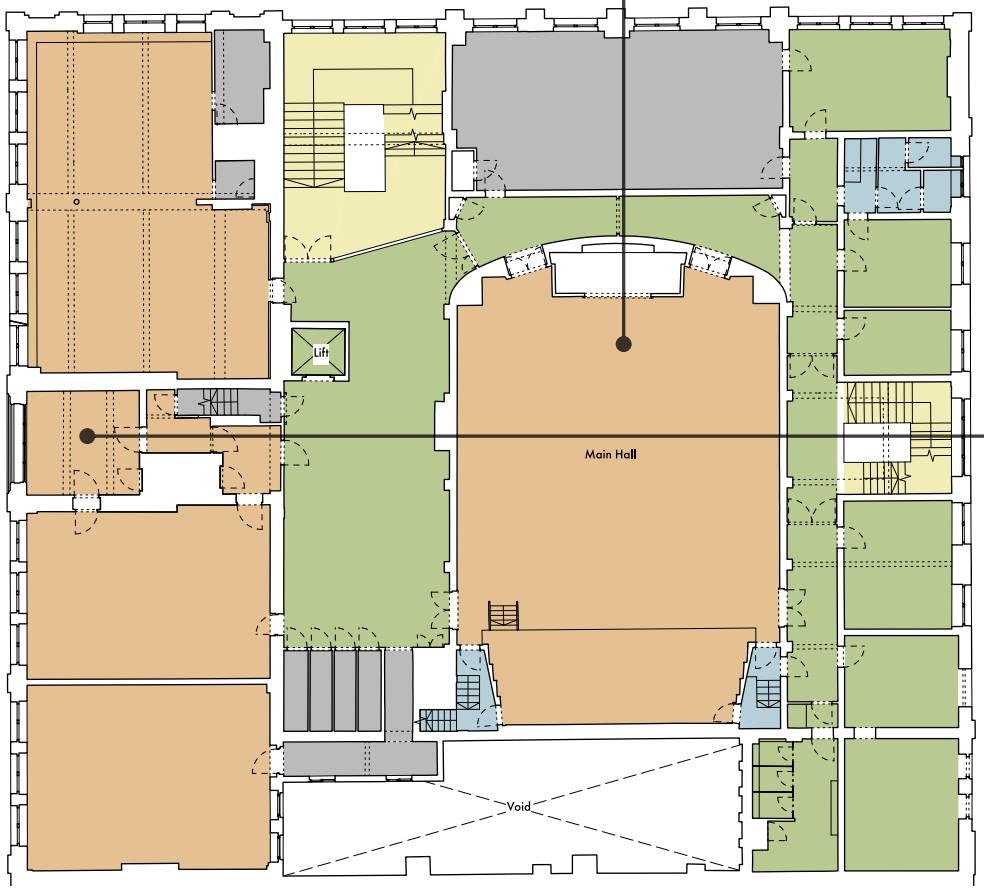
High Significance (space of a high level of interest)

Moderate Significance (simpler space or one that has been more altered)

Neutral Interest

Negative Significance (detracts from the significance of the building as a whole)

Not Assessed



First Floor Level Plan (1:200 @ A3)



High Significance – Main Hall
Like the Chapel, much of the 1950's timber detailing inside the main hall has been removed. However, it remains a space of high significance based on its strong communal value, and it remains a large, shared community space at the centre of the building. The role of the hall as a communal gathering space is fundamentally important providing a continuous link between the first building, the 19th century Central Hall and the re-development of the 1950's. It continues to fulfil a communal role to this day.





High Significance – First floor rooms along Oldham St.
The rooms at first floor on Oldham St. survived the bombing, and feature 1950's timber windows, secondary glazing and decorative plastering and panelling. Alongside this, the arched fanlight above the main entrance is a focal point of the primary elevation.

N

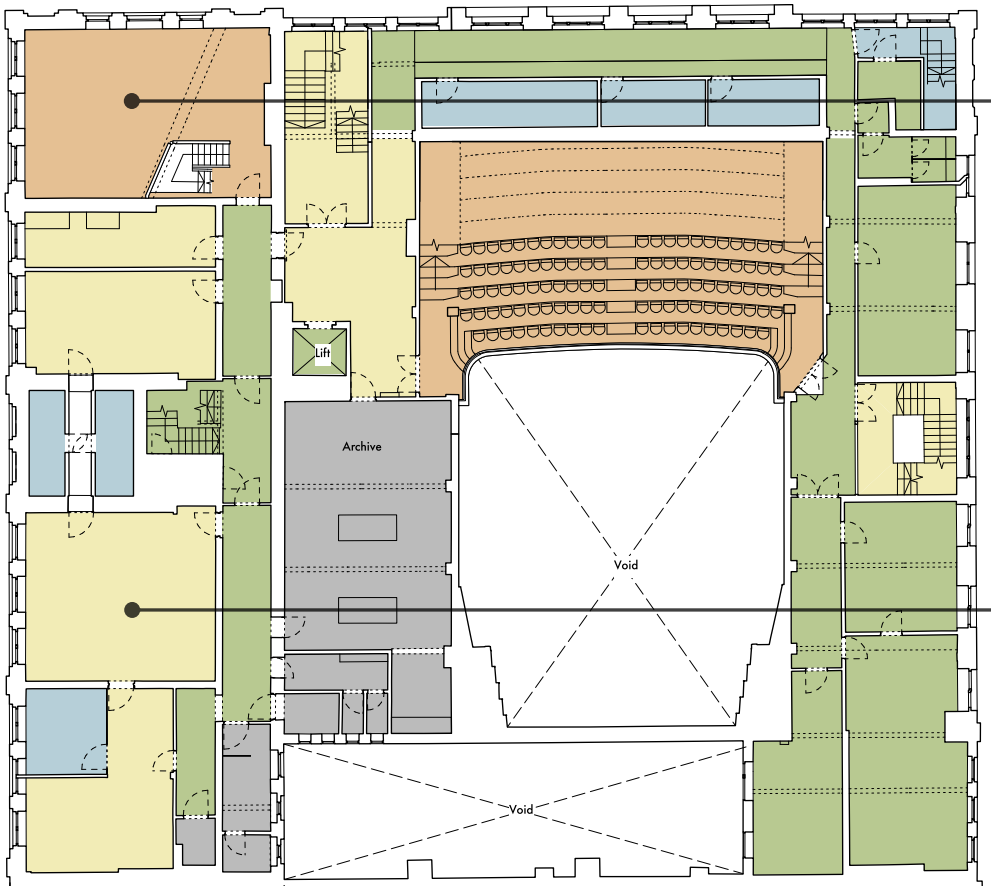
High Significance (space of a high level of interest)

Moderate Significance (simpler space or one that has been more altered)

Neutral Interest

Negative Significance (detracts from the significance of the building as a whole)

Not Assessed



Second Floor Plan (1:200 @ A3)



High Significance – Corner room on Oldham St./Dale St (TMCP Offices)
This room features a high vaulted ceiling with decorative plaster work and panelling. The windows are original, although feature modern metal secondary glazing. It is noted that the modern mezzanine detracts from the high aesthetic significance of the space.



Medium Significance – Rooms along Oldham St. (TMCP Offices)
Like the floor below, these offices feature 1950's timber windows and panelling, and in some areas the secondary glazing remains. However, modern partitions make the spaces feel dis-jointed.

N

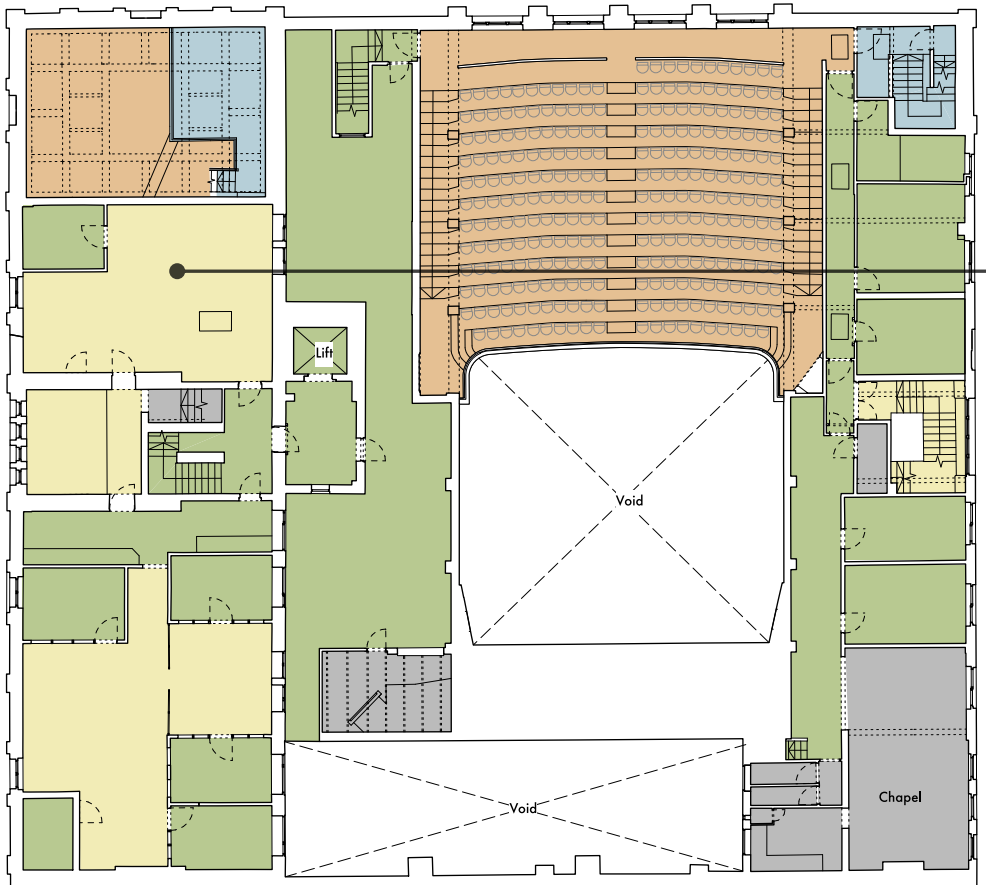
High Significance (space of a high level of interest)

Moderate Significance (simpler space or one that has been more altered)

Neutral Interest

Negative Significance (detracts from the significance of the building as a whole)

Not Assessed



Third Floor Plan (1:200 @ A3)



Medium Significance – Rooms along Oldham St. (TMCP Offices)
The offices at third floor feature 1950's timber windows, but like the floor below, modern partitions divide the space and detract from the overall aesthetic of the spaces.

5.3 Evidential value:

5.3.1 Evidential value is the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity.

5.3.2 It is understood that the records of the earlier chapel were largely destroyed during the bombing. This has limited the potential for gaining an understanding of the site's early history and previous chapel. This limits the Evidential Value.

5.3.3 There is potential to better understand the re-development post war. This may include the discovery of other historic information such as original drawings, which could enhance our understanding of the 1950's work. This enhances the Evidential Value.

5.3.4 It is considered that the full re-development of the site and its nature as an 'island' surrounded by highways and adjacent structures limits potential for below-ground archaeological deposits or investigations. This potential is Low in the context of the site's Evidential Value.

5.3.5 Consequentially, the Evidential Value is considered to be **Low**.

5.4 Historical value:

5.4.1 Historical value is the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present.

5.4.2 The Central Hall itself demonstrates the growth and importance of the Methodist movement in the UK. The hall represents a direct link to John Wesley and the Methodist movement he and his followers created. As Methodism increased in popularity, the movement spread throughout Manchester rapidly, and the Methodist Central Hall is one of the few remaining demonstrations of this.

5.4.3 The Central Hall can also show how aspects of Methodism evolved to support the changing society in Manchester. The site has been linked with Methodism since it was first built on in the 18th century, but even as the economic and social climate of Manchester evolved, the site was able to adapt to suit this, which it did through forming a close link with charities and the community that remains today.

5.4.4 The Site therefore has a **Medium** level of Historical value.

5.5 Aesthetic value:

5.5.1 Aesthetic value is the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.

5.5.2 The aesthetic significance is enhanced by the in-tact nature of the Oldham Street façade, which is well preserved and represents an interesting example of Egyptian revival architecture. It fits well within the eclectic mix of architecture in the Northern Quarter.

5.5.3 Some of the 1950s alterations also have a modern aesthetic (e.g. balustrading along the stairs) and have a nice design quality. Despite this, much of this detail has been removed/covered up through the various phases of alterations, including the majority in the Main Hall. Individual elements and details throughout the building may have a high aesthetic significance. The Central Hall has undergone a significant amount of change, particularly around the stage, which has detrimentally affected its overall aesthetic value.

5.5.4 The shop fronts are detrimental to the aesthetic significance of the Oldham St and Dale St elevations. The varied shop fronts are incoherent, of poor quality and detract from the façade's high-quality stonework and detailing. The graffiti around the store fronts contribute to an unkept appearance and also detracts from the façade's aesthetic and the Central Hall's significance.

5.5.5 The staining and saturation damage to the original stonework contributes to the appearance of a deteriorating building condition. This has a detrimental impact to the aesthetic significance of the Oldham St and Dale St elevations.

5.5.6 The uPVC windows added to the Spear St façade, along with further modern services have a detrimental impact to the aesthetic significance of the Oldham St and Dale St elevations.

5.5.7 The Site therefore has a **Medium** level of Aesthetic value.

5.5.8 It is important to note that the aesthetic value of the Central Hall could be enhanced if some of the issues above are addressed.

5.6 Communal value:

5.6.1 Communal value is the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory.

5.6.2 The Central Hall was primarily built as a place for communal use, which is reflected in the early Methodist core community values. The hall has continually been used as a hub for the wider Manchester community and has hosted many significant congregations since its construction. Alongside its role in Methodist teaching, the hall has supported commercial and charitable organisations as well as wider religious networks.

5.6.3 The communal value of the site has remained high through time, despite the changing surroundings. The building has always had a focus on helping those less fortunate in Manchester and provided a community 'village hall' in the centre of the city.

5.6.4 The strong link of the building with various charities has enhanced its communal value, making it a central hub for people in need.

5.6.5 Alongside this, the site has always remained a hub for Methodists in Manchester, being one of only 18 still in-use Central Halls in the UK.

5.6.6 The communal value of the site is, currently, therefore **High**.

5.7 Statement of Significance

The Methodist Central Hall, Manchester, remains one of few such Halls which still fulfils its original function. Whilst much altered architecturally, this makes the Hall significant, not only as a symbol of Methodism across the UK, and further afield, but as a long-standing focal point for the area now known as the Northern Quarter in Manchester.

It is believed many early records of the site were destroyed when the building was badly damaged during the blitz in 1941. Consequently, this has a negative impact on the evidential significance. However, there remains an opportunity to better understand the Hall's post-war reconstruction, design and decision making which led to the configuration of the building as it stands today.

6.0 Heritage Impact Assessment

6.1 Context & Introduction to the Impact Assessment

6.1.1 This Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) has been prepared to accompany the planning application for the redevelopment of the Methodist Central Hall, Manchester.

6.1.2 The HIA assesses the impact of the proposals on the Stevenson Square Conservation Area and on adjacent heritage assets. The Central Hall is not a listed building, however an assessment of the impact based on the parameters established in the Heritage Statement has been undertaken for both exterior and interior of the building.

6.1.3 The HIA follows the principles outlined in Historic England's document *Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets, Historic England Advice Note 12* and the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), paragraphs 43-44 and 189.

6.1.4 The NPPF requires that an understand of significance is defined which should be sufficient (but no more) to understand the impact of the proposal on the significance (both positive and negative) and sufficient for the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to be able to judge the level of impact on that significance and therefore the merit of the proposals.

6.1.5 The Heritage Statement, which forms section 1-5 of this document was prepared at the outset of the project. This document was developed and used to inform the development of the proposals which are described in the Design and Access statement. This document should, therefore, be read in tandem with the other design documentation.

6.2 Stevenson Square Conservation Area

6.2.1 The boundary extent of the Stevenson Square Conservation Area is shown in the plan below.

6.2.2 There is not a formal Conservation Area Appraisal currently for the area, but a brief narrative description is available on the MCC website.[1]

[1] https://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/511/conservation_areas/1208/stevenson_square_conservation_area

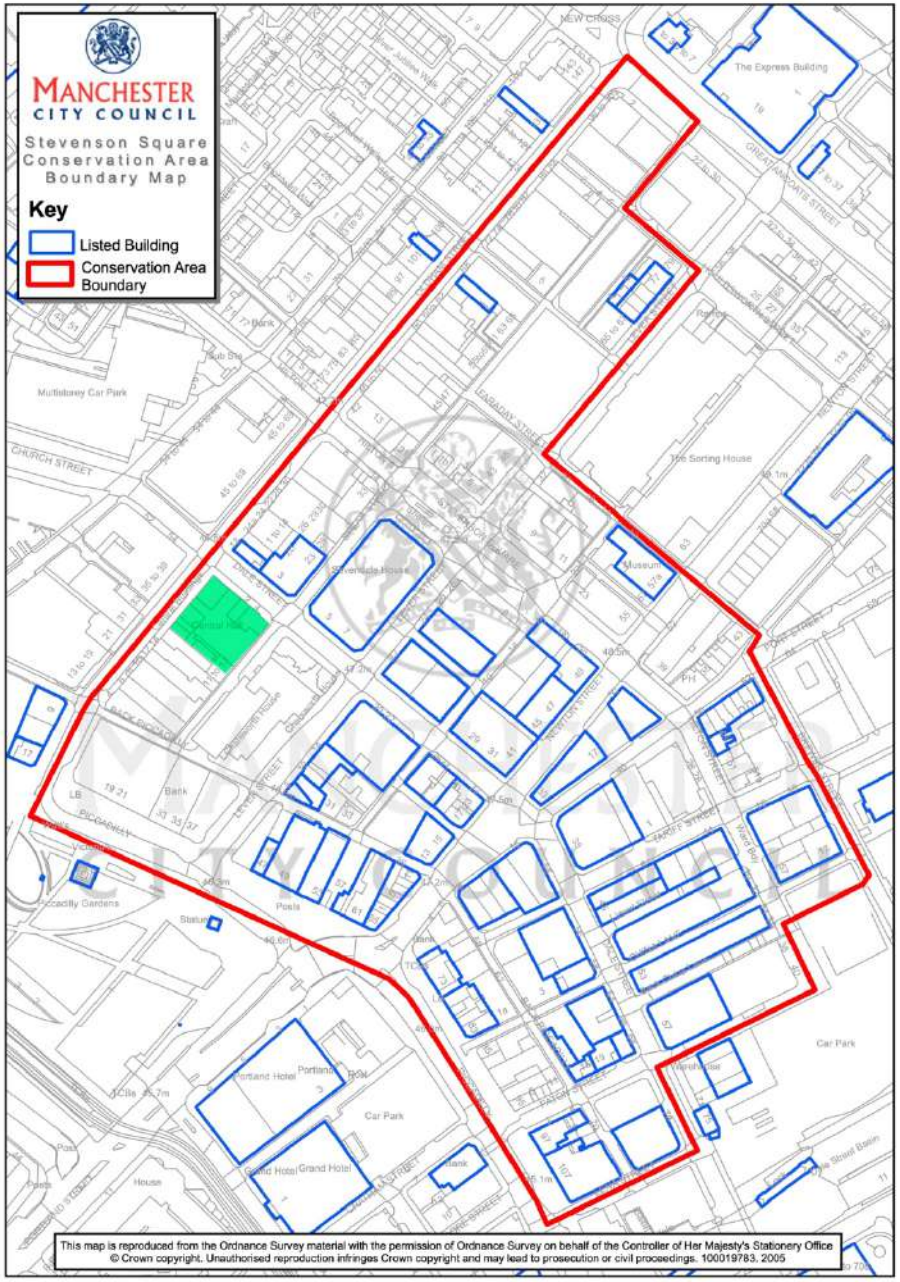


Figure 30 – Stevenson Square Conservation Area (Manchester City Council). Boundary identified in red, listed buildings blue. The Central Hall is identified in green.

6.2.3 The Stevenson Square Conservation Area represents a particularly intact part of the 19th century city. It retains a high proportion of extant buildings from, largely, the 19th Century, mostly associated with the development of the cotton industry through the period.

6.2.4 It bounds Piccadilly Gardens to the south-west the Dale St Basin (largely a car park) to the south-east, it extends up to Great Ancoats Street in the north.

6.2.5 The conservation area is characterised by low-medium rise buildings. Those of the late 19th Century or 20th Century tend to be taller.

6.2.6 Materiality is varied. In the immediate context of the Central Hall, adjacent buildings are faced in terracotta, render, ashlar stone and brick.

6.2.7 In the immediate environs of the Central Hall, the buildings to the north-east, along Dale Street, are listed. These comprise Dale Street Chambers (returning into 18 Oldham Street) which comprises a retail space with office above. it dates from c.1860 in stucco with sandstone dressings in a striking gothic style. It has suffered from unsympathetic later shop fronts and an unfortunate, prominent rooftop extension which is very prominent on the view from the Dale and Oldham Street junctions (see fig.32). The original shop fronts are visible on the 1886 view of the Central Hall (see fig.9).

6.2.8 Further along Dale street (heading south-west) are no. 3 Dale Street, formerly a Millinery Warehouse of the early 20th century. This is a good composition with baroque details, combining terracotta and facing brick, with large areas of glazing.

6.2.9 Sevendale House faces Dale and Spear Streets (Fig 31). Another striking composition combining a granite plinth, sandstone ground floor with terracotta and brick above. The building was formerly a warehouse, now offices with retail on the ground floor.

6.2.10 All these buildings are included on the national list for group value and as such play an important contextual role in the conservation area around the Central Hall.

6.2.11 Opposite Sevendale House and facing the Spear Street elevation of the Central Hall is Chatsworth House. A substantial 8-9 storey residential block of the 1970s. this is set back along Spear Street, with a parking area enclosed with a later mesh façade. Along Dale Street, in front of Chatsworth House, facing the Spear Street Elevation is a slightly 'ad-hoc' collection of street



Figure 31 – Sevendale House (Grade II – 1200847) which sits to the north-east of the site.



Figure 32 – Dale Street Chambers (Grade II – 1246279, left), No.3 Dale Street (Grade II – 1209576, right).

food/outside eating areas, now hoarded along the street, punctuated by trees.

6.2.12 Facing the Central Hall along Oldham Street are other 19th and early 20th Century buildings. 21-31 (Planetree House) has a formal classical façade in Portland stone, again with poor quality shop fronts at street level.

6.2.13 33 Oldham Street is an interesting, smaller scale insertion which has recently had improvements to street level, forming a live music venue. It may have once formed a connection to Short Street, beyond.

6.2.14 On the corner of Church and Oldham Street, facing the Central Hall the building now known as 'Afflecks' houses a mix of alternative retail. The building is late 19th century, rendered, painted in contrasting terracotta and buff. The section further along Oldham Street has distinctive part-recessed bay windows, two tapering roofs have some fine remaining ironwork at high-level. Again the shop fronts are poor and detrimental to the streetscape. The building is currently scaffolded (March 2024).

6.3 The Proposals

6.3.1 Central Hall is a seven day a week hub for social justice and a centre for mission and service at the heart of Manchester city centre. The large community building houses a wide variety of facilities and spaces. At its core the building is a place of worship with a chapel at entrance level and retail units fronting onto Oldham Street and Dale Street. A café is located at ground floor and a basement level provides multifunctional community space under the banner of Mosaic which is used by partner organisations. Upper levels provide rooms for hire, meeting spaces and conference facilities which are in high demand given the city centre location. The building also provides office space for the twenty staff of the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes.

6.3.2 The design for the wholescale redevelopment of the building will dramatically reconfigure the existing layout and structure, bringing a renewed sense of arrival, welcome, hospitality and sanctuary at entrance level. Elsewhere the transformation of the internal arrangement will improve legibility, rationalise circulation and increase levels of daylight throughout. Key to this approach is the adaptation of an existing external lightwell into a glazed internal atrium. This new top lit atrium forms a key aspect of the heating, cooling and ventilation strategy as well as providing an opportunity to integrate planting via a 15m vertical living wall. Elsewhere the complete replacement of the building services and addition of renewable energy generation and air source



Figure 33 – Looking towards the Central Hall, note the prominence of Piccadilly Tower in the view.



Figure 34 – Afflecks on the corner of Oldham and Church Streets.

heat pumps will result in an all-electric building reducing CO2 emissions and lowering longer term running costs.

6.3.3 The large central hall at the core of the building will be reconfigured and upgraded to welcome audiences for theatre productions, worship, live music and concerts. New meeting spaces and rooms for hire will expand existing provision and rental income while upgraded offices and coworking spaces will place emphasis on socialisation and interaction – one of the foundational themes underlying the project.

6.3.4 An additional floor level will create a vibrant, flexible new rooftop pavilion and outdoor terrace to meet needs not satisfied elsewhere in the building and provide the ability to host a range of large events whilst expanding the conference offer within the city centre. A full programme of stonework repair, window refurbishment and shopfront upgrade will accompany the works and signpost the internal transformation.

6.3.5 The Assessment is based on the following drawings produced by OMI Architects:

- 1433-L1000 Proposed Plan L00
- 1433-L1001 Proposed Plan L01
- 1433-L1002 Proposed Plan L02
- 1433-L1003 Proposed Plan L03
- 1433-L1004 Proposed Plan L04
- 1433-L1005 Proposed Plan L05
- 1433-L1006 Proposed Plan LG
- 1433-L1007 Demolitions Plan L00
- 1433-L1008 Demolitions Plan L01
- 1433-L1009 Demolitions Plan L02
- 1433-L1010 Demolitions Plan L03
- 1433-L1011 Demolitions Plan, Roof
- 1433-L1012 Basement Floor, Demolitions
- 1433-L1501 Proposed Section 01

- 1433-L1502 Proposed Section 02
- 1433-L1503 Proposed Elevation, Oldham St
- 1433-L1504 Proposed Elevation, Dale St
- 1433-L1505 Proposed Elevation, Spear St
- 1433-L1506 Proposed Elevation, Lightwell (01)
- 1433-L1503 Proposed Elevation, Lightwell (02).
- 1433 MCH Consultation Boards (March 2024).
- Dale St and Oldham St Views (1 & 2).

6.4 The Impact of the Proposed Works on the Exterior

Elevations

6.4.1 The exterior of the central hall is described in some detail in section 4.0.

6.4.2 The proposals to the elevations include:

- Conservation and repair of stonework.
- Repairs and upgrading works to windows (or replacement to some on Spear St).
- Renewal of shop fronts.
- Addition of a new entrance treatment.
- Repairs and adjustments to Spear Street Elevations.

The individual elements and their impacts are reviewed below.

Figure 35 – Proposed Elevations to Oldham Street (top) and Dale Street (below). © OMI Architects.



Conservation and repair of the stonework.

6.4.3 The stonework to the central hall on Oldham Street is generally original, of the 19th century, that to Dale Street is partly from the post-war reconstruction but using a similar sandstone. The stonework is badly stained in places and there is saturation and deterioration especially to string courses, central pediment and around the main entrance area.

6.4.4 This stonework is to be repaired as outlined on the repair drawings. This will have a **highly beneficial** impact, on the aesthetic value through improved appearance, the historic value through the protection of the original material.

Repairs and Upgrading of Windows.

6.4.5 The windows to Oldham Street and the first floor on Dale Street are generally of the 19th Century. They original comprised a pair of outward opening casements with a hopper-light over. Interestingly they originally included secondary glazing, which comprised inward opening casements and an unusual parallel interconnected hopper.

6.4.6 Much of the secondary glazing is missing or has been replaced with later aluminium. The glazing to the outer windows is generally modern glass, the original presumably having been destroyed in the bombing or later damage.

6.4.7 The proposals are to undertake conservation-led repairs to the windows and reinstate secondary glazing to match the original in the most significant internal spaces (see interior) or modern (elsewhere). It is proposed to reglaze the windows externally either in fine double-glazing or vacuum glass.

6.4.8 A drawing of the existing windows with secondary glazing is shown below. For full details see wider application documents.

6.4.9 The conservation of the windows will have a **highly beneficial** impact on the historic value and aesthetic value, as will the reinstatement of the secondary glazing to key spaces (refer also to interior).

6.4.10 The proposal to re-glaze in more modern performing glass enables the building to function and will not adversely impact the appearance externally if handled with care. The depth of the frame is sufficient to accommodate modern glass with minor adjustment to the rebate depth and the glazing is beaded (as original detail). Perimeter brush seals will be introduced. The upgrading works will have a **neutral** impact in terms of aesthetic value, but essential to make the spaces functional and enable the retention of the original windows.

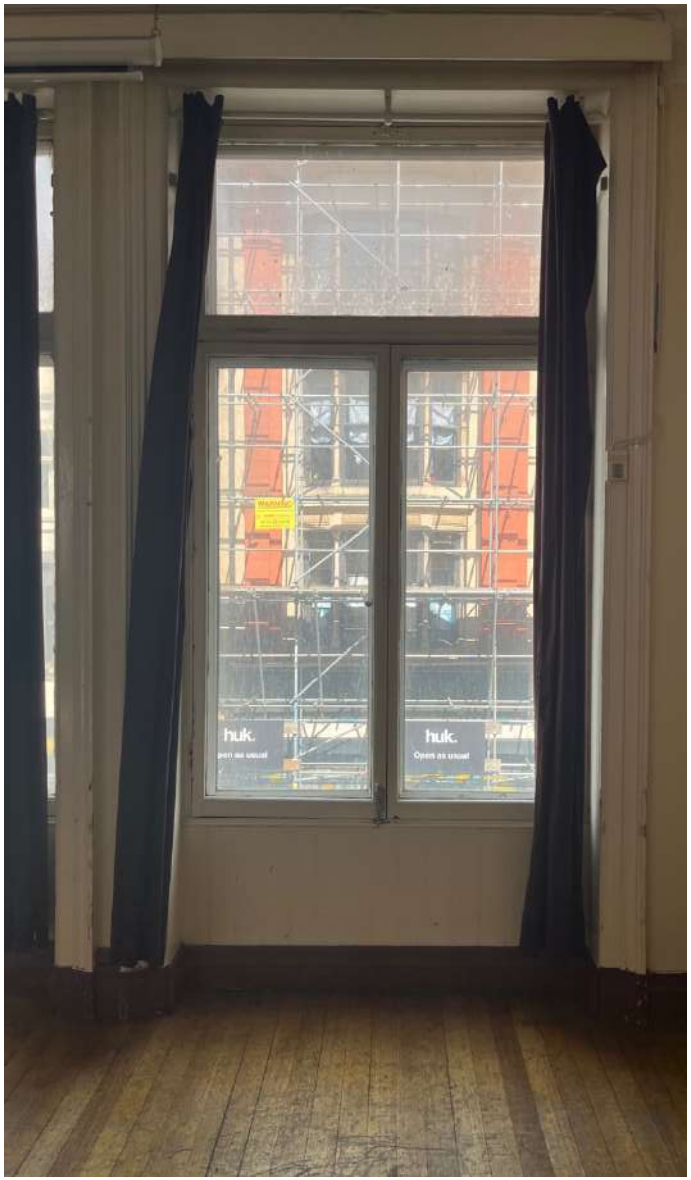
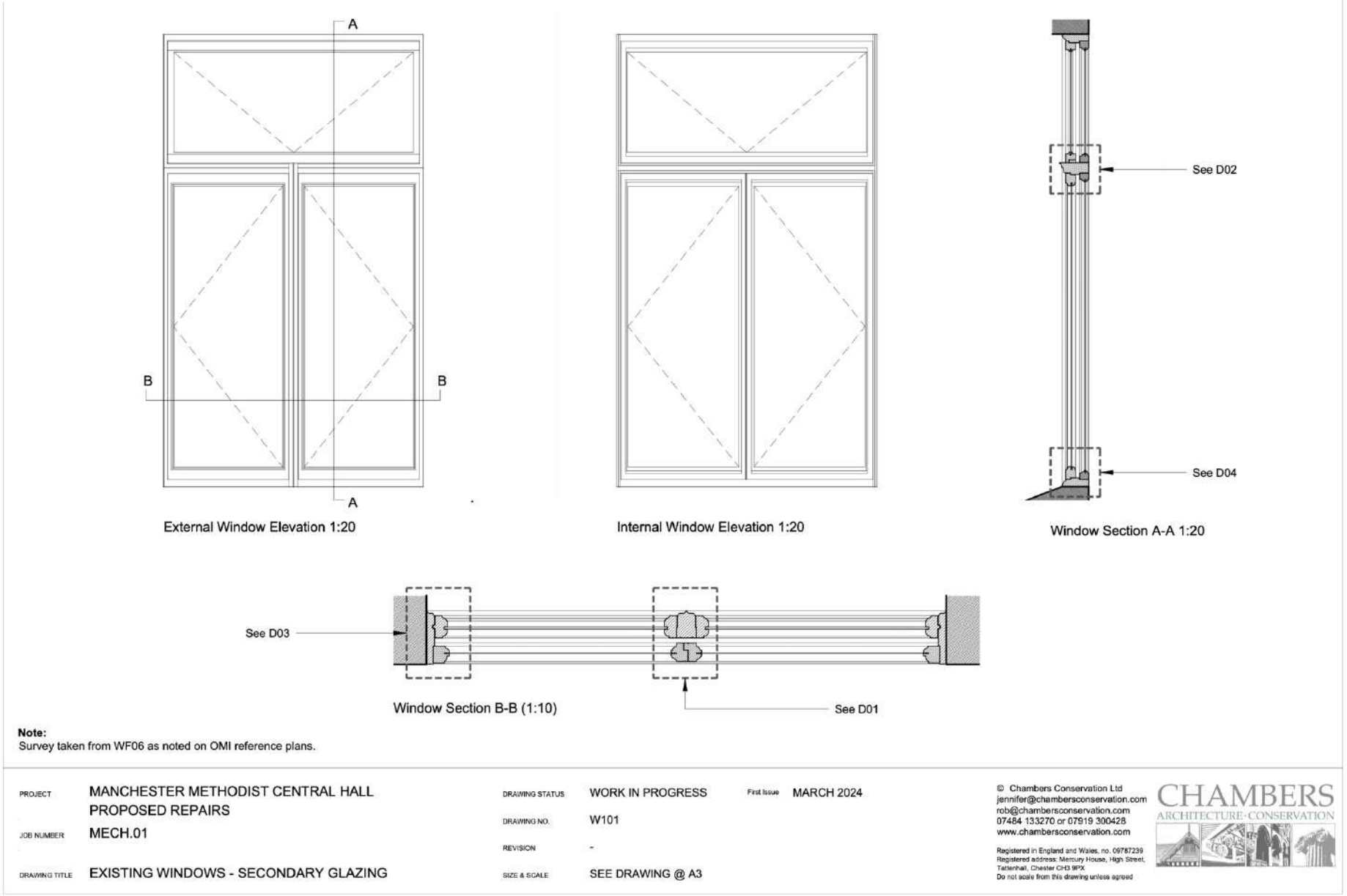


Figure 36 – Internal view of first floor window (Oldham St) with intact secondary glazing.

Figure 37 – Existing Window Details showing secondary glazing © Chambers Conservation



Renewal of Shop Fronts.

6.4.11 The shop fronts are the single most detrimental element of the Central Hall's exterior. They represent a jarring, incoherent and visually confusing picture along both Oldham and Dale Streets. Materiality is poor and shutters, alarms, lighting and other features damage both the building itself and the wider streetscape.

6.4.12 The proposed scheme draws upon some evidence of the original but proposes a consistent, subtly modern treatment.

6.4.13 It is proposed that the rusticated stone piers which are partly obscured and originally offered a satisfying delineation of the building at street level are proposed to be repaired and reinstated.

6.4.14 The proposed works to renew the shopfronts will have a **highly beneficial** impact on the aesthetic and heritage values of the building.

Provision of New entrance treatment.

6.4.15 The scheme proposes a new treatment to the entrance facing onto Oldham Street.

6.4.16 The current signage over the entrance is detrimental and has poor quality surface-fixed lighting. Positive elements of the entrance include the oval convex bronze signs, the original doors, which remain. The stonework around the entrance is in quite poor condition, especially the soffit to the projecting cornice above.

6.4.17 The signage will be in-set into the opening, and the new detail will provide more appropriate and better-quality signage which will define the entrance more effectively.

6.4.18 The building has had at least two different projecting canopy designs in the past. See fig. 10 and fig. 22. The proposed design proposes a more sensitive and elegant solution than either of the previous iterations (both date from after the post-war reconstruction).

6.4.19 The enhanced quality and appearance of the new entrance detail would result in a **beneficial** impact overall.



Figure 38 – Disjointed and inconsistent shop fronts and signage, Oldham Street (2023).



Figure 39 – Remaining (if disfigured by graffiti) rusticated stone pier to the corner of Dale and Spear Streets.

Alterations to Spear Street Elevation.

6.4.20 The scheme proposes some rationalisation to the spear street elevation. This includes amendments to openings currently disfigured by later openings. The rationalisation will be **beneficial** to this secondary elevation through an enhancement of its aesthetic value.



Figure 40 – Spear street elevation as proposed. © OMI Architects.

Roof

6.4.21 The roof of the central hall is described in some detail in section 4.0.

6.4.22 The proposals to the roof include:

- Repair of the remaining 19th Century roof running along Oldham Street

- Replacement of post-war roofs with a new construction including rooftop pavilion.

The individual elements and their impacts are reviewed below.

Repair of the remaining 19th Century roof running along Oldham Street

6.4.23 Refer to section 4.1 for descriptions of roof and 4.2 for an overview of the current condition.

6.4.24 The original roof to Oldham Street is finished in concrete hipped to the Dale Street end and abutting the building to the south-west. This roof and the associated parapet gutter are in poor condition and are to be repaired and finished in natural slate. The repair works and the replacement of the concrete tiles with slate will be **highly beneficial**.

6.4.25 The remaining roof is post-war. The flat roofed areas are largely laid flat with later rubber roofing having replaced earlier asphalt. These surround the pitched roof to the current hall below. The flat roofs are of poor quality and can be considered detrimental to the building. The pitched roof to the Hall is finished in modern concrete tiles.

6.4.26 The flat roof between the Hall and the 19th century roof is a mix of poor quality later additions (such as the lift shaft overrun), plant and other elements.

6.4.27 The roof elements to be removed are of low quality and do not contribute to the historic value of the building. They are not visible from lower levels so neither offer a contribution or a detriment to the overall aesthetic value. Their removal can be considered **neutral**, but overall impact is dependent on a number of factors:

- The quality of the reinstatement proposals and materials.
- The visibility of the proposed new structure from surrounding streets and in terms of the wider conservation area context.

6.4.28 The impact in terms of the Central Hall is modest, because it only removes later structure, does not impact upon the visibility of the facades or the remaining 19th century spaces. The primary potential impact of this addition in heritage terms is primarily defined by any impact on the key views and consequently the impact on the conservation area or on the setting of adjacent heritage assets. This is considered in more detail in 6.6, below.



Figure 41 – Modern concrete tiled roof to the Hall, poor flat roof (now finished in rubber, adjacent).



Figure 42 – Lift motor room abutting the 19th century roof. The latter is covered in modern concrete tiles.

6.5 The Impact of the Proposed Works on the Interior

6.5.1 Before considering the internal works it is important to be clear that the building is not listed and therefore there is not a statutory protection conferred on the interior. However, the client and team have recognised that elements of the interior have value and will also enhance the quality of the building into the future. Therefore a considered approach has been taken and the assessment of the impact of the proposals is included below for reference.

6.5.2 The importance of the internal spaces is discussed in section 5 and more specifically in the annotated significance plans (5.2).

6.5.3 The impacts take account of the significance and consider impacts only to those spaces deemed to have high significance. The works to these areas can be defined as follows:

- Reconfiguration of the Main Hall.
- Reconfiguration of the entrance and access steps.
- Works to the first-floor rooms along Oldham Street.

Reconfiguration of the Main Hall

6.5.4 The scheme proposes that the current hall (created after the war) is significantly reconfigured to better reflect the current needs of the Methodist Church and the operation of the building.

6.5.5 The scheme proposes the removal of part of the rear balcony and a new roof structure which is, in part, to support the new roof-top pavilion above.

6.5.6 It must be noted, firstly, that the significance of the main hall and the reason for its identification as a high-significance space is its communal value. It reflects the fact that there has been a congregation space on the site from the time of early Methodism to the present day, not the specific detail of the current space.

6.5.7 The reconfiguration is considered essential to maintain this communal significance and therefore this value can be considered as being enhanced by the proposal, i.e. **beneficial**.

6.5.8 There is some quality in the 1950's work, however, which will be partly (albeit not fully) lost through the reconfiguration. This will have a **minor detrimental** impact.



Figure 43 – Faience panels to the entrance lobby.

Reconfiguration of the Entrance Area

6.5.9 The scheme proposes that the entrance is reconfigured to provide improved access. The areas considered of high significance relate to the original doors, ceiling and faience panels either side of the entrance. These will remain unaffected by the proposals (the steps were moved back in previous alteration s), therefore **neutral** overall.

Works to the rooms along Oldham Street.

6.5.10 These rooms are the only complete 19th century interiors in the building.

6.5.11 The 'board' room which is on the corner of Oldham and Dale Streets is the most significant 19th century interior in the Hall. It has some fine plasterwork, see fig 44, but it is partly disfigured by a modern mezzanine level. This is intended to be removed which will be **highly beneficial** to the most significant remaining internal space.

6.5.12 The first-floor rooms along Oldham Street also retain a significant amount of original detail such as cornicing, mouldings, architraves etc. The double-bay room at the corner of Oldham and Dale Street has had a store inserted which disrupts the proportions and the room which sits behind the arched Diocletian window (above the entrance) has a lobby and later staircase. The removal of these will be **highly beneficial** to this space and return it, largely, to its original configuration. This is slightly offset by the proposed new connection which achieves a connection to the room on the south-western corner of the building, this will interrupt internal details (these are to be retained above ceiling line), consequently **slightly detrimental.**

6.6 The Impact of the Proposed Works on the wider Conservation Area & Setting.

6.6.1 The reinstatement of high-quality, consistent shop-front treatments and the rusticated piers will have a **highly beneficial** impact on the appearance from street level and in key views from Dale Street, along Oldham Street and from the important junction of Dale, Oldham and Castle Streets.

6.6.2 Similarly the conservation-led works to the stonework and windows will also enhance (appropriately) the appearance of the building from key views within the conservation area, with consequent **highly beneficial** impact.

6.6.3 The primary consideration when looking at impact on the Conservation Area and wider context is the implications of the new additions to the roof. The



Figure 44 – Decorative plasterwork to board room.



Figure 45 – First Floor, corner of Dale and Oldham Street, showing original plasterwork and detail. The visibly disruptive boxing along the cill line is later and will be removed.

impact here is not considered in elevation but in street views. OMI have produced a series of views from adjacent streets. These are included below at figures 46-49. The views show the existing outline (red) and projections beyond the existing roofline (e.g new pavilion or plant screen) in blue.



Figure 46 – View along Dale Street towards the Hall. The existing hipped roof screens any additions from view.



Figure 47 – View along Dale Street towards the Hall looking north-west. The new pavilion will project slightly above the parapet line, but is fully screened by mature trees.



Figure 48 – View along Oldham Street towards the Hall. The adjacent buildings screen the new additions from view.

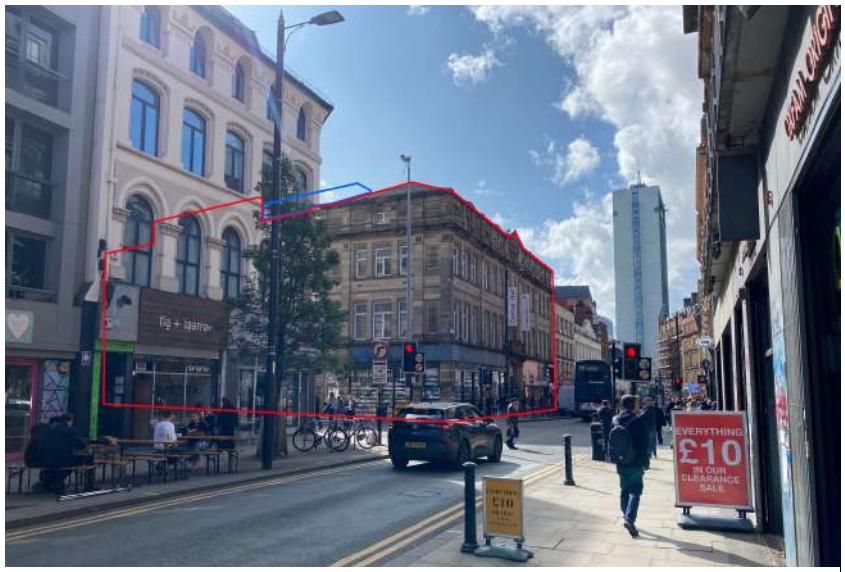


Figure 49 – View along Oldham Street towards the Hall looking south-west. The new structure will project slightly above the parapet line.

The view points are considered individually as follows:

6.6.4 Fig 46 shows that the new construction is obscured from view along Dale Street so consequently no impact on the conservation area. **No Impact**

6.6.5 Fig 47 shows that the new extension will be slightly above the parapet. This is generally screened by the tree planting, however, and seen in context of the street food stalls, hoarding and the 1970's building Chatsworth House. Any visible impact can be mitigated by use of good quality materials. **Minor detrimental impact.**

6.6.6 Fig 48 shows that the new construction is obscured from view along Oldham Street so consequently no impact on the conservation area. **No Impact**

6.6.7 Fig 49 shows that the new extension will be slightly above the parapet. Most of the extension is screened by the parapet, but there is a small section visible. Visible impact can be mitigated by use of good quality materials and ensuring any plant is properly screened. **Minor detrimental impact.**

6.6.8 Overall the impact on the conservation area, taking account of works to the external fabric, improvements to the elevations, shop fronts and conservation works in balance to the rooftop addition can be seen as **beneficial.**

6.7 The Impact of the Proposed Works on other Listed and adjacent Heritage Assets

6.7.1 Immediately adjoining the building are three listed buildings, Dale Street Chambers, 3 Dale Street and Sevendale House.

6.7.2 In general terms the impact on these buildings will be **beneficial**, their setting together with the wider conservation area will be enhanced by the improvements to the elevations, streetscape and overall appearance of the Central Hall. The buildings are listed for group value and their context is an essential component of this.

6.7.3 The new rooftop addition will have no direct impact on the setting or significance of the adjacent listed structures.

6.8 Conclusion

6.8.1 The overall impact of the scheme on the heritage values and consequent significance of the Central Hall is demonstrably positive. The minor detrimental impacts noted are far outweighed by the other elements of a

project which enables the building to continue to serve a function which it was fundamentally designed for. They constitute an appropriate new ‘layer’ in the timeline of Manchester Methodism and as such should be supported.