Heritage Statement

in connection with

Proposed PV Cell installation at Victoria Warehouse & Albert Warehouse (Marriott Hotel), Water Street, Manchester

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1 INTRODUCTION

Purpose and Methodology

1.1 This heritage statement has been prepared to assess revised proposals to install photovoltaic cell arrays upon the roofs of the grade II listed Victoria and Albert Warehouses (now converted as a hotel – the 'Manchester Marriot Victoria & Albert Hotel'), which lie within the Castlefield Conservation Area. The aim of the statement is to assess the likely impact of the proposed development upon the heritage significances of the listed building and conservation area. The proposed scheme has been revised for resubmission purposes and this heritage statement is an amended version of an original statement dated October 2023.

1.2 The approach taken in the preparation of this statement adheres to the principle of managing change intelligently, which lies at the heart of national planning policy for conservation of the historic built environment. The methodology employed involves the following sequential steps:

- Establish the nature of the proposed change(s), including the overall aim of the change and any emergent design proposals
- Identify any designated and/or non-designated heritage assets potentially affected by proposals for change
- Evaluate the heritage values and significances of the heritage assets, placing particular focus on values and significances that might be affected by the proposed change(s)
- Produce a statement of significance which is to be used to guide the design of changes in a manner that places conservation of significance as a priority
- Analyse the potential impact of the finalised design upon the significance(s) of the heritage asset(s)

1.3 The statement has been prepared in accordance with the general guidelines set out in the Historic England publications 'Informed Conservation'[i] and 'Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance'[ii] and responds to heritage policies outlined in Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG 2021). Historic England guidance in preparing heritage statements, entitled 'Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets' (Historic England Advice Note 12, 2019) has also been used. The legal context is set by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act of 1990.

1.4 Further guidance has been obtained from the suite of Historic England guidance documents, particularly the Historic England Advice Notes (HEAN) and Good Practise Advice notes (GPA). More specific guidance has also been obtained from Historic England's 2018 publication

'Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings: Solar Electric (Photovoltaics).'

Methods of Research and Investigation

1.5 Inspections of the site were carried out in July 2023 to assess its physical nature. Background research has also been conducted to ascertain all relevant contextual matters appertaining to the proposals. In accordance with the NPPF, background research has been proportionate to the nature of the building/site, the proposed change(s) and the likely impact of the change(s).

1.6 In terms the site's potential for buried archaeology, this has not been explored beyond scrutiny of historic mapping.

2 GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Location

2.1 The property is located between Water Street and the River Irwell, south of New Quay Street, to the east of Manchester city centre (figure 1).

Figure 1) Site location - The listed warehouses are denoted with the triangle (National Heritage List)

Outline Description & Historical Background

2.2 Constructed c.1840 as a pair of industrial warehouses, the adjoining Albert (north east) and Victoria (south west) Warehouses are brick built, of approximate rectangular and L-shaped plans and five stories in height, with gable slated roofs and an internal structure of iron columns and wooden beams. The elevations of the buildings are characterised by regular tiers/rows of windows with full height taking in doors to the riverside elevation.

2.3 Historic mapping shows that the Victoria Warehouse was originally of u-shaped plan with a tunnel entry off Water Street. The southern parts of the building were demolished to make way for a car park in the 1970s. Mapping also shows that The Albert Warehouse was originally longer in plan, but its north eastern end was reduced to make way for the large Albert Shed warehouse in the early C20th.

2.4 The Victoria Warehouse and Albert Warehouse were converted as a hotel in the 1990s with the interiors altered and sub-divided and new ancillary structures added. These included

low rise buildings adjacent to Water Street, an entrance canopy with projecting glass structures to the main south western and riverside elevations, and a rebuilt block to the north east. Photos of these changes are provided later.

2.5 The former warehouses are classified as riverside warehouses owing to their siting on the east side of the River Irwell. Riverside warehouses became a feature in Manchester from the early C18th[iii], with the Irwell's link to the Mersey completed in 1736 establishing a key trading route and resulting in extensive riverside development[iv]. The vast majority of this Georgian and Victorian industrial infrastructure was demolished in the C20th, and in recent years major high-rise redevelopment and regeneration of the local area has drastically changed the setting of the remaining industrial warehouses.

2.6 The former warehouses lie on the periphery of the Castlefield district of Manchester. The industrial history of the area is summarised by Manchester City Council within its conservation area descriptions[v], as follows:

'The River Irwell was made navigable in the 1720s, allowing access to Liverpool via the River Mersey, and in 1734 Edward Byrom financed the first quay on the Irwell for loading and unloading goods. This led to the construction of Quay Street between Deansgate and the river. The Roman fort was more like a grass-covered mound than a ruined castle when, from 1758 to 1761, the Duke of Bridgewater employed James Brindley to construct the first canal in Britain, its purpose being to transport coal from the Duke's mines at Worsley to Manchester.

The success of this venture, which halved the price of coal, was enormous and prompted the construction of the Rochdale Canal, which although planned by Brindley was carried out by John Rennie. It was opened in 1804 and made Castlefield the hub of the canal network which subsequently developed.

A large number of warehouses were also built to supply the needs of the rapidly growing population of Manchester, the fastest growing city in the world in the 19th century. It soon became apparent that canals could not move goods quickly enough, and this led to the construction of railways, the world's first railway station being opened on Liverpool Road in 1830.

Soon devoted to goods traffic, it became the centre of a network of railway lines, several of which crossed Castlefield on viaducts. These were concentrated over the site of the Roman fort, where four viaducts converge. The castellated design of some of the supporting piers was a homage to the fort. Further viaducts were constructed, extending as far as Central Station, which opened in 1879.

The remains of the old town of Aldport, although very densely populated, were demolished at the end of the 19th century to make way for the construction of the Great Northern Warehouse, the ultimate transport interchange building.

During the 20th century, both canal and rail transport declined to the point where these facilities were used chiefly for leisure purposes. The railway complex at Liverpool Road was sold to a conservation group for £1 and became the Greater Manchester Museum of Science and Industry, the centrepiece of Britain's first Urban Heritage Park. The principle of an Urban Heritage Park was established in December 1982, along with the decision to reconstruct part of the Roman Fort on the excavated foundations.'

2.7 There follows a series of historic maps and more recent photographs illustrating the historic development of the Victoria and Albert warehouses from the late C19th.

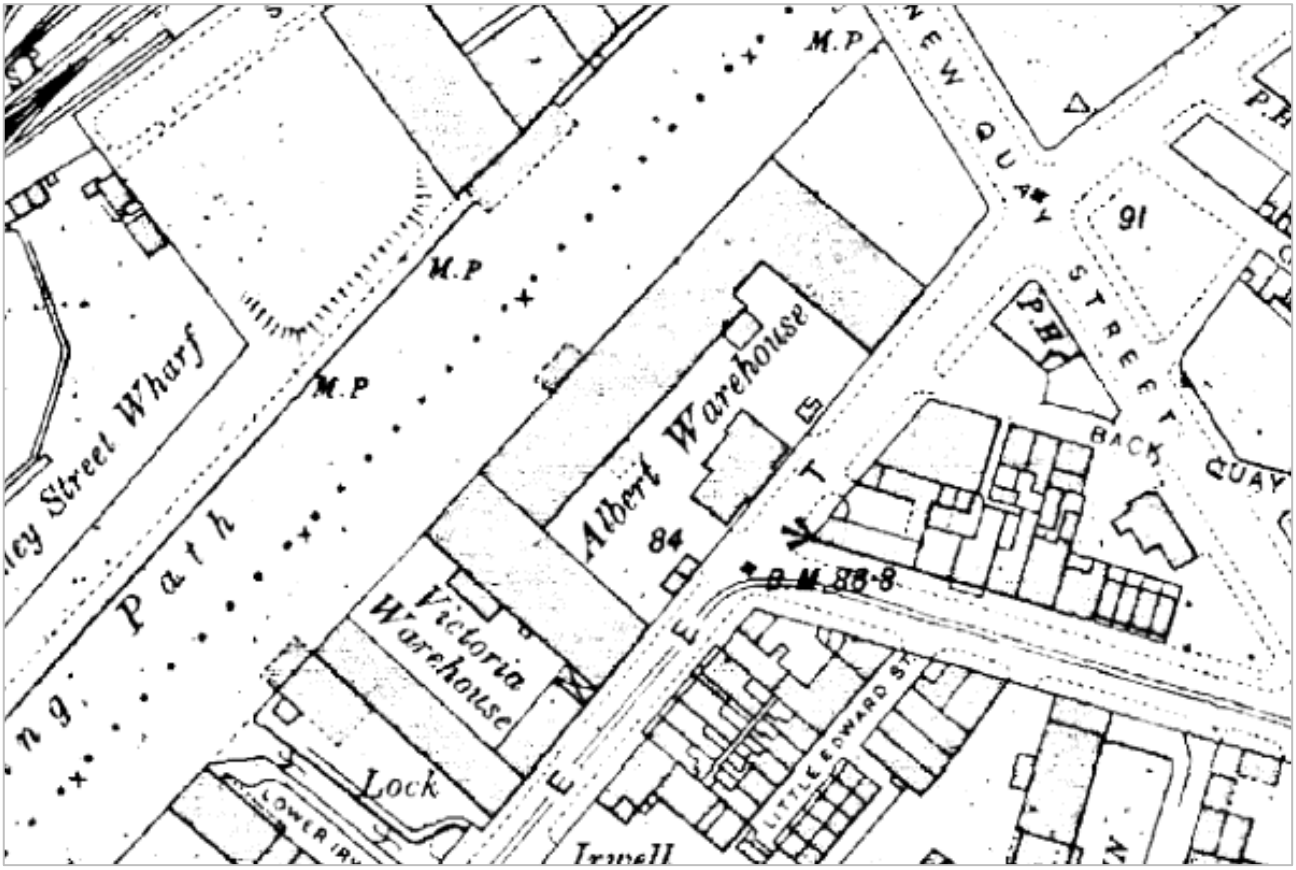

Figure 2) OS map c.1901 showing U-shaped plan of the Victoria Warehouse

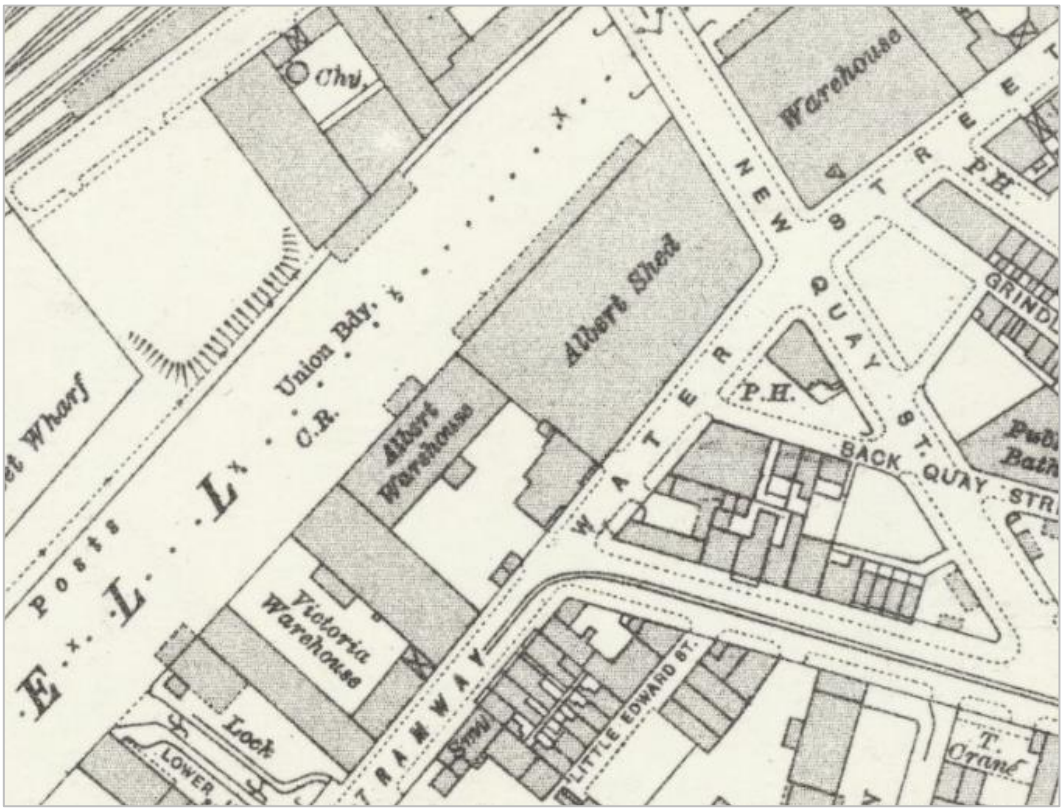

Figure 3) OS map of 1915/16 (published 1922) showing arrival of the Albert Shed

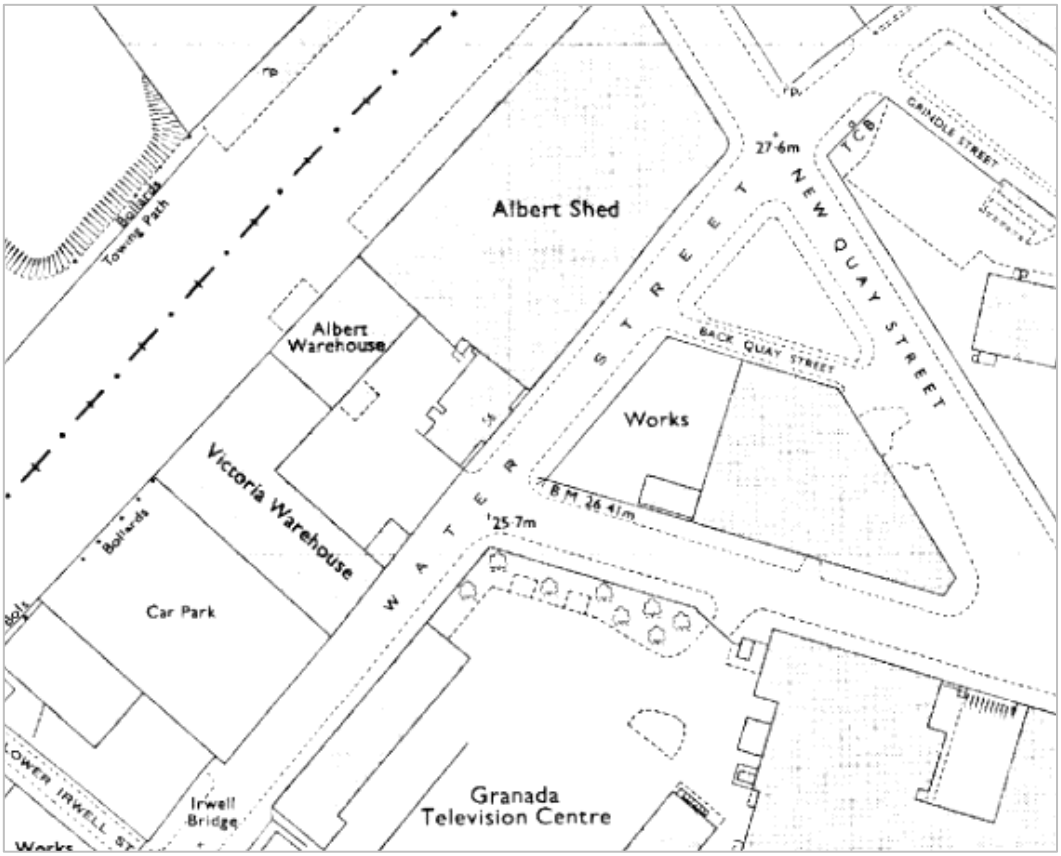

Figure 4) 1970s OS map showing a car park in the position of the Victoria Warehouse's former southern wing

Figure 5) View from the Rover Irwell showing the converted building with ground floor additions

Figure 6) View from Water Street showing added entrance canopy and ground floor projecting extension

Figure 7) Aerial view from the east showing new block (right) and new single storey ancillary structures

Figure 8) Aerial view (from SW) of high-rise development surrounding the warehouses (Google Earth, July 2023)

Heritage Asset Designations

2.8 The Victoria Warehouse and adjoined Albert Warehouse (and adjacent quay) are listed under a single listing as a grade II listed building and a designated heritage asset. The listing occurred before conversion to a hotel. The listed building lies within the Castlefield Conservation Area, also a designated heritage asset. The listing description and conservation area map are given below.

2.9 *SJ8398 WATER STREET 698-1/16/430 (West side) 03/10/74 Victoria Warehouse, Albert Warehouse, quay on west side fronting River Irwell*

GV II

Warehouses. Early to mid C19, altered. Red brick with sandstone dressings and slate roof; quay of very large dressed stone blocks. Victoria Warehouse L-plan with one range at right-angles to street and the other parallel to the quay, and Albert Warehouse continued from north end of this. Five storeys. The west front, to the river, forms a continuous range of 9+7 windows, plus 4 loading slots. Victoria warehouse, the southern half, has 5-stage loading slots at the south end and near the centre (dividing the windows 4 and 5), both with timber sills, board doors and pitched wooden canopies; Albert Warehouse has round-headed 5-stage loading slots at the junction and near the centre (dividing the windows 3 and 4), and between these a large basket-arched doorway rising through 2 storeys, with rusticated quoined surround (and now furnished with sliding doors and protected by remains of wooden pentice). Both have low 6-pane tilting casement windows (mostly damaged), with raised

stone sills and flat-arched heads. Victoria Warehouse has a hipped roof, Albert Warehouse has a stone frieze, cornice and blocking course, and raised coped gables. The return side and rear (to Water Street) are generally similar, but Victoria Warehouse has 2 blocked basket-arched doorways with quoined surrounds. Interior: iron columns with wide timber pads to timber beams.

2.10 The Castlefield Conservation Area was first designated in 1979. The V&A Warehouse sits at the northern tip of the conservation area, as shown in the boundary map below.

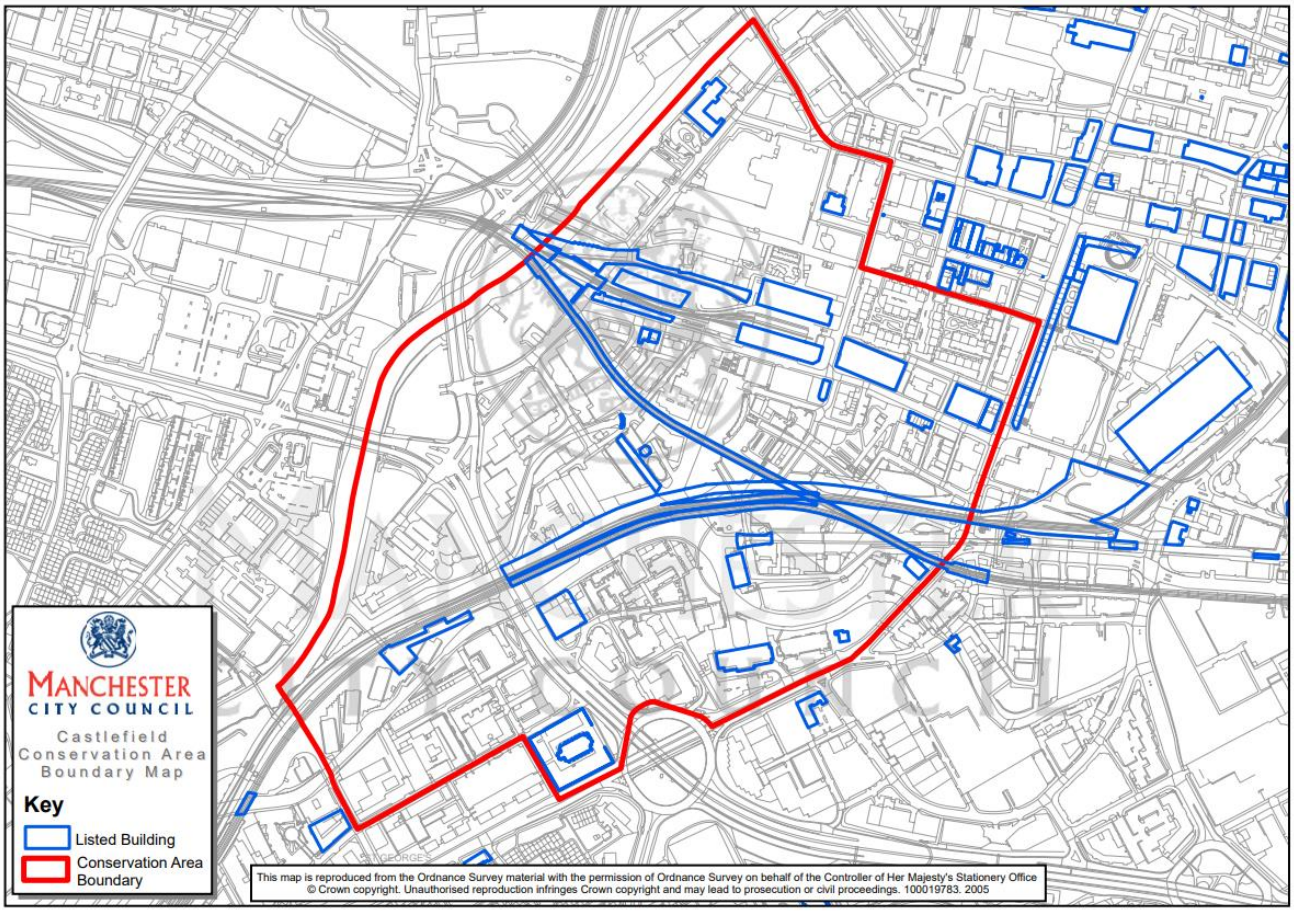

Figure 9) Castlefield Conservation Area map. The V&A warehouse is the northern most listed building with the area

3 HERITAGE APPRAISAL

Introduction

3.1 The following appraisal adheres to guidance published by Historic England (2008 and 2019)[vi],[vii] and relates specifically to the requirement contained in paragraph 189 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021), given in extract below:

3.2 "*In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary*."

3.3 The appraisal begins by identifying and assessing any heritage values/interests that might be affected by the proposals, before evaluating these and composing a 'Statement of Significance'. The essential purpose of the Statement is to set priorities for conservation of significance and enable an objective assessment on the likely impact of the proposals.

Heritage Interests

3.4 The heritage interests explored below are distilled under the following headings: archaeological interest; historic interest; architectural and artistic interest. The exploration focusses specifically on those interests deemed of possible relevance to the proposals site, and it is not an exhaustive assessment of the inherent heritage interests of the relevant heritage assets. The phrase 'heritage interests' is interchangeable with the phrase 'heritage values', which was used in Historic England guidance from 2008[viii].

Archaeological Interest

3.5 Historic England (2019) suggests that "There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point."

3.6 The converted warehouses and quay hold notable archaeological interests owing to their industrial past and the retained evidence of industrial processes. This evidence, namely of large Victorian riverside storage warehouses, has been compromised by past alterations and conversion. Likewise, major changes in the setting of the building have eroded archaeological interest derived from the wider scale industrialisation of the riverside. The archaeological interest of the site is defined by the remaining evidence of C19th construction and the riverside setting.

Historical Interest

3.7 Historic England (2019) suggests this to be - "An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history, but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity".

3.8 The historical interest of the former warehouses lies in their history of use and the role they played in establishing riverside industrial infrastructure through the C19th. The buildings are relatively rare survivors of this period which adds to their historic interest, however conversion, alteration and addition has eroded some historic interest derived from clear and interpretable evidence of original function/use. This erosion of interest extends to the setting of the building, where major redevelopment has removed the bulk of the historic setting of the warehouses and dramatically changed the character of this former industrial district and the northern part of the Castlefield Conservation Area.

Architectural and Artistic Interest

3.9 Historic England (2019) suggests that: "These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skills, like sculpture."

3.10 The warehouses possess some architectural interest on account of their retained plan form, original construction and overall appearance. Conversion, alteration and extension has a had a notable impact upon the visual character of the buildings inside and out, however they generally remain interpretable as Victorian era warehouse structures. This is in part due to the simplicity of their brick construction and regular arrangement of windows and former taking in doors, partly due to their riverside location, and partly due to the material contrast they present alongside their modern neighbours. This contrast establishes the building's role in defining the northern reaches of the Castlefield Conservation Area, where remaining Victorian era development generally peters out and modern development begins.

Statement of Significance

3.11 Having assessed the heritage interests associated with the site, it is now possible to take a more informed approach to the assessment of site significance. This will consider prioritising conservation in light of the proposals for change. In this context, a statement of significance

is given below.

3.12 An appraisal of heritage interests has been conducted to explore the inherent heritage interests and associated significances of the grade II listed Victoria and Albert warehouses which lie in the Castlefield Conservation Area. The principal findings of the appraisal are that the warehouses are survivors of riverside industrial development from the Victorian era, which were converted into a hotel in the 1990s in order to secure a viable new use. This conversion, which involved extensive alteration, extension and localised demolition, generally retained the overall material and volumetric form of the buildings and therein saved interpretable evidence of their original function. However, the changes simultaneously eroded the architectural and historic interests of the buildings - they were listed before conversion - and recent large scale redevelopment of the local area has also erased much of the warehouses original industrial setting.

3.13 The retained heritage significance of the warehouses rests in the architectural and historic interest of their simple volumetric form and brick built elevations, which, when paired with the riverside location, present interpretable evidence of their industrial storage function. This significance is compromised by both the extent and nature of past conservation (etc) and the dramatic redevelopment of the surrounding area over recent years, which has eroded significance derived from setting. In terms of conserving retained significance, as it contributes to the listed buildings and the Castlefield Conservation Area, the primary aim would appear linked to preserving the overall volumetric appearance of the building and the materiality of its functional brick elevations, in order to conserve the buildings' industrial character.

4 ANALYSIS OF THE PROPOSALS

General Principles

4.1 General guidance on assessing proposed changes to heritage assets is given in chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021). The NPPF establishes the premise that conserving significance should be a guiding principle when designing proposals for any development. In order to do this, it is first necessary to understand the heritage significance(s) of heritage assets before commencing with design.

4.2 Part 3 of this statement fulfils the need to understand significance and the findings of part 3 have informed the design of the proposals. There follows, here in section 4, an objective review of the finalised scheme, verifying to what extent conservation of significance has been achieved or whether any harm is likely to accrue.

Summary of the Proposals

4.3 The revised proposals involve installation of PV cells upon the roofs of the listed buildings so as to improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emmissions. The scheme herein considered involves notable amendments to a previous scheme (October 2023) with a reduced number and altered positiing of the proposed PV cells. The revised proposals repond to comments receieved from Manchester City Council's planning department, which essentially relate to concealing the PV cells from general views of the listed building.

4.4 The changes to the scheme involve repositiong the proposed PV cells on to the lower level flat roof area located in the central portion of the building, rather than on the main higher level pitched roofs of the L-shaped listed building as per the original scheme. These lower roofs are modern additions to the former mill buildings, which are far less visible than the higher roofs and contained within the main body of the building. Indeed the panels will only be generally visible from adjacent higher level vantage points (hotel windows etc).

4.5 Representative images of the visual impact of the scheme are shown below together with a existing and proposed roof plan. More extensive drawings and supporting information is provided with the full listed building consent application.

Figure 10) Existing and proposed north east elevation

Figure 11) Existing and proposed roof plans

Analysis of the Proposals: National Planning Policy Framework

4.6 As discussed earlier, section 16 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment) of the NPPF (2021) considers heritage planning and identifies the following key drivers in the decision making process:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality;
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

4.7 The NPPF unifies the overall approach to planning, in order to ensure that deliberations over decisions relating to heritage assets are made in the full planning context. Securing sustainable development is the primary driver of the NPPF: in the heritage context this relies on maintaining active use (long term) in a manner that seeks to limit potential harm to significance.

NPPF Paragraph 199

4.8 Paragraph 199 of the NPPF states:

"When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance."

4.9 Parts 2 and 3 of this heritage statement acknowledge the need to explore and understand heritage significances in order to guide proposals for change and review likely impacts, all as outlined within the NPPF. On the matter of whether any harm to significance accrues, this is discussed in the passages below.

NPPF Paragraph 201

4.10 Paragraph 201 of the NPPF states:

"Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and

b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and

c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and

d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use."

4.11 Paragraph 201 of the NPPF considers the circumstances where total loss or substantial harm to significance of a designated heritage asset might accrue on account of a development proposal. In this case, as the proposals have limited impact upon the historic fabric and appearance of the listed building, there would appear no reasonable or appreciable risk of substantial harm or total loss of significance to either the listed building or the conservation area.

NPPF Paragraph 202

4.12 Paragraph 202 of the NPPF states:

"Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use."

4.13 The potential risk of less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage

asset, as referred to in paragraph 202 of the NPPF, could only theoretically arise in this case should the proposals alter the appearance of the listed building and/or the conservation area in such a manner that their extant heritage significances are eroded to an appreciable degree. This risk of potential harm relates specifically to the historic fabric of the building and the visual appearance of the building.

4.14 In terms of historic fabric, the revised scheme involves mounting the PV cells on non-original and insignificant elements of the building. Historic fabric will therefore not be affected.

4.15 In terms of visual appearance, the proposed installation of PV cells will only change the appearance of the modern flat roof part of the listed building as generally shown in the images above. There will therefore be virtually no visual impact on the listed building when viewed from ground level, but the cells upon the flat roofs will be visible from surrounding higher levels vantage points (windows etc). The changes herein will impact the appearance of modern elements of the building, elements which do not make a positive contribution to the significance of the listed building.

4.16 Historic England published revised guidance on the use of PV cells on listed buildings in 2018[ix]. That guidance, entitled 'Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings: Solar Electric (Photovoltaics)' explores the benefits of microgeneration and low carbon technologies, whilst also considering potential harmful impacts. This is done mindful of increasing concerns over the impact climate change and the economic effects of rising energy prices. Issues such as reversibility, replacement materials and significance are considered, with the following general advice provided on the latter:

"*When assessing applications for PV installations fixed directly to the building or within the setting of heritage assets like historic buildings, the significance of the asset will need to be properly assessed. This assessment may well conclude that the roof covering; its appearance, perhaps a decorative array of tiles, or intrinsic historic fabric (for example ancient local stone tiles) is of high significance and therefore the impact of the PV is harmful. The understanding of significance of the roof is often critical*."

4.17 The revised proposal follow the guidance provided by Historic England in that the placing of the PV cells is upon a part of the listed building with no inherent heritage significance. The installation is also reversible and provides valuable contribution to reducing the carbon emissions of the host building.

Analysis of the Proposals: Local Heritage Planning Policy

4.18 Local planning policy effectively follows, as it must legally do, the policy requirements of the NPPF, therefore separate consideration of local policy in the heritage planning context is not deemed necessary.

5 SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

5.1 This heritage statement has been prepared to assess revised proposals to install photo voltaic cell arrays upon the roofs of the grade II listed Victoria and Albert Warehouses (now converted as a hotel – the 'Manchester Marriot Victoria & Albert Hotel'), which lie within the Castlefield Conservation Area. The aim of the statement is to assess the likely impact of the proposed development upon the heritage significances of the listed building and conservation area. The scheme has been revised in response to comments from Manchester City Council's planning department for a previous scheme (2023).

5.2 The initial findings of the statement are that the heritage significance of the listed building are almost solely derived from the building's historic use, evidence of its original function and the importance of its riverside setting. These significances likewise contribute to the wider architectural and historic interests of the Castlefield Conservation Area.

5.3 In terms of impact upon significance, it is noted that the proposed PV cell installation previously intended for the main roofs of the listed building will now be installed upon a modern flat roof area instead. This prevents any impact upon original elements of the building and dramatically reduces the visibility of the cells. The changes avoid causing any harm to the significance of the listed buildings.

5.4 In terms of public benefits, the proposals will provide a valuable source of low carbon energy, and the scheme presents an excellent opportunity to demonstrate the valuable role historic buildings can play in reducing carbon emissions and tackling climate change.

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[i] Clarke, K, *Informed Conservation,* Historic England 2003

[ii] Historic England, *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance: Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment,* 2008

[iii] Nevell, M. *The River Irwell and the Archaeology of Manchester's Early Waterfronts*, Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society Vol 100 (2004), 30-15

[iv] English Heritage, *Manchester: The Warehouse Legacy*, *English Heritage,* 2002

[v] https://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/511/conservation_areas/972/castlefield_conservation_area/2

[vi] Historic England, *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance: Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment,* 2008

[vii] Historic England Advice Note 12 (2019) *Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets*

[viii] Historic England, *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance: Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment,* 2008

[ix]https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/eehb-solar-electric/heag173-eehb-solar-electric-photovoltaics/