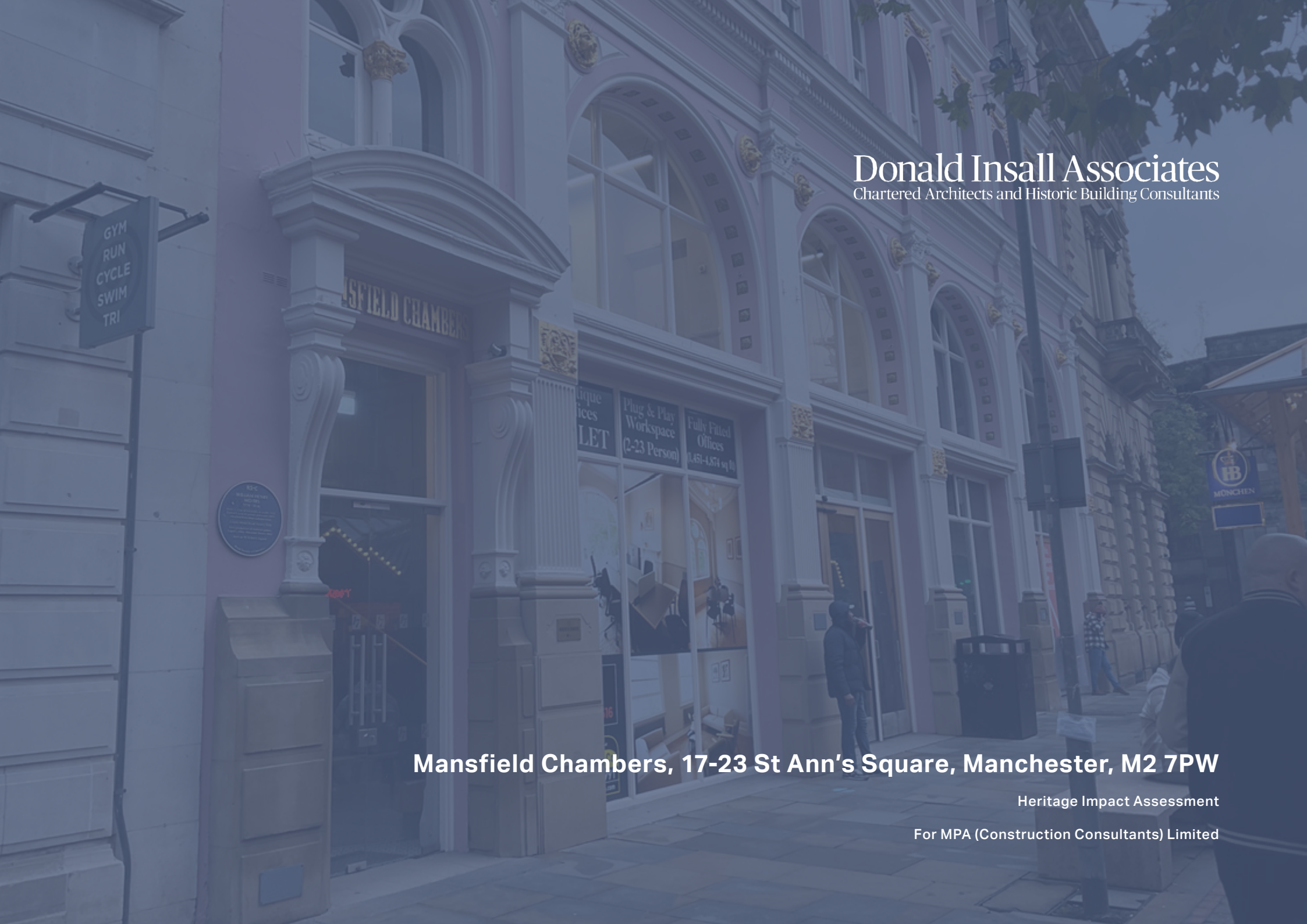




Donald Insall Associates

Chartered Architects and Historic Building Consultants

Mansfield Chambers, 17-23 St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7PW

Heritage Impact Assessment

For MPA (Construction Consultants) Limited



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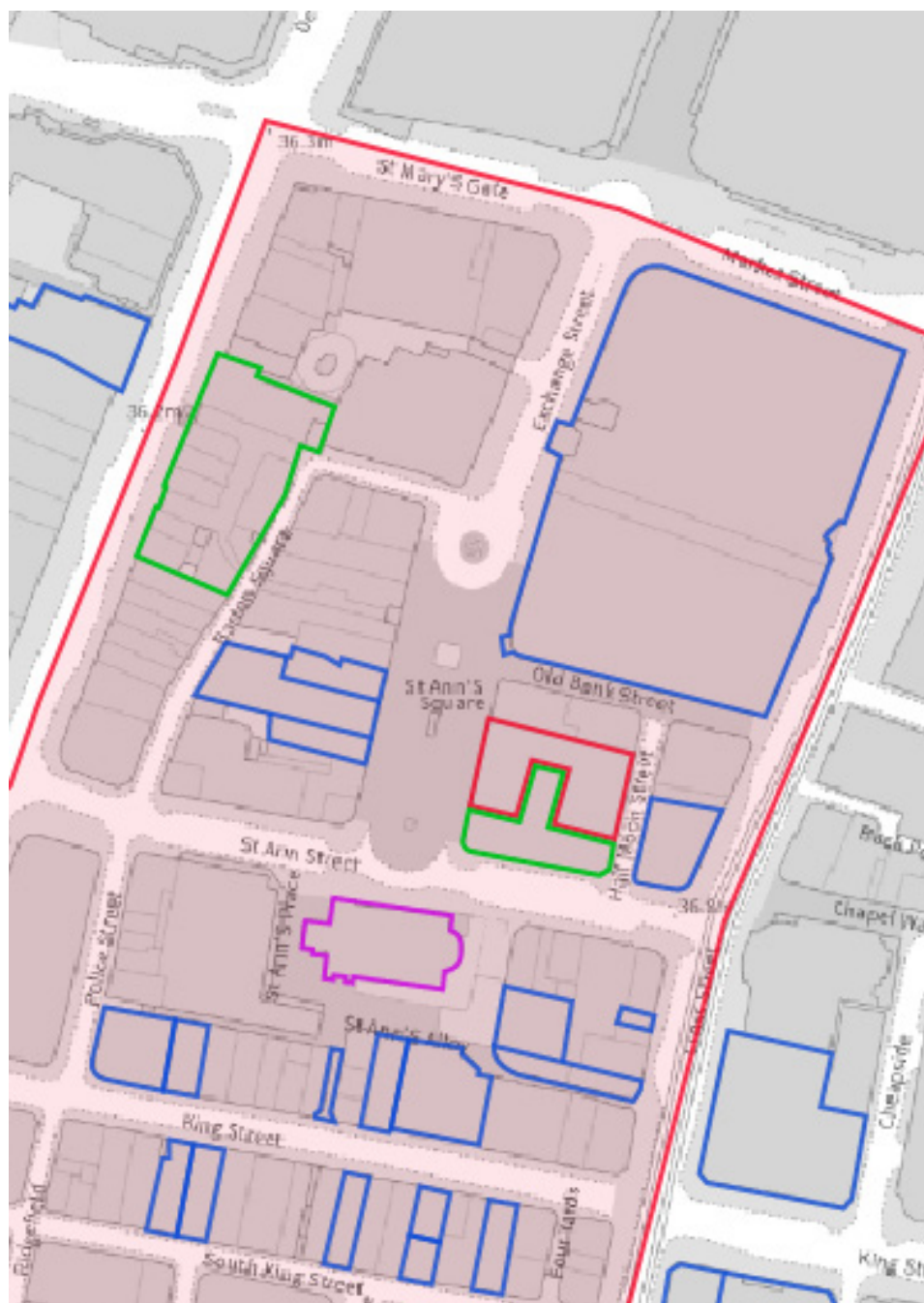
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Key:

- St Ann's Square Conservation Area
- Grade I Listed Building
- Grade II* Listed Building
- Grade II Listed Building

1.1 Heritage Assets Map

1.0 Summary of Heritage Impact Assessment

1.1 Introduction

Donald Insall Associates was commissioned by MPA (Construction Consultants) Limited in October 2023 to assist in the preparation of proposals for high-end retail use within the ground floor and basement of Mansfield Chambers, 17-23 St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7PW.

The investigation has comprised historical research, using both archival and secondary material, and a site inspection. A brief illustrated history of the building, with sources of reference and bibliography, is in Section 2; the site survey findings are in Section 3. The investigation has established the significance of the building, which is set out in Section 4 and summarised below.

The specific constraints for this building are outlined below. This report has been drafted to inform the design of proposals for the building, by Johnson Pinney Architects and Section 5 provides a justification of the scheme according to the relevant legislation, planning policy and guidance.

1.2 The Building, its Legal Status and Policy Context

Mansfield Chambers is a Grade II-listed building located the City of Manchester. It is situated within the St Ann's Square Conservation Area and forms part of the setting of the following listed buildings **[Plate 1.1]**:

- 25, St Ann's Square (Grade II*)
- Cobden's Statue (Grade II)
- 22, St Ann's Square (Grade II)
- 18-20, St Ann's Square (Grade II)
- 16, St Ann's Square (Grade II)
- Alliance House (Grade II)
- War Memorial (Boer War) (Grade II)
- Royal Exchange Theatre (Grade II)
- Church of St Ann (Grade I)
- Deacon monument north of apse at east end of Church of St Ann (Grade II)
- Boardman monument south of apse at east end of Church of St Ann (Grade II)

Alterations to a listed building generally require listed building consent; development in conservation areas or within the setting of a listed building or conservation area requires local authorities to assess the implications of proposals on built heritage.

The statutory list description of the listed building is included in Appendix I and a summary of guidance on the St. Ann's Square Conservation Area provided by the local planning authority is in Appendix II, along with extracts from the relevant legislation and planning policy documents.

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is the legislative basis for decision-making on applications that relate to the historic environment. Sections 16, 66 and 72 of the Act impose statutory duties upon local planning authorities which, with regard to listed buildings, require the planning authority to have '*special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses*' and, in respect of conservation areas, that '*special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area*'.

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan applicable to the building is the Manchester Core Strategy 2012-2027 (2012) and saved policies in the Unitary Development Plan (UDP - 1995) which require that proposed works preserve or enhance the historic environment, avoiding adverse impact on the special interest of listed buildings.

The courts have held that following the approach set out in the policies on the historic environment in the National Planning Policy Framework 2023 will effectively result in a decision-maker complying with its statutory duties. The Framework forms a material consideration for the purposes of section 38(6). At the heart of the Framework is '*a presumption in favour of sustainable development*' and there are also specific policies relating to the historic environment. The Framework states that heritage assets are '*an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they*

can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations'. The Glossary to the National Planning Policy Framework defines a heritage asset as:

A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

The Framework, in paragraph 200, states that:

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.

Section 4 of this report – the assessment of significance – meets this requirement and is based on the research and site surveys presented in sections 2 and 3, which are of a sufficient level of detail to understand the potential impact of the proposals.

The Framework also, in paragraph 205, requires that:

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.

The Framework goes on to state at paragraph 206 that:

Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting) should require clear and convincing justification.

Section 5 of this report provides this clear and convincing justification.

The Framework requires that local planning authorities categorise harm as either 'substantial' or 'less than substantial'. Where a proposed development will lead to 'substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset', the Framework states, in paragraph 207, that:

...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

Where a development proposal will lead to 'less than substantial harm' to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the Framework states, in paragraph 208, that:

...this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

The Framework requires local planning authorities to look for opportunities for new development within conservation areas and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Paragraph 212 states that:

Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.

Concerning conservation areas and world heritage sites it states, in paragraph 213, that:

Not all elements of a Conservation Area [...] will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area [...] should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 207 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 208, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area [...] as a whole.

1.3 Summary Assessment of Significance

A fuller assessment of significance is included in Section 4.0 of this report. The following paragraphs are a summary explaining why the listed building is considered of nationally important architectural and historical interest.

The significance of Mansfield Chambers is centred on the architectural interest of its principal neo-classical facade (although seemingly heavily altered), the contribution that this makes to the street scene and character of St Ann's Square and its listed buildings – particularly the Church of St Ann (Grade I) – and its historic interest as a representation of the Victorian phase of the multi-faceted evolution of the St Ann's area from a Georgian domestic enclave into a multi-faceted commercial district. Externally, the rear elevation has some limited interest at ground floor, mainly in its original doorways and hoist, but the modern rebuilding to the inner bays detracts heavily.

Internally, the building is heavily altered, having lost almost all of its historic fittings and fit out and potentially a substantial amount of its internal original structural fabric. At ground and basement floors much of its cellular original plan form has been lost, particularly in the west and north, with only very limited evidence to cast light on its historic use beyond the creation of those interconnecting openings that evidence the amalgamation of the space almost

immediately after construction. Almost all historic fit out and decorative features have been lost and almost none of the original circulation between the ground floor units and their basements survive. At both floors, no. 17 and in particular the rear appear to have suffered the greatest loss, the grid of column supports potentially non original and representing substantial rebuilding at an early date.

1.4 Summary of the Proposals and Justification

The proposed scheme is outlined in detail in the application drawings and Design and Access Statement by Johnson Pinney Architects, which this report accompanies and described in detail in Section 5 below. The works seek to refurbish and reconfigure the basement and ground floors into a new retail unit with a new associated shopfront. Key interventions include:

- Creation of a sale areas area across the ground floor supported by a small back of house space
- Creation of a hospitality area to the rear of the basement floor with back of house functions to the front
- Changes to circulation, including a new lift and stair
- New shopfront and signage and external alterations
- Installation of new MEP

The proposed works outlined above seek to consolidate the existing tired and cluttered interior, mainly comprising modern fabric, to create a high quality aesthetic which celebrates the remaining historic features and reinforces a sense of the original individual retail units. This all forms part of the ambition to create a proposed high-end retail experience – akin to the commercial prestige of this part of the city at the time of its construction in the 1860s – whilst bringing both floors into full active use and providing the fitout and features suited to 21st century retail of this nature. Considered alongside the new shopfronts proposed, this would present an overall enhancement to the listed buildings and its contribution to the retail activity and vibrancy of the St Ann's Square Conservation Area.

The proposed scheme would meet the statutory duty imposed by The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the tests for sustainable development as outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework and accord with the relevant local policies insofar as they relate to the historic environment. They are therefore considered to be acceptable in heritage terms.

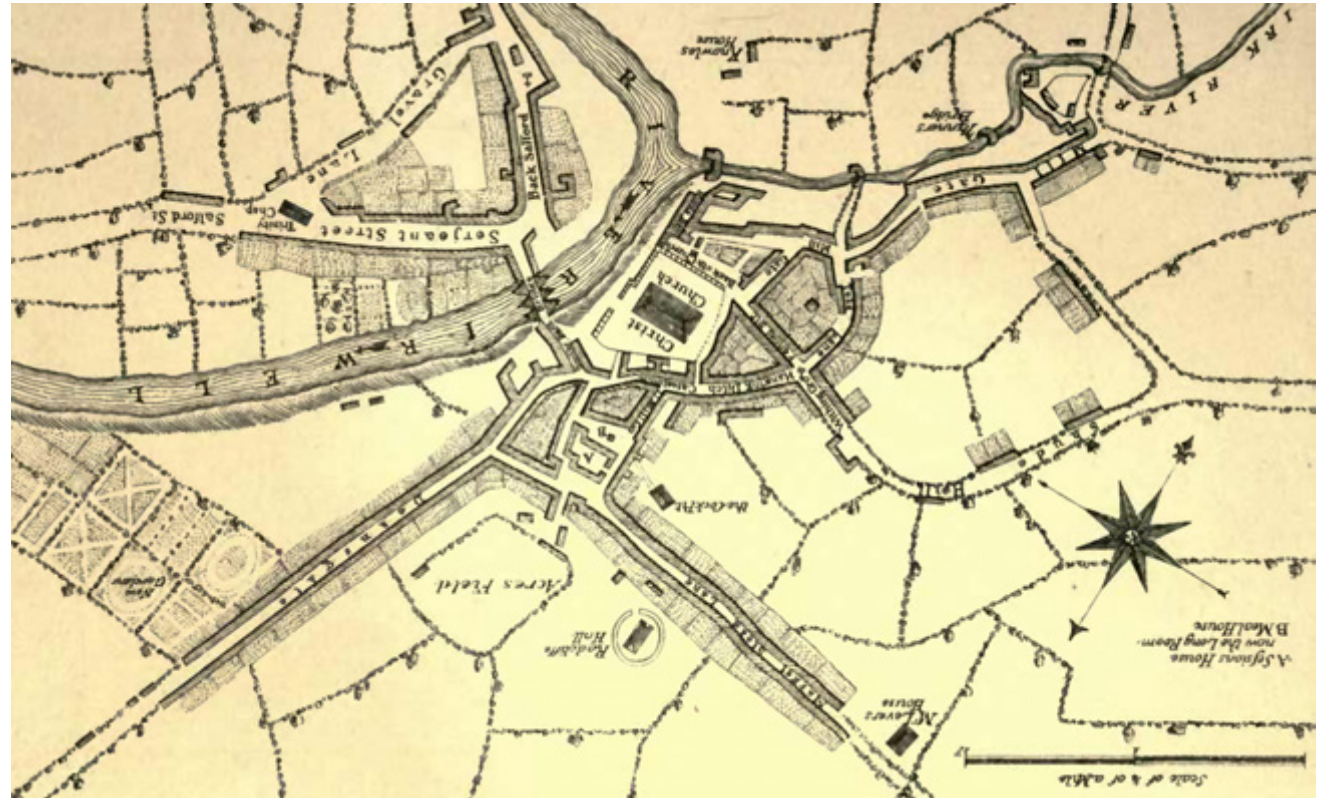
2.0 Historic Background

2.1 The Development of St Ann's Square

2.1.1 Early History (to 1700)

In the medieval period Manchester was only a small village, focused upon the monastic Christ Church (now Manchester Cathedral). What is today the site of King Street and its surroundings was at this time open fields, one of which (**Acres Field**) began to be used for an **annual fair** in the 13th century.

In the post-medieval period the area today known as St Ann's Square was a 'common' or '**open' field** for the collective use of certain townspeople of Manchester. Manchester was still only a small town, with comparatively little industry, and Deansgate (west) and Market Street (north) formed the very edges of the built-up area. Acres Field, situated to their east and south respectively, lay beyond the town, with the area to its south (including the future site of St Ann's Square) still undeveloped fields [Plate 2.1].



2.1 Acres Field and surroundings, 1650 (redrawn in 1822) (Views of Manchester)

2.1.2 The Development of St Ann's Square and Surrounding Streets (1700-1800)

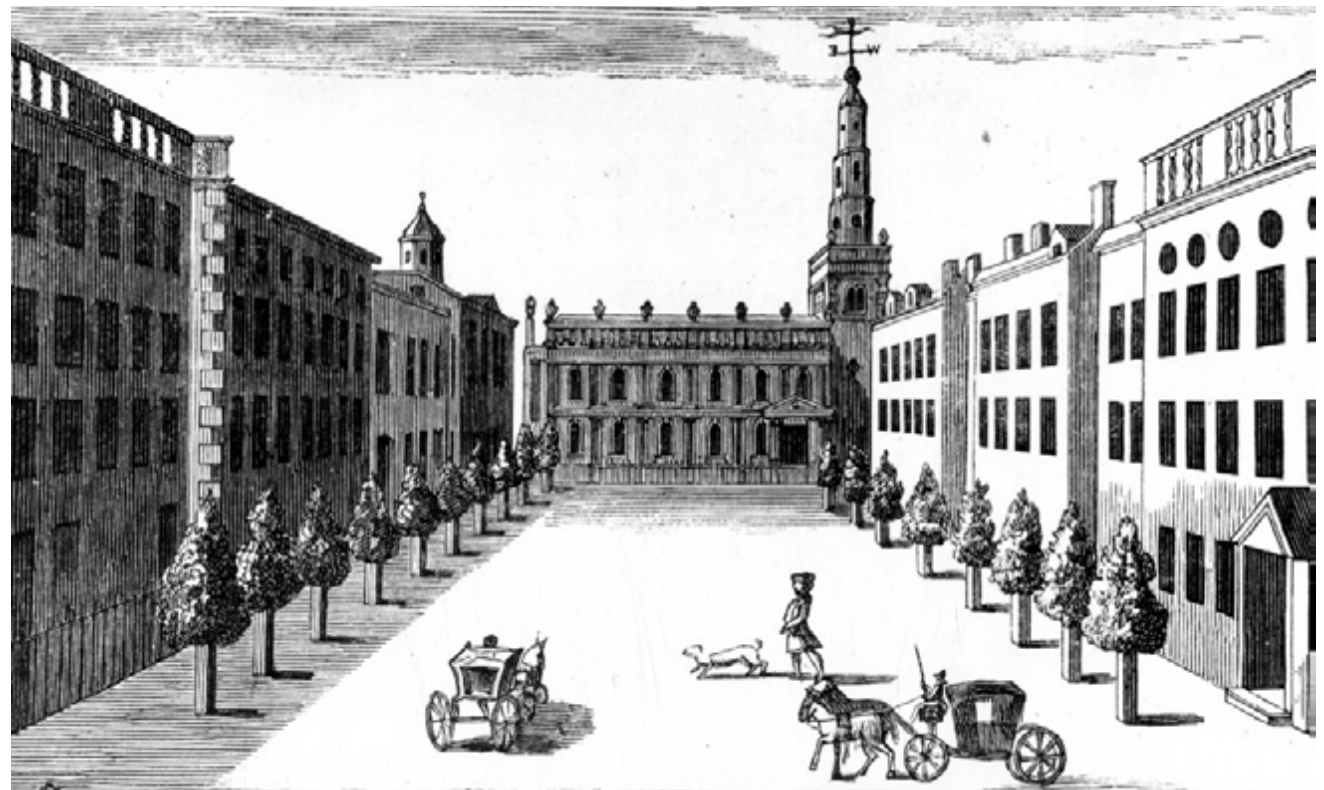
An Act of Parliament was awarded in 1708 allowing the construction of what became the **Church of St Ann (Grade I)**. This was built in 1709-12, supposedly by **Sir Christopher Wren** or a student of his (although this is unproven). The Act also required that an area 30-yards wide be set aside adjacent to the church, for continued use by the fair. This 30-yard area was formally laid out in 1720, as **St Ann's Square**, its creation now regarded as the first step in the expansion of the town of Manchester from the historic core around Christ Church. Indeed, the square may have been Manchester's first substantial **planned development** outside of the historic core.

The laying out of the square was presumably also accompanied by the release of the surrounding land for development. From its start, this development was dually residential and commercial in use, and prestigious in character. Construction likely began around the square itself, with the **Cotton Exchange**, Manchester's first, built to its north in 1729. By the 1740s the square was already well-established as a desirable residential area of townhouses [Plate 2.2].

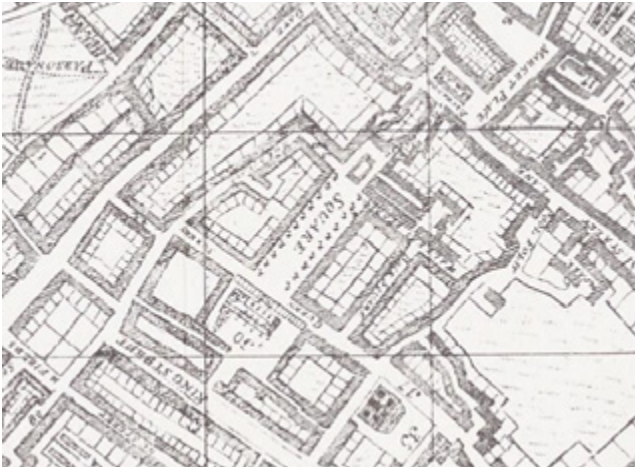
Development was rapid and by the 1740s streets had been laid out on all sides of St Ann's Square, although fields remained scattered amongst the buildings. **King Street** had been laid out and was already fully lined with fashionable houses on both sides, stretching along its full extent. The early maps are representational only, and do not provide accurate depictions of individual buildings, but do show the houses on **St Ann's Square** as having enclosed gardens or yards to the

rear [Plate 2.3]. Maps of the following decades show development continuing to the east and south of the square [Plate 2.4].

By the 1780s and 1790s St Ann's Square was engulfed to all sides, the densely packed development broken up only by occasional squares and churchyards, and the remnant undeveloped fields at Mosley Street. The more detailed maps now show its buildings presenting a regular line to the street but more irregular to their rears, where extensions and additions projected into what had formerly been yards or gardens [Plate 2.5].



2.2 St Ann's Square, 1745 (Greater Manchester Lives)



2.3 St Ann's Square and surroundings, Casson and Berry, 1746
(University of Manchester)



2.4 St Ann's Square and surroundings, Tinker, 1772
(Manchester Historical Maps)



2.5 St Ann's Square and surroundings, Green, 1787-94
(University of Manchester)

2.1.3 Redevelopment in the 19th Century (1800-1900)

The St Ann's and King Street area began to change in character in the 19th century, rapidly developing to become a prestigious commercial and retail centre within the city. As Manchester became a wealthy industrial town its commercial buildings became larger and more prestigious, with the **Cotton Exchange** replaced in 1809, on a site further to the south, and rebuilt on that same site in 1829. Domestic use declined as the townhouses themselves were converted to office use for prestigious businesses and professionals, this area now fully subsumed by urban development [Plate 2.6]. The fair was finally relocated to Shudehill in 1820, by which time the **churchyard** and **St Ann's Square** were the only substantial open areas (few of the houses now retaining anything more than a small remnant yard to the rear) [Plates 2.7-2.9].

Such was the eminence of the area that it now became home to Manchester's first **Town Hall**, built at the corner of King Street and Cross Street in 1819-34. Purpose-built **banks** were also beginning to emerge, the **Manchester & Salford Savings Bank** built in 1841-42 and Benjamin Heywood's bank, designed by J. E. Grogan, following at **25 St Ann's Square (Grade II*)** in 1848.

Remodelling and rebuilding accelerated in the mid-19th century, many of the townhouses located around St Ann's Square being replaced by new, taller, purpose-built office and retail premises such as **Mansfield Chambers (Grade II)** and the **Equitable Building** (7-9 St Ann's Square, 1867). On a larger scale,

Barton's Arcade (Grade II*) was added in 1871 to designs by Corbett, Raby and Sawyer and the **Royal Exchange (Grade II)** was rebuilt again in 1874 (and subsequently extended), becoming the biggest trading floor in England.



2.6 Extract from a birds' eye view of Manchester (Mansfield Chambers in the centre), 1889 (University of Manchester)



2.7 St Ann's Square and surroundings, Swire, 1824 (Historical Maps of Manchester)



2.8 St Ann's Square and surroundings, OS surveyed 1845 and published 1848 (National Library of Scotland)



2.9 St Ann's Square and surroundings, OS surveyed 1880s and published 1890s (National Library of Scotland)

2.1.4 Changing Use in the 20th and 21st Centuries (1900-2023)

By the turn of the 20th century the area St Ann's Square had lost any residual domestic character, now being dominated by buildings for retail, commerce and - particularly to the east of Cross Street - insurance and banking [Plate 2.10]. Redevelopment continued here and around the churchyard into the early decades of the century, creating new shops such as the elaborate, mock timber-framed **15-17 King Street (Grade II, 1902)**, bars and restaurants (most notably **Thomas's Chop House, Grade II**, 1901, abutting the churchyard), cafes and hybrid buildings combining these functions (such as **Winters Buildings, Grade II**, also adjacent to the churchyard).

On St Ann's Square and King Street the construction of modern and often elaborate commercial buildings continued in an eclectic mixture of styles, resulting in the 1913 **Lloyds Bank** (Grade II, 53 King Street and 33-35 Cross Street) and office buildings such as **Eagle House (Grade II, 1911)**, built at 62-68 Cross Street for Eagle Insurance (designed by Charles Heathcote and Sons) [Plates 2.11-2.12]. Head offices for the **Manchester Liners Shipping Company** followed on St Ann's Square in the interwar period, with the **Marshall and Snelgrove** extension constructed on St Ann Street in 1937 to designs by Benjamin Waterhouse. Further banks and prestigious insurance company offices were also constructed on and around King Street [Plate 2.13].

The character of St Ann's Square and adjoining streets began to change in the post-war period. Its banking, service sector and financial buildings, including that of the **Royal Exchange (Grade II)** and **Heywood's Bank**

(**Grade II***), increasingly converted to **retail and leisure use**, this area becoming a focal point for high-end shopping by the 1990s. King Street was pedestrianised in 1976 and St Ann's Square in the 1980s, both being further remodelled and improved in the 1990s. By 2000 many of the former bank and insurance buildings east of Cross Street housed high-end retail businesses on their ground floors.¹

St Ann's Square is heavily changed from its Georgian origins, the original 18th-century townhouses believed to survive only at nos. 6, 16 (Grade II), and 18-20 (Grade II), all heavily altered [Plates 2.14]. Instead, the majority of the square as it survives today was constructed in the 19th century (with further subsequent additions) [Plate 2.15].

St. Ann's Square was designated as a **conservation area**, Manchester's first, in 1970.

¹ Parkinson-Bailey (2000), p. 271.



2.10 St Ann's Square, showing Mansfield Chambers (R), early 20th century (Manchester History Revisited)



2.11 St Ann's Square and surroundings, OS revised 1915-21 and published 1923 (National Library of Scotland)



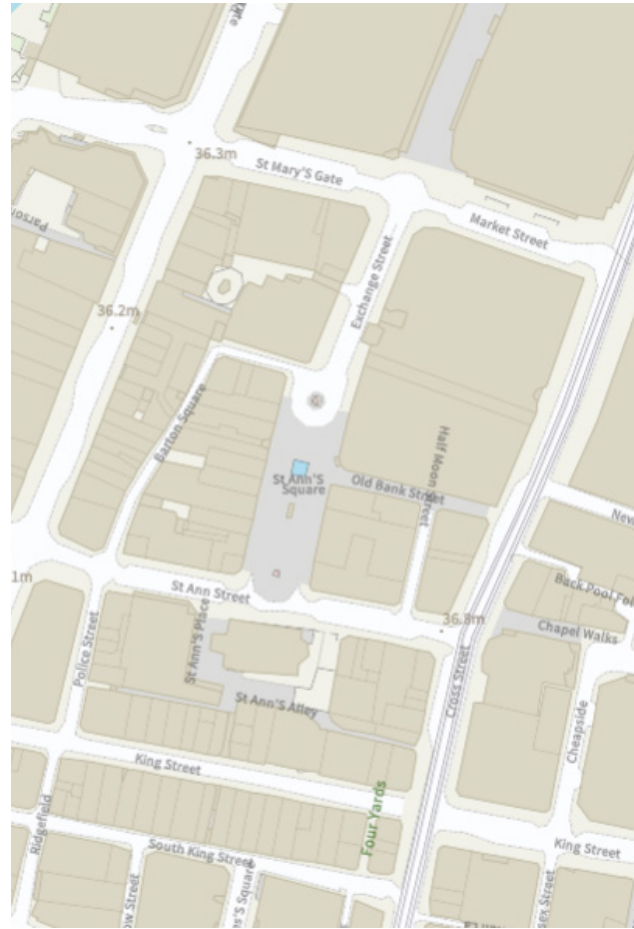
2.12 St Ann's Square and surroundings, 1927 (Britain From Above)



2.13 St Ann's Square and surroundings, 1948 (Britain From Above)



2.14 18-20 St Ann's Square, 2018 (Historic England)



2.15 St Ann's Square and surroundings, c.2023 (Historic England)

2.2 The Building

2.2.1 Earlier Use of the Site (1720-1867)

The formal development of St Ann's Square began in 1720, the first buildings on the future site of Mansfield Chambers probably being **townhouses**, likely with gardens and yards to the rear, stretching back into what is today known as Half Moon Street. These gardens were likely lost subsequently, absorbed under extensions and additions, before being released as independent plots, accessed from Half Moon Street

There is no record of the early history of the site to cast light on any changes occurring over time. However, by 1866 the St Ann's Square frontage of the site formed part of a longer **row of townhouses of varying width, height, design and roof type**, all essentially classical and symmetrical in style but evidently in commercial use, with shopfronts at ground floor (one also having a photography studio at attic level) [Plate 2.16].



2.16 Benjamin Heywood's Bank and buildings to its west (site of the future Mansfield Chambers), 1866 (Manchester Local Image Collection)

2.2.2 Original Design (1867)

Benjamin Heywood's Bank (Grade II*) was built at the corner of St Ann's Square and St Ann Street in 1848, with an unrelated building occupying the Half Moon Street plot to its north [Plate 2.17]. These formed part of a long townscape block occupied by two rows of linear plots running from St Ann's Square in the south and Half Moon Street in the north to meet in its middle.

At some date prior to or in 1867 (and in one or more phases of work) the bank acquired and cleared the plot to its north and also those to their immediate west. The manager's house was added in the plot to its north whilst a lantern-covered addition (being enclosed to all sides) was built in the middle of the plots to the west, foreshortening all but one (present day 17 St Ann's Square). This U-shaped site, extending around the bank's lantern-covered addition at its centre, was then redeveloped as **Mansfield Chambers (1867)**, to the designs of Manchester architects **Speakman and Charlesworth**.



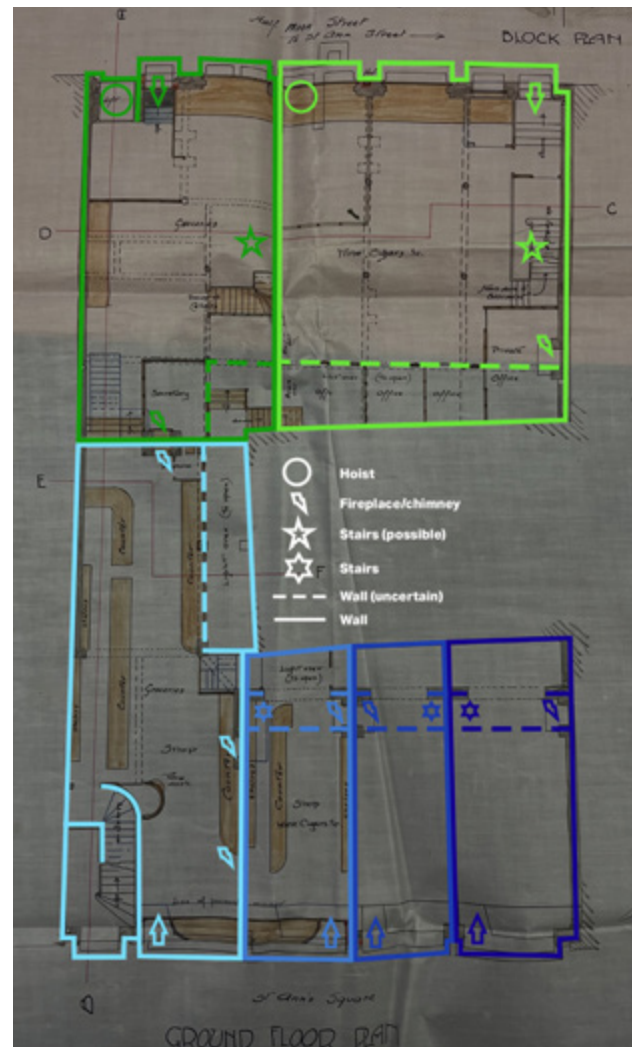
2.17 OS map, surveyed 1849, published 1851 (NLS)

A suggested original outline plan form reconstructed from later map and plan evidence suggests that the ground floor was purpose-built as **four shop units to St Ann's Square** and as **two store rooms to Half Moon Street** (with **the upper floors office spaces**, accessed from the southwest staircase opening directly onto St Ann's Square and the northeast staircase from Half Moon Street). The **basement seems to have originated as stores for the corresponding ground-floor** [Plates 2.18-2.19].

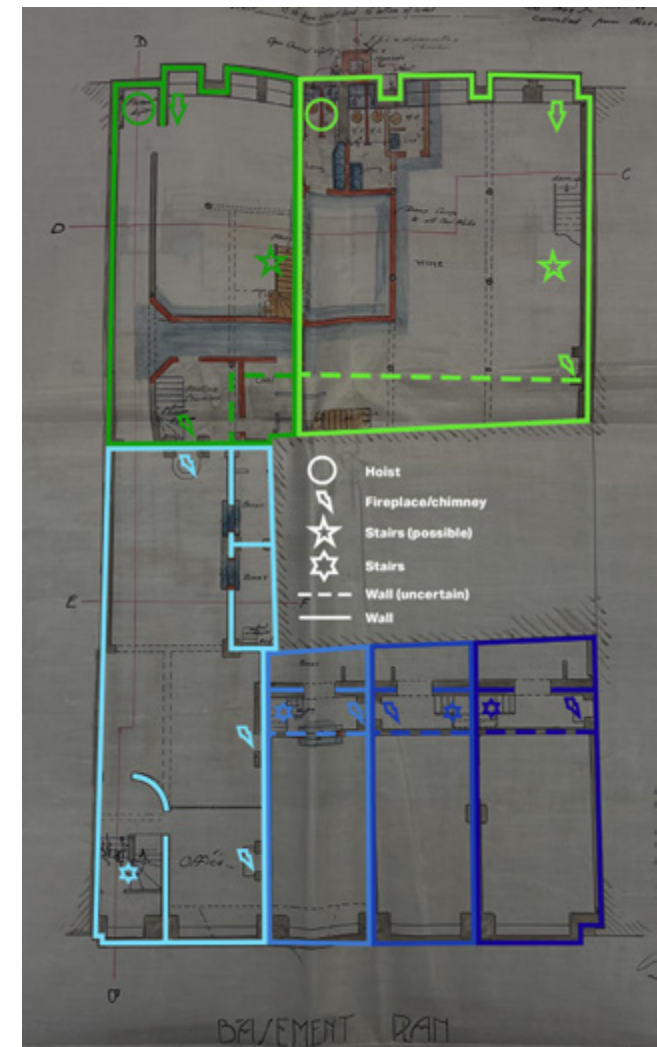
Of note are:

- In the front: **nos. 19-23** three separate but matching units, each having a section of the glazed **lightwell** in the rear, a **staircase enclosure** with **fireplace** in the middle, and a **larger shop area** to the front (with a corresponding plan at basement).
- In the west: **no. 17**, its **staircase** inside a curved enclosure below the staircase to the upper floors).
- The rear (north): two units of different sizes (**5 and 3 Half Moon Street**) at ground floor, also with lightwells, having **hoists** in their northwest corners, the **staircase** to that to the east running under the staircase to the upper floors from Half Moon Street (the position of the other staircase unrecorded).²

2 The absence of this staircase enclosure from the pre-1927 Goad plans may be an omission.



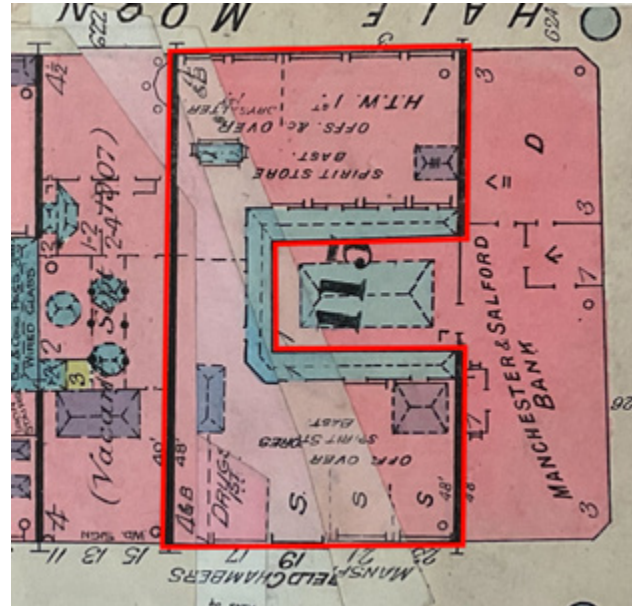
2.18 Suggested original ground floor layout



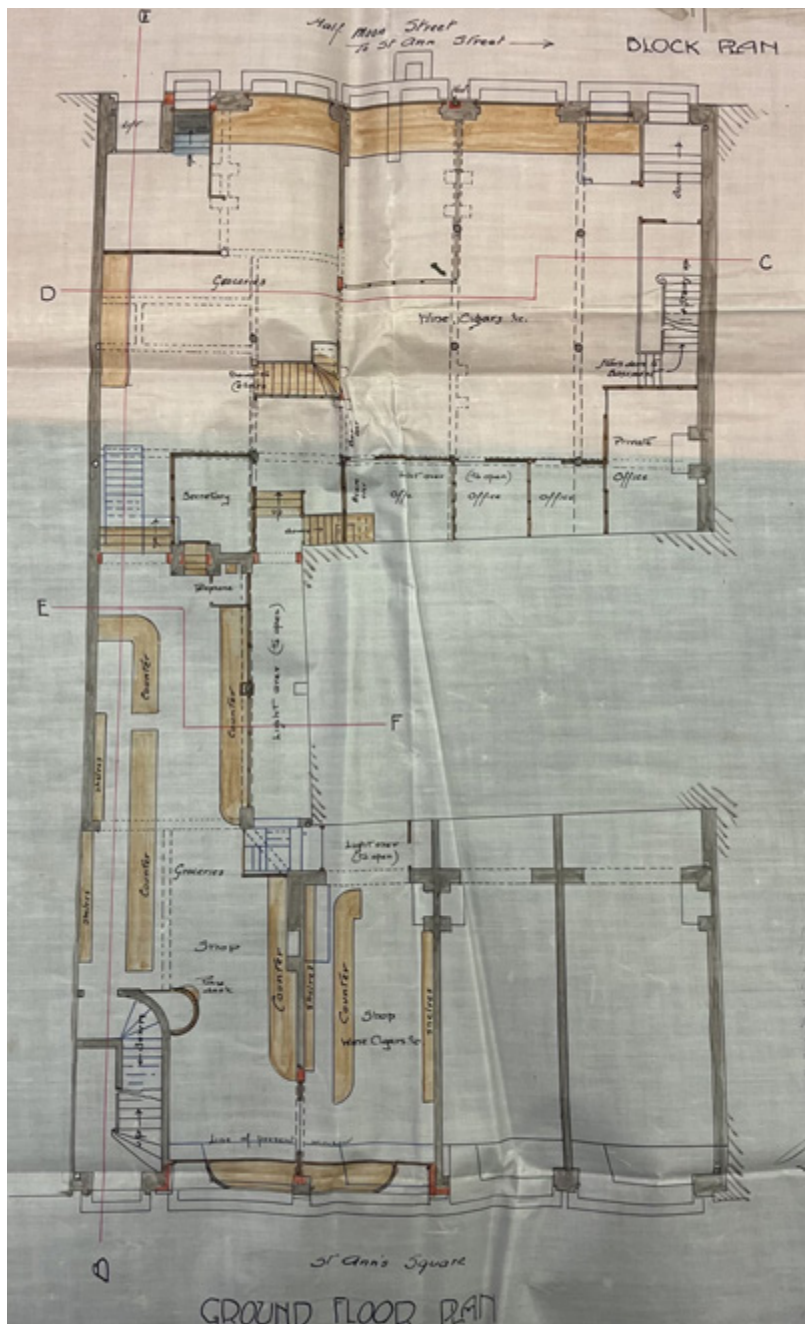
2.19 Suggested original basement layout

By 1913/14 [Plates 2.22-2.24]: The two combined basement areas present in 1886 now complemented at ground floor, where the **rear and nos. 17 and 19 had been amalgamated**, using these two large basement stores below. This whole amalgamated space was occupied by a wholesale grocer and wine merchant (the basement, as in 1886, an alcohol store). In the **rear, the column structure (if not original) had been added**, and the now **duplicate staircase and hoist removed**. **Steps from no. 17** to the rear may reflect an original difference in height or, alternatively, the raising of the rear basement ceiling.³ Drawings of 1914 show continuous **glazed wooden partitions** running along both the length of no. 17 and the width of the rear (see below, Plates 2.24-2.25).

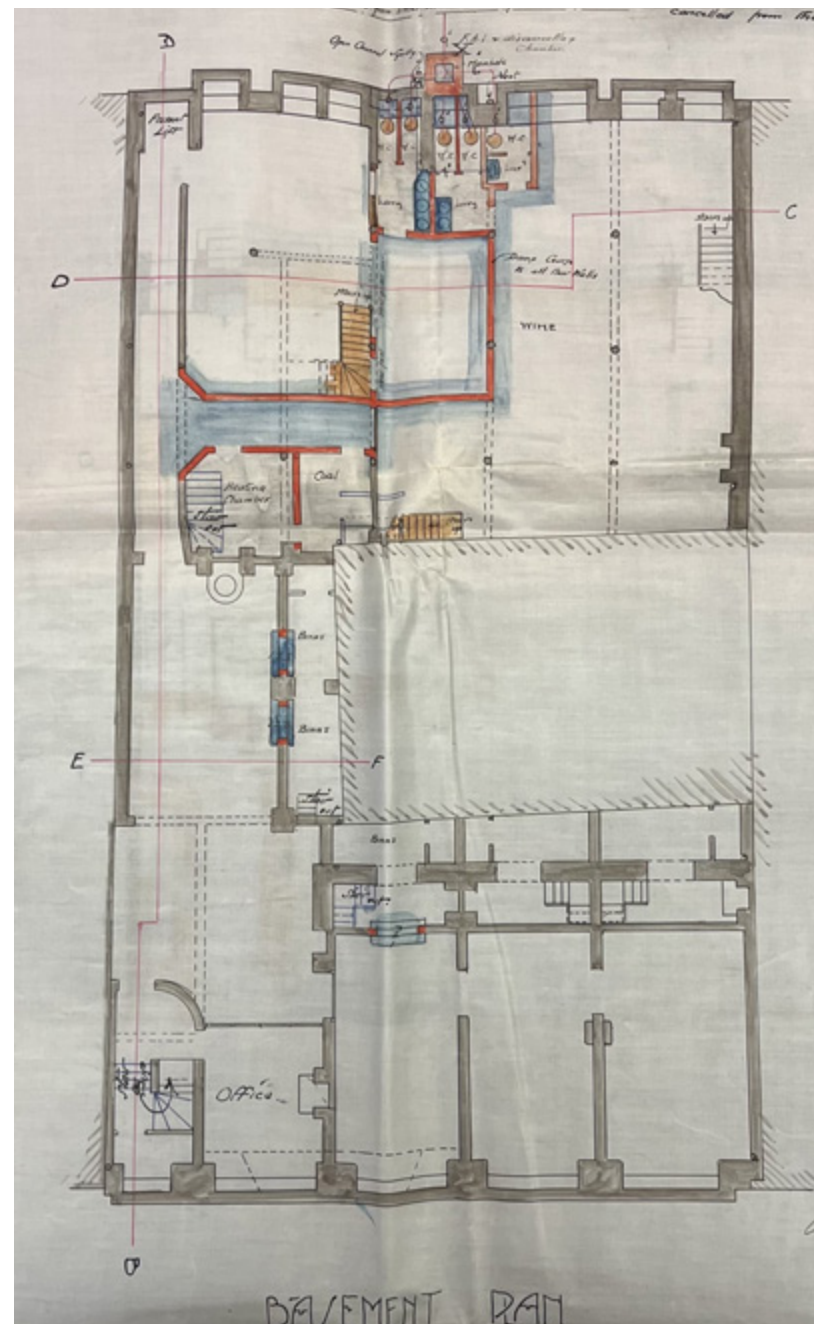
3 This is not reflected in the Ordnance Survey maps, however, which show only nos. 17 and 19 combined by 1913 and the rear added by 1948.



2.22 Goad fire insurance plan, 1913 (Greater Manchester Archives)



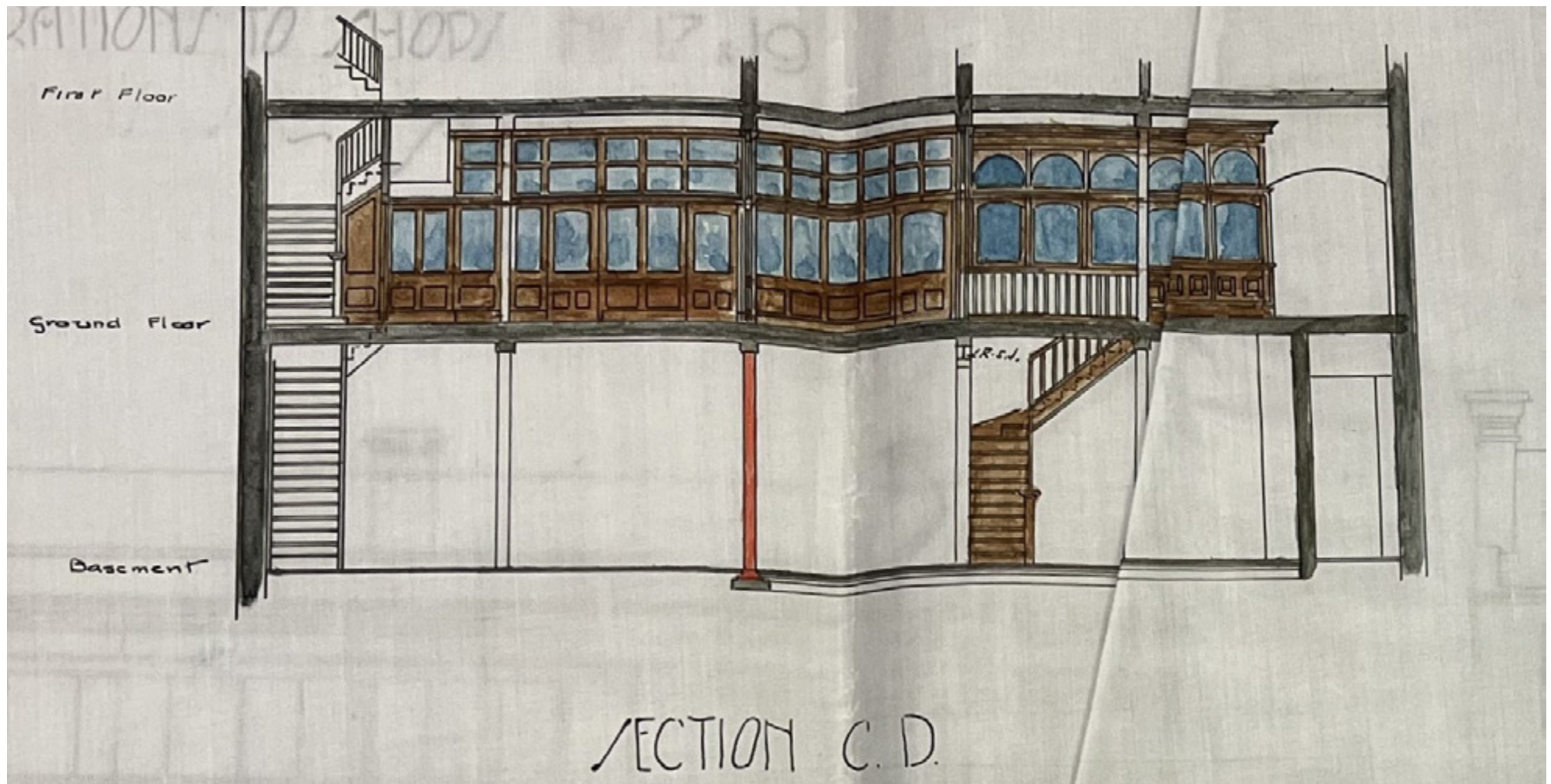
2.23 1914. Ground floor as existing (with proposed alterations in red)
(Greater Manchester Archives)



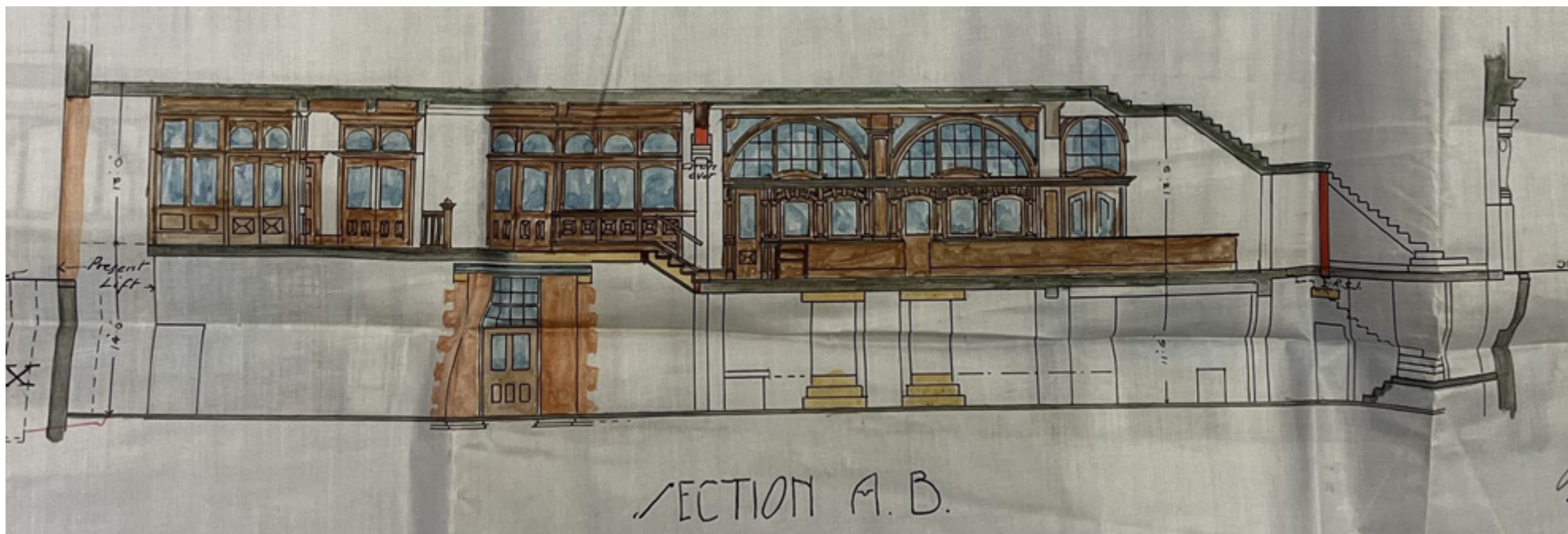
2.24 1914. Basement as existing (with proposed alterations in red)
(Greater Manchester Archives)

In c.1914 [Plates 2.25-2.26]: The **rear basement stripped out and new WCs and a boiler room ('heating chamber') inserted**, a new basement **wall replacing the northern line of columns**, and wine bins inserted inside openings within certain basement walls.

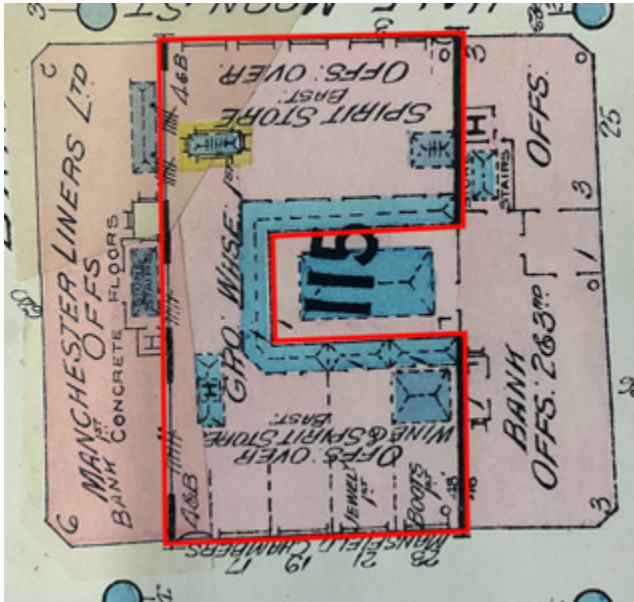
This division of use, confirmed in the 1927 Goad fire insurance plan, continued until the 1960s or early 1970s **[Plates 2.27-2.29]**.



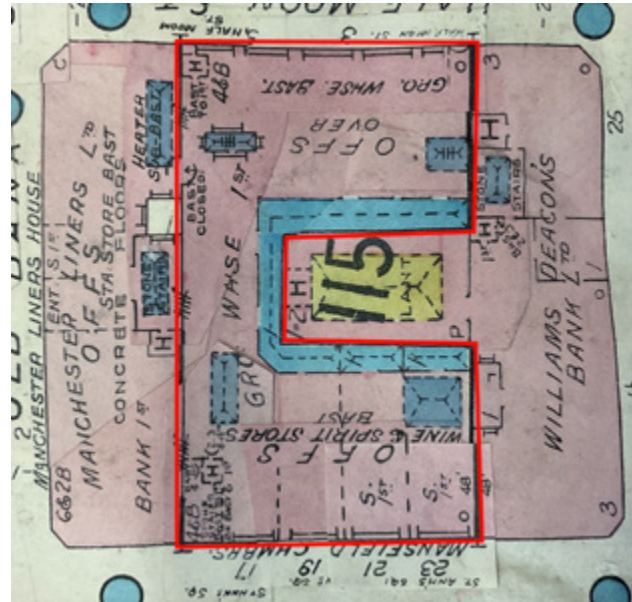
2.25 1914. Former Half Moon Street units (with proposed changes)
(Greater Manchester Archives)



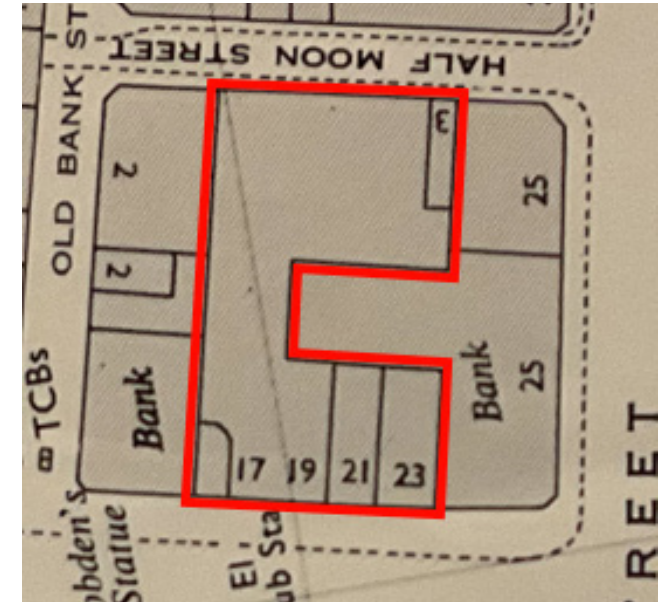
2.26 1914. 17 St Ann's Square (looking west, with proposed changes)
(Greater Manchester Archives)



2.27 Goad fire insurance plan, 1927 (Greater Manchester Archives)



2.28 Goad fire insurance plan, 1966 (Greater Manchester Archives)

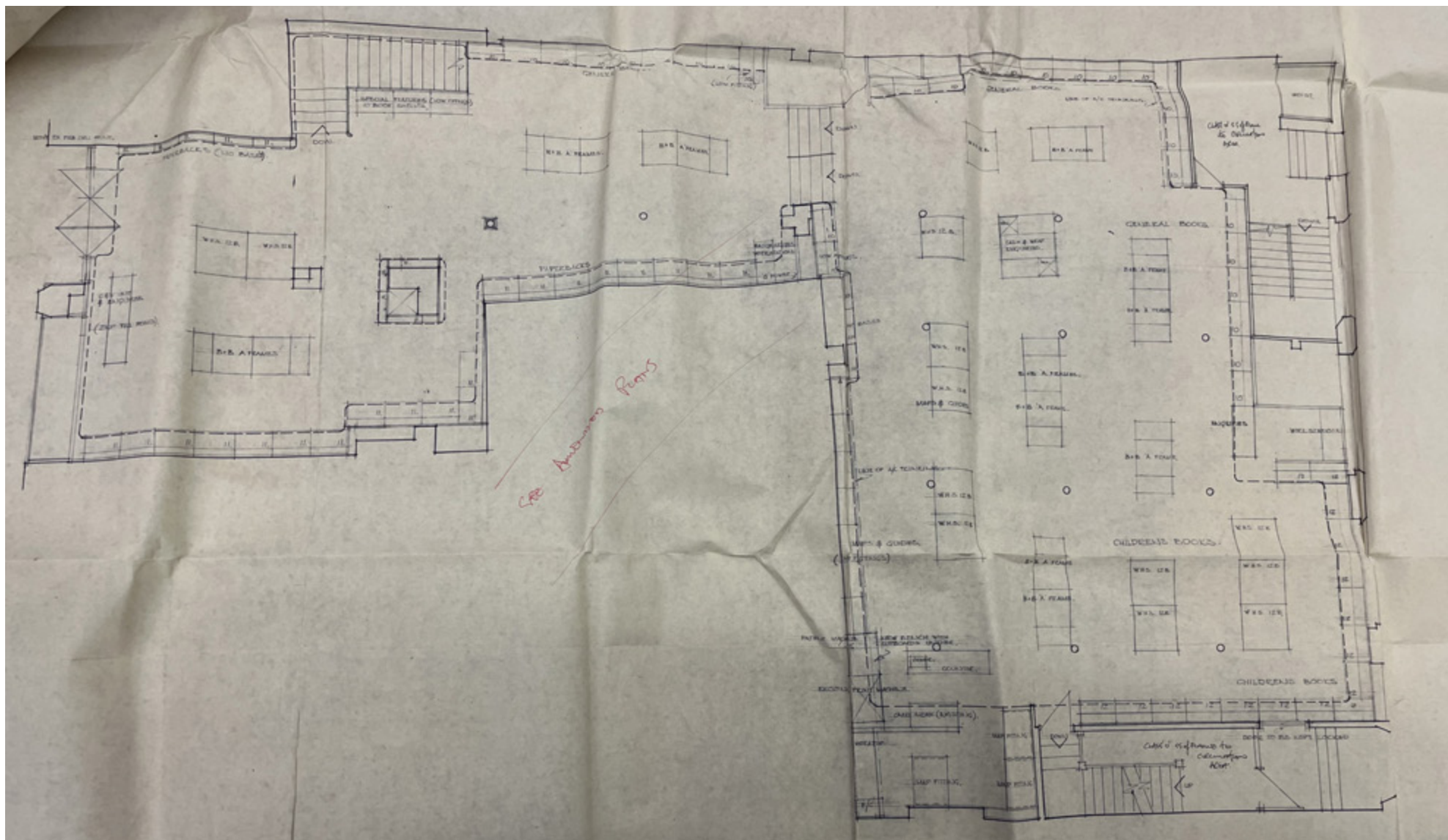


2.29 OS map, surveyed and published 1970 (Greater Manchester Archives)

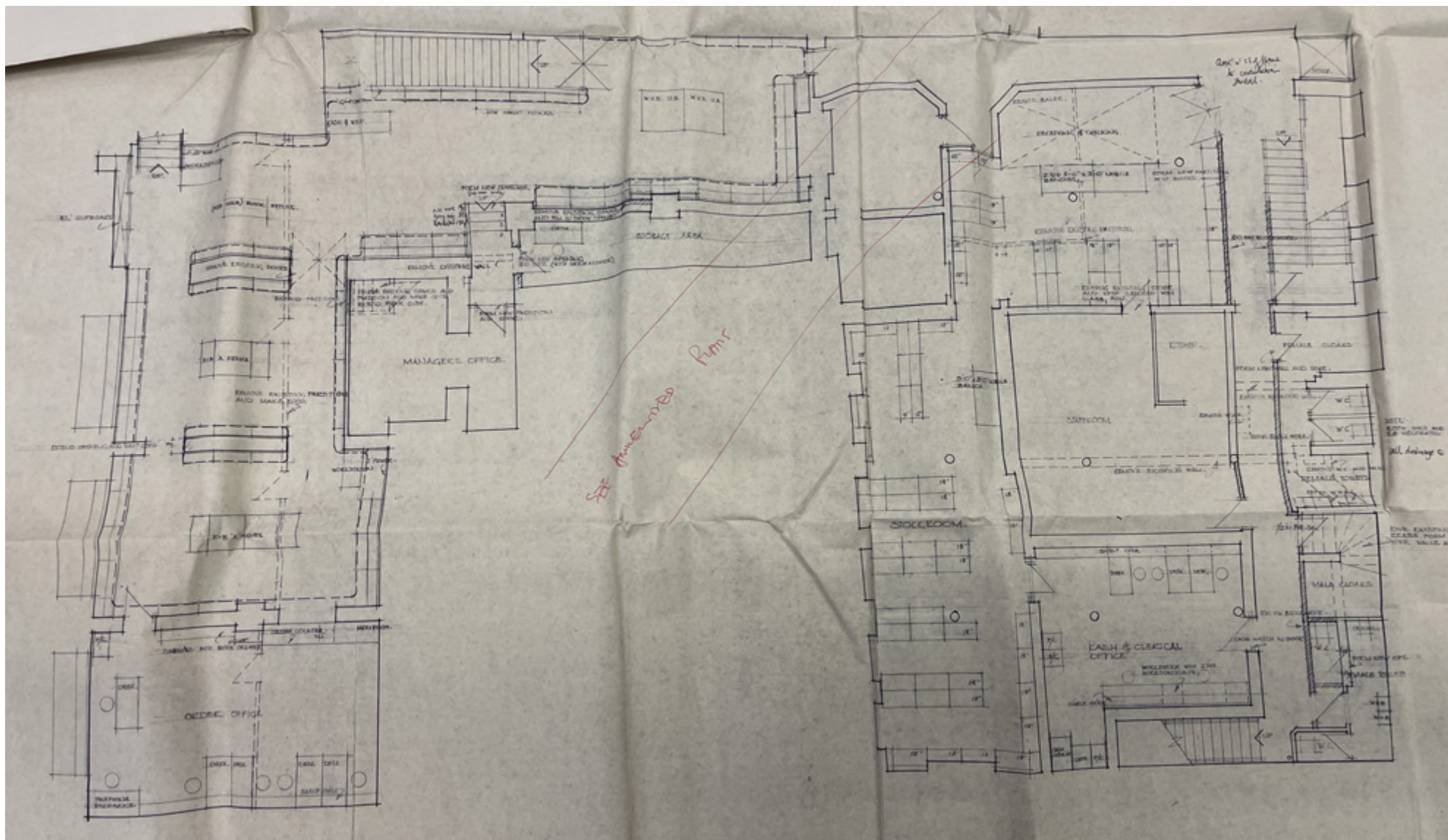
By 1977 [Plates 2.30-2.31]: By this WH Smith occupied the rear and nos. 17-19 at both floors, plus the basement storerooms (but not the lightwells and staircase enclosures) to nos. 21 and 23.

At ground floor, the basement staircase in the southeast corner (sitting below the flight to the upper floors) had been closed off, the associated **curved staircase enclosure removed and the staircase removed and rebuilt along the west wall**. The **opening in the wall between no. 17 and the rear had also been widened** (the rear now part of the shopfloor), a new staircase **added along the north wall** and **partitioning inserted in the northwest**.

At basement level, the staircase enclosure in no. 17 had also been lost and in **no. 19 the staircase enclosure to no. 19 had been turned into a larger office**, removing the wall that divided it from the lightwell, repositioning its southern wall further away and creating an opening in the west for access. Further **openings running into and through the store rooms of nos. 19, 21 and 23 had also been added in the south**.



2.30 Ground floor as existing (with proposed changes), 1977 (Greater Manchester Archives)



2.31 Basement as existing (with proposed changes), 1977 (Greater Manchester Archives)

In 1977 (see above, Plates 2.29-2.30): The addition of partitioning through the rear basement, seemingly without any substantial change to the already heavily altered historic fabric.

By 1988 (see below, Plate 2.31): The **ground floor of no. 21 was brought into the amalgamated unit** sometime after 1977, openings made in its west wall to allow access.

1988 [Plate 2.32]: No. 23 absorbed into the amalgamated unit at ground floor, with openings in its west wall matching those to no. 21. By this time **no. 23 had lost its staircase enclosure, staircase and southern wall to the lightwell enclosure (which had been replaced with a partition)**, with a new staircase situated inside the lightwell. It may have been soon after that a **replica lightwell wall with brackets and moulding** was inserted.

Later Changes

Sometime After 1966: The central U-shaped **lightwell** was still glazed in 1966, being roofed over some time subsequently.

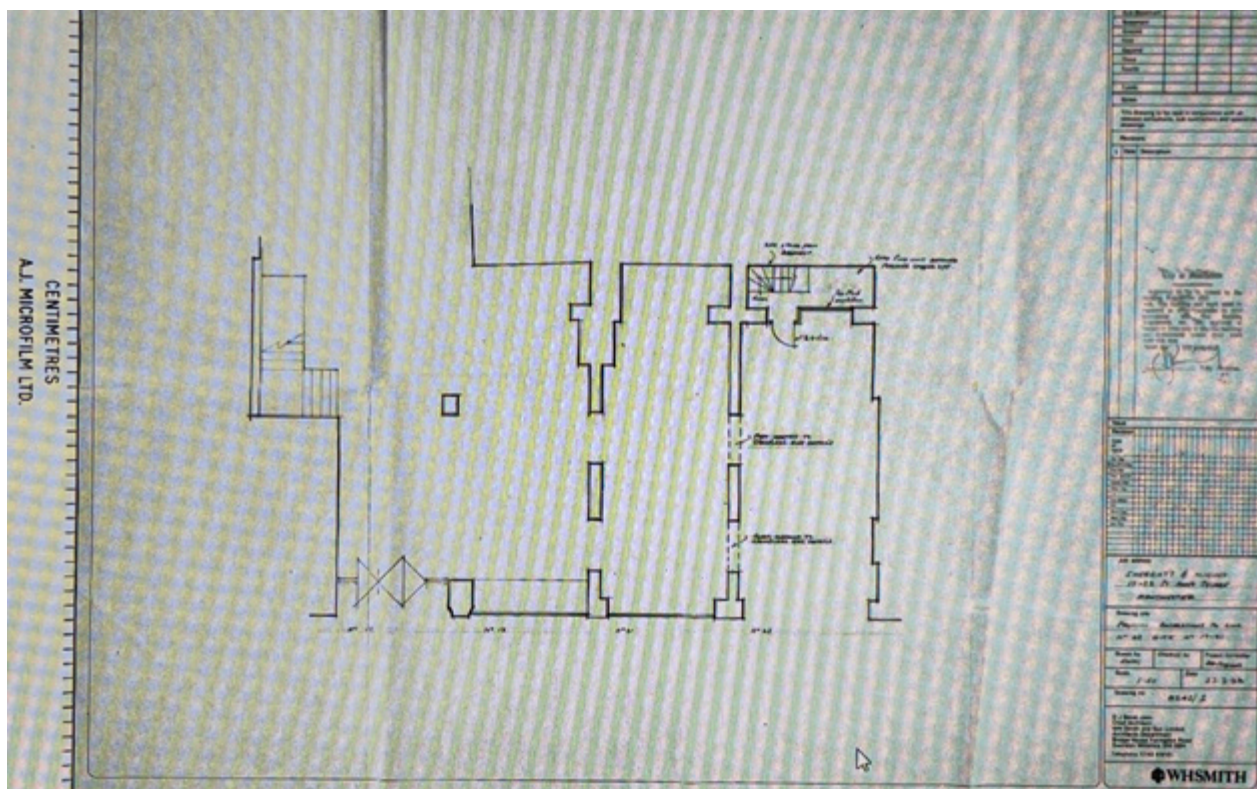
The **lift was added at some date after 1977** and at some time **after 1988 no. 23 was re-separated** at ground floor, closing the openings in the wall (or rebuilding the wall entirely). In the basement, the shared boiler room serving the amalgamated units had been created in a new partitioned space in 1914 and remained here in 1977 but was subsequently relocated to the lightwell are. Above, the glazing to the lightwell still survived in 1966 and was removed subsequently.

Ceiling rafts were present by 2019.

Other Changes of Unknown Date

- **Loss of the staircases and fireplaces/chimneys.**
- **At ground floor, removal of the southern walls to the staircase enclosures** to nos. 19, 21 and 23.
- In the basement, the addition of new partition walls to **create an enclosed corridor through the southern row of arched openings** (presumably made before no. 23 was re-separated).
- Externally, the **rebuilding of the inner bays of the rear outer wall** and the loss of the lightwells and associated pavement lights to the rear and part of the front.
- Addition of iron columns to the northeast staircase.

Due to the scale of change already made by the time of the first available records, and the lack of exposed historic fabric today, the **original configuration and plan form of the rear is difficult to reconstruct.**



2.32 Front ground floor as existing (with proposed alterations, 1988 (Greater Manchester Archives)

2.2.3 Recent Use

WH Smith remained at Mansfield Chambers until a fire on the upper floors in the late 1990s caused flooding to the basement and damage to the ground floor.⁴

The ground floor and basement appear to have remained vacant until around 2008, by which time a mobile phone shop was occupying all but **no. 23 (evidently re-separated again, presumably at both ground and basement)**. Internal fit out works were carried out in 2015 to convert the amalgamated space (excluding no. 23) for use by Barclays Bank, photographs showing no. 23 remaining in separate use. **No. 23 appears to have become vacant by 2018, whilst the larger unit was vacated in 2022.**

2.2.4 Overview of Key Physical Changes by the Present Day

Principal frontage to St Ann's Square: the small number of photographs suggest that this exterior frontage of the building as a whole and the ground floor in particular has essentially retained the historic appearance recorded in the first available images. It is, however, possible that the frontage to no. 17 at least has been rebuilt, this section of the building recorded as having suffered a direct hit during the 1940 Blitz. Any rebuilding of this frontage appears to have replicated the historic appearance, although with use of fibreglass and the adoption of a seemingly modern colour scheme, and no lightwells survive at street level.

The shopfronts are today entirely modern replacements. Historic photographs show Victorian shopfronts with recessed doorways, curved windows, traditional stallrisers and awnings, and canted external fascia boards. These still survived in no. 23 in the 1950s and no.17 in the 1970s, by which latter time no. 21 had gained a modern shopfront with a taller fascia, no. 17 and no. 17 a contrasting full shopfront that rose above the cornice. These have all been replaced subsequently, the current shopfronts retaining a tripartite arrangement and also introducing fanlights [**Plates 2.33-2.35**].

Secondary frontage to Half Moon Street: This elevation is more heavily altered, the central bays of the ground-floor external wall rebuilt between the structural supports (removing the lightwells and second loading hatch), although the westernmost and (particularly) easternmost bays remain more intact [**Plate 2.36**].

Internal changes: Over its century and a half of occupation, and with changes to the relationship between its different floors and their units, the interior has undergone a number of alterations. Most notably, the **walls between the separate ground-floor units** have been removed or opened up in various phases (see above). These are depicted in the first Goad plans using the symbol for 'wooden or plaster partitions' (and later versions as 'some floors only (or wood or plaster partition)', whilst plans of 1914 show long timber divisions between the amalgamated units. This is likely to indicate that the brick walls running between the units today are entirely later replacements.

Likewise, the lightwell has been roofed over, its dividing wall with the units lost in the rear and rebuilt in no. 23, whilst the majority of the basement staircases

have been lost. At **basement level, the original division of, access into and vertical circulation of what is presumed to have been two rear units** is no longer legible. **Vertical circulation** has also changed repeatedly accordingly, although the enclosed staircases surviving in the southwest and northeast appear original.

Whilst their positions have remained unaltered from 1914 it is not clear whether the columns themselves are those already existing in 1914 or later replacements. The concrete encasing of the columns in the area of c.1970s fit out to the rear basement, and the exposed metal joists in the area of more recent fit out adjacent, may also indicate modern structural work.

4 Stride Treglown, for Barclays (2008), pp.3-6.



2.33 Principal frontage, c.1904 (Manchester History Revisited)



2.34 Principal frontage, undated (Manchester History Revisited)



2.36 Principal frontage, 1952 (Manchester History Revisited)



2.35 Principal frontage, 1973 (Manchester Local Image Collection)

2.3 Relevant Planning History

The following applications of potential relevance are listed on the Manchester City Council planning portal.

020403; 1983; Approved
LISTED BUILDING CONSENT Mounting of street lighting fitting(s) on the fascia of the building to comply with the council's statutory obligation to provide street lighting to the highway

020655; 1983; Approved
LISTED BUILDING CONSENT New entrance door and alterations to entrance and corridor areas [location within the building not specified]

029150; 1987; n/a
Alterations to shopfront

033831; 1989; Approved
Internal alterations and installation of new shop fronts

033892; 1989; Approved
LISTED BUILDING CONSENT Internal alterations and installation of new shop fronts

050670/LO/CITY1/96; 1996; Approved
LISTED BUILDING CONSENT Installation of replacement signage

060586/FO/CITY1/00; 2000; Approved
Installation of a new shop front

061283/LO/CITY1/01; 2001; Approved
LISTED BUILDING CONSENT Internal and external alterations including installation of new shopfront

073221/LO/2004/C1; 2004; Approved
LISTED BUILDING CONSENT for the installation of new shopfront and 1 no. fascia sign

073219/FO/2004/C1; 2004; Approved
Installation of new shopfront

073164/LO/2004/C1; 2004; Approved
LISTED BUILDING APPLICATION - for alterations to basement and ground floor including provision of a lift and the installation of air-conditioning

072858/FO/2004/C1; 2005; Approved
Change of use of basement and ground floor from Retail (Use Class A1) to Restaurant (Use Class A3).

086170/FO/2008/C1; 2008; Approved
Change of Use of ground floor and basement from A1 (Shop) to A2 (Bank) and elevational alterations to form new shopfront and entrance

073164/LO/2004/C1; 2009; Approved
LISTED BUILDING CONSENT External alterations to shopfront including installation of windows, entrance door and three automated telling machines. Internal alterations, including the installation of a lift and air conditioning equipment

090467/LO/2009/C1; 2009; Approved
LISTED BUILDING CONSENT for the Installation of fascia sign

096739/LO/2011/C1; 2011; Approved
LISTED BUILDING CONSENT for installation of new doors

099540/LO/2012/C1; 2012; Approved
LISTED BUILDING CONSENT The relocation of 2no. existing ventilation condensers from the Ground Floor Plant Room to the external structure of the light well.

111502/LO/2016; 2016; Approved
LISTED BUILDING CONSENT The Relocation of 2no. existing ventilation condensers from the Ground Floor Plant Room to the external structure of the light well.

123108/LO/2019; 2019; Approved
LISTED BUILDING CONSENT for the installation of new ventilation system to existing rafts and ceiling

133624/FO/2022; 2022; Approved
External and internal works, including removal of existing external signage, removal of external ATMs and internally for removal of internal counters, ATMs, partitioning and all furniture.

133625/LO/2022; 2022; Approved
LISTED BUILDING CONSENT External and internal works, including removal of existing external signage, removal of external ATMs and internally for removal of internal counters, ATMs, partitioning and all furniture.

134538/LO/2022; 2022; Approved
Listed Building Consent for proposed internal refurbishment works to ground to third floors

2.4 Sources and Bibliography

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Plan 12060. Plans, 1914

Plan 14903. Plans for WHSmith, 1977

Plan 82322. Plans for WHSmith, 1988

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Goad Fire Insurance Plans

Historic Images and Maps

Digital Archive: Goad Maps of Manchester [CD ROM]

Historic England, England's Places, <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/photos/englands-places/>

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Manchester History, 'Mansfield Chambers', <https://manchesterhistory.net/manchester/tours/tour5/area5page10.html>

3.0 Site Survey Descriptions

3.1 The Setting of the Building and the Conservation Area Context

Mansfield Chambers is situated within central Manchester and has its primary frontage to St Ann's Square and secondary frontage to Half Moon Street (a service road). St Ann's Square and its immediate surroundings represent significant parts of the city's historic development, critical to its earliest domestic and commercial expansion beyond the medieval core in the Georgian period. It retains a strong pattern of rectilinear grid streets later evolved from the late 18th and early 19th century onwards, with a complex and multifaceted commercial, financial, and retail function developing from the Georgian period to the modern day. The St Ann's area is highly significant as a piece of early Georgian urban planning and it is generally defined by the wide north-south axis of St Ann's Square, leading south from St Mary's Gate, around which are situated highly significant (and later) buildings such as the Royal Exchange.

St Ann's Square sits at the east end of Exchange Street and is crossed in its east by St Ann Street [Plates 3.1-3.2]. Its buildings sit on a largely continuous building line, set to the back of a good-quality and pedestrian-focused entirely modern public realm. Whilst a shared scale gives a sense of cohesion a complex range of architectural styles including the Georgian, Italianate, classical, art deco and modern, dating from the 18th to the early-21st centuries give a highly characterful variation. Although laid out in the early-18th century, the square retains only comparatively few buildings from its earliest phases of development.

Visually dominant in its east is the Georgian **Church of St Ann (Grade I)**, designed in the Wren style in red sandstone and with retained memorial monuments positioned along its exterior (surviving from its historic churchyard, now lost) [Plate 3.3]. The north of the square is enclosed by the townscape block formed by the former **Benjamin Heywood's Bank (25 St Ann Street, Grade II*)**, **Mansfield Chambers (Grade II)** and the **Old Bank Chambers (15 St Ann's Square)** in the east and by the classical and baroque **Royal Exchange (Grade II)** in the west, which faces Old Bank Chambers across Old Bank Street [Plate 3.4]. Dominating the west end of the square, and continuing along the full length of Exchange Street, this former commercial exchange on an extensive footprint, was in effect rebuilt in 1914-21 to occupy the entire block enclosed between Market Street, Exchange Street, Cross Street and Old Bank Street.

The southern side of St Ann's Square is occupied by a row of generally smaller buildings. The exception, at its east corner, is **nos. 24-28**, which forms the St Ann's Square frontage of a building grand Baroque purpose-built row of shops in stone and granite that runs the entire depth of the townscape block to the south. Originally three storeys high, this now has a modern addition above. Adjacent and facing Mansfield Chambers is a group of Georgian four-storey townhouses dating to the earlier phases of the development of St Ann's Square. **Nos. 16 and 18-20 (both Grade II)** are believed to be late-18th-century (nos. 18-remodelled in the 19th century) and **no. 22 (Grade II)** early-19th century, although all show evidence of substantial alterations and have modern shopfronts and generally fascia signage and signage at fanlight level. To their west are several three- and four-storey buildings of a generally similar appearance but probably

19th century, all with modern shopfronts and fascia and fanlight-level signage and showing varying degrees of modern alterations (particularly roof extensions). At the end of the square these face 2 Barton Square/ 8 Exchange to the west – a large contemporary building fronting onto Exchange Street, beyond which lies **King's Court**, a post-war retail and office building (4 Exchange Street).

The square itself is a pedestrianised open space with trees and a fountain, framed to the east by a Victorian bronze statue of **Richard Cobden (Grade II)** and to the west by the Edwardian bronze **Boer War memorial (Grade II)**.



3.1 St Ann's Square, looking east



3.3 Church of St Ann



3.2 St Ann's Square, looking west



3.4 St Ann's Square, north side, looking east

Mansfield Chambers forms part of a townscape block of three large-footprint buildings, all of which run the full width of the block from St Ann's Square in the south to Half Moon Street in the north. Occupying the end of the block to its east (and extending into its interior) is the former **Benjamin Heywood's Bank building (Grade II*)**, built in 1848 in the south of the block and extended to the west (within the townscape block) and north by 1867 [Plate 3.5]. This faces onto St Ann Street, where it has a central entrance to the link block, its side returns facing onto St Ann's Square and Half Moon Street (the latter dominated visually by a modern emergency staircase). The southern (original) section is a tall three-storey sandstone building in the Italian palazzo style, the manager's house built on a smaller scale in a complementary but plainer design using red brick with stone detailing, the two joined by a single-storey link block mainly concealed by the entrance. The western extension runs into the interior of the block and is hidden from view but is single-storey with a lantern above. Mansfield Chambers then wraps around the bank extension, having to its west the 1920s **Old Bank Chambers (formerly the Manchester Liners Building)**, its later date (1925) articulated in its greater scale, art deco influences and use of Portland stone, whilst its construction for the Manchester Shipping Company is reflected in the subjects of its relief sculptures [Plate 3.6]. With six principal storeys, this has its principal frontage to the west (Old Bank Street), its side returns fronting onto St Ann's Square and Half Moon Street, the building rising above the remainder of its townscape block.

Half Moon Street itself is a narrow side street now used as a service road and bin store. It is overlooked by the rear of **Alliance House (Grade II)**, a turreted five-storey insurance company office building of 1901 built in ashlar that has an eclectic French Renaissance frontage to Cross Street and St Ann Street but is entirely plain to the rear beyond its side return bay. Adjacent is the interwar **26 Cross Street**, a comparatively plain tall building of eight storeys faced in Portland stone, its rear also facing onto Half Moon Street.



3.5 Townscape block from the east



3.6 Townscape block from the west

3.2 The Building Externally

This is a brick building of four principal storeys and a basement below, entirely enclosed to its east by the former Benjamin Heywood's Bank (Grade II*) and to its west by 15 St Ann's Square (built after Mansfield Chambers, to replace an earlier structure) **[Plate 3.7]**.

The building has a square U-shaped footprint, reflecting its construction to fit around the glazed extension to the bank at its east. A single-storey lightwell with a glazed cover (and basement space below) constructed around this bank extension is now entirely roofed over.



3.7 15 St Ann's Square (L), Mansfield Chambers and former Benjamin Heywood's Bank (R)

3.2.1 Front Elevation (South)

The Italianate front elevation presents to St Ann's Square and responds architecturally to this prestigious location. Classical in style, it has a grand giant pilastered arcade and a projecting dentillated cornice at ground floor, round arched windows at second floor and small rectangular windows at third floor (the upper floor windows all sashes), surmounted by a moulded frieze and pilastered cornice and parapet with thick dentils, ornamental urns rising above. Treated as five bays, that to the west narrower, a clear hierarchy of status is expressed vertically from its double-height ground floor to its low third floor [Plate 3.8].

The stuccoed finish is painted pink and the classical details and entablature white, with gilding to the classical ornamental details (historic photographs suggesting that the brick may have been exposed originally). Historic England suggests that the decorative details and pilasters are a mixture of stone and fibreglass replacements.

The ground floor is arcaded, the first floor treated as its mezzanine, the pilasters between the bays rising from the tall moulded ashlar plinth to the first-floor moulded cornice. The west (entrance) bay has a segmental pediment supported on moulded pilasters with fluted consoles and bears the name MANSFIELD CHAMBERS in gilding, the door and transom light within the stone surround modern. Above is an original round arched window with circular stone tracery (its glazing modified), presenting as its fanlight but actually the first floor. The four wider bays have large rectangular openings at street level with arched fanlight windows above at first

floor, the latter with gilded moulded detailing within the reveals and a frieze above (the openings containing modern glazing and doors) [Plates 3.9-3.10].

Above, the design becomes more domestic in style and feel, the second-floor windows set within simpler moulded architraves with pediments above and those on the third floor simply recessed, although both floors have gilded classical ornamentation. A simple sill band runs between these floors.

There is a modern surface to St Ann's Square and, consequently, no evidence of the historic pavement lights or the associated lightwells survives above ground.



3.8 Principal frontage to St Ann's Square



3.9 17-23 St Ann's Square, shopfronts



3.10 19 St Ann's Square, shopfront

3.2.2 Rear Elevation

This much plainer elevation of five bays is heavily altered at the ground floor but more intact above **[Plate 3.11]**.

At ground floor the east bay is the more ornate, faced in ashlar and containing two pilaster-framed keyhole-shaped openings with engaged colonettes **[Plate 3.12]**. The opening in the east comprises a doorway below and a transom window with round stone tracery above, whilst that in the east (with painted '3' signs) has been modified to create a single, lower, doorway with boarding above (all doors modern). Above is a deep moulded cornice with dentillation. The doorways appear to be original to construction, one door serving the upper floors and the other the east rear unit (also providing access to its staircase), suggesting that a similar doorway may once have existed in the west, serving the second unit.



3.11 Secondary frontage to Half Moon Street (L)



3.12 Secondary frontage, east bay

The three inner bays adjacent have been rebuilt at ground floor in contemporary materials and style, with modern windows, louvres and rendered infill added between the retained original brick-encased structural elements (now rendered), the element between bays three and four not quite aligned with the bay above **[Plates 3.13-3.14]**. The westernmost of these three bays is believed to be the original position of the hoist and loading hatch to the east bay, which may have once have had a swinging crane attached matching that in the west, although no evidence survives today. These bays also have a modern boarded fascia at cornice level that also continues into bay 5. This westernmost bay originally contained a door, hoist and loading hatch, which appear to have remained in situ until the 1970s at least, although the hatch is now paved over and it is unclear whether the hoist survives. The doorway remains in the east of this bay but appears entirely modern, set below contemporary vents. The west of the bay has two narrower brick structural elements (with ashlar details), a swinging crane attached to that in the east and the space between retaining historic brickwork at the top (and modern replacement bricks and an infilled window below, presumably replacing the hoist opening) **[Plates 3.15-3.16]**.

The brick-encased structure continues on the upper floors, dividing the elevation into bays, each containing an identical, replacement, casement window in a wooden window case. The brickwork is entirely plain beyond banded dentilation to the window sills and corbelling on the upper floor **[Plate 3.17]**.

Although bins mainly concealed the pavement there was no obvious evidence of any retained pavement lights or lightwells to this elevation.



3.13 Secondary frontage, rebuilt inner bays



3.14 Retained structural supports



3.15 Secondary frontage, west bay



3.16 West bay, crane and former hoist location



3.17 *Secondary frontage, upper (office) floors*

3.2.3 Internal Elevations

The first, second and third floors are entirely without ornamentation, having a plain brick fabric and simple casement windows, the fenestration repeated regularly over the floors in alignment with the division into bays **[Plate 3.18]**. At ground floor the exterior wall of the former lightwell is abutted by the lantern-covered extension to the bank.



3.18 Internal elevations, 2023 (Google Earth)

3.2.4 Roof

The main building has a pitched roof with two chimneys in the southern pitch of the front range to St Ann's Square **[Plate 3.19]**. Also in this range, a valley has been added in the southeast and a flat-roofed extension in the southwest (with a roof lantern adjacent). The original chimneys to the north range have been lost but a large modern flue rises high above the building in the southern pitch of the north range, situated above the pre-1977 boiler room and adjacent to the present-day replacement and presumably replacing a chimney (the Edwardian boilers having been coal-fed). It appears to be shared with the property adjacent. To the immediate west, a small pitched upwards extension sits at its side.

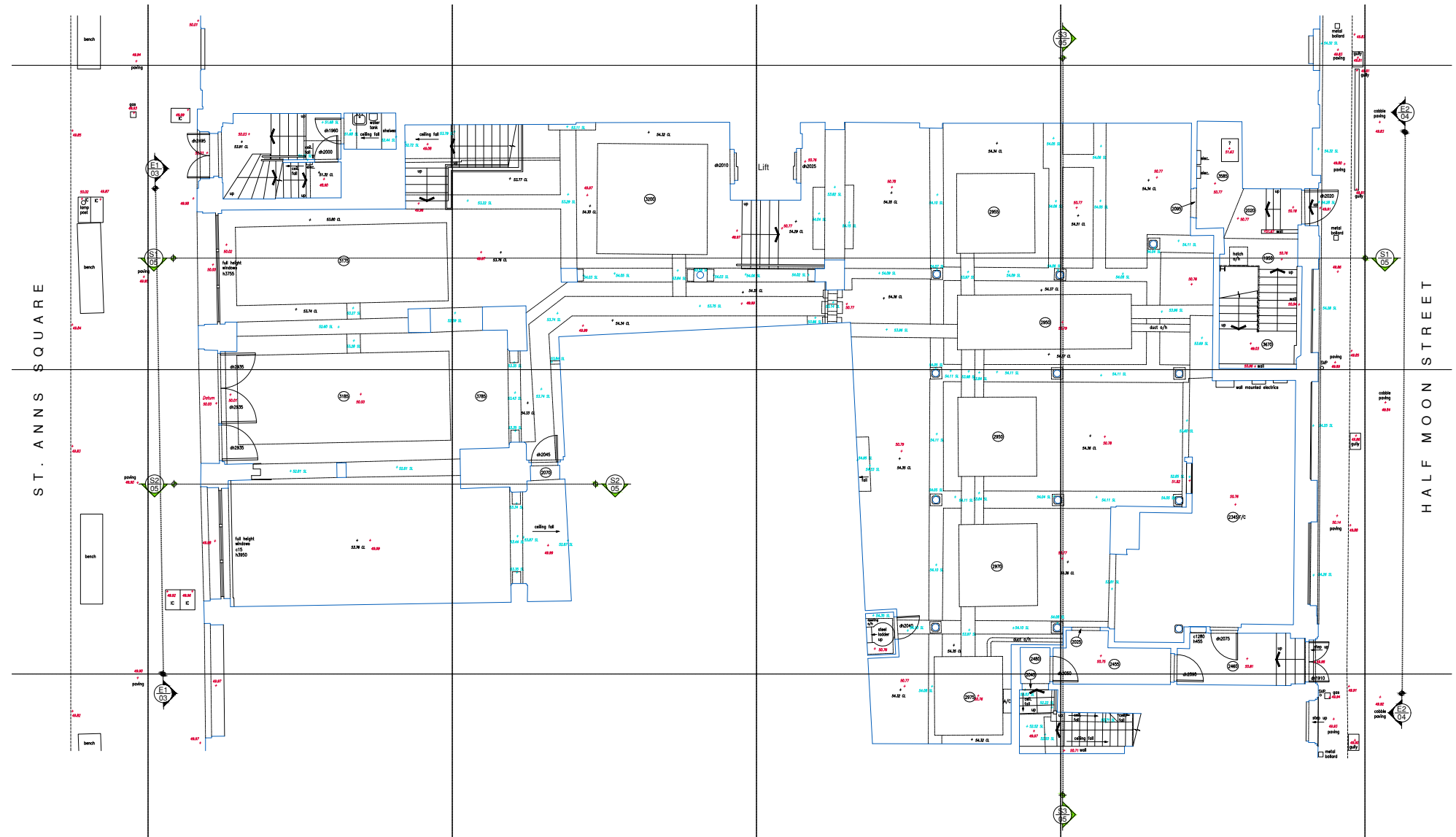
Running around the interior of the building is the single-storey former lightwell, which now has a mainly flat roof with a modern cover (sloped to the rears of no. 21 and 23) and bears various plant and extraction units.



3.19 *Roof and covered lightwell (extending around the bank's lantern), 2023 (Google Earth)*

3.3 The Building Internally

[Ground floor as existing]



Ground Floor

The ground floor is heavily altered, with the plasterboard to the walls, the plasterwork to the ceilings, and the simple wooden skirting board (consistent throughout) all modern. The floors are covered in modern tile and/or carpet in the amalgamated unit – with a plyboard surface below exposed in areas of damage to the rear area – and a different modern tile to no. 23. Throughout this area there is a uniform modern decorative plasterwork cornice that runs around the modern alterations and interventions and associated inserted coffering, their presence throughout suggesting that they were added as part of or after their amalgamation (prior to the re-separation of no. 23). All lighting and fit out are modern and the southern units (nos. 17-23 St Ann's Square) have modern glazed shopfronts forming the entirety of their southern walls.

Nos. 17 and 19 and the rear units also have an identical system of ceiling rafts with grid supports (which is absent from units 21 and 23), set below the coffering.

Various walls survive in full or part in or adjacent to the sites of known historic walls and are assumed on the basis of probability to include at least some older fabric internally, although not the original fabric (those on the ground floor originally timbered or plaster partitions). Changes in their depth, their resultant non-alignment and the apparent narrowing of the front shop units (where the lightwell openings no longer appear in a central position) indicate that some are heavily increased in width.

3.3.1 Ground Floor: 17, 19 and 21 St Ann's Square

These units are now amalgamated into a larger single space through the opening-up of the dividing walls [Plates 3.20-3.23].



3.20 Nos. 17 (R), 19 and 21, remnant dividing walls



3.22 Nos. 17 and 19, remnant dividing wall



3.21 Nos. 21 (L), 19 and 17 (R), remnant dividing walls



3.23 Nos. 17 and 19, dividing wall with wider plasterboard encasement

No. 17 [Plates 3.24-3.25]

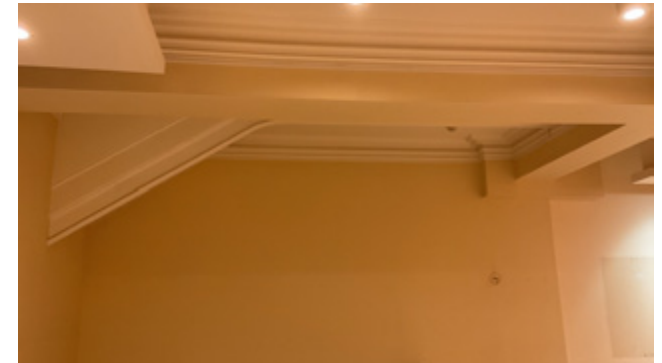
In the southwest corner a cut-out space contains the staircase to the upper floors, original to construction, accessed directly from St Ann's Square (and with a lower added subsequently). No 17's staircase (which originally ran below, inside a curved enclosure) is a 1970s dog-legged stair running along the west wall (the coffering and skirting above matching) [Plates 3.26-3.28]. The west wall itself is seemingly non-original from the frontage to the start of the raised area to the rear, apparently rebuilt in the Edwardian period.

There are several walls in the east of no. 17 [Plate 3.29]. In the south, a remnant survives of the original wall that divided it from no. 19. To its north, set slightly to the east, is what was originally the outer wall of the lightwell (now painted orange) [Plate 3.30]. To the west of this, a column and a nubbin preserve the line of what was the inner enclosure to the lightwell, the column presumably added as a structural support to replace a removed wall and not matching those in the grid in the rear space [Plates 3.31-3.33]. It is not clear whether this preserves the original wall (which is likely to have been a plaster or timber partition) or is entirely a replacement. Brackets attached to the column, the wall behind (originally the north wall of the lightwell) and either side of the nubbin differ to those elsewhere on this floor and are evidently later additions. There is no evidence today of the series of small openings into no. 17's lightwell that existed historically.

A canted corner (replicated in the coffering above) shows where the lightwell originally met the dividing wall with no. 19 [Plate 3.34]. The lightwell seems to have been further narrowed by the building-out of the outer wall (painted orange), which cuts across a mock-stone 'arch' adornment added where the lower levels

of the north wall has been removed; this wall has been removed entirely to the west of the lightwell [Plates 3.35-3.36]. To navigate the change in floor level from the front to the rear, a set of steps runs up to this party wall, a modern lift inserted at their west sometime after 1977 [Plates 3.37-3.38]. It is not clear whether this change in height is original.

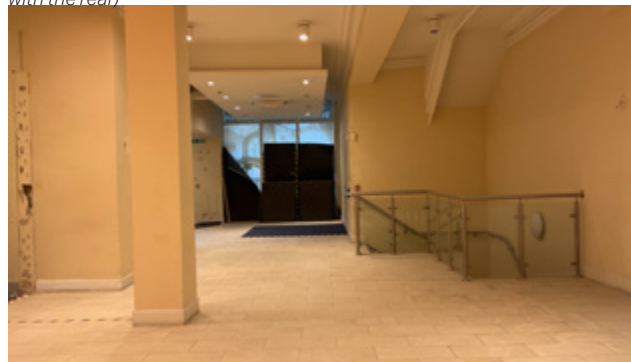
The cornicing to the ceiling runs throughout no. 17 and has terminations where walls have been truncated [Plates 3.39-3.40].



3.26 No. 17, separate staircase passing through from behind



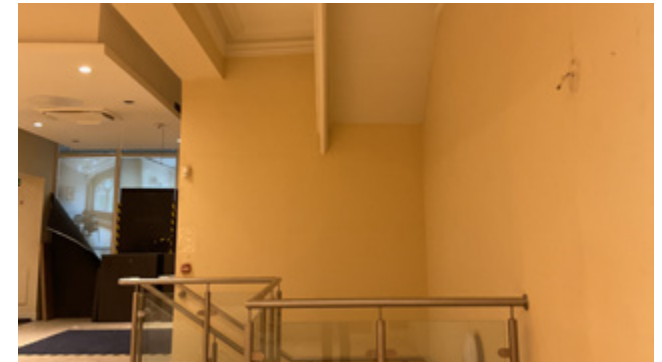
3.24 No. 17, looking north (the top of the steps the original dividing wall with the rear)



3.25 No. 17, looking south, showing the original (independent) staircase and the 20th-century inserted stairs



3.27 No. 17, 20th-century inserted staircase



3.28 No. 17, older (independent) staircase enclosure now with a squared profile (with cornicing)



3.29 No. 17, former and surviving walls to the east



3.32 No. 17, nubbin and column preserving line of the inner wall of the lightwell



3.35 No. 17, former lightwell, the rebuilt opening with a replica bracket



3.30 No. 17, former outer (orange) to the lightwell, the inner wall replaced by a column



3.33 No. 17 Replica brackets to the column and wall nubbin



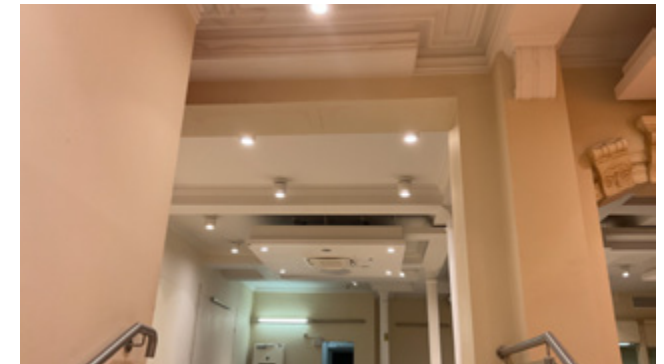
3.36 No. 17, mock stonework at the original north wall of its lightwell



3.31 No. 17, former inner wall to the lightwell, with a later column and replica brackets



3.34 No. 17, former diagonal line of the lightwell, with a replica corbel where the wall previously continued to the south



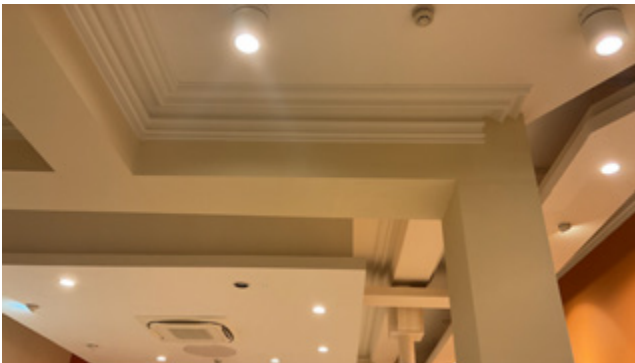
3.37 No. 17, steps running up to the former northern wall with the corning continuing around an unknown insert



3.38 No. 17, modern inserted lift



3.39 No. 17, cornicing continuing around the modern lift and an obstruction adjacent



3.40 No. 17, termination to modern cornicing

No. 19 [Plates 3.41-3.43]

No. 19 is a short rectangular unit that retains its former lightwell in the north (now roofed over) but has lost the staircase enclosure originally located to the south of this, no evidence surviving of the wall (with opening) that once enclosed this to the south. In the west is its remnant dividing wall with no. 17, which runs (with a number of openings) to the inner wall of its lightwell but has been removed inside the lightwell itself, creating a passage. At its south the recent removal of modern plasterboard has revealed this section of the wall to be only two bricks thick, mixing older and modern bricks [Plates 3.44-3.45]. A similar remnant wall with multiple openings also runs along the unit's east (its openings different and made much later), this wall continuing through the lightwell (where a modern door has been inserted to allow through access to no. 21) [Plate 3.46].

Although shown in the centre of the bay in the plans of 1914 the opening into the lightwell is now offset to one side, presumably caused by changes to the thickness of the remnant dividing walls [Plate 3.47]. Even though originally part of a back-of-house area, this opening has an ornamental moulded trim in its plasterwork to both front and rear and decorative plasterwork brackets in the corners, all believed to be original. The lightwell itself is devoid of historic features, having modern plaster to the walls and ceiling and modern cornicing [Plates 3.48-3.52].

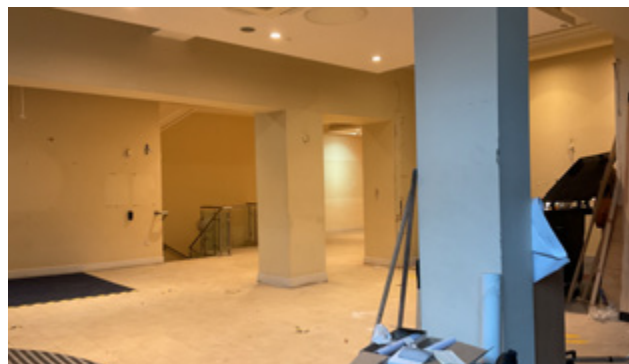
The ceiling to no. 19 is dominated by a large service raft, the modern cornicing visible behind [Plate 3.53].



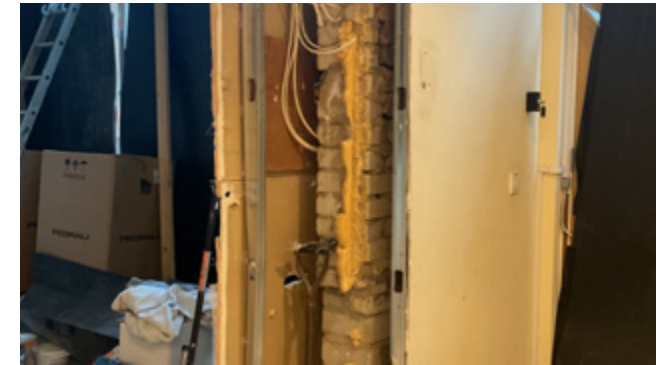
3.41 No. 19, looking north



3.42 No. 19, looking south



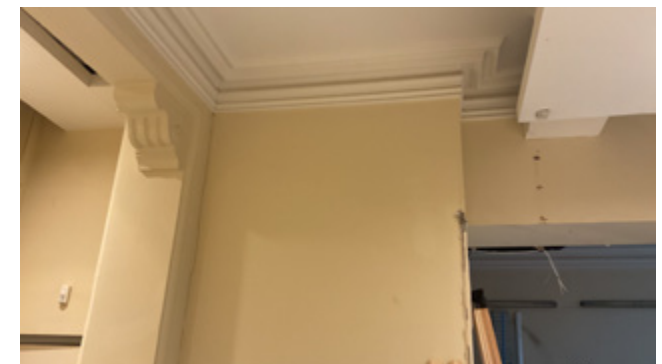
3.43 No. 19 (middle), looking into no. 17



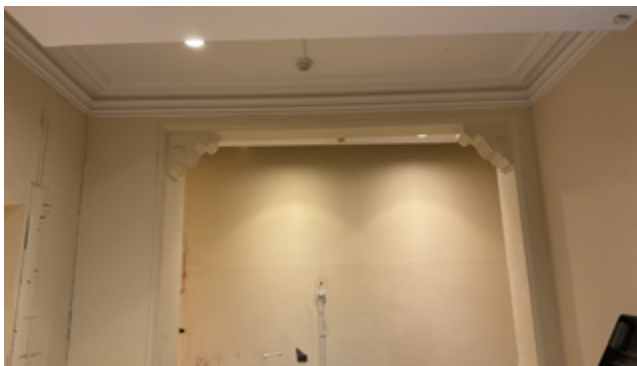
3.44 No.19 (southern end), two-brick-thick remnant of the dividing wall, mixing historic and modern bricks



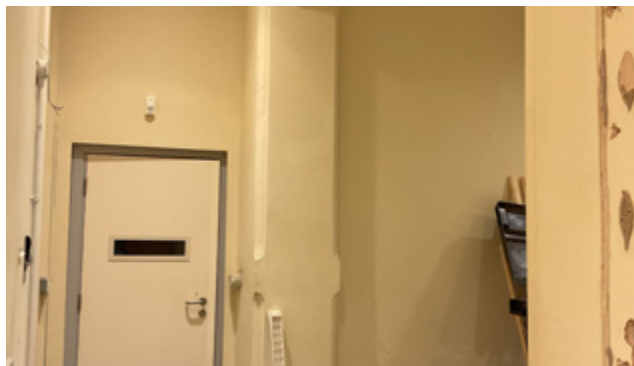
3.45 No. 19, west wall (L) and lightwell opening with bracket, the west wall to the lightwell lost



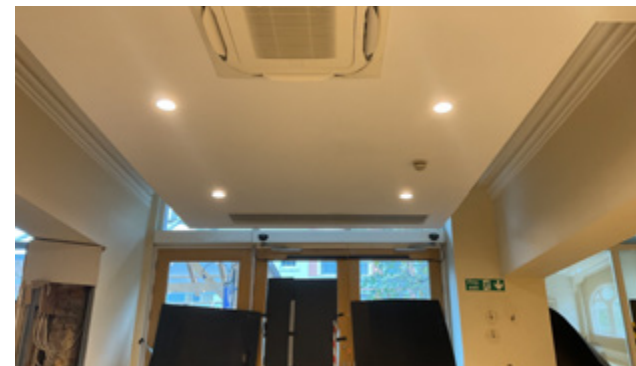
3.46 No. 19, remnant east wall



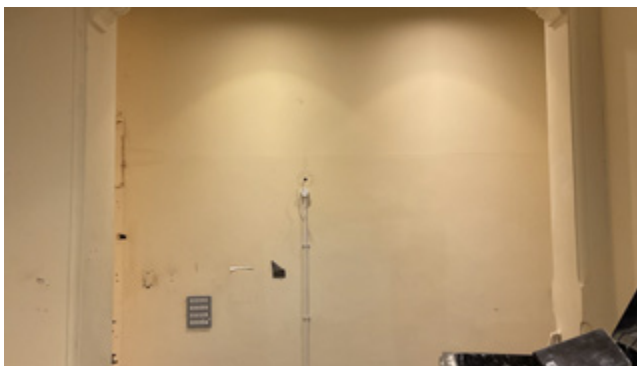
3.47 No. 19, lightwell opening no longer central to the space



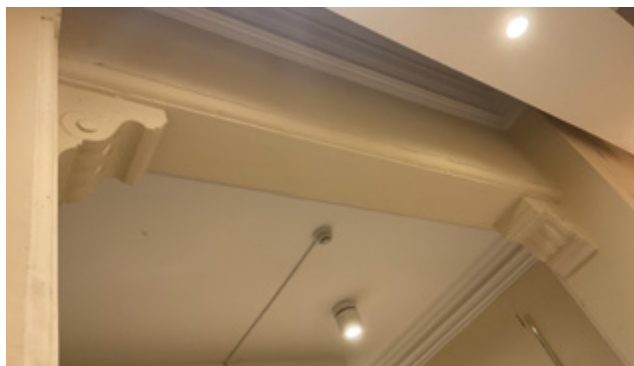
3.50 No. 19, former lightwell (L), ornamental moulding to both the front and rear of the opening



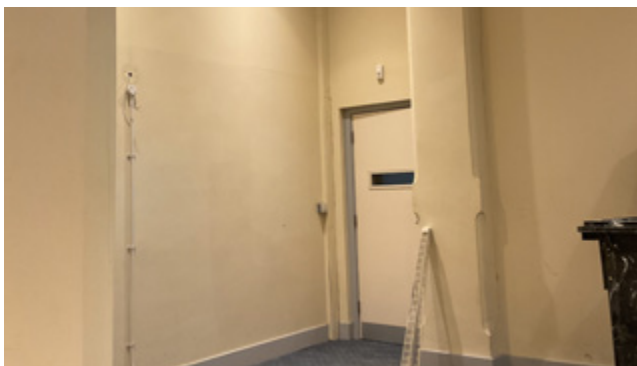
3.53 No. 19, cornicing behind the ceiling raft



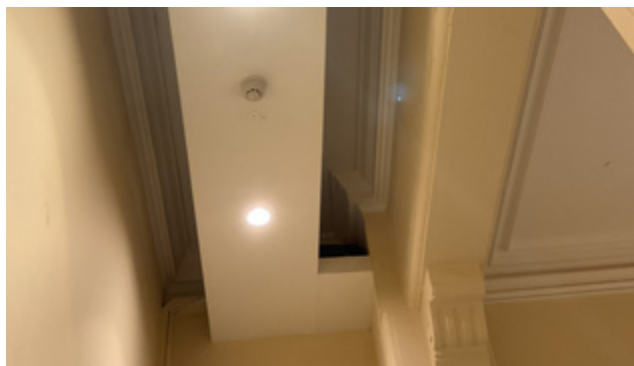
3.48 No. 19, lightwell opening, looking into the lightwell



3.51 No. 19, brackets to the lightwell opening



3.49 No. 19, former lightwell, with an inserted door to no. 21



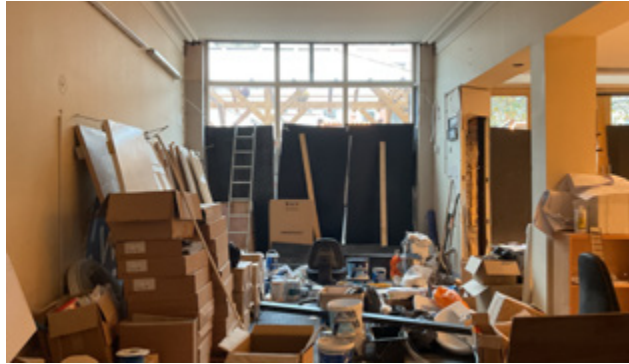
3.52 No. 19, former lightwell (with cornicing) and bracket to the opening

21 [Plates 3.54-3.55]

No. 21 is similar to no. 19, although its east wall is complete (either rebuilt or with its openings infilled).

As in no. 19, the staircase enclosure is absent and the lightwell is now offset from the centre, although here the lightwell is devoid of cornicing and has a sloped roof. Cabling and various attachments along the rear wall suggesting a recent back-of-house use, and that its opening was until recently infilled. However, no evidence of this survive, the opening matching that to no. 19 [Plates 3.56-3.59].

The cornicing is cut away at the south as it approaches the modern shopfront and there is no service raft [Plate 3.60].



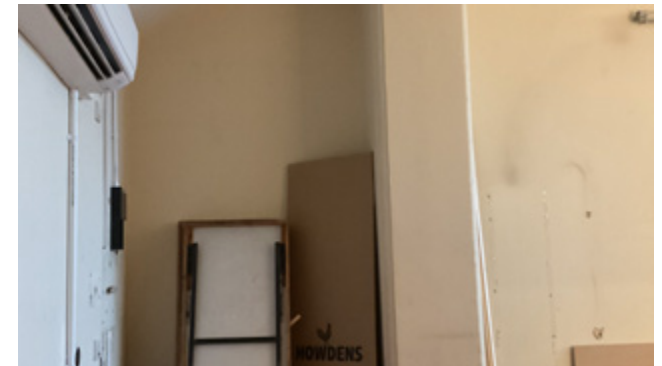
3.55 No. 21, looking south



3.58 No. 21, ornamental trim and bracket to the lightwell opening



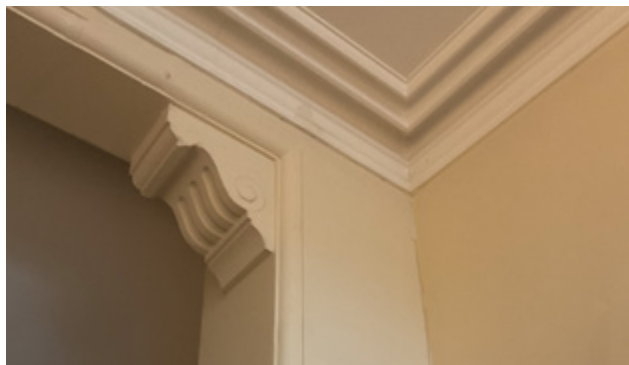
3.56 No. 21, opening to the former lightwell, with trim and brackets



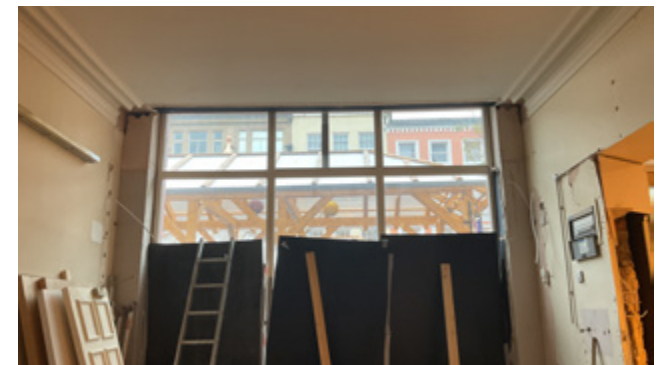
3.59 No. 21, former lightwell with sloped roof



3.54 No. 21, looking north



3.57 No. 21, ornamental trim and bracket to the lightwell opening



3.60 No. 21, the cornicing built around the modern shopfront

3.3.2 Ground Floor: Former 5 and 3 Half Moon Street [Plates 3.61-3.64]

From the inside, the rear is accessed via the stairs leading up to the break in the original dividing wall with no. 17. The external wall to the west is believed to be original here, as is the eastern external wall. The north wall has been replaced in the three inner bays and rebuilt in modern brickwork in part of the western bay but is believed to remain intact in the east bay, where the two entrances are located. Modern (c.1970s) partitioning runs along this wall's interior, in the northwest enclosing the former site of the hoist, what is now an emergency exit (the original entrance to the west rear unit) and the c.1977 staircase along the north wall. In the north there are partitioned rooms with suspended ceilings and in the northeast a similar partition walls provides access to the lower flight of steps (running to the basement) in the original (but altered) staircase and to a seemingly non-original enclosed passageway running towards the Half Moon Street door (no. 3) [Plates 3.65-3.66].

The southern wall of this space is formed by the outer wall of the lightwell (now painted orange), which appears to have been built out through the addition of modern plasterboard (with services behind) so that it no longer aligns with its continuation to the west (which also displays a mock stone arch) [Plates 3.67-3.70].

The space itself is occupied by a painted metal columns with exposed bases, shafts and heads, arranged in a regular grid of three rows with a northwestern column lying slightly outside of the grid and another situated in the well of the northeast staircase [Plates 3.71-3.73]. The grid itself already existed by 1914 and roughly

aligns with the division of the front of the building into units. As far as can be visible the columns are identical and devoid of markings.

The ceiling is similar to no. 17 but more regular, having a dense pattern of corniced coffering corresponding with the column grid system, the coffering and cornicing continuing above the suspended ceilings of the partitioned spaces [Plates 3.74-3.77].



3.64 Rear, looking east



3.61 Rear, looking north



3.64 Rear, looking west



3.62 Rear, looking south towards the south wall (formerly the outer wall of the lightwell)



3.65 Rear, modern partitioning in the northwest and north



3.66 Rear, modern partitioning in the northeast and the entrance to the northeast staircase and passageway



3.69 Rear, modern cabling in the south wall (former outer wall of the lightwell)



3.72 Rear, column head and coved ceiling above



3.67 Rear, former outer wall of the lightwell (L), originally continuing as the dividing wall between the rear and no. 17



3.70 Rear, former site of the lightwell as it entered the rear (originally divided by this wall)



3.73 Rear, column base



3.68 Rear, dividing wall with no. 17 (R) and former lightwell outer wall no longer aligned



3.71 Rear, the column to the northwest of the grid, matching but deviating from its layout



3.74 Rear, coved ceiling continuing above dropped ceilings



3.75 *Rear, cornicing continuing above the suspended ceilings*



3.76 *Rear, cornicing continuing around an unknown insertion to the south wall*



3.77 *Rear, cornicing interrupted by a later insertion along the outer wall of the lightwell*

3.3.3 Ground Floor: 23 St Ann's Square [Plates 3.78-3.79]

In its basic form No. 23 (now re-separated) is similar to nos. 19 and 21. The west wall is fully or partially a modern rebuilding (see above, Section 3.4.1), whilst the east wall (abutting the adjacent, earlier, building) is presumably original. The staircase enclosure wall has been lost and in the north the opening into the former lightwell is again offset. It appears to be a modern re-insertion, its simple trim lacking the curved profile of that in Nos. 19 and 23, and the brackets (one now mainly obscured) simpler and smaller (but different to the replicas in no. 17). A thin plasterboard insert sits inside the opening and contains a modern door into the lightwell. This has a late-20th-century staircase and a sloped ceiling and is entirely devoid of features of historic interest [Plates 3.80-3.82].



3.78 No 23, looking north



3.79 No. 23, looking south



3.80 No. 23, former opening into the lightwell



3.81 No. 23, plain replica moulded edge to the former lightwell opening

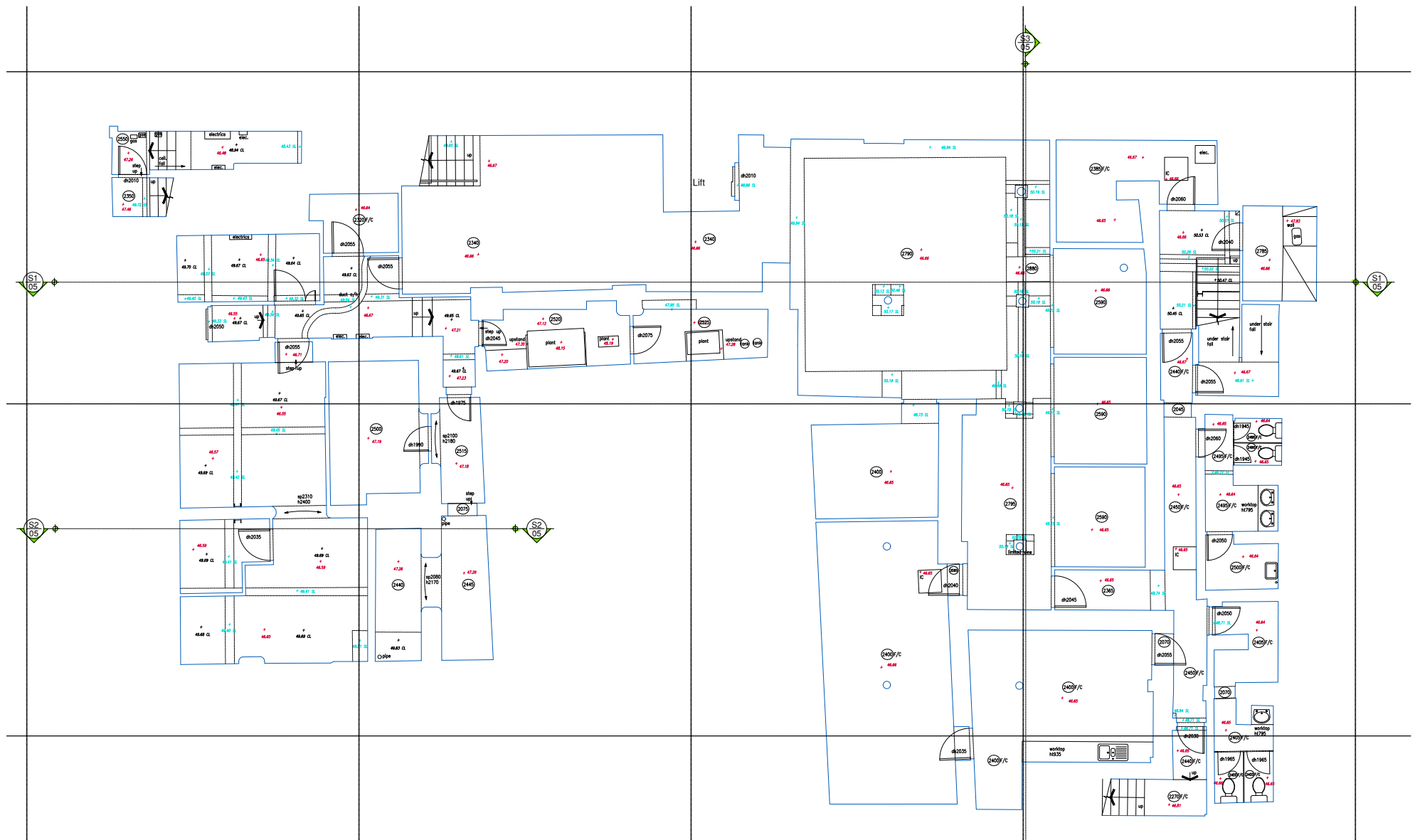


3.82 No. 23, replica bracket in the former lightwell opening

Basement

[Basement as existing]

To no. 17 and the rear there is a heavy partitioning and modern fit out of different ages, the rear also having suspended ceilings. Nos. 19 and 21, by contrast, have some historic and modern fabric to the walls, mainly exposed but with areas of newly applied plasterboard. Their ceilings are roughly surfaced, with exposed services, the larger spaces with new plasterboard coffering, whilst the floors are cement.



3.3.4 Basement: 17, 19 and 21 St Ann's Square

No. 17

The basement follows the footprint of the ground floor and its former lightwell area and is accessed via the 1977 repositioned staircase in its southwest. The main body of its basement is now in effect divided into three, that in the south divided with modern partitions to create a series of smaller rooms, that in the north a single, larger, space with the modern lift at its end, and that in the east a 20th-century inserted corridor, running as far as the lightwell, all with a modern fit out [Plates 3.81-3.82]. The L-shaped corridor is contained between an inserted wall in 20th-century brick to the west (paintwork on its east suggesting wine store use) and the west wall of no. 19 and to the east runs along the east frontage from the middle of no 17, where a canted lightwell sits adjacent to the independent staircase to the upper floors. It then passes through nos. 19 and 21 to an opening into the basement of no. 23. Its northern arm runs from the east frontage up to where the south wall of no. 17's lightwell originally met the since-removed west lightwell wall of no. 19. A 20th-century inserted doorway runs into the lightwell to no. 17, which is divided into two, the northern area with an entirely modern fit out. The southern area has a plaster wall in the south (the brick where exposed is older at the bottom), whilst the west wall contains two plastered curved stanchions, one with its rough red brick interior partially exposed, the area between the two filled with an Edwardian wine bin (itself subsequently infilled). The east wall, the outer wall of the lightwell area (wrapping around the bank extension) is plastered, with no internal fabric exposed [Plates 3.83-3.87].



3.81 No. 17, looking north



3.82 No. 17, looking south



3.83 No. 17, former lightwell area, bricks in the south wall



3.84 No. 17, former lightwell area, historic bricks at the base of the south wall



3.85 No. 17, former lightwell, stanchions along the inner lightwell wall (3)



3.86 No. 17, former lightwell, brickwork to the southern stanchion of the inner lightwell wall



3.87 No. 17, former lightwell, stanchions along the inner lightwell wall

No. 19

No. 19 is now accessed from no. 17, where the dividing wall of the lightwells has been rebuilt in modern brick (pre-1977) further to the east. This has a concrete floor and walls of painted brick, the plastered south wall (with an arched opening) believed to be a modern replacement (this space having previously been combined as an office) **[Plate 3.88]**. This opening leads into the staircase enclosure, which has walls of painted brick, that to the sides seemingly original but the southern wall a 20th-century replacement, rebuilt further south to extend the space. This wall has evidence of a former staircase and a lost partition **[Plates 3.89-3.90]**.

The store room to no. 17 is now accessed through a 20th-century opening in its west wall and has also been truncated to the south by the modern corridor. Its east and west walls are the original brick dividing walls, that in the east with an inset beam and both with probably pre-1886 arched openings **[Plates 3.91-3.92]**. The section in the south, beyond the modern corridor partition, is similar, the west wall removed entirely to provide access and the east wall similarly shortened. Here, the curved walls of its former lightwell survive but have been infilled.



3.88 No. 19, lightwell with the arched opening into the former staircase enclosure (the modern inserted wall to the west)



3.89 No. 19, extended staircase enclosure with evidence of a former staircase



3.90 No. 19, 20th-century south wall to the staircase enclosure, with evidence of a lost dividing wall



3.91 No. 19, main store, looking through the arched opening to no. 21 to the similar opening (now blocked) to no. 23



3.92 No. 19, main store, rear of the relocated stair enclosure wall (south east corner)

No. 21

The west wall of the lightwell to no. 21 has been removed to provide access from no. 19, the inserted lintel and brick supports modern **[Plate 3.93]**. The lightwell is similar to no. 19 but has painted rather than plastered walls, exposing the historic red brick in places, and the ceiling is modern plasterboard. A curved arched opening (without a door) runs into the former staircase enclosure, where the original fireplace is visible built into the depth of the west wall (and now bricked up) and the south wall retains its probably pre-1886 infill to the original opening **[Plates 3.94-3.95]**.

The main store is accessed through the opening in the original brick west dividing wall (modern services now running through), with a similar opening opposite into no. 23 (infilled with modern blockwork). This space is similar to no. 19 and has a similar beam set into the west wall, whilst also retaining part of an otherwise dismantled brick partition wall in its south (modern plasterboard now used to create a separate room) **[Plates 3.96-3.100]**. In the south, in what is now the corridor space, are the retained curved walls surviving from this unit's former lightwell.



3.93 No. 21, lightwell, looking through the modern opening into no. 19, with the opening into the staircase enclosure (L)



3.94 No. 21, staircase enclosure with former fireplace



3.95 No. 21, staircase enclosure, former fireplace



3.96 No. 21, main store, arched opening from no. 19



3.99 No. 21, main store, blocked arched opening to no. 23



3.97 No. 21, main store (viewed from the opening from no. 19), showing the blocked arched opening into no. 23



3.98 No. 21, main store, brickwork to the dividing wall with no. 23



3.100 No. 21, main store, truncated partition wall

3.3.5 Basement: Former 5 and 3 Half Moon Street

This rear area is accessed from the two staircases in the rear and from its south via the lift and no. 17.

The north, east and west walls of this area are believed to be original behind the modern fit out, whilst the south wall is the outer wall to the lightwell area, which is also believed to retain its original fabric behind modern plasterboard. In the west, where it became the dividing wall between the rear and no. 17, the wall has been removed entirely, presumably as part of the amalgamation of the spaces (and as early as 1886).

The mid-20th-century inserted staircase sits along the north wall, the internal profile of a vertical structural support exposed where the stairs reach ground floor, matching those on the exterior **[Plates 3.101-3.102]**. In the north of the east wall is the original staircase, the structure having historic newel posts (but a later handrail), the inner wall perhaps a modern alteration **[Plates 3.103-3.104]**. Modern partitioning runs along the north wall and through the east of the space.

The two southernmost rows of columns in place by 1914, mainly replicating the southern and middle rows on the ground floor. The southernmost row sits below that on the ground floor (which likely supported the lightwell glazing), although missing the second column, there instead being a north-south aligned wall here (introduced in 1914). The middle row of columns also differs from ground floor, having an extra column in the west, whilst the column in the northeast stairwell is positioned further to the north. Only one of the third row of columns is present, situated below the westernmost

column of the ground floor. The column shafts and most of their heads are visible, matching those above, but their bases are not exposed.

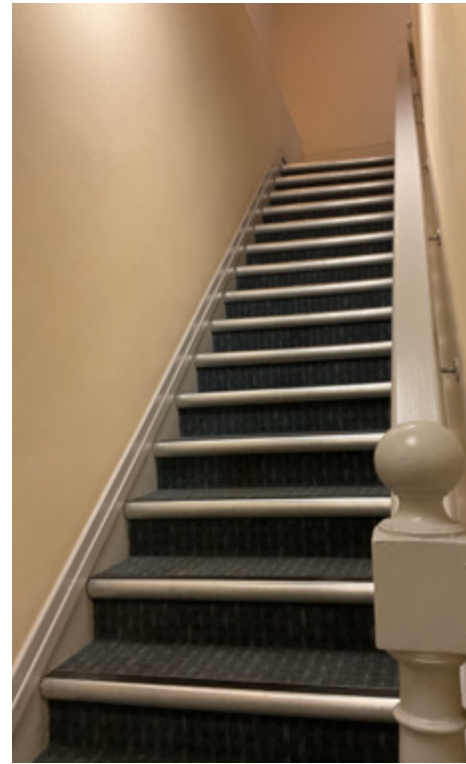
In the west of are large floating lowered ceilings, cut away to expose the column heads and metal fixtures, the columns around its edge running up to the ceiling without interruption **[Plate 3.105]**. Most (but not all) have metal fixtures, these and the joists that they attach to vary and likely indicate past repairs. There is only one column in the partitioned rooms along the northern edge, where a suspended ceiling conceals the column head **[Plate 3.106a-3.106d]**. The columns then continue into the east of the space, where there is a series of c.1970s partitioned rooms with tiled suspended ceilings concealing the column heads **[Plates 3.107-3.108]**. Where the tiles are absent the columns are visible running into concrete-encased beams, the floor structure exposed above **[Plates 3.109-3.110]**.



3.101 *Rear, 20th-century staircase in the northwest (existing by 1977)*



3.102 *Rear, original profile of the outer wall visible adjacent to the inserted staircase*



3.103 *Rear, northeast staircase*



3.104 *Rear, historic newel post to the northeast staircase*



3.105 *Rear, west area, columns travelling through and around the lowered ceiling*



3.106b *Rear, west area, exposed column head, joist and fixtures*



3.106a *Rear, west area, exposed column head, joist and fixtures*



3.106c *Rear, west area, exposed column head, joist and fixtures*



3.106d *Rear, west area, simpler exposed column head*



3.107 *Rear, east area, 1970s fit out*



3.108 *Rear, beams in the east area*



3.109 *Rear, east area, columns running into concrete-encased beams*



3.110 *Rear, east area, underside of the floor above*

3.3.6 Basement: 23 St Ann's Square

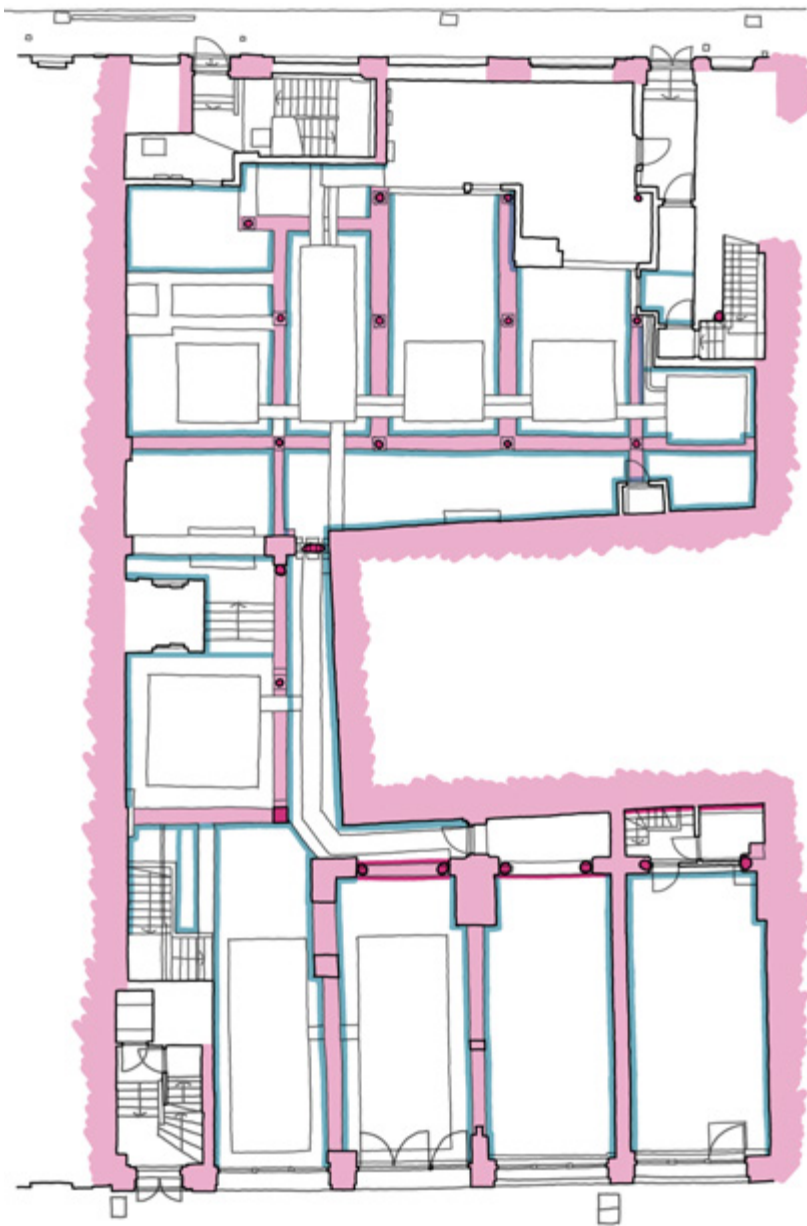
This was not available for inspection. However, modern plans suggest that it retains much of its original plan, and potentially a good degree of the historic brick fabric of its walls. The west wall is likely to be original (excepting the two openings), whilst the east (external) wall is believed to be unchanged. The southern wall of the staircase enclosure remains in its original position but may have had its opening (probably closed prior to 1886) reinstated further to the west than original, the position of its fireplace/chimneybreast still visible in the east (enlarged into a WC). The southern wall of the former lightwell area is similarly likely to retain original fabric to either end, its opening now widened, although the staircase in the lightwell area is a 20th-century intervention on a new alignment, replacing that originally existing to its south.

All other openings and partitions are believed to be non-original, the opening in its west wall late-20th-century.

3.4 Summary of Surviving Historic Fabric

Historic plans indicate that a major phase of alteration had occurred prior to 1913, and potentially as early as 1886, with further works likely completed in 1914, several key changes occurring subsequently (alongside several phases of partitioning and new fit out).

Site analysis suggests an uneven survival of this internal fabric as it was extant in 1913 (and which incorporated non-original elements) **[Plates 3.111-3.112]**.



3.111 Ground floor, suggested survival of fabric existing by 1913



3.112 Basement, suggested survival of fabric existing by 1913

- Visible surviving
- Believed surviving

4.0 Assessment of Significance

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this section is to provide an assessment of significance of Mansfield Chambers (basement and ground floors only internally) so that the proposals for change are fully informed as to its significance and that the effect of the proposals on that significance can be evaluated.

This assessment responds to the requirement of the National Planning Policy Framework to 'recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance'. The NPPF defines significance as;

'The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological (potential to yield evidence about the past), architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting'.

4.2 Assessment of Significance

4.2.1 Mansfield Chambers

Summary

Mansfield Chambers originally dates to the 1860s, constructed as a purpose-built commercial building comprised of shops and 'warehouses' (or rather store rooms) at ground floor, with corresponding basement space below, and offices above. There is a basement and three principal floors, the first and second floors (not part of this report) remaining in their original office use today (although recently vacant), accessed via the independent entrances in the northeast and southwest corners.

Externally, Mansfield Chambers was constructed running on a north-south alignment through the centre section of the block bound by St Ann's Square to the south (front), St Ann Street to the east, Half Moon Street at the north (rear) and Old Bank Street to its west. This was an eminent and prominent position, as evidenced by the presence of its immediate neighbour, the private Benjamin Heywood's Bank (Grade II*). There was, however, a clear hierarchy of status and use across the lower floors, with the shops and the principal entrance to the offices (cut out of 17 St Ann's Square) fronting onto the prestigious square, whilst the rear faced onto Half Moon Street, a secondary street similarly enclosed by the rears of the buildings to Cross Street. There is no evidence to indicate that this part of the building ever had any other, more prestigious uses, prior to its warehouse use, recorded in 1886 (11 years after construction). The rear retained this store use until subsequently, by the Edwardian period in conjunction

with some of the shops to the front (a wholesale provisioner and wine merchant), finally becoming back-of-house space for WH Smith in the 1960s or early 1970s.

Internally, the ground and basement floors appear to have initially formed six separate units (each with an area of lightwell to the interior), the first available records showing the four to St Ann's Square in retail and hospitality use and the two to Half Moon Street as stores. The six units were amalgamated over a series of phased changes, until eventually operated as a single wholesale unit (subsequently WH Smith), although 23 St Ann's Square (the last to be absorbed) was subsequently re-separated (and remains so today). Plans indicate repeated changes in vertical and horizontal circulation, partitioning and fit out according to the changing relationship between the units and the occupants and types of use. Consequently, little survives of the original internal and dividing walls at ground floor (although there is slight greater survival in the south of the basement), even where these have been rebuilt, with almost no of the historic fit out at ground floor. However, the basic original separation of the four front units to St Ann's Square remains perceptible, evidenced in the survival of remnants of walls or their rebuilding (with associated coffering to the ceilings), and in the still extant division of the St Ann's Square frontage into four distinct shopfronts. This is also legible at basement level, although in the south only, the historic footprint lost entirely in the rear basement and almost completely in no. 17.

Internally, these floors as they survive today are formed of the separate 23 St Ann's Square and the large amalgamated unit, the latter containing two enclosed entrances running to the basement and upper

floors, cut out of its southwest (17 St Ann's Square) and northeast (in what was originally one of the two Half Moon Street units). Both no. 23 and the single amalgamated space retain their retail use, although currently vacant.

Significance

The significance of Mansfield Chambers centres on the architectural interest of its neo-classical principal facade (although heavily altered), the contribution that this makes to the street scene and character of St Ann's Square and its listed buildings – particularly the Church of St Ann (Grade I) – and its historic interest as a representation of the Victorian commercial phase of the multi-faceted evolution of the St Ann's area (for which see below, Section 4.2.2). The rear elevation has some limited interest at ground floor, mainly in its original ashlar doorways in the east and its surviving swinging crane in the west. The modern rebuilding, however, although respecting the original bay division and retaining the structural supports, is heavily detracting, diluting the historic character of the rear and obscuring its historic warehouse function.

Internally, however, the building is heavily altered, having lost almost all of its historic fittings and fit out and potentially a substantial amount of its internal historic fabric. At ground and basement floors much of its original plan form has been lost, particularly in the west and north. Consequently, the interior collectively has only a low historic and architectural interest. At ground and basement floors it is the areas of retained structural fabric that provide fragmented evidence of the building's original cellular layout, this surviving primarily at basement level, a secondary, more utilitarian service space throughout the life of

the building. Here, it is the southern units that have the most intact plan form and structural fabric (although with evidence of alteration), their retained dividing walls and original and early interconnecting openings the source their greatest interest. Although this area seemingly retained a single function from before 1886 until around the 1960s there is very little fabric surviving to evidence its wine store use, beyond two remnant wine bins (now infilled) and discolouration left by former shelving. Having lost this internal dividing fabric and the extent of modern fitout the basement rear and unit 17 are of much lower significance, the presence of probably non-original grid column to the rear further distorting any evidence of the original plan form and character.

There is, therefore, comparatively little evidential or historical associative interest in those basement areas viewed (i.e. excluding no. 23), with the limited interest focused principally in the south.

At ground floor the architectural and historic interest is derived principally from the two surviving moulded and bracketed lightwell walls, the remnants of dividing wall running between the four units and the original cellular plan form that these memorialise. Even in no. 23, which has been restored as a separate unit, the loss of the staircase enclosure, relocation of the stairs, replacement of the lightwell screen and known creation of modern openings to its west wall compromises its interest. Beyond the two moulded and bracketed lightwell enclosures there is no surviving historic fit out or decoration to this floor and no features such as fireplaces survive, with the original circulation between the shopfloors and their basement stores lost, the staircase to no. 17 a modern replacement and only one staircase (potentially altered) surviving in the rear.

4.2.2 St Ann's Square Conservation Area

The conservation area draws historic value from illustration it provides of the evolution of Manchester beyond its medieval core, illustrating the evolution of a planned Georgian commercial and domestic suburb into a commercial, financial, and retail powerhouse over the course of the later 18th and 19th centuries, by the mid-19th century now driven by purpose-built large-footprint buildings such as Mansfield Chambers. This is particularly evident through the continuing public use of its buildings and the substantial evolution of purpose-built commercial and retail premises with an impressive range of 19th-century revival styles that, whilst highly varied in their visual execution, create a well-articulated frontage.

As a result of the linear course of St Ann's Square and the building's distinction from its neighbours, accentuated by its ornamental flamboyance and (modern) decorative scheme, Mansfield Chambers remains one of the most prominent examples of the area's Victorian re-invention. This importance is further enhanced by its purpose construction for a multi-faceted office, retail and storage use, capturing the very hybrid character of mid-19th-century St Ann's Square as its transformation from a Georgian domestic enclave into a commercial heartland was cemented in the Victorian period.

The contribution of the Half Moon Street façade to the conservation area is much more limited, the ground floor to a great extent having a contemporary appearance and the decline in use and vibrancy of this narrow service road bringing little footfall. There is no substantial opportunity to appreciate the original stark contrast between the elaborate frontage and the utilitarian warehouse rear.

5.0 Commentary on the Proposals

5.1 Description of the Proposals and their Impact on the Heritage Assets

The proposed scheme is outlined in detail in the application drawings and Design and Access Statement by Johnson Pinney Architects, which this report accompanies. The works seek to refurbish and reconfigure the basement and ground floors into a new retail unit with a new associated shopfront. Key interventions include:

- Creation of a sale areas area across the ground floor supported by a small back of house space
- Creation of a hospitality area to the rear of the basement floor with back of house functions to the front
- Changes to circulation, including a new lift and stair
- New shopfront and signage and external alterations
- Installation of new MEP

These works are discussed in turn below:

Creation of a sale areas area across the ground floor supported by a small back of house space

All modern fabric including wall linings, partitions, lowered ceilings, rafts, services and connecting vents are to be removed to allow for a consolidated retail fitout across the floor to suit the incoming retail brand. The removal of the myriad of rafts and connecting ducts would allow the ceilings to be raised to their original level through most of the floor level. Suspended rafts with integral lighting would be installed in the three

principal sales areas to the front, and in the small sales area set behind the rear staircase. The modern cornices would be replaced to match given their appropriate profile. The historic high-level corbels would be retained alongside exposed column heads, whilst the replica cornice affixed to the wall linings to be removed would be replaced to match the same profile.

To the front facing St Ann's Square, three distinct retail areas would be created. This would include the insertion of partitions to reduce the size of the existing openings, whilst a new opening would be formed into no. 23, with all three openings aligning. The back of house area would be set to the rear of the floor plan.

The proposals to the ground floor would significantly improve the internal character of the floor and present a much more coordinated approach to its appearance, befitting of a retail unit in a prestigious location within the city (both today and historically). All identified historic features would be retained, whilst the rationalisation of the ceiling would allow them to be better appreciated, and the replica cornice would once again be reinstated to maintain the historic aesthetic of the space. The new opening into no. 23 would be formed in a wall previously opened and then infilled, whilst the proposals to create a series of distinct retail spaces would express the original plan form and retail use of the small independent units. The back of house areas would be located in an area more heavily subdivided as existing to the rear of the floor plan. As such the works here would very much enhance the significance of the building and its contribution to the vibrancy of St Ann's Square.

Creation of a hospitality area to the rear of the basement floor with back of house functions to the front

Similarly, all modern fabric would be stripped out at basement level. The proposed hospitality area would bring the basement floor into use as a mix of ancillary retail and back of house space. The presence of the columns would be maintained, whilst the ceiling would be rationalised – most significantly removing the section of modern concrete slab which sits below the timber structure to the ground floor. WCs and associated facilities would be accommodated to the rear of the floor, as existing and historically. The proposed back of house areas would retain the plan form and the historic fabric identified through this report. Where an opening is proposed to be infilled this would clearly read as an insertion within the historic arched opening – as per the example shown in Plate 3.88.

The works to the rear of the floor would see the strip out of detracting modern partitions, wall linings and suspended ceilings and provide a unified aesthetic, with the columns retained as the principal original features. The concrete floor slab to be removed is a modern insertion, likely to have been installed as a security measure associated with its more recent bank use; as such its removal would form part of the overall enhancement of this part of the floor. As demonstrated elsewhere in the submission documents, the slab would be carefully removed without utilising heavy drilling equipment, to mitigate any potential damage to adjacent fabric through vibration. Furthermore, the interface of the new structure required has been designed to be the minimum necessary - limited to the insertion of padstones in the masonry wall for the steel

beams and bolts for the timber joists. Located at the secondary basement floor level, and given the minor extent of the works and improvements they will bring to the volume of the space and its associated increased use, it is not considered that overall they would cause any harm to the significance of the building.

The front of the floor plan very much has a back of house character, with areas of exposed historic fabric alongside poor quality partitions, boarded ceilings, poorly infilled openings and exposed services. Again, here the proposals would present an enhancement to the finished appearance of the space without compromising its significance.

Changes to circulation including a new lift and stair

The modern stair between ground and basement would be infilled, with the circulation between the ground and basement floors consolidated in the centre of the floor plan- where a new lift would also be installed in the position of the existing and alongside a stair serving the raised ground floor to the rear. The secondary stair to the rear of no. 23 would also be removed.

Plans from 1914 show a number of stairs located within the centre of the floor plate serving different levels, whilst no stair existed historically in the location of the main stair to be infilled. As such there would be no impact on the significance of the listed building. Whilst the stair to the rear of no. 23 reflects the historic connection between the basement and ground floors, it is not original nor is it located in its original location, and therefore the impact of its removal on the overall significance of the listed building would be negligible.

New shopfront and signage

It is proposed to install a timber shopfront with a metal core to meet the security requirements of the high-end retail use (outlined in more detail within the Design and Access Statement), whilst maintaining the aesthetic of a timber shopfront. The shopfront would comprise a tripartite arrangement to each opening, with a single fanlight spanning across. Internal bulkheads would allow for signage to be located internally behind the fanlight, minimising the clutter to the shop frontage. Ventilation grilles are also proposed, to allow for fresh air intake which would route into MEP services located within the bulkhead; this bulkhead would also accommodate the system for the proposed lattice roller shutter. The ventilation grilles would take the form of a decorative grille, which would be seamlessly integrated into the façade design and serve as a decorative element.

Further external alterations include cleaning and making good stone and brickwork, whilst the modern doors to the rear (Half Moon Street) façade would be replaced with new security doors.

The existing shopfronts are modern insertions and as such the principal of their replacement would have no impact. The detailed design proposed, including the timber finish and tripartite arrangement, follows the composition of the original individual retail units, whilst the single fanlights with internal signage follows the historic fascia line. Maintaining the tripartite arrangement here would not respond to the original shopfront composition and would bisect the internal signage, further diminishing its prominence within St Ann's Square by comparison to the predominantly external signage. As outlined elsewhere within the submission pack, the requirement for fresh air intake through the front and rear (as existing) elevations is the

only means of achieving the requirements to serve the ground and basement floors, and allowing the basement to be brought into a meaningful use. As demonstrated within the Design and Access Statement the proposed grille would form an integral element of the overall shopfront design as found commonly to Victorian retail units where natural ventilation was required – particularly to constrained basement storage areas such as in Covent Garden Market Building (Grade II). Overall, the proposed shopfronts present a high-quality, considered design which would preserve, and indeed enhancement, the appearance of the building and its contribution to St Ann's Square.*

The multifunctional role of the bulkheads located behind the shopfronts would rationalise potentially cluttering and detracting features within a single location and form part of the overall enhancement strategy to the ceilings across the ground floor, as outlined above. The setback position of the shopfront would also allow for the shop window displays to be visible even when closed, maintaining an active frontage 24/7 and enlivening St Ann's Square.

Cleaning the facades would present an enhancement to both the building and its contribution to the conservation area, whilst the replacement doors to Half Moon Street would have no impact.

Installation of new MEP

MEP routes would be carefully concealed within risers from the basement; to the front of the floor plan they would be concealed within the new bulkhead (discussed above), and the new partitions proposed to be inserted to reinstate the division between the historic retail units. Further routes would be concealed within new wall linings (replacing existing modern finishes), whilst a new service route would also be located to the very rear of the floor (to the front of the former 5 and 3 Half

Moon Street) where deep bulkheads accommodate service routes as existing. Additional penetrations are also required between floor levels, as highlighted on the submission drawings – these would be limited to be minimum necessary and would form discreet holes in the timber floor structure (front of floor plate) and concrete slab (rear floor plate).

The installation of MEP is required for the proposed retail use – including bringing the basement floor into meaningful full use – integrating the routes required into new partitions, bulkheads and wall linings required as part of the overall scheme would ensure that this would have no impact on the significance of the listed building. Whilst some openings are required between floor levels, their limited number, the minor amount of historic fabric removed and their concealed location means that the impact of the significance of the listed building overall would be negligible.

5.2 Justification of the Proposals

The proposed works outlined above seek to consolidate the existing tired and cluttered interior, mainly comprising modern fabric, to create a high quality aesthetic which celebrates the remaining historic features and reinforces a sense of the original individual retail units. This all forms part of the ambition to create a proposed high-end retail experience – akin to the commercial prestige of this part of the city at time of its construction in the 1860s – whilst bringing both floors into full active use and providing the fitout and features suited to 21st century retail of this nature. Considered alongside the new shopfronts proposed, this would present an overall enhancement to the listed buildings and its contribution to the retail activity, and to the vibrancy of the St Ann's Square Conservation Area.

As explained in Section 1.2, Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan applicable to the building comprises **The Core Strategy (2012)** and saved policies from the **Unitary Development Plan (1995)**. **Policy EN3 Heritage in the Core Strategy** establishes a presumption in favour of 'development that complements and takes advantage of the distinct historic and heritage features of its districts and neighbourhoods, including those of the city centre' and that 'proposals which enable the re-use of heritage assets will be encouraged where they are considered consistent with the significance of the heritage asset'. Similarly, **Policy 19 Listed Buildings of the UDP** indicates the 'council will have regard to the desirability of securing the retention, restoration, maintenance and continued use of such buildings'...provided 'in its opinion, there would be an adverse effect on its architectural historic character'. As outlined above the proposals would bring forward a reuse of the ground and basement floors in a manner akin to their historic use, albeit to serve the needs of 21st century retail, without causing harm to the significance of the listed building or its architectural historic character. Perhaps, more critically however given the well-known challenges facing the high street, is the role that the proposed retail offer would play in maintaining and enhancing the particular distinctiveness of St Ann's Square as a high-end retail area, both historically and as existing.

The thrust of the Core Strategy aligns with the **National Planning Policy Framework**, which seeks to ensure the heritage assets are conserved in a manner accordingly to their significance. As has been outlined in detail above, the proposals will sustain and enhance the significance of both the listed building and the conservation area through the high-end retail offer they will enable, which in turn will positively contribute to the economic vitality and local character and distinctness of this part of the city (Para 203). As such they would be wholly beneficial and would cause no harm to the significance of Mansfield Chambers as a Grade II listed building or the St Ann's Conservation Area. Likewise, the statutory duties of the **Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990** to preserve the special interest of the listed building and to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area would be met.

5.3 Conclusion

The proposed scheme would meet the statutory duty imposed by The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the tests for sustainable development as outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework and accord with the relevant local policies insofar as they relate to the historic environment. They are therefore considered to be acceptable in heritage terms.

Appendix I - Statutory List Description

Mansfield Chambers, 17-23 St Ann's Square

Grade II listed building

List Entry Number: 1247654

Date first listed: 03-Oct-1974

Listing NGR: SJ8381498389

Shop with offices over. Probably later C19; altered. Stucco on brick, with dressings of stone and fibre-glass imitating stone (roof concealed). U-plan formed by main range parallel to street with back extension, and rear wing attached to this parallel to Half Moon Street. Italianate style. Four storeys and 5 bays (the first narrower and slightly set back); 4-bay giant arcade to ground and 1st floors (1st floor treated as mezzanine), with pilasters (now partly or wholly of fibre-glass), frieze, and moulded cornice; low 3rd floor with sill-band and frieze; modillioned cornice and pilastered parapet with urns. The arcade has C20 shop fronts at ground floor and semi-circular windows above, and the narrow bay to the left of this has a doorway with C20 doors, rectangular overlight, frieze lettered "MANSFIELD CHAMBERS", and segmental pediment on long fluted consoles, and above this a round-headed 2-light window with circular tracery; the 2nd floor has round-headed sashes in moulded architraves with swags and cornices; 3rd floor has short sashed windows. Three chimneys visible above parapet. Interior not inspected.

Appendix II - Planning Policy and Guidance

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

The Act is legislative basis for decision making on applications that relate to the historic environment.

Sections 16, 66 and 72(l) of the Act impose a statutory duty upon local planning authorities to consider the impact of proposals upon listed buildings and conservation areas.

Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that:

[...] in considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority or the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Similarly, section 66 of the above Act states that:

In considering whether to grant permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority, or as the case may be the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Similarly, section 72(l) of the above Act states that:

[...] with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

Regional Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

Any proposals for consent relating to heritage assets are subject to the policies of the NPPF (December 2023). This sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. With regard to 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment', the framework requires proposals relating to heritage assets to be justified and an explanation of their effect on the heritage asset's significance provided.

Paragraph 7 of the Framework states that the purpose of the planning system is to 'contribute to the achievement of sustainable development' and that, at a very high level, 'the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'.

At paragraph 8, the document expands on this as follows:

Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives:

a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and

c) an environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

and notes at paragraph 10:

10. So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11).

With regard to the significance of a heritage asset, the framework contains the following policies:

201. Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

In determining applications local planning authorities are required to take account of significance, viability, sustainability and local character and distinctiveness. Paragraph 203 of the NPPF identifies the following criteria in relation to this:

- 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; and*
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness*

With regard to potential 'harm' to the significance designated heritage asset, in paragraph 205 the framework states the following:

...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.

The Framework goes on to state at paragraph 206 that:

Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:

a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;

b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.*

Where a proposed development will lead to 'substantial harm' to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset paragraph 207 of the NPPF states that:

...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

With regard to 'less than substantial harm' to the significance of a designated heritage asset, paragraph 208 of the NPPF states the following:

282. 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.

The Framework requires local planning authorities to look for opportunities for new development within conservation areas and world heritage sites and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Paragraph 212 states that:

... Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.

Concerning conservation areas and world heritage sites it states, in paragraph 213, that:

Not all elements of a Conservation Area or World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 207 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 208, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole.

Local Policy

Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester (1995)

The Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester (the UDP) was adopted by the Council in 1995 as the statutory document that set out guidelines for all development in Manchester and provided a framework from which to base decisions about planning applications. Although the UDP has been superseded the following policies were retained and remain extant.

19. Listed Buildings

DC19.1 In determining applications for listed building consent or planning applications for development involving or having an impact on buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, the Council will have regard to the desirability of securing the retention, restoration, maintenance and continued use of such buildings and to protecting their general setting. In giving effect to this policy, the Council will:

- b. not permit a change of use of a listed building, where it would have a detrimental effect on the character or appearance of the building;
- c. not permit any external or internal alteration or addition to a Listed building where, in its opinion, there would be an adverse effect on its architectural or historic character;
- d. seek to preserve and enhance the settings of listed buildings by appropriate control over the design of new development in their vicinity, control over the use of adjacent land, and where appropriate, by the preservation of trees and landscape features;

- f. not permit alterations to a listed building which would prevent the future use of any part of the building, in particular upper floors or basements, or where poor maintenance is likely to result.

Manchester Local Plan. Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2012)

Manchester Local Plan was adopted by Manchester City Council in 2012, though it retains several of the policies set out in the 1995 UDP. The following policies are of relevance.

Policy EN 3: Heritage

Throughout the City, the Council will encourage development that complements and takes advantage of the distinct historic and heritage features of its districts and neighbourhoods, including those of the City Centre. Proposals which enable the re-use of heritage assets will be encouraged where they are considered consistent with the significance of the heritage asset.

Policy CC 9: Design and Heritage

Design of new buildings will need to be of the highest standard in terms of appearance and function. The standards and guidance explained in other LDF policies should be the basis for the approach to design, with particular attention to be given to the City Centre context and character.

Development in Manchester City Centre should preserve or enhance the heritage assets that have been identified, including listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled ancient monuments.

The Council will support high density and mixed use development in the City Centre, but developers must recognise the specific design challenges that must be overcome to ensure complementarity of function and form. New development must support the range of uses the Council expects in the City Centre and contribute to a coherent and integrated physical environment.

St Ann's Square Conservation Area

St Ann's Square Conservation area was designated in 1970. Manchester City Council provides the following assessment of the character of the conservation area online.

Now the commercial heart of a large city, almost all the buildings in the conservation area are shops or offices, or a combination of both. There is a wealth of buildings of architectural quality, the majority of them being Victorian with some Edwardian and a few of more recent origin. Few properties remain from the 18th century, although many buildings are listed for their special architectural or historic interest.

St. Ann's Square was laid out in the Georgian period, early in the 18th century, and is one of the main spaces in the city centre. The church, which dominates the southern end of the Square is the only surviving building of that time in the area, the remainder being later replacements which continue to enclose the Square in a satisfactory and coherent manner. As these buildings were constructed in various styles over a long period, they create a rich tapestry of built form. The Royal Exchange is the dominant building in the area, by virtue of its sheer bulk, but the much smaller St. Ann's Church is also a landmark building

because of its contrasting form and dominant location at the southern end of the Square. Although there are other architecturally fine individual buildings, it is the relationship of them to each other as components in the street wall that dominates the area, as in other parts of the city centre.

St. Ann's Square is lined with many buildings of architectural merit, each designed with due regard and respect for the others that were already there and together they create an imposing 'street wall'. Most have narrow frontages, so if one is replaced the street still manages to retain its character. On the corner of St. Ann's Square and St. Ann Street stands a building which is a fine example of the Italian palazzo style of architecture, with semi-circular headed arches and Venetian windows. Designed by the architect J. E. Grogan, it was originally Benjamin Heywood's Bank and was connected to the manager's house by a single-storey link. It is listed Grade II*. The surface of St. Ann's Square has been replaced with a modern bold paving pattern that aims to reinstate the character of the Georgian original. This scheme also extends into the streets around the Square, some of which are very narrow.

National Planning Practice Guidance

The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) was published on 23 July 2019 to support the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the planning system. It includes particular guidance on matters relating to protecting the historic environment in the section: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment.

The relevant guidance is as follows:

Paragraph 2: What is meant by the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment?

Conservation is an active process of maintenance and managing change. It requires a flexible and thoughtful approach to get the best out of assets as diverse as listed buildings in every day use and as yet undiscovered, undesignated buried remains of archaeological interest.

In the case of buildings, generally the risks of neglect and decay of heritage assets are best addressed through ensuring that they remain in active use that is consistent with their conservation. Ensuring such heritage assets remain used and valued is likely to require sympathetic changes to be made from time to time. In the case of archaeological sites, many have no active use, and so for those kinds of sites, periodic changes may not be necessary, though on-going management remains important.

Where changes are proposed, the National Planning Policy Framework sets out a clear framework for both plan-making and decision-making in respect of applications for planning permission and listed building consent to ensure that heritage assets are conserved, and where appropriate enhanced, in a manner that is consistent with their significance and thereby achieving sustainable development. Heritage assets are either designated heritage assets or non-designated heritage assets.

Part of the public value of heritage assets is the contribution that they can make to understanding and interpreting our past. So where the complete or

partial loss of a heritage asset is justified (noting that the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted), the aim then is to:

- capture and record the evidence of the asset's significance which is to be lost
- interpret its contribution to the understanding of our past; and
- make that publicly available (National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 199)

Paragraph 6: What is "significance"?

'Significance' in terms of heritage-related planning policy is defined in the Glossary of the National Planning Policy Framework as the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

The National Planning Policy Framework definition further states that in the planning context heritage interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. This can be interpreted as follows:

- **archaeological interest:** As defined in the Glossary to the National Planning Policy Framework, 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.
- **architectural and artistic interest:** 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 skill, like sculpture.

- **historic interest:** 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.

In legislation and designation criteria, the terms 'special architectural or historic interest' of a listed building and the 'national importance' of a scheduled monument are used to describe all or part of what, in planning terms, is referred to as the identified heritage asset's significance.

Paragraph 7: Why is 'significance' important in decision-taking?

Heritage assets may be affected by direct physical change or by change in their setting. Being able to properly assess the nature, extent and importance of the significance of a heritage asset, and the contribution of its setting, is very important to understanding the potential impact and acceptability of development proposals.

Paragraph 13: What is the setting of a heritage asset and how should it be taken into account?

The setting of a heritage asset is defined in the Glossary of the National Planning Policy Framework.

All heritage assets have a setting, irrespective of the form in which they survive and whether they are designated or not. The setting of a heritage asset and the asset's curtilage may not have the same extent.

The extent and importance of setting is often expressed by reference to the visual relationship between the asset and the proposed development and associated visual/physical considerations. Although views of or from an asset will play an important part in the assessment of impacts on setting, the way in which we experience an asset in its setting is also influenced by other environmental factors such as noise, dust, smell and vibration from other land uses in the vicinity, and by our understanding of the historic relationship between places. For example, buildings that are in close proximity but are not visible from each other may have a historic or aesthetic connection that amplifies the experience of the significance of each.

The contribution that setting makes to the significance of the heritage asset does not depend on there being public rights of way or an ability to otherwise access or experience that setting. The contribution may vary over time.

When assessing any application which may affect the setting of a heritage asset, local planning authorities may need to consider the implications of cumulative change. They may also need to consider the fact that developments which materially detract from the asset's significance may also damage its economic viability now, or in the future, thereby threatening its ongoing conservation.

Paragraph 15: What is the optimum viable use for a heritage asset and how is it taken into account in planning decisions?

The vast majority of heritage assets are in private hands. Thus, sustaining heritage assets in the long term often requires an incentive for their active conservation. Putting heritage assets to a viable use is likely to lead to the investment in their maintenance necessary for their long-term conservation.

By their nature, some heritage assets have limited or even no economic end use. A scheduled monument in a rural area may preclude any use of the land other than as a pasture, whereas a listed building may potentially have a variety of alternative uses such as residential, commercial and leisure.

In a small number of cases a heritage asset may be capable of active use in theory but be so important and sensitive to change that alterations to accommodate a viable use would lead to an unacceptable loss of significance.

It is important that any use is viable, not just for the owner, but also for the future conservation of the asset: a series of failed ventures could result in a number of unnecessary harmful changes being made to the asset.

If there is only one viable use, that use is the optimum viable use. If there is a range of alternative economically viable uses, the optimum viable use is the one likely to cause the least harm to the significance of the asset, not just through necessary initial changes, but also as a result of subsequent wear and tear and likely future changes. The optimum viable use may not necessarily be the most economically viable one. Nor need it be

the original use. However, if from a conservation point of view there is no real difference between alternative economically viable uses, then the choice of use is a decision for the owner, subject of course to obtaining any necessary consents.

Harmful development may sometimes be justified in the interests of realising the optimum viable use of an asset, notwithstanding the loss of significance caused, and provided the harm is minimised. The policy on addressing substantial and less than substantial harm is set out in paragraphs 199-203 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Paragraph 18: How can the possibility of harm to a heritage asset be assessed?

What matters in assessing whether a proposal might cause harm is the impact on the significance of the heritage asset. As the National Planning Policy Framework makes clear, significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

Proposed development affecting a heritage asset may have no impact on its significance or may enhance its significance and therefore cause no harm to the heritage asset. Where potential harm to designated heritage assets is identified, it needs to be categorised as either less than substantial harm or substantial harm (which includes total loss) in order to identify which policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraphs 199-203) apply.

Within each category of harm (which category applies should be explicitly identified), the extent of the harm may vary and should be clearly articulated.

Whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgment for the decision-maker, having regard to the circumstances of the case and the policy in the National Planning Policy Framework. In general terms, substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases. For example, in determining whether works to a listed building constitute substantial harm, an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest. It is the degree of harm to the asset's significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed. The harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting.

While the impact of total destruction is obvious, partial destruction is likely to have a considerable impact but, depending on the circumstances, it may still be less than substantial harm or conceivably not harmful at all, for example, when removing later additions to historic buildings where those additions are inappropriate and harm the buildings' significance. Similarly, works that are moderate or minor in scale are likely to cause less than substantial harm or no harm at all. However, even minor works have the potential to cause substantial harm, depending on the nature of their impact on the asset and its setting.

The National Planning Policy Framework confirms that 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). It also makes clear that any harm to a designated heritage asset requires clear and convincing justification and sets

out certain assets in respect of which harm should be exceptional/wholly exceptional (see National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 200).

Paragraph 20: What is meant by the term public benefits?

The National Planning Policy Framework requires any harm to designated heritage assets to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

Public benefits may follow from many developments and could be anything that delivers economic, social or environmental objectives as described in the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 8). Public benefits should flow from the proposed development. They should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large and not just be a private benefit. However, benefits do not always have to be visible or accessible to the public in order to be genuine public benefits, for example, works to a listed private dwelling which secure its future as a designated heritage asset could be a public benefit.

Examples of heritage benefits may include:

- sustaining or enhancing the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting
- reducing or removing risks to a heritage asset
- securing the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long term conservation

Other Relevant Policy Documents

Historic England: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning (December 2017)

Historic England: Conservation Principles and Assessment (2008)

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