



**77 – 79 MOSLEY STREET
MANCHESTER
M2 3LQ**

Repair and refurbishment of 77-79 Mosley Street including: proposals for a bin and bike store to the basement, updated WC facilities, secondary glazing, fire lobbies to each floor, new passenger lifts, plant deck to the roof and the reveal and repair of the existing shop frontage to Mosley St.

PLANNING STATEMENT

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SEPTEMBER 2023**

INTRODUCTION

This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of M20 Properties Ltd. to accompany applications for planning permission (137032/FO/2023) and Listed Building Consent (137033/LO/2023) for the proposed development at 77-79 Mosley Street, Manchester, M2 3LQ.

DOCUMENTS

The planning application is accompanied by the following documents:

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| • Application Form | |
| • Certificate A | |
| • Drawings Issue Sheet | Atelier MB Urban Architects |
| • Market Context and Viability Paper | OBI Property May 2023 |
| • Heritage Statement | Atelier Heritage May 2023 |
| • Design and Access Statement | Atelier MB Urban Architects March 2023 |
| • Planning Statement | Ludlam Associates September 2023 |
| • Noise Impact Assessment | PDA Acoustic Consultants August 2023 |
| • Odour Assessment and Mitigation Strategy | Redmore Environmental August 2023 |

The LBC application comprises the documents as above.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The description of the development is as follows:

“The Repair and refurbishment of 77-79 Mosley Street to include new WC’s, passenger lifts, level access and enlarged reception area. Creation of extra floorspace within existing light well.”

SITE LOCATION and DESCRIPTION

The Report to the Planning and Highways Committee of 28th June 2018 in respect of the previous application and LBC applications (118398/FO/2017 and 118399/LO/2017) describes the site/building in detail and is quoted here for accuracy and consistency:

“The application site includes addresses at 77- 79 Mosley Street and 14/16 Princess Street but for the purposes of this Report will be referred to as 79 Mosley Street. The building is five-storeys and has a sub-ground/ basement level at 77-79 Mosley Street and 14-16 Princess Street. It is Grade II Listed, within the George Street Conservation Area and adjacent to the Albert Square Conservation Area. The building has elevations to Mosley Street, Back George Street and Princess Street.

There are a number of listed buildings nearby including Manchester Town Hall (Grade I) and Town Hall Extension (Grade II), Manchester Central Library (Grade II*), the City*

Art Gallery (Grade I) and Athenaeum (Grade II) and Princess Buildings (18-24 Princess Street) (Grade II).*

79 Mosley Street is characteristic of the Conservation Area in terms of its former use, scale, form and design, as well as for its group value through a shared historical context with the warehouses on Princess Street.

The building is likely to have been speculatively constructed around 1870 by an unknown architect, and combined both warehouse, office and shop accommodation in one building, taking advantage of the three most lucrative areas of commerce during the last quarter of the 19th Century. It is built of red brick and decorated with moulded sandstone window surrounds, sill courses with a balustrade parapet at roof level in front of a pitched slate roof. The internal layout is complex and comprises a multi-level ground floor, numerous building entrances, two internal staircases, a central lightwell and each floor is divided into separate rooms. The layout relates to the original uses and has since been modified and adapted on numerous occasions.

Externally the building is loosely Italianate in style, with both principal elevations, fronting Princess Street and Mosley Street, being in red brick and decorated with moulded cream stone window surrounds, sill courses and a balustrade parapet at roof level. The window arrangement and decoration across the principal elevations alternate as the building rises to third floor level.

The basement level is constructed of rock-formed rustication in stone. The ground floor level contains segmental headed windows, set within deep moulded stone surrounds and oversized keystones. The first-floor level windows are contained within flat-headed window openings, each with eared stone surrounds. The second-floor level windows are set within segmental stone surrounds, each with overhanging pediments, the second floor contains seven stone balconies', looking out onto Princess and Mosley Street. The third-floor level windows are set within flat-headed openings, with projecting central keystones to each. The elevations are surmounted by a deep stone and brick bracketed eaves course, which terminates by a continual stone balustrade at roof level.

The office accommodation was arranged on the upper floors of the 79 Mosley Street elevation with floors split into two main open-plan rooms and designed to be accessed independently via the Mosley Street entrance. This allowed the ground floor corner shop at 77 Mosley Street to be occupied independently.

The warehouse space was designed to let on a floor-by-floor basis accessed from a double entrance doorway at No. 16 Princess Street via a small vestibule and highly decorative cast-iron staircase. The staircase hall contains early 20th Century sash windows, which obscure the view into the central light well/courtyard. The ground and upper floors are all designed in the same manner, with a single, open-plan warehouse floor, each containing rows of simple cast iron columns, designed to allow for the weight of stored goods on each floor above. All floors within the warehouse building were functionally designed and decorated, and have since been altered removing any early fixtures, fittings or decorative schemes, with only the cast-iron columns and hoist structure retaining.

The ground floor of No. 77 forms the curved corner of the building, and originally would have been a speculative shop unit with decorative cast iron columns and shop front. The shop, which included the adjoining No. 77a, was since the 1880's occupied by Macbeth Brothers Tailors. When originally built, the two ground floor shops were only accessed from street level, these were later joined into the office entrance (No 79 Mosley St) and the former warehouse floor (No 16 Princess St).

In 1955 the Huddersfield Building Society took over the corner shop at No. 77 and redesigned the exterior and interior of the shop in an Art Deco style, a style, although typically associated with the 1930s, was still being used following the end of the Second World War. The new internal arrangement saw a door opening between No. 77 and No. 77a being blocked, and the Macbeth Brothers Tailors concentrating their business in the adjoining No.77a and the basement rooms beneath both shops, for which they used as fitting and tailoring rooms. The redesign and reconfiguration of the new building society premises saw the original Victorian shop front being replaced by a high quality polished green granite square column and downstands, designed in the Art Deco Style. As part of this work, the basement windows were blocked. Within this retail unit, a good example of a high quality 1950s interior decoration scheme is retained.

The rear elevation, fronting Back George Street has flat rubbed brick window arches and one-over-one sash windows. The centre of the elevation contains a filled-in hoist from first to third floor level. This recessed hoist serviced the warehouse floors of No. 16 Princess Street, and was probably filled in and incorporated into the warehouse floors during the 1930's.

The building has a high level of architectural decoration and design. Its architectural merit and group value and its setting within a densely packed area of similarly dated buildings, enhances the buildings significance and provides a high streetscape value. Its historical, evidential, and aesthetic values are primarily related to it being a well preserved and a good example of a speculative, combined Victorian warehouse, commercial and office development, in an area of Manchester which formed the late Victorian commercial heart of the city. Internally, the building at upper floor levels has a somewhat lesser significance, with significant areas relating to the survival of the original, largely open-plan warehouse and office floors, which for the main part retain their original plan form. The area of highest significance is its external elevations – particularly the articulation of the different units/entrances that allow for an understanding and appreciation of how the building was originally used.

Another area of high significance is the location and survival of the original decorative cast-iron staircase at No. 16 Princess Street. The original staircase serving the original office floors of No. 79 Mosley Street, has suffered from substantial alterations and is now considered to be of low significance; however, the location of this staircase is considered to yield a high significance, due to its original plan form”.

An extract from the Listing Description is included here:

“MANCHESTER

**SJ8497NW PRINCESS STREET 698-1/32/322 (Southwest side) 03/10/74 Nos.14 AND 16
GV II**

Includes: Nos.77 AND 77A MOSLEY STREET.

Offices and home trade warehouse, now bank and offices. c.1860-70, altered. Red brick with sandstone dressings (roof concealed). Rectangular plan parallel to street, on end of block site, with curved corners. Four storeys over basements, 4:2:4 windows, plus 3-window corners; stone plinth, pilaster strips framing the centre, sill-bands to all floors with saw-tooth courses below the windows, bracketed cornice and balustraded parapet. Arcaded ground floor with panelled pilasters, moulded imposts and stilted segmental arches with keystones, square-headed doorway to 4th bay and sashed windows to the other bays (but 2 bays at right-hand end, and the corner, now have C20 bank front). All upper floors have windows with moulded architraves, those at 1st floor with cornices, those at 2nd floor segmental-headed with keystones and cornices, and those at 3rd floor with keystones; but windows at 1st and 2nd floors of centre and corners have more elaborate treatment, those at 1st floor with swagged cartouches and masks on the heads, and those at 2nd floor with balustraded balconies. Most windows sashed without glazing bars. Five-bay returned ends similar.

Listing NGR: SJ8401797998”

PLANNING HISTORY

The historic development and occupation of the site is set out above and in the submitted Heritage Statement. The Planning Register includes a number of historic applications relating to the various changes of use and alterations which indicate the variety of uses and also periods of vacancy since the 1970's. Most recently it has been wholly vacant since 2009, despite significant investment in regeneration in the surrounding area.

The most recent approvals for development in 2018 were granted following a rigorous assessment of the proposals by Officers and consideration of objections from Historic England. Minutes of the Committee Meeting indicate that Members made an on-balance decision that the significant public benefit the development would bring about outweighed the substantial harm to the building's interior form.

The previous owners discharged all the pre-commencement conditions and made a material start on the development which resulted in these approvals remaining extant. Therefore, this is a significant relevant material consideration in the determination of these current applications. These approvals will be referred to as the *“Fall-back Option”* in the remainder of this report.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSALS

This is set out fully in the Design and Access Statement (Section 5 – Design Development and Section 6 – Proposals).

The proposals are also compared with the Fall-back Option (Section 6.1).

PLANNING POLICY

The Planning Policy context has remained unchanged since the Fall-back Option was determined in 2018. Using the same format as the previous Report to Committee (for the sake of completeness and accuracy) and updated as necessary, the current proposals are submitted to be consistent with relevant policies for the following reasons:

Local Development Framework

The principal document within the framework is The Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2012 -2027 ("the Core Strategy") which was adopted on 11th July 2012 and is the key document in Manchester's Local Development Framework. It sets out the long-term strategic planning policies for Manchester's future development.

The proposals are considered to be consistent with the following Core Strategy Policies **SP1, EC1, EC2, CC1, CC2, CC5, CC6, CC7, CC8, CC9, CC10, T1, T2, EN3, EN4, EN6, EN8, EN9, EN11, EN14, EN15, EN16, EN17, EN18, EN19** and **DM1** for the reasons set out below.

Saved UDP Policies

Whilst the Core Strategy has now been adopted, some UDP policies have been saved. The proposal is considered to be consistent with the following saved UDP policies **DC18, DC19.1, and DC26** for the reasons set out below.

Planning applications in Manchester must be decided in accordance with the Core Strategy, saved UDP policies and other Local Development Documents. The adopted Core Strategy contains a number of Strategic Spatial Objectives that form the basis of its policies:

SO1 Spatial Principles - provides a framework within which the sustainable development of the City can contribute to halting climate change. This development would be in a highly accessible location and reduce the need to travel by private car.

SO2 Economy - supports further significant improvement of the City's economic performance and seeks to spread the benefits of growth across the City to reduce economic, environmental and social disparities, and to help create inclusive sustainable communities. The scheme would provide new jobs during construction and employment opportunities in a highly accessible location.

S05 Transport - seeks to improve physical connectivity, through sustainable transport networks, to enhance function and competitiveness and provide access to jobs, education, services, retail, leisure and recreation. This development would be in a highly accessible location, close to all modes of public transport and would reduce the need to travel by private car and make the most effective use of public transport.

S06 Environment - the development would be consistent with the aim of seeking to protect and enhance both the natural and built environment of the City and ensure the sustainable use of natural resources in order to:

- mitigate and adapt to climate change
- support biodiversity and wildlife
- improve air, water and land quality
- improve recreational opportunities
- ensure that the City is inclusive and attractive to residents, workers, investors and visitors.

Relevant National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (updated 2023) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to apply. It aims to promote sustainable development. The Government states that sustainable development has an economic role, a social role and an environmental role (**para's 6 & 7**).

Para's 11, 12, 13 and 14 of the NPPF outline a "presumption in favour of sustainable development". This means approving development, without delay, where it accords with the development plan. Local planning authorities may make decisions which depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed.

The proposal is consistent with sections **1, 2, 4, 7, and 10** of the NPPF for the reasons outlined below.

NPPF Section 1 - Building a strong and competitive economy and Core Strategy Policy SP 1 (Spatial Principles), CC1 (Primary Economic Development Focus - City Centre and Fringe), CC8 (Change and Renewal) EC1 (Employment and Economic Growth in Manchester) and EC2 (Existing Employment Space)

The proposal would modernise employment space and rejuvenate a long vacant building delivering high quality refurbished office space and ground floor uses. It would need the demands of occupiers seeking a location in the commercial core with excellent transport links. It is a prominent site on a key junction of St Peter's Square with Princess Street adjacent to one of the City's key transport hubs. This would represent the last phase of the regeneration of St Peter's Square which is a key driver of economic growth in the City Region. The harm that would be caused to the listed building, which is discussed in other sections of this report, would provide a high-quality refurbished office space for which there is a shortage and proven demand within the City Centre.

The development would be highly sustainable and consistent with the aim of bringing forward economic and commercial development within the Regional Centre, in a

location which would reduce the need to travel. The proposal would support the City's economic performance and redevelop a site within a key location for employment growth (as identified in the Core Strategy) contributing to a requirement for the minimum of 200 ha of employment land that has to be delivered in City between 2010 and 2027, on a highly accessible site. This would help to spread the benefits of growth across the City and help to reduce economic, environmental and social disparities, creating inclusive sustainable communities by creating employment during construction and permanent employment in the offices and ground floor units on completion. The development would complement recent developments within St Peter's Square and help to create a neighbourhood where people would choose to be. It would enhance the built and natural environment and contribute to the creation of a well-designed place that would enhance and create character.

As the site is well connected to the City's transport infrastructure and would encourage and facilitate walking, cycling and public transport use.

The design would use the site efficiently and enhance the sense of place. It considers the needs of users and employees of the site in terms the availability of transport modes and the reduction of opportunities for crime.

NPPF Section 2 - (Ensuring the Vitality of Town Centres) and Core Strategy Policies SP 1 (Spatial Principles) and CC4 (Visitors, Culture and Leisure)

The Regional Centre should be the focus for economic and commercial development, leisure and cultural activity, alongside high-quality city living. The proposal would promote a competitive city centre environment and encourage economic activity in an appropriate location. It would contribute to the creation of a neighbourhood which would attract and retain a diverse labour market in a well-connected location and therefore would assist in the promotion of sustained economic growth.

NPPF Section 4 - (Promoting Sustainable Transport), Core Strategy Policies CC5 (Transport), T1 Sustainable Transport and T2 Accessible Areas of Opportunity and Need

The site is highly accessible, close to Oxford Road and Deansgate Stations and adjacent to the St Peter's Square Metrolink Interchange along with Metroshuttle routes and therefore should exploit opportunities for the use of sustainable transport modes.

NPPF Sections 7 - (Requiring Good Design) and 12 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment), Core Strategy Policies EN1 (Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas), CC6 (City Centre High Density Development), CC9 (Design and Heritage), EN3 (Heritage) and saved UDP Policies DC18.1 (Conservation Areas) and DC19.1 (Listed Buildings)

The development would be of a high quality and help to raise the standard of the streetscape. It would contribute positively to sustainability and place making and would bring significant regeneration benefits.

Whilst the proposals would result in substantial harm to one element of the listed building in terms of the loss of original fabric, this needs to be balanced against the constraints to the buildings viable reuse and the negative impact that its continued vacancy has on the quality of the physical and visual environment in this corner of one

of the City's main civic spaces, along with the substantial public benefits including regeneration benefits which would be derived from the proposals.

The positive aspects of the proposals and the justification for the level of harm and compliance with local and national policies relating to Heritage Assets are discussed in more detail in the Heritage Statement.

NPPF Section 10 (Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change), Core Strategy Policies **EN4** (Reducing CO2 Emissions by Enabling Low and Zero Carbon) **EN6** (Target Framework for CO2 reductions from low or zero carbon energy supplies), **EN 8** (Adaptation to Climate Change), **EN14** (Flood Risk) and **DM1** (Development Management- Breeam requirements)

The Design and Access Statement includes a section, Sustainability, which describes how the proposals contribute to meeting these policies.

The application sites lies within Flood zone 1 and is therefore classified as a low risk site.

Policy DM 1- Development Management

This outlines a range of general issues that all development should have regard to and of these, the following issues are or relevance to this proposal:

- appropriate siting, layout, scale, form, massing, materials and detail
- design for health
- adequacy of internal accommodation and amenity space
- impact on the surrounding areas in terms of the design, scale and appearance of the proposed development
- that development should have regard to the character of the surrounding area
- effects on amenity, including privacy, light, noise, vibration, air quality and road safety and traffic generation
- accessibility to buildings, neighbourhoods and sustainable transport modes
- impact on safety, crime prevention and health; adequacy of internal accommodation, external amenity space, refuse storage and collection, vehicular access and car parking; and
- impact on biodiversity, landscape, archaeological or built heritage, green Infrastructure and flood risk and drainage.

The above issues are considered in detail in below.

DC26.1 and DC26.5 (Development and Noise)

Details how the development control process will be used to reduce the impact of noise on people living and working in the City stating that this will include consideration of the impact that development proposals which are likely to be generators of noise will have on amenity and requiring where necessary, high levels of noise insulation in new development as well as noise barriers where this is appropriate. The submitted Noise Impact Assessment has addressed these issues.

Other relevant National Policy

Section 16 (2) of Listed Building Act 1990 provides that *“in considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works to a listed building, 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”*.

Section 66 of the Listed Building Act 1990 provides that *“in considering whether to grant planning permission for development that affects a listed building or its setting the local planning authority 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”*.

Section 72 of the Listed Building Act 1990 provides that *“in considering whether to grant planning permission for development that affects the setting or character of a conservation area the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area”*.

In relation to the above and in terms of the NPPF the following should also be noted:

Para.197 - Advises that in determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Para.200 - Advises that any harm to or loss of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm or loss should be exceptional and substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, including grade I and II* listed buildings should be wholly exceptional.

Para.201 - Advises that local planning authorities should refuse consent for proposed development which will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site
- no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation
- conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible
- the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

Para.202 - Advises that where proposals 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 securing its optimum viable use.

Other National Legislation

Legislative requirements

Section149 Equality Act 2010 provides that in the exercise of all its functions the Council must have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between person who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not. This includes taking steps to minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a protect characteristic and to encourage that group to participate in public life. Disability is a protected characteristic.

Section17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998 provides that in the exercise of its planning functions the Council shall have regard to the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder.

Other Relevant City Council Policy Documents

Manchester City Centre Strategic Plan- The Strategic Plan 2015-2018 updates the 2009-2012 plan and seeks to shape the activity that will ensure the city centre continues to consolidate its role as a major economic and cultural asset for Greater Manchester and the North of England. It sets out the strategic action required to work towards achieving this over the period of the plan, updates the vision for the city centre within the current economic and strategic context, outlines the direction of travel and key priorities over the next few years in each of the city centre neighbourhoods and describe the partnerships in place to deliver those priorities.

The application site lies within the area identified in the document as the Central Business District within which Manchester's Civic Quarter (based around St Peter's Square) is pivotal to the next phase of growth of the city centre economy. It is one of the most significant areas of open space within the city centre, characterised by one of the finest collections of historic and modern civic, cultural and commercial buildings in the UK. It is also a major gateway and a key arrival point to the city centre.

The redevelopment around St Peter's Square is driven in response to the city centre's need for Grade A office space, which has seen constrained levels of growth and the delivery of more Grade A floor space within the Civic Quarter is identified as a key priority. Continuing to address this issue will increase the city centre's attractiveness as a business location.

Central Manchester Strategic Regeneration Framework

This Strategic Regeneration Framework sets a spatial framework for Central Manchester within Manchester City Council which investment can be planned and guided in order to make the greatest possible contribution to the City's social, economic and other objectives and identifies the area within which the site sits, as one that will underpin the Framework, which is extremely important for Central Manchester, the city as a whole and the surrounding area.

The application proposals will contribute significantly to achieving several of the key objectives that are set out in the Framework, as follows:

- “A renewed urban environment”
- the development would in turn transform the character of the site and have a positive impact on Central Manchester as a whole relationship between Central Manchester, the City Centre and other key employment areas”
- the development would significantly enhance connectivity between the site, the City Centre and other surrounding areas particularly through the resultant increase in footfall, thus assisting in the future growth and regeneration of these areas.
 - “Making Central Manchester an attractive place for employer investment”
- In providing new office accommodation, the development would
 - “Changing the image of Central Manchester”
- in addition to the high aesthetic design quality of the proposed development would help create the “sense of place” principally by removing the poor-quality street level environment and sense of semi dereliction and managed decline such that it would contribute fully as part of a distinctive regenerated neighbourhood that has a positive impact on the image of Central Manchester as a whole.

Civic Quarter Regeneration Framework (2009)

This includes the site within its remit and refers to the area around St Peter’s Square being brought forward as the market demands. The document notes that: *“the City Council has identified Manchester Central and the Civic Quarter as pivotal to the next phase of growth of the city centre economy. To remain internationally competitive, the city centre must respond to the demands of new investment markets, and keep ahead of changes in demand from occupiers for new workspace and new working environments.”*

The Framework has since been updated by Ian Simpson Architects (September 2012) and a draft version has previously been endorsed by Manchester City Council’s Executive Committee. The updated Framework sets a context for regeneration of this part of the City Centre with which the proposed development would align.

Stronger Together: Greater Manchester Strategy 2013

This is the sustainable community strategy for the Greater Manchester City Region. It sets out a vision for Greater Manchester where by 2020, the City Region will have pioneered a new model for sustainable economic growth based around a more connected, talented and greener City Region, where all its residents are able to contribute to and benefit from sustained prosperity and a high quality of life.

The provision of high-quality refurbished office space on the application site, at the heart of the city region and powerhouse of the North-West, aligns with the aspirations of the Greater Manchester Strategy by meeting the demands of the business community.

Manchester Strategy (January 2016)

The strategy sets the long-term vision for Manchester's future and how this will be achieved. An important aspect of this strategy is the City Centre and how it will be a key driver of economic growth and a major employment centre.

Conservation Area Declarations

George Street Conservation Area

George Street Conservation Area is located in the heart of Manchester city centre and is bounded by Mosley Street, Charlotte Street, Portland Street, Oxford Street, George Street and Dickinson Street. The area was designated in June 1985 and effectively consolidated several conservation areas by linking those of Whitworth Street, St Peter's Square, Albert Square and Upper King Street.

It is principally a busy commercial district, but the range of uses has recently expanded to include shops, restaurants, banks and housing. However, the area is best known as the location of Manchester's China Town.

George Street and its environs is an area of great commercial vitality, and the desire is to see it prosper. The continued use of existing buildings will ensure that they do not fall into disrepair. Development of businesses will be encouraged and, where appropriate, modern building proposals will be given the freedom to develop as long as they do not detract from the existing quality of the built environment.

When proposals for new buildings are being considered, the character of existing buildings should be studied. The height, massing and materials of existing buildings should be respected, particularly as this is not an area where landmark buildings can be justified. Consequently, heights of between three and seven storeys, red/orange brick with sandstone dressings, vertically proportioned window openings with deep reveals and an emphasis on corners of buildings, are all cues to the design of new buildings. Furthermore, all new building proposals should generally be to the back of pavement.

Most development proposals will require planning permission and even minor works may also require the prior approval of the City Council. Alterations to listed buildings will require Listed Building Consent. The City Centre Team will be willing to give advice on such matters, which should be sought at an early stage, as should advice on any demolition proposals in the conservation area.

As with all new development, new proposals are considered in their context. This may mean preparing designs which relate to an entire street, or to long vistas seen from the junction of two streets, rather than evolving a design which could be located anywhere in Manchester or indeed in any other city.

THE SCHEME'S CONTRIBUTION TO REGENERATION

The site has remained vacant for a considerable length of time, despite the otherwise total ongoing regeneration of this part of the City Centre including St. Peter's Square, George Street Conservation Area, and the Civic Core. The site in its vacant state

creates a poor impression in a highly prominent and visible location. The recently extended St. Peter's Metrolink Station is a major pedestrian generator and the Town Hall Extension and War Memorial form an important civic space. It is self-evident that a scheme which refurbishes the exterior of the building and reconfigures the internal layout to attract occupiers will contribute to the street scene, both visually and economically, and complete the extensive regeneration of the wider area. The scheme will create employment in the long term and in the construction period. All previous attempts to bring this long-term vacant building into use have ultimately failed, including the Fall-back Option, which resulted in significant harm to the whole interior. The current proposals represent the only viable option which can be implemented at this time, as demonstrated in the submitted Market Context and Viability Paper (OBI Property) this concludes that:

In conclusion, the previous owners of this property undertook extensive work in drawing up different schemes to bring this building back into use. This work culminated in an 87-page report produced in 2016 which evaluated multiple schemes for the building and ultimately determined that the façade retention was the only viable scheme to bring the building back into use at the time. This option adds approximately 10,000 sq ft of floor space and in many ways is perhaps the most compelling solution for the building from a commercial point of view. However, the rapid rise in interest rates and market uncertainty has led debt funding to become either non-available, or prohibitively expensive in the current environment.

The current owners acquired the property against this backdrop of reduced appetite for expansive schemes such as the façade retention and have spent the last 12 months evaluating the development potential of the property – with a preference for schemes that can be delivered both immediately and speculatively. Since 2016 there has been an improvement in office rental levels and an increase in demand for smaller character workspaces as discussed above which have ultimately convinced the owners of the merit in the scheme proposed in this submission. Whilst this new scheme does include harm being done to some internal features of the building, it does undoubtedly cause significantly less harm than the façade retention scheme which remains as an alternative project to be developed out once market appetite for such schemes returns”.

IMPACT ON CHARACTER AND FABRIC OF THE LISTED BUILDING, CHARACTER OF THE CONSERVATION AREA, DESIGN ISSUES AND ARCHITECTURAL QUALITY.

Heritage Assessment

The submitted Heritage Statement (Atelier Heritage) includes a detailed analysis of Proposals and Impact (Section 5) as required by NPPF **Para.194**. This describes each element of the scheme and assesses the impact on the significance of the listed building, together with any justification and mitigation where required. In general, the scheme has positive impacts, some minor or moderate adverse impacts and a single major adverse impact in the proposed removal of the original warehouse staircase. It is acknowledged that this results in significant harm to the listed building. In such

circumstances, NPPF **Para.201** requires that to be justified by public benefits. The Heritage Statement addresses this issue and is reproduced in full below and concludes that:

“The proposals seek to retain, enhance and protect the majority of internal and external historic fabric. A number of inappropriate additions will be removed and instances of new intervention are considered to be a sensitive response to character and built fabric.

Instances of harm have been identified and mitigation and justification measures set out.

The relevant national and local planning context has been provided and changes judged in response to those policies.

The scheme is considered to have significant benefit for the long-vacant site and in most instances demonstrates substantial enhancement to the building, and the ability to understand the asset. Proposals are seen as making a positive contribution to the wider Conservation Area.

The loss of the staircase would cause harm to one area of the interior but would allow the greater majority of fabric to be retained.

Justification for proposed harm is centred around the core principle running throughout NPPF, which is the sustainability of development.

There are recognised major constraints to adaptation within the floor plates of the building, particularly to the former warehouse side which retains a tight knit column layout. The continued vacancy and granting of previous permission for facade retention scheme demonstrate the difficulties in retaining all features and achieving lettable space.

Limited and specific incidences of substantial harm are considered to be justified within the exceptional circumstances given a) the history of the building and multiple failed attempts at re-use and b) set within the context of the existing permission to demolish the majority of internal fabric, which would cause a greater degree of substantial harm and loss to the listed building.

*It is considered that the removal of the stairs and hoist would not result in a **total loss** of significance to the property and that even with their removal, the building will retain a high degree of its historical, aesthetic, evidential and communal value, and substantially more than the approved scheme.*

No other less harmful, practicable, options have been identified, in this scheme or those previously explored, and in mitigation, loss has been reduced to the minimum consistent with achieving the re-use objective.

The proposal would not adversely impact the larger proportion of fabric, which would be enhanced. It would not adversely impact the setting of any adjacent heritage assets

nor the character and appearance of the George Street Conservation Area, which would be improved, along with the general streetscape.

The harm resulting from the loss of two individual elements is considered to be substantially less than the total loss approved in the alternative scheme. There is a clearly identifiable set of public benefits to a scheme which avoids total internal demolition; contributes to the economic vitality of St Peter's Square by creating employment and workspace within a long-term vacant listed building; provides enhancement and improvement to the appearance and enjoyment of the Conservation Area; and contributes to the wider economic and sustainability aims set out in national and local policy.

When balancing the relative values of the Grade II asset, the impact of the proposals upon significance, avoiding internal demolition and the wider benefit of securing a viable re-use in this prominent city centre location, the proposals are considered justified”.

Impact on the character of the conservation area and adjacent listed building

The current condition of the building harms the character of the George Street Conservation Area, the setting of the nearby listed buildings and the quality and character of the townscape.

In the repair and refurbishment of the exterior and the beneficial occupation of the building, there will be a significant positive impact on all these components of the area.

The proposals are consistent with the tests set out in the NPPF **Section 16**, Core Strategy Policies **EN1**, **EN3**, **CC6**, **CC9** and Saved UDP Policies **DC18.1** and **DC19.1**.

Sustainability and relationship to Public Transport Infrastructure

The Design and Access Statement (Section 8.1-Sustainability) outlines the approach which has been taken to maximising the sustainability of the proposals.

Effects on the Local Environment/Amenity

The applicants have been requested to supply additional reports in relation to Odour and Noise.

Odour

An Odour Assessment and Mitigation Strategy prepared by Redmore Environmental has been submitted. Using standard methodology, and assuming the cuisine type and number of covers for the proposed ground floor food and drink use, the odour risk was classified as high. The required appropriate mitigation measures have been developed by a specialist technical supplier which would reduce potential impacts to an acceptable level. Implementation of these mitigation measures can be required by an appropriate condition.

The proposal is therefore in accordance with Core Strategy Policy **DM1**-Development Management.

Noise Impact Assessment

A Noise Impact Assessment prepared by PDA Acoustic Consultants has been submitted which concludes that:

“The assessment has covered noise break-out from the facades of the proposed commercial units to the basement and ground floors of the development to the nearest noise sensitive receiver.

The predicted noise levels at the nearest noise sensitive receiver suggest that the criteria set out by Manchester City Council can be achieved where noise levels are expected to be ≥ 5 dB below the typical background sound level across each octave band. In addition, the noise emissions from the proposed plant deck units have been calculated to be more than 5 dB below the typical background sound level at the nearest noise sensitive receiver, therefore satisfying the criteria of Manchester City Council”.

The proposal is therefore in accordance with the NPPF, MCC Planning and Noise-Technical Guidance 2022 and Core Strategy Policy **DM1**-Development Management.

As the extent of the proposed work is limited to external renovations and limited internal alterations with no change of use or extensions, the applicants have not been requested to provide further technical reports other than those summarised above. Therefore, this Report is confined to these scheme-relevant issues.

CONCLUSION

The Conclusion of the previous report by officers, which was accepted by Members, applies equally to these current proposals, and indeed more so, as the substantial harm to a limited part of the interior of the listed building is significantly less than previously accepted. The continued long-term vacancy of the building is evidence of the failure to deliver a viable development which will balance the need to contribute to the sustainable regeneration of this important part of the City Centre whilst retaining the listed building. This current scheme is the only realistic option at this time which will ensure the future long-term occupation of the building.