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Planning, Development & Heritage Consultants

University of Manchester (Estates Design Services Group)

John Owens building: Proposed installation of new electrical equipment to power and control lighting and external electrical plant being installed within the adjacent Old Quad

Heritage, Design & Access Statement

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Manchester University: The John Owens Building 1908

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Site Location
3. The Heritage Planning Policy Context
4. The Proposed Scheme
5. Design and Access Matters
6. Pre-application
7. Listed Description
8. Heritage Significance
9. Heritage Impact Assessment
10. Conclusion

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Paul Butler Associates on behalf of the University of Manchester (Estates Design Services Group) to accompany a listed building consent application for the University of Manchester (John Owens Building). The application proposal is for listed building consent for the installation of new electrical equipment (including new data and power cables and containment, new distribution board and new lighting control panel) required to power and control lighting and external electrical plant being installed within the adjacent Old Quad which is being remodelled under permissions granted previously. The proposed installation will facilitate the effective and efficient control of new external lighting and infrastructure within the Old Quadrangle.
- 1.2 The buildings surrounding the Old Quadrangle were listed Grade II* on 18 December 1963. The statutory listing address of the complex is 'Victoria University of Manchester including Christie Library, Whitworth Library, Whitworth Hall, Oxford Road'.
- 1.3 This Heritage Statement has been prepared to accompany the listed building consent application for the proposal. The statement assesses the heritage significance of John Owens Building and the potential impact of the proposed electrical installation upon the building. The proposed works have been designed with a clear understanding of the heritage significance of the building and through a conservation-led approach. Appropriate heritage mitigation is identified where appropriate.
- 1.4 This statement has been prepared in accordance with the policies and procedures of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), in addition to an examination, analysis and assessment of available historic records.
- 1.5 This statement includes:
- A description of the application site's location;
 - A summary of the heritage planning policy guidance context;
 - An overview of the proposed scheme;
 - Consideration of design and access matters;

- A summary of pre-application contact with the authority;
- A description and an assessment of the heritage significance of the building; and,
- An assessment of the impact of the proposed works upon its significance.

1.6 This statement is not intended to be a full or complete record of the site rather it is proportionate to the works proposed.

2. Site Location

2.1 The University of Manchester building to which this application relates is the John Owens building which forms part of a complex located to the west side of Oxford Road, lying between Coupland Street to the north and Burlington Street to the south. The postal address of the application site is University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL. The John Owens building is Grade II* listed (LEN 1271428). It does not lie within a Conservation Area.



Figure 2.1 University of Manchester, Source Google Earth.

3. The Heritage Planning Policy Context

- 3.1 The heritage planning policy of relevance to the proposed scheme, and which provides the context for its assessment, is set out within national and local planning policy guidance.

National Planning Policy Guidance

Town and Country Planning Act 1990

- 3.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning Act states that the determination of planning applications must be made in accordance with the Development Plan, unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. This establishes the Development Plan as the primary decision-making document when considering planning applications. In this instance the development plan currently comprises the Manchester Core Strategy (2012) and saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan for Manchester (1995). The relevant provisions of these documents are discussed below.

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

- 3.3 Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 advises that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which 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. The application building is Grade II* listed. A description of the subject building is provided at Section 7 below.
- 3.4 In determining this listed building consent application it is necessary to consider the impact of the proposal on the significance of the John Owens Building. This includes direct physical change on its built fabric. As the works are internal and below ground, no indirect impacts on the setting of the building have been noted. Section 9 of this report provides an assessment of these anticipated heritage impacts.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 3.5 Detailed guidance about the legislation is given in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF was first published on 27th March 2012 with the latest version published in December 2023. The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies regarding the conservation of the historic environment.
- 3.6 Section 16 of the NPPF deals with conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Paragraph 195 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.
- 3.7 Paragraph 200 advises 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'.*
- 3.8 Paragraph 201 states that *'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.'*
- 3.9 Paragraph 203 states *'In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:*
- 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'.*

- 3.10 Paragraph 205 states *‘When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance’.*
- 3.11 Paragraph 206 states *‘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’.*
- 3.12 Paragraph 207 states that *‘Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:*
- a. the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and*
 - b. no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and*
 - c. conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and*
 - d. the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.*
- 3.13 Paragraph 208 states that *‘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'.

- 3.14 Annex 2: Glossary of the NPPF provides a glossary of key terms which are relevant to this application. 'Significance' is defined as: *'The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting'.*

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

- 3.15 The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) is a web-based resource which was launched in March 2014 and coincided with the cancelling of the majority of Government Circulars. It provides guidance on many aspects of planning including plan-making and decision taking. NPPG advises that *'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.'* (Paragraph: 002 Reference ID: 18a-002-20190723)

Local Planning Policy Guidance: The Development Plan for Manchester

Manchester Core Strategy Development Plan Document (July 2012)

- 3.16 Manchester's Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document was adopted on 11th July 2012. A specific heritage policy of the core strategy of relevance to the proposed scheme is:
- Policy EN3 'Heritage' this states that 'New developments must be designed so as to support the Council in preserving or, where possible, enhancing the historic environment, the character, setting and accessibility of areas and buildings of acknowledged importance, including listed buildings.

Saved Policies of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) for the City of Manchester (adopted 1995)

3.17 A saved heritage policies of the UDP of relevance to the proposed scheme is:

- DC19 'Listed Buildings' which states that the Council will have regard to the desirability of securing the retention, restoration, maintenance and continued use of such buildings.

4. The Proposed Scheme

4.1 The application proposes 'the installation of new electrical equipment (including new data and power cables and containment, new distribution board and new lighting control panel) required to power and control lighting and external electrical plant being installed within the adjacent Old Quad which is being remodelled under permissions granted previously. The proposed installation will facilitate the effective and efficient control of new external lighting and infrastructure within the Old Quadrangle.

5. Design and Access Matters

Design Considerations

- 5.1 The changes proposed are internal/subterranean to the subject building. Where possible existing voids or cable trays will be used. Where new ducting or containment is unavoidable the designer has routed this to follow the least visually intrusive route.
- 5.2 Details of the proposals are provided by the submitted application drawing and are assessed within Section 9 of this statement.

Access Considerations

- 5.3 No matters regarding access have been identified as a result of the works and none therefore need be discussed within this Statement.

6. Pre-application Liaison

- 6.1 The applicant has sought to minimise new penetrations. A draft proposal was tabled to the Conservation Officer who responded, requesting additional information be submitted in support of the application. This submission includes the additional information requested.

7. Listed Description

- 7.1 The Listed Building entry is as follows: *'University. West range begun 1870, east range 1883-7 and north range 1888, all by Alfred Waterhouse; with Whitworth Hall added to south end of east range c.1895-1902 by Paul Waterhouse. Sandstone ashlar, red tiled roofs with fishscale bands. Large and irregular plan round a courtyard which is open at the south-west corner. Gothic style. The WEST RANGE (Main Building), the first on the site, in domestic scale and style, of 2 storeys plus basements and attics, has a projected gabled wing in the centre flanked by large canted entrance bays which have gabled porches with moulded 2-centred doorways and large 2-centred arched windows of 3 stepped lancet lights rising into steep gables, and tall coupled arched windows in the flanks (some with stepped sills); the central wing has a canted 2-storey bay at the gable end with a niche at ground floor containing a carved shield, a large 5-light window at 1st floor and a tiled hipped roof, a clockface in the apex of the gable, side walls with gables, and a fleche on the roof. The outer wings differ in plan and elevation; all parts have various mullioned, arched and arcaded windows, and small gabled dormers and tall stone chimneys. The EAST RANGE (the main facade to Oxford Street) is monumental in scale and style, asymmetrical, with a very large rectangular tower at the south end, a 2-storeyed entrance archway to the left of this and a tall 4-storey 7-bay range to the right. The entrance archway has a wide 2-centred moulded arch, and above this a stepped triple lancet in a gable flanked by pinnacles. The tower, with pilastered corners*

and an octagonal stair-turret at the north-east corner, has a very large 2-centred arched doorway with splayed reveal including foliated niches, 4 orders of moulding, and hoodmould with apex carried up to form a pedestal to a 1st-floor niche with a statue; arcaded windows on 6 stages (successively 5, 5, 3, 3, 5 and 5 lights), all different and those at the top stage with a colonnaded screen; and a steep saddle-back roof with banded cladding of lead and tiles. In the angle with the main range to the right is a tall 2-bay canted staircase which has buttresses, tall 2-light windows with geometrical tracery, and an arcaded parapet. The main range itself, 4 storeys diminishing in height and 7 bays with buttresses square at ground floor and chamfered above, terminating in pinnacles, has arcaded windows filling each bay, those at ground floor segmental-headed with transoms and arched lights, those at 1st and 2nd floors with shafts and 3 square-headed lights and those at 3rd floor with 4 arched lights; and a corbel table and blind arcaded parapet to each bay. WHITWORTH HALL (to the left of the entrance archway), of 2 unequal storeys and 8 bays plus a corner tower at the south end, has buttresses, coupled segmental-headed windows at ground floor, bands of blind arcading between floors, and tall 2-light transomed windows with cinquefoil lights at 1st floor; an elaborate 2-storey gabled porch to the 1st bay with pinnacles, blind-arcading in the gable and open arcading linking the gable to the pinnacles on either side, and a 2-centred doorway moulded in 3 orders; and a 3-stage corner tower with a tiered segmental oriel, corner pinnacles, octagonal belfry and short spire, all in elaborate Gothic style. Various other portions in similar style. Interior not inspected.'

8. Heritage Significance

Introduction

- 8.1 The Historic England Publication 'Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets (HE 2019) suggests three areas of interest for assessing a heritage asset's significance. These are to be described, following which the level of the general significance of the heritage asset should be assessed, with the particular contribution of any described features. The three areas of interest are:

- Archaeological interest if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.
- Architectural and artistic interest which are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skills, like sculpture.
- Historic Interest which is 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.

John Owens Building

- 8.2 The John Owens building was begun in 1870 being designed by Manchester architect Alfred Waterhouse who had won the competition to design Manchester Town Hall in 1868. He went on to design Owens College which would subsequently become the University of Manchester. On opening, the building was used for teaching all disciplines within the exceptions of chemistry which occupied a new institute on Burlington Street, and medical courses, which were taught at a new medical school across the 'back quadrangle' to the east of the main building.

Archaeological interest

- 8.3 The building retains a high proportion of original fabric externally but less so internally having been subject to alteration and several refurbishments. The premises is likely to contain fabric of archaeological interest associated with the construction and use of the building as a

purpose-built University building and there is potential evidential interest within its physical construction. The building is considered to have low-medium archaeological significance.

Architectural and artistic interest

- 8.4 The listed building description notes that the west range (Main Building), was the first to be constructed and was built in domestic scale and style, of 2 storeys plus basements and attics. The domestic scale may in part have been a response to the domestic character of the area at the time of construction which mainly comprised of residential villas set within gardens.
- 8.5 The listed building description notes the external architecture of the building noting that the *'The building has a projected gabled wing in the centre flanked by large canted entrance bays which have gabled porches with moulded 2-centred doorways and large 2-centred arched windows of 3 stepped lancet lights rising into steep gables, and tall coupled arched windows in the flanks (some with stepped sills); the central wing has a canted 2-storey bay at the gable end with a niche at ground floor containing a carved shield, a large 5-light window at 1st floor and a tiled hipped roof, a clockface in the apex of the gable, side walls with gables, and a fleche on the roof. The outer wings differ in plan and elevation; all parts have various mullioned, arched and arcaded windows, and small gabled dormers and tall stone chimneys'*.
- 8.6 The building is constructed in restrained gothic style and the exterior is of high architectural significance. Whilst the building has been altered to accommodate use as offices, some original features still survive internally. The building is regarded to have medium-high architectural and artistic interest.

9. Heritage Impact Assessment

- 9.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England. The NPPF builds upon the provisions of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and requires applications affecting the significance of any

heritage asset to be accompanied by an assessment of the asset's significance, including any contribution made by their setting, in addition to consideration of the potential impact of the application on the significance.

- 9.2 Heritage impact is defined as the potential level of harm or benefit to the special architectural or historic interest caused by a proposed development. The NPPF stresses that impacts on heritage assets should be avoided and if it cannot be avoided, it should be minimised or mitigated. The NPPF does not prescribe a format for analysis of heritage significance and/or impact.
- 9.3 Scale or severity of impacts or changes can be judged taking into account their direct and indirect effects and whether they are temporary or permanent, reversible or irreversible. The cumulative effect of separate impacts should also be considered. Change can be either harmful or beneficial to heritage significance.
- 9.4 The following methodology is based on the guidance set out by ICOMOS (2011) *Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage Properties*, although intended for World Heritage Sites it provides a sliding scale of impacts that can be applied to assets on all significance levels.

Impact Grading	Criteria
High Beneficial	Comprehensive changes to an asset or its setting resulting in a major enhancement of significance.
Medium Beneficial	Significant changes to an asset or its setting resulting in a notable enhancement of significance.
Low Beneficial	Modest changes to an asset or its setting resulting in a slight enhancement of significance.
Neutral	No or negligible change to an asset or its setting resulting in no or negligible change to significance.
Low Adverse	Modest changes to an asset or its setting resulting in slight harm to significance.
Medium Adverse	Significant changes to an asset or its setting resulting in notable harm to significance.
High Adverse	Comprehensive changes to an asset or its setting resulting in major harm to significance.

- 9.5 When assessing potential heritage impacts associated with the proposed scheme the only impact to consider is the direct impact of the proposed electrical installation works on the physical fabric of the building
- 9.6 The impact of the proposed works is assessed in the table below, with appropriate mitigation identified where appropriate. This table should be read alongside RPG Plan 'Proposed Lower Ground Floor' M14420-RPS-ZZ-B1-DR-E.

	Summary of Proposals	Impact on significance?	Mitigation required to be undertaken
1.	PROPOSED WALL WITHIN LG.029 FOR EQUIPMENT MOUNTING. EQUIPMENT INCLUDES NEW DISTRIBUTION BOARD, LIGHTING CONTROL PANEL AND RELEVANT CONTAINMENT	The works proposed include the addition of a new distribution board and control panel to be installed to a plant room wall. The plant room is not noted to have any historic features which would need to be removed or modified to allow for the installation. The proposal is judged to have a NEUTRAL impact.	No mitigation is required.
2.	INSTALL 2 No. 100mm DATA DUCTS AND 6 No. 100mm LV DUCTS BELOW EXISTING IRON GRATE WITH DUCTS TO PASS THROUGH EXISTING BLOCKING. DUCTING TO BE INSTALLED BELOW IRON GRATE. ANY VISIBLE DUCTING TO BE FINISHED IN BLACK	This location has been chosen to route ducting as it has little impact on historic fabric compared with the alternatives considered and discounted. Alternative locations were discounted in John Owens and Beyer since glazed basement windows would have required removal	Mitigation suggested is the ducting is routed below the existing cast iron grill and is finished in black and the blocking up to

	Summary of Proposals	Impact on significance?	Mitigation required to be undertaken
		and blocking. The selected location for ducting for the Old Quad installation is an existing blocked opening which accommodates a ventilation fan and existing ducting. The proposal is judged to have a NEUTRAL impact subject to mitigation suggested.	is painted black on completion to ensure the installation is noticeable in its below ground position.
3.	NEW TWO COMPARTMENT TRUNKING TO RUN WITHIN EXISTING LOWER GROUND CEILING VOID	New data cabling will be routed from the Basement Room LG.029 through the building and to the existing data cabinet in Lobby 034. Use of the void above the lowered ceiling is proposed throughout the length of the Lower Ground Floor corridor. Whilst the ceiling is lowered and modern, existing penetrations are used where possible. The proposal is judged to have a NEUTRAL impact.	No mitigation is required.

Cumulative Impact

- 9.7 The table above has identified the impact of the proposed works on the significance of the subject building. The works are reversible and involve minimal disturbance to sensitive fabric. They are regarded to have little or no impact on the described significance of the building. The changes for which approval is sought are necessary to secure the functionality and safety of the public using the external Old Quad area and are reversible should a future user wish to remove the installations.

Overview of Heritage Impact and Assessment against Planning Legislation and Policy

- 9.8 This Heritage Statement has confirmed that the electrical installation proposed will be reversible and involves minimal disturbance to sensitive fabric. The works are regarded to have little or no impact on the described significance of the subject building subject to the mitigation identified and which was requested by Conservation Officer by email at pre-application stage and will lessen any harm to a negligible level. As such it is demonstrated that the proposal is consistent with paragraph 201 of the NPPF which requires that harm to a heritage asset's conservation is minimised or avoided.

10. Conclusion

- 10.1 This Heritage, Design and Access Statement has been prepared to consider the impact of a development proposal on the heritage significance of John Owens building at the University of Manchester.
- 10.2 The report has established that the proposed electrical installation has been designed to be sensitive to the heritage significance of the building. On this basis it has been demonstrated that the proposal accords with relevant legislation, provisions of the NPPF, the Development Plan for Manchester and other relevant guidance in terms of heritage impacts.