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Bernard Taylor Partnership Ltd

Elizabeth House 486 Didsbury Road Heaton Mersey Stockport SK4 3BS
0161 443 1221 info@btparchitects.co.uk www.btparchitects.co.uk



Unit 3, The Stables

for
Europium World UK Ltd

Heritage Impact Assessment:

Retrospective Applications for the Retention of Rooftop Air Handling Equipment and Associated Fixings Including the Provision of a Conservation Rooflight for Access and Maintenance Purposes.



Directors: V J Saunders BA(Hons), B.Arch, ARB, RIBA, SCA, CAABC. M Atkinson BA(Hons), M.Arch, ARB, RIBA. Associate Director: S Dennis BSc, B.Arch(Hons), ARB, RIBA.
Associates: E M Denby BA(Hons), M.Arch, ARB, RIBA. L J Taylor BA(Hons), M.Arch(Hons), ARB, RIBA. Company No. 4168609.



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Executive Summary

The Stable Block to Parrs Wood House is located in East Didsbury situated between the A34 Kingsway, the A5145 Disbury Road and the B5095 Manchester Road. In its original configuration the Grade II listed Stables were sited 150m to the north of the House and were an integral component of the Georgian estate created by the owner, John Farrington. Whilst the House (Grade II*) and its attendant Stable Block (Grade II) once stood in their own landscaped parkland, changes to the site through the 20th century have greatly diminished the setting of both. Fundamentally, this has changed the context from that of a semi-rural educational campus to a busy commercial hub.

Following the purchase of Unit 3 of The Stables at Parrs Wood by Europium World UK Ltd (EWUK Ltd), it quickly became apparent that the office building was prone to significant overheating and that environmental conditions within the unit were not conducive to efficient business use. Having determined that the appropriate solution was to install rooftop air handling equipment, applications for planning permission and listed building consent were submitted to the local planning authority. However, those applications became subject of protracted and ultimately non-productive negotiations. As a result, EWUK Ltd felt left with little alternative other than to proceed with the works in belief that approvals would eventually be forthcoming. Unfortunately, approvals were not secured and appeals against non-determination of the applications were subsequently dismissed by an inspector appointed by the Planning Inspectorate.

In response to the dismissal of the appeals, EWUK Ltd sought advice from both a planning consultant and a specialist planning barrister regarding the appropriate way forward. The inspector's appeal decisions were carefully considered and areas of concern were addressed. In particular, details of fixings are now provided and a thermal comfort assessment was commissioned from appropriately qualified mechanical engineers. In addition, alternative possible methods of achieving satisfactory environmental conditions have been considered and discounted and a signed statement of fact has been obtained from the previous occupiers confirming the problems encountered with over-heating in recent years. The views of a commercial agent have also been sought regarding the importance of the air handling equipment in securing the continuing viability and longevity of the building moving forward.

This Heritage Impact Assessment (prepared by BTP Architects) has been revised and updated and clearly establishes that the applicant's proposals would result in less than substantial harm. This evaluation is supported by the decision of the inspector on the previous appeals (Appeals Decision Paragraph 12). The Thermal Comfort Assessment prepared by Hydrock concludes that the installation of the fixed heating and cooling system is necessary to improve the buildings poor environmental performance and that, as a result, it has increased the buildings desirability as high-quality office accommodation and ensured its longevity and viability moving forward.

Hydrock's views regarding continuing viability and longevity of the building are fully supported by the submitted letter report of commercial agents Canning O'Neil dated 10th October 2023. Canning O'Neil confirm greater demand from tenants in recent years for air conditioning as a standard requirement, further fuelled most recently by the Covid pandemic and increasing focus upon global warming. The agents advise that lack of air conditioning means not only lower rentals, but also longer void periods and higher "holding costs" on vacant offices. Inevitably this results in increased risk of building maintenance being neglected and a growing risk post-Covid of office buildings (particularly of older age) falling into long term disrepair and neglect.

It is clear that provision of the heating and cooling system now installed is necessary in order to regulate environmental conditions within the building and so secure viability of the building for employment purposes moving forward. Alternative solutions have been carefully considered and discounted for reason of greater impact and harm upon/to character and appearance of the heritage asset. Securing such viability is key to securing ongoing maintenance and preservation of the listed building in the future, in accord with legislation, policy and guidance enacted, adopted and issued with the objective of preserving heritage assets in the public good.

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In addition to helping secure preservation of the listed structure, the thermal comfort assessment prepared by Hydrock also sets out how the system now installed will serve to heat the building at an increased efficiency compared to traditional boiler fed or electric radiator systems. The system installed therefore results in reduced energy consumption and reduced carbon emissions and is therefore in accord with the stated commitment of UK Government to reduce reliance on fossil fuels and achieve net zero by 2050. All energy saving strategies implemented will have the result of benefitting the public in the long term. Public benefits therefore result not just from helping to secure viability and preservation of the heritage asset but also in helping to reduce reliance on fossil fuels and assist with climate change.

In addition to these clear public benefits, the improved conditions that will result for employees must also be a public benefit in its own right. As set out by Hydrock in the thermal comfort assessment, employers are required under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations to assess risks to workers and to put controls in place to protect them. Furthermore, the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations require employers to provide a reasonable indoor temperature in the workplace. The Health and Safety Executive also advise that all workers are entitled to an environment where risks to their health and safety are properly controlled.

These outcomes clearly establish that the 'less than substantial harm' resulting from installation of the fixed heating and cooling system as installed is clearly outweighed by the public benefit delivered. Provision of the fixed heating and cooling system will result in clear public benefit in securing viability and preservation of the listed structure for future generations moving forward, in improving energy efficiency, reducing reliance on fossil fuels and assisting with climate change and by way of improving conditions for and safeguarding the health of employees. The comprehensive technical justification submitted provides the clear and convincing justification required by the National Planning Policy Framework.

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1.00 Introduction.

This Heritage Impact Assessment has been produced by BTP Architects on behalf of Europium World UK Ltd (EWUK) in support of the Planning and Listed Building Consent applications for the retention of the installed air handling equipment on the roof of Unit 3 at the Stable Block to Parrs Wood House, East Didsbury.

Under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) a number of factors need to be carefully considered and taken into full account when considering interventions which may affect Heritage Assets. These are :-

- Understand the Significance of the affected assets.
- Understand the impact of the proposal on that significance
- Avoid, minimise, and mitigate impact in a way which meets the objectives of the NPPF
- Look for opportunities to better reveal or enhance significance.
- Justify any harmful impacts in terms of the sustainable development objective of conserving significance and the need for change
- Offset any perceived negative impacts by enhancing other aspects through recording, disseminating, and archiving historical interest of the important elements of the heritage assets affected.

Where any perceived harm needs to be justified by the public benefit that would be delivered by change, paragraph 208 of the Framework is clear that this:

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

The purpose of this report is to bring together the various aspects of all of the above and to present a reasoned and coherent technical justification for the installed equipment.

2.00 Applicant

Europium World UK Limited is a Northwest based business, successfully trading since 2009. It has built its brands through a network of reliable global and UK based manufacturing partners, which are distributed through a formidable portfolio of British, European and other global retailers. Its Manchester based headquarters creates employment as well as trade opportunities for other local and national service providers through its design, development, sales and customer services divisions. The business has recently also set up its logistics division at a secondary location within Manchester.

A core element of the company's business strategy is to ensure that in a changing global market they continue to meet the highest standards of social and environmental responsibility. For this reason, EWUK have commenced the process of being recognised through B Corp status. This is driven through attaining the required accreditation through five key areas of activity.

- **Governance** – Company mission, ethics, accountability & transparency.
- **Workers** – Employees financial, physical, professional and social wellbeing.
- **Community** – Positive impact on the external communities.
- **Environment** – How the company manages its impact on the environment.
- **Customers** – Company's value to customers and the consumers of their product or service.

These are the foundations on which EWUK has built its business and represent the fundamental values underpinning how the company conducts its commercial activities.

The relocation to Unit 3, The Stables, Parrs Wood was a key strategic decision to allow the company to build its capabilities in Marketing, Product Development, Sales and Customer Services by attracting the best staff required for the company's growth plans whilst creating further job opportunities for the local community. The Company employed 18 staff at the time this decision was taken.

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3.00 Site

The Stable Block to Parrs Wood House is located in East Didsbury to the South of Manchester and is situated between the A34 Kingsway, the A51455 Disbury Road and the B5095 Manchester Road.



The suburb of Didsbury is situated to the northwest of the Stables with the historic centre of Didsbury located due west. The location benefits from excellent transport links. Within the immediate vicinity is the East Didsbury Station (formerly Midland Railway) and the Metrolink (following the line of the former Manchester South District Line (again formerly Midland Railway)).

Although originally set in its own landscaped grounds Parrs Wood House is currently set in the middle of Parrs Wood High School and serves as their Sixth Form Centre. The main school buildings are located immediately to the south, and the extensive Parrs Wood Entertainment Centre is to the west.

3.01 Brief History and Description

The centre of the village of Didsbury was originally much further south than its current location. It was centred on the two public houses (The Olde Cock and the Didsbury) and the former village green in front of them at the point where Wilmslow Road turns northwards towards Parrs Wood. In its early years, the township was little more than a rural settlement but one which grew up around one of the main fording points on the River Mersey to the south of the city.



1845 tithe map for East Didsbury

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The importance of the route to the south, along with the industrialisation of Manchester, led to the growth of Didsbury as a location where the wealthy merchants would choose to live. This trend led to the development of a series of grand houses including Didsbury Manor, Scotscroft, The Cedars, The Elms, Parkfield House, Lawnhurst, Broome House, and The Towers (the latter later becoming the Shirley Institute).

Parrs Wood House is a Grade II* listed house currently in use as a Sixth Form College for Parrs Wood High School. The Estate is believed to have been purchased by Richard Farington in 1795 at which time the house and stables were incomplete. Farington completed the works and delivered a fairly typical late-Georgian era stuccoed country house and stable block.

The architect of the house is unknown, but it is thought that it may have been designed by James Wyatt, or one of his brothers due to a passing similarity to Heaton Hall in Heaton Park. Pevsner references this and does call it a 'Poor Man's Heaton Hall' in his 'The Buildings of England' citation.



Parrs Wood House South Elevation



Parrs Wood House West Elevation

The original House and its attendant Stable Block once stood in their own landscaped park land bounded by a lane Parrs Wood Lane (now Didsbury Road) to the north and Wilmslow Road (now Manchester Road) to the west. In its original form, the site was defined by open farmland to the east and south. There was a grand entrance drive from Wilmslow Road which curved gracefully through the parkland to arrive at the house in the centre of a roughly square site.

The estate had wooded pleasure grounds with a path a system surrounding the house to provide opportunities for recreation and appreciation of the landscape. The paths were carefully laid out to lead to the Stable Block and the produce gardens located discretely to the north of the house. To the south, the boundary of the pleasure grounds was defined by a single row of trees. The site remained almost unaltered at the end of the century.

The Grade II listed Coach House, Stable Block, and cobbled stable yard, sits 150m to the north of the House and once played an integral part in the life of the Georgian estate. The block was a key component of Farrington's intention to create a Georgian estate fit for a landed gentleman.

Unfortunately, the changes to the site through the 20th century have greatly diminished the setting of both the House and the Stable Block. This culminated in the construction of the Parrs Wood Entertainment complex and the rebuilding of Parrs Wood High School. This fundamentally changed the setting from that of a semi-rural educational campus to a busy commercial centre. The redevelopment included the rebuilt secondary school alongside a multiplex cinema, restaurants, bowling alley, casino venue and health club all on the one site.

The stables complex adopts the L shapes form which was common for such utilitarian buildings in Georgian estate planning. The wings define the stable yard, and it is likely that smaller ancillary buildings were placed on the open sides of the quadrangle. The 1848 plan confirms this arrangement and there is some indication of produce gardens/plots immediately to the north with a formal orchard to the east of the stables.

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South Elevation of the Stable Block.



The entrance elevation to Unit 3 from the cobbled courtyard.

Given the orientation of the yard, it is also possible that glasshouses for produce, lined the north side abutting the brick screen wall noted in the listing notice (see below). These would take advantage of the southerly aspect and would be supported by lean to back sheds on the north side of the wall. However, examination of historic mapping does not provide any conclusive evidence of this.



The OS map of 1848 shows the House and its Stable Block in a rural setting with the village of Didsbury to the west.

A full description of the configuration and materials of the complex is provided in the statutory listing notice reproduced in the next section.

3.03 20th Century Change

Whilst the site remained almost unaltered at the end of the 19th century, the various interventions through the 20th century has critically eroded the setting of the associated buildings in various stages. The key components of this have been:

- Construction of the A34 Kingsway which sliced the northwest corner off the original site in the 1920's.
- The construction of the first iteration of the school in 1967 which impacted on the setting to the south and the views towards the river. It also had an impact on the setting to the east.
- The construction of the entertainment complex in the early years of the 21st century which completed the loss of setting to the west.



1967 School buildings (demolished 2000).



Replacement school buildings constructed 2000.

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The most recent catastrophic change to have affected the stable block occurred during the construction of the entertainment complex in the late 1990' when a large portion of the stable block burned down. At this time, the site was still under the ownership of the Manchester Corporation and the city architect drew up plans to rebuild the damaged section with 'like-for-like' materials to match the original as closely as possible. This was approved and the works carried out in the year 2000.



Fire damage to Unit 3 of the Stables following the arson attack in the late 1990's

The photographs record that the extent of the damage was mostly concentrated in the area of Unit 3 currently the subject of this application. The fire completely destroyed the roof structure and the upper third of the external walls and internal longitudinal wall. The adjacent southern block was also critically affected.



City Architects drawing identifying the extent of the rebuilding to the internal courtyard elevation of Unit 3

The proposed 'like for like' rebuilding process involved the reconstruction of the top 2m section of the external and internal loadbearing walls to support the reconstructed roof structure using new trusses, purlins and rafters. The roof was then reinstated with reclaimed Welsh slates incorporating new insulation to improve the thermal performance of the envelope. Physical examination of the present fabric confirms that all wall finishes are clearly of modern gypsum plaster. The roof coverings and supporting rafters (modern) all appear to be contemporaneous with extensive works carried out in the conversion/repair process.



Replacement roof trusses from 2002 repairs/conversion.



Unit 3 first floor open plan offices.

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The process also resulted in the insertion of a substantial new steel frame and bracing and complete renewal of the first-floor structure. It must be assumed that this was necessary as the retained sections of the fire damaged walls were no longer able to support the proposed structure necessary for its new commercial use.

The high degree of intervention required was necessary to reinstate the historic appearance of the Stable block but inevitably diminished the authenticity of the retained structure. The introduction of contemporary materials (timber, insulation and steelwork) irrespective of their traditional form and the overall totality of change goes some way beyond simple *'like for like'* renewal.

3.04 Significance

The process of establishing significance is informed by the conservation values outlined by Historic England in Principles, Policies and Guidance for Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment (2008). It also draws upon wider guidance from the Heritage Lottery Fund. These promote that significance is assessed in relation to the heritage values outlined as follows:

- **Evidential Value.**
Evidential value derives from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity.
- **Historical Value.**
Historical value derives from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present. It tends to be illustrative or associative.
- **Aesthetic Value.**
Aesthetic value derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.
- **Communal Value.**
Communal value derives from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory. Communal values are closely bound to historical (particularly associative) and aesthetic values but tend to have additional aspects.

Each value is normally assessed against a scale of significance which is structured as follows:

- **Outstanding.**
The value makes an important contribution to the wider significance of the heritage. The value is clearly legible and of special historical interest.
- **High.**
The value has a lesser impact on the wider significance of the heritage. The value is legible but of less historical impact.
- **Some.**
The value makes little contribution to the wider significance of the heritage. The value is obscured and of very little historical interest.
- **Neutral.**
The value is not present.
- **Intrusive.**
This should not apply to heritage values; usually applied to specific objects or site components.

In assessing the significance the Stable Block against the recognised values it must be recognised that the issue of setting has not been considered. It is clear that the various interventions implemented through the 20th century have critically eroded the setting of the House and the Stables and that this issue should no longer be brought into consideration. In consequence, the following response focusses solely on the extant structure.

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Evidential Value.

The Stable Block has been much altered and adapted over its lifetime to accommodate various uses. The fire and neglect of the late 1990's subsequently resulted in the removal of much of the original fabric and particularly the roof structure and coverings but also internal finishes. It is likely that all of the external windows and doors were changed for modern components providing appropriate security for the intended use of the building.

In its present extant form, it is likely that only the primary masonry elements and a small number of the principle roof trusses remain from the original early 19th century phase of construction.

It is acknowledged that whilst the external appearance has been subject to a degree of change thereby diminishing its authenticity, it is still recognisable as a late Georgian stable block and that this makes a very positive contribution to its immediate setting. The configuration of the roof planes reflects its historic form and any change should respect this.

Bearing the above in mind, it is considered that the **evidential value** exhibited by the Stable Block is of **some significance**.

The installation of the external air conditioning equipment in the proposed location will have no impact on the evidential value of the listed building.

Historical Value.

Whilst the degree of adaption has stripped the buildings of much of the truly historic fabric, the form and appearance of the building clearly indicates its late Georgian construction. However, the loss of setting makes the association of the building with its landscape or House difficult to read and weakens the legibility of the site.

As such, it is considered that the **historical value** exhibited by the Stable Block is of **some significance**.

The installation of the external air conditioning equipment in the proposed location will have no impact on the historical value of the listed building.

Aesthetic Value.

Whilst the setting of the Stable Block has been greatly diminished, the external appearance and form of the Stable Block is essentially the same as it was at the time of its construction. It is recognised that some changes have been made to the distribution and configuration of external openings. Generally, these interventions sit comfortably with the overriding Georgian aesthetic.

The building is a recognisable component of its immediate, albeit damaged, setting and has been a constant feature to the community across the generations. Despite its modest, utilitarian appearance, its scale and standing establishes its origin as an integral part of a fine Georgian estate.

Bearing the above in mind, it is considered that the **aesthetic value** exhibited by the Stable Block is of **medium to high significance**.

However, the installation of the equipment despite its largely concealed location, will constitute an overtly modern intervention within the very traditional appearance and finishing materials. In the Planning Inspectors decision notice, this aspect is, by the very nature of the installation, considered incongruous even in conceding its hidden position. This is examined in more detail in a subsequent section.

As a consequence, **the installation of the external air conditioning equipment in the proposed location is considered to have a minor impact on the aesthetic value of the listed building.**

The NPPF directs that proposals should seek to avoid, minimise, and mitigate impact and that applications should provide justification for any harmful impacts. With this regard, the issue of impact is examined in more detail in a subsequent section.

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Communal Value.

The presence of the Stable Block across many generations has undoubtedly raised the complex communal value although this has also been somewhat diminished by the loss of setting and particularly its association with the House.

As noted previously, the numerous interventions through the 20th century have critically eroded the setting of both House and the Stables. Perhaps the most detrimental of these resulted in the construction of the new school and the commercial/leisure development. Both of these dwarf the historic Georgian elements in both scale and footprint and have fundamentally damaged the legibility of the estate setting.

It is beyond doubt that the Stable Block has some meaning to those local residents who remember it sitting happily in the grounds of the original 1960's school. However, through each passing generation those associations weaken, and it is difficult to see how this trend can be rectified since the overwhelming redevelopment of the early 21st century.

As a result of the above, it is considered that the ***communal value*** exhibited by the Stable Block is of ***low significance***.

Irrespective of this, ***the installation of the external air conditioning equipment in the proposed location will have no impact on the communal values of the listed building.***

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4.00 Guidance

4.01 National Planning Policy Context.

Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (see Appendix 1) states at paragraph 128 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'.

(Paragraph 128).

The Statement should consider sufficient information to enable both the significance of the asset and the impact of change to be understood. It should be proportionate both to the significance of the historic asset and to the degree of change proposed. In operation, if you want to make a small change that is likely to only have minimal impact, then a short assessment which focuses on the part of the historic asset that will be affected, with a brief explanation of how it relates to the asset as a whole, will be sufficient.

The NPPF also 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. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be'.

(Paragraph 132)

As noted previously, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF para 128) is clear in its guidance that Heritage Assessments should be proportionate to both the significance of the historic asset and to the degree of change proposed. The NPPF also direct that proposals should seek to avoid, minimise and mitigate impact and that applications should provide justification for any harmful impacts.

4.02 Historic England.

The aims of the NPPF are supported by the national amenity bodies and particularly Historic England. Their general guidance is promoted through the publication ***'Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment'***. This adopts a positive approach to the management of change to listed buildings and acknowledges:

'Change in the historic environment is inevitable, caused by natural processes, the wear and tear of use, and people's responses to social, economic and technological change.'

(Principle 4.2 page 22)

The final section of the document, ***'Conservation Policies and Guidance'*** focusses on how change can be implemented whilst acknowledging the established values:

'New work or alteration to a significant place should normally be acceptable if:

- a. there is sufficient information comprehensively to understand the impacts of the proposal on the significance of the place;*
- b. the proposal would not materially harm the values of the place, which, where appropriate, would be reinforced or further revealed;***
- c. the proposals aspire to a quality of design and execution which may be valued now and in the future;*
- d. the long-term consequences of the proposals can, from experience, be demonstrated to be benign, or the proposals are designed not to prejudice alternative solutions in the future.'*

(Paragraph 86 page 43)

Whilst all of the above is not specifically relevant to the fairly narrow parameters of the installed air conditioning equipment, it is nevertheless of some relevance and promotes the view that change should be supported where it does not fundamentally diminish the overriding value of the asset and where the need for change is justified.

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In the penultimate section of the guidance, *'Managing Change to Significant Places'* Historic England endeavours to provide some clarity with regard to the issue of benefit saying:

'Keeping a significant place in use is likely to require continual adaptation and change; but provided such interventions respect the values of the place, they will tend to benefit public (heritage) as well as private interests in it.'

(Paragraph 86 page 43)

This acknowledges that the boundary between what is perceived as public interests and those considered to be private is often indistinct and that the two are linked. In applying this to the Stables, improvements which do not fundamentally or critically impact on the values of the place but provide benefit through sustaining the ongoing positive office use will, in turn, deliver public benefit.

Paragraph 154 (page 61) recognises that such change.....

'.....can make a place sustainable by maintaining its market value.....'

but goes on to caution:

'..... changes that would cause harm to the heritage values of the place should obviously be limited to what is necessary to sustain it in use, and their impacts mitigated so far as possible'.

In conclusion the document directs:

'Every reasonable effort should be made to eliminate or minimise adverse impacts on significant places. Ultimately, however, it may be necessary to balance the public benefit of the proposed change against the harm to the place. If so, the weight given to heritage values should be proportionate to the significance of the place and the impact of the change upon it.'

(Paragraph 162 page 67)

In applying the guidance directly to the circumstances at the Stables we must have due cognisance to the direction given through the Planning Inspectors dismissal of EWUK' appeal. These issues are explored in more detail in a subsequent section.

4.03 Other Guidance.

Whilst it is widely recognised that fixing condenser units to the principle facades of listed buildings will have an unacceptable visual impact, specific guidance from local authorities which goes beyond this is sparse. However, the City of Edinburgh Council ([see Appendix 3](#)), have gone further than most to provide clear guidance.

Their guidance note *'Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas (Updated October 2022)'* specifically highlights:

'The preferred location for units within Conservation Areas is:

- *Freestanding within garden or courtyard areas, subject to appropriate screening and discreet ducting*
- *Within rear basement areas*
- ***Inconspicuous location on the roof (within roof valleys or adjacent to existing plant). However, aerial views will also be considered.***
- *Internally behind louvres on inconspicuous elevations. This should not result in the loss of original windows.'*

(page 29)

It goes on to say:

'Units should be limited in number, as small as possible and painted to tone with the surrounding stonework or background.'

Whilst clearly this guidance is specific to the City of Edinburgh it provides a considered framework for the location of equipment and the control of impact. In the absence of a similar guidance note from Manchester City Council it is of interest that the installed equipment accords closely with the Edinburgh guidance being located within the roof valley in a location where the equipment is not visible.

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However, we would concede that in its present 'factory finished' condition the installation does not make any attempt to

'.....tone with the surrounding stonework or background'.

In the specific context of the Stable roof top, the dominant colour is clearly that of the Welsh slate roof finish and as part of the retrospective application we would propose to paint the equipment and the steel supporting structure in a slate grey colour (RAL 7015) to further minimise any perceived incongruity.

4.04 Precedent.

The issue of integrating modern services into existing buildings inevitably results in technical and aesthetic challenges which are only amplified when these buildings are designated as being of greater historic value. However, some guidance is available through examining what has proved to be acceptable in other cases thereby establishing a credible precedent.

The strategy of incorporating external plant at roof level where this will have no impact on the overriding aesthetic value of the of the building thereby providing a tangible public benefit, has been implemented across many listed buildings. Whilst this approach is obviously more prevalent in city centre locations it is equally applicable to suburban locations.

In looking specifically at the area under Manchester City Council's planning area, numerous buildings of all levels of statutory designation demonstrate such an approach. For simplicity, this is easily demonstrated through examining the city centre where the density of commercial uses is much higher. The examples illustrated provide a very limited sample of similar installation but it is acknowledged that it is entirely possible that some of these may have been implemented without any consents. Nevertheless, the siting of the equipment in a roof top location has proved to be acceptable and the principle of the approach is well established and credible.

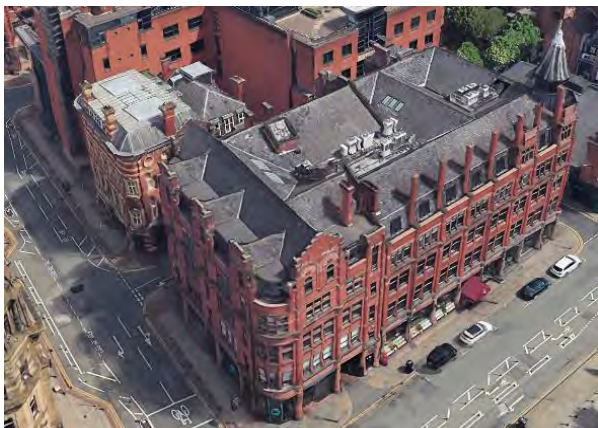
Using the aerial imagery provided by Google Earth, such installations are demonstrated at:



Oddfellows House, 184-186 Deansgate Grade II



Royal London House, 188-202 Deansgate Grade II



Elliot House, 151 Deansgate Grade II

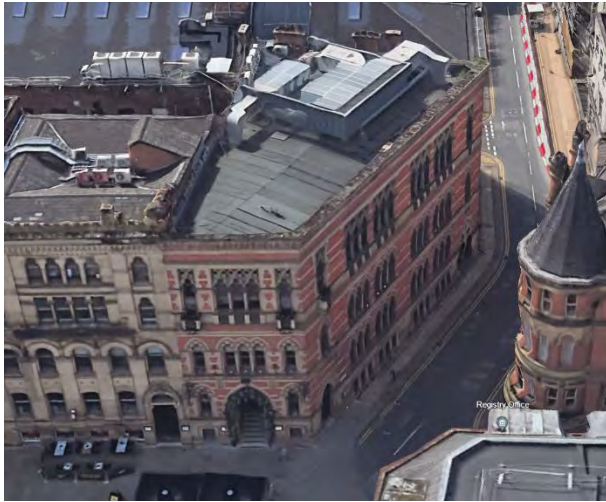


Former Grape St Warehouse (off Lower Byrom St at MOSI) Grade II

Unit 3, The Stables, Parrs Wood, Manchester.

for Europium World UK Ltd

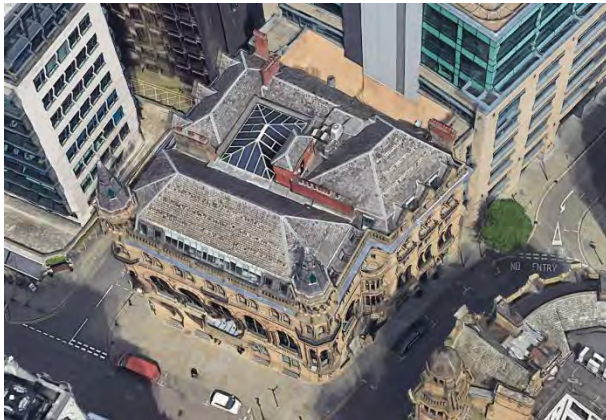
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Memorial Hall, 1-3 Southmill Street (Albert Square) Grade II*



Midland Bank (Gotham Hotel), King Street Grade II



Former Reform Club, King Street Grade II*



41 Spring Gardens Grade II

The above all constitute Georgian, Victorian or 20th C listed buildings which are much lower than the late 20th and early 21st century buildings which now surround them. The more recent additions are the usual mix of commercial, residential and hotel accommodation found in modern city centre locations. Their intensive use and permanent occupation inevitably results in a much greater degree of overlooking and therefore intrusion, than is experienced at the Stables.

Allied to this, it must also be acknowledged that the examples are much larger building with greater floor plates and a higher requirement for servicing. The plant and equipment at roof level is consequently much greater. It could be argued that the resultant degree of 'incongruity' is also much greater than that demonstrated at the Stables whilst the extent to which the installations could be considered as being 'reversible' is reduced.

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for Europium World UK Ltd

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5.00 Planning History

The following have been extracted from the public access records available through the Manchester City Council planning website. The applications noted are limited to those specific to proposals for changes to the Stable Block/Coach House and not the wider educational/commercial use of the site.

- 1987 – Planning permission granted for ‘alterations to improve children’s toilet facilities’ at Parrs Wood Rural Studies Centre (ref: 030134).
- 1998 – Listed Building Consent granted for ‘alterations to existing building and demolition of part of adjacent wall’ (ref: 052866)
- 2003 – Planning and Listed Building Consent granted for ‘demolition of outbuilding’ and ‘elevational alterations in association with use as a day nursery’ (ref: 066980 & 066983).
- 2004 – Planning and Listed Building Consent granted for ‘conversion and refurbishment of stables to form 2 storey office building’ and ‘associated use of 40 existing car parking spaces (ref: 073142 & 073153).
- 2006 – Planning and Listed Building Consent granted for ‘installation of 4no external air conditioning units to roof’ (ref: 077800 & 077809).*
- 2008 – Retrospective Listed Building Consent granted for ‘temporary planters and decking area within courtyard’ (ref: 087932).
- 2022 – Planning and Listed Building Consent Applications (ref: 133055 & 132890)
Submitted by applicant for Appeal on the grounds of Non-Determination (Appeal ref: (B4215/W/22/3301586 & B4215/Y/22/3301573)

Dismissed and permission/consent refused 20th December 2022

*Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent was given in February 2006 for the installation of air conditioning (Ref 077800/FO/2005/S2 and 077809/LO/2005/S2). This consent included for the construction of an external steel deck concealed within the hidden internal flat roof of Unit 3. The deck would be supported on steel posts built off the existing timber trusses and these would have weatherproof flashings down onto the slate roof finishes.

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for Europium World UK Ltd

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6.00 Installation

Following purchase, Europium World UK Ltd quickly became concerned as to the prevailing environmental conditions within the Stables. It must be assumed that when the building was restored following the catastrophic fire the comprehensive renewal of the roof finishes and structure included the introduction of high levels of modern insulation. Even in the colder months, this can result in excessive temperatures in the open plan office. The 'Thermal Comfort Assessment' subsequently provided by the mechanical engineers Hydrock and submitted in support of the current application confirms this.

It would appear that this issue had been recognised previously and that Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent was given in February 2006 for the installation of air conditioning (Ref 077800/FO/2005/S2 and 077809/LO/2005/S2). This consent included for the construction of an external steel deck concealed within the hidden internal roof valley of Unit 3. The deck would be supported on steel posts built off the existing timber trusses and these would have weatherproof flashings down onto the slate roof finishes.

The condition of the areas where the equipment has been installed are shown on the photographs included on the submitted sheet titled **'1 – Record Photographs Pre-Construction 2021'** (see Appendix 4).

At this point, EWUK commissioned BTP Architects to apply for the necessary Planning and Listed Building Consents for the required equipment adopting exactly the same approach as that previously approved.

To facilitate future safe access for the necessary maintenance of the air handling equipment and also for the cyclical maintenance of the valley gutter/rainwater outlet, the installation includes a new rooflight to the inner slope of the hidden valley. This was considered essential to make the maintenance of the listed fabric as easy and safe as possible protecting the structure from damage through water ingress.

It was always acknowledged that adopting the approach highlighted above would comprise physical change to the external appearance of the listed building even though this will not be visible from ground level in any views. Accordingly, EWUK understood that Planning and Listed Building Consent would be required.

The applications for the necessary consents were submitted early in 2022 (Listed Building Consent application 132890/LO/2022 validation date Fri 18 Feb 2022 and Planning application 133055/FO/2022 validation date Tue 01 Mar 2022).

Unfortunately, the process of negotiating consent became slow and drawn out and Europium World were left with little alternative but to proceed with the works in order to improve conditions and in the belief that approvals would eventually be forthcoming.

The appearance of the installed equipment is shown on the photographs included on the submitted sheet titled **'2 – Record Photographs As Built 2023'** (see Appendix 5).

The approval process dragged on into May 2022 and with no imminent conclusion in sight, it was reluctantly resolved to appeal to the Planning Inspectorate against non-determination in an effort to secure an approval for the now installed equipment.

Unfortunately, both appeals were dismissed by the Planning Inspector (S. Ashworth BA Hons BPI MRTPI) appointed by the Secretary of State on the 20th December 2022 (see Appeal Decision Notice Appendix 6).

To rectify the situation, EWUK have considered a range of options including the removal of the installed equipment and the reinstatement of any damaged fabric. Whilst an authentic reinstatement could be achieved through carefully matching available reclaimed materials to the finishes affected (installed as part of the fire damage repairs around 2000), this would do little to address the fundamental environmental issues. The ineffective building services installation would not rectify the extreme peaks in temperature experienced through large parts of the year. This would continue to be a substantial challenge to the ongoing use particularly as climate warming increases.

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for Europium World UK Ltd

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As an alternative approach EWUK resolved to seek the further advice of a Planning Consultant, specialist environmental engineering consultants and a Planning Barrister to arrive at an appropriate strategy for moving forward. After some deliberation, it was resolved that EWUK's consultants should provide a carefully considered response to the Planning Inspectors decision notice. This would analyse where the submitted applications fell short of satisfying the statutory tests. This assessment would then inform new applications for retrospective consent thereby enabling the retention of the installed equipment.

The results of these deliberations are detailed in full in the subsequent sections of this report.

Unit 3, The Stables, Parrs Wood, Manchester.

for Europium World UK Ltd

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7.00 Impact and Mitigation

It is clear that the interventions through the 20th century critically eroded the setting of the associated buildings. To all intents and purposes, the installed equipment have an essentially neutral impact on the setting of the asset as it presently stands.

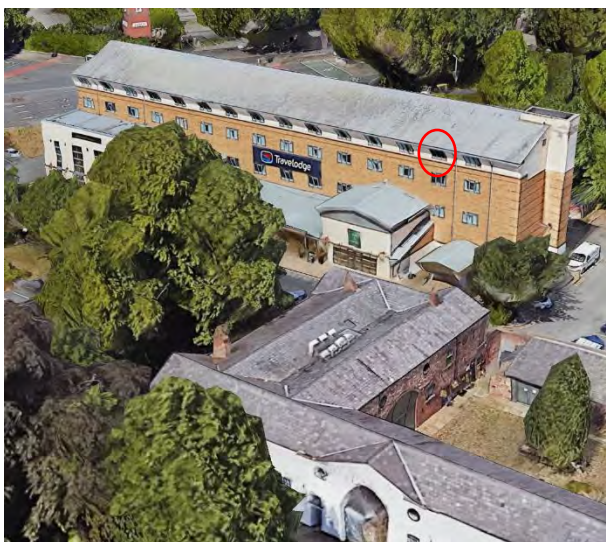
As noted previously, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF para 128) is clear in its guidance that Heritage Assessments should be proportionate to both the significance of the historic asset and to the degree of change proposed.



The Stable block is now completely subsumed by surrounding developments from the early years of the 21st century.

In compiling the revised details for the retrospective Planning and LBC applications, EWUK have recognised the importance of addressing the shortcomings of the original applications. These are most clearly identified in the Planning Inspector dismissal and generally reflect and/or respond to the issues raised in the local authorities statement of case. For consistency we propose to document our response directly against the Planning Inspectors concerns. **A full copy of the inspectors decision notice is included in Appendix 6.**

Paragraphs 9 and 10 of the decision notice, Inspector Ashworth considers the issue of harm to the listed building. The inspector acknowledges that there would be no visual impact when viewed from ground level but questions the degree of visibility when viewed from the upper floors of the adjacent hotel. We can confirm that the roof mounted equipment will be visible from the uppermost floor (4th) of the Travelodge.



Google Earth image of hotel overlooking the Stables.



View of Stable rooftop from hotel bedroom.

Unit 3, The Stables, Parrs Wood, Manchester.

for Europium World UK Ltd

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Enlarged view of air conditioning equipment taken from hotel bedroom.

In Paragraph 9 the inspector reasons that the listed buildings are defined as such through their inherent qualities irrespective of whether they can be seen or not and that the proposed would cause harm to the significance of the listed building as:

‘The proposed steel structure and air conditioning units would be an incongruous feature on a building of late 18th century origin. In addition to that their form, colour and appearance would be wholly at odds with that of the roof, a matter exacerbated by the number of units proposed.’
(Paragraph 9)

We accept that it could be perceived that the air conditioning equipment could be considered as being incongruous but only if its impact critically affected the primary component of the assets values, in this case, its aesthetic significance. However, the location of the equipment in the largely hidden area of the roof minimises the harm whilst its method of construction allows any subsequent removal of the installation to be completely reversible.

It is clear that in 99% of publicly accessible views the installation has no visual impact and therefore cannot be considered as being incongruous in those views. It is equally clear that the installation does have an impact in a very limited number of viewpoints.

However, it must be recognised that these are restricted to the transient residents of the few rooms of the modern hotel (2004) which directly overlook the roof top of the listed building. Historically, this is a view that would not have been available through the almost 200 years of the buildings existence before permission was granted for the modern hotel.

Even in these ‘affected’ views, the impact of the wider immediate context must be considered. Whilst the affected rooms look directly across the roofscape of the Stables beyond this they look onto the incongruous industrial backdrop provided by the substantial north wall of the entertainments complex. Slightly to the east of this the three-storey massing of the modern extension to the original house obscures any view of the Grade II* listed building. In both cases, these contemporary flat roof structures both accommodate mechanical plant over the extent of their roof areas.

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for Europium World UK Ltd

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The guidance of the NPPF is also clear that proposals should seek to avoid, minimise, and mitigate impact and that applications should provide justification for any harmful impacts.

The need for the installed equipment is established through the information detailed in section 8.00 of this document. This clarifies the technical justification for the installation whilst also documenting the unacceptable environmental conditions which presently exist (see Hydrock's 'Thermal Comfort Assessment'). Ultimately, this body of work confirms that these conditions cannot be addressed through inertia and that change and therefore impact, cannot be avoided.

In accepting this, the installed equipment has been designed to be the minimum needed to deliver acceptable internal environmental conditions through all seasons. Clearly, it is not in the owners economic best interests to have provided an installation which was over designed resulting in unnecessary capital and operational costs. To support this, and with the assistance of a specialist engineers, we have investigated potential alternative approaches and these are documented in section 10.00 of this report.

We would accept that the previous application relied on the reversibility argument as the principle component of the requirements of the NPPF to mitigate any impact. To reinforce this we would suggest that the most appropriate and least intrusive way to mitigate the visual impact of the installed equipment would be to paint the roof mounted equipment in a colour which more closely matched the predominant slate grey colouring of the roof finishes.



Enlarged view of air conditioning equipment taken from hotel bedroom with the equipment and platform structure painted in slate grey.

The appearance of the installed equipment is shown on the photographs included on the submitted sheet titled **'3 – Photomontage to Illustrate Painted Equipment'** (see Appendix 7).

This will not 'hide' the installation but will reduce the degree of contrast it has with its immediate physical context. This would be the most 'honest' way to present the installation and would require no further materials/finishes to be appended to the existing structure.

Alternatively, it would be possible to provide a 'cloak' to hide the individual pieces of equipment by creating an additional structure which masks the presence of the equipment (see sketch). This again could be painted to sit comfortably in its roof top location.

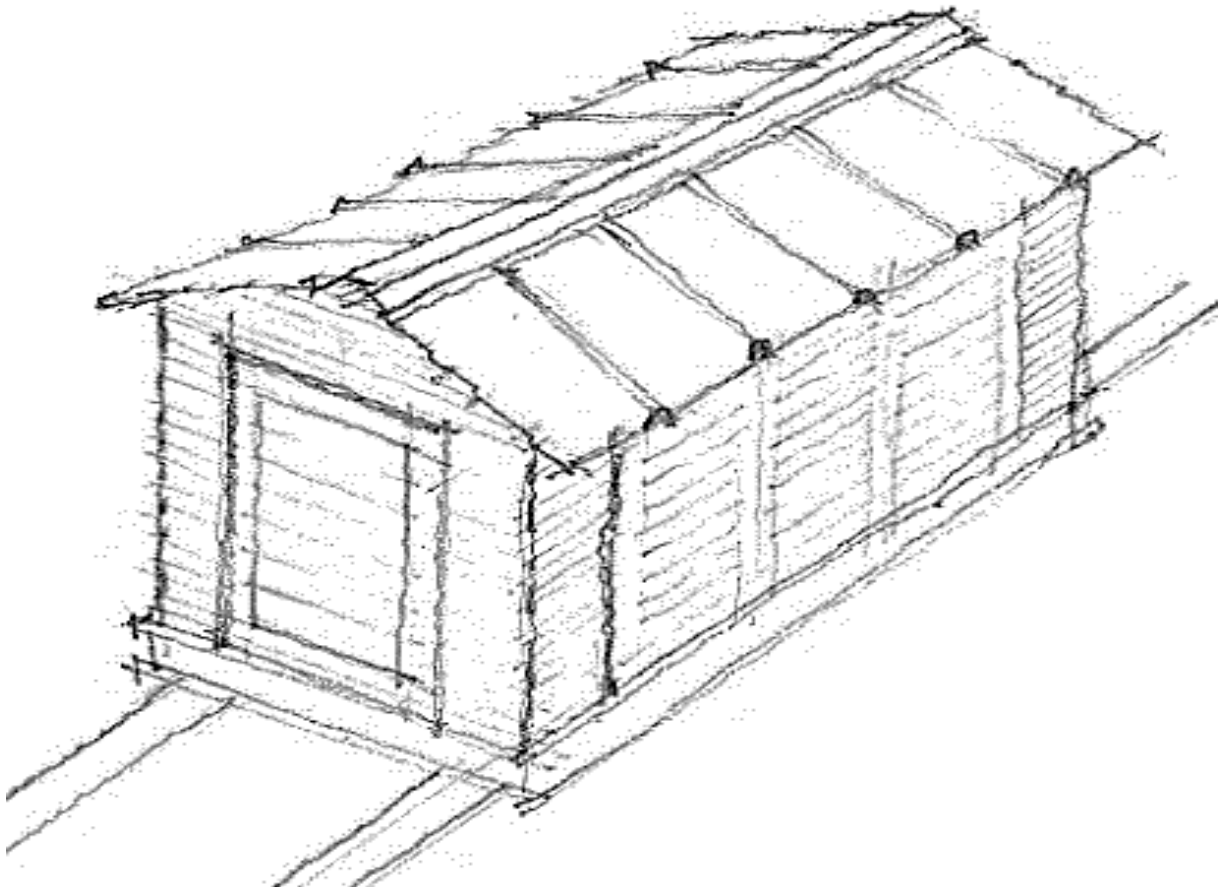
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In effect this would assume the appearance of a plant room at roof level so that the units were not seen when looked down on from the vantage point of the 4th floor of the hotel. A number of the existing roof top examples illustrated previously adopt this approach but taking the form of a freestanding 'wall' behind which the necessary equipment hides.

In our opinion, this would have a greater intrusion than that presently experienced. The approach would introduce a further element of visual 'clutter' to the largely hidden roof of the listed building. By its very nature the additional structure would be a more permanent intervention. Construction and any subsequent removal would require a greater degree of interference with the existing fabric.



Sketch of potential timber or GRP housing to hide proposed equipment.

For the above reasons we propose as part of this application to paint the installed condenser units and the steel supporting platform slate grey (RAL 7015/BS640). The effect of this approach is illustrated in [Appendix 7](#). Changing the colour will allow the equipment to merge into the backdrop created by the roof finishes against which it is seen in the limited views available from the fourth floor of the adjacent hotel.

Finally, we would confirm that a full technical justification for the installation has been provided in the 'Thermal Comfort Assessment' provided by Hydrock.

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for Europium World UK Ltd

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8.00 Technical Requirement

In Paragraph 12 of the Appeal dismissal notice the Inspector raises concerns as to the justification for the proposed installation. This states:

'The Framework requires that any harm should require clear and convincing justification and in cases where it would result in less than substantial harm, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits.....' (Paragraph 12)

and goes on to say in the subsequent paragraph:

'The proposal is sought to provide temperature regulation within the building particularly during the summer months although there is no technical evidence before me on this matter.' (Paragraph 13)

In response to the Inspectors guidance and in recognising that the lack of technical justification was a substantial impediment to establishing a tangible need, EWUK have commissioned mechanical engineers Hydrock to provide a 'Thermal Comfort Assessment'. This document gives an overview of current thermal comfort and overheating guidance, establishes the clear risk of overheating and also describes a number of solutions which can mitigate overheating. In conclusion, the report summarises where the need arises, justifies the installed arrangement and identifies the benefits delivered.

A copy of this report has been included as part of the submission as a standalone document in support of the retrospective applications.

Paragraph 13 goes on to contend that the historic lettings are proof that the existing building is demonstrably viable for office use in its present form and seeks to argue that the option of 'no change' is a viable response to ensuring the assets ongoing sustainable use.

'I am unconvinced that without it the use of the building for offices is unviable given it has been used as such for almost 20 years.'

The Inspectors comments appear to suggest that adopting a strategy of sterile preservation would be the most appropriate way of securing the ongoing positive use of the Stables. This contradicts the guidance of Historic England who are quite clear that:

'Keeping a significant place in use is likely to require continual adaptation and change; but provided such interventions respect the values of the place, they will tend to benefit public (heritage) as well as private interests in it.' ('Managing Change to Significant Places' Paragraph 86 page 43)

By concealing the equipment required to deliver effective environmental conditions required to sustain the office use in an increasingly competitive market, the applicant has minimised the potential impact that the installation could have on the principle significance of the complex, its external appearance.

In support of this assertion, EWUK has requested the independent opinion of Canning O'Neill the commercial letting agents who have experience of lettings and sales within the Stables complex over a number of years. **A copy of their Letter Report is included in Appendix 8 of this document.**

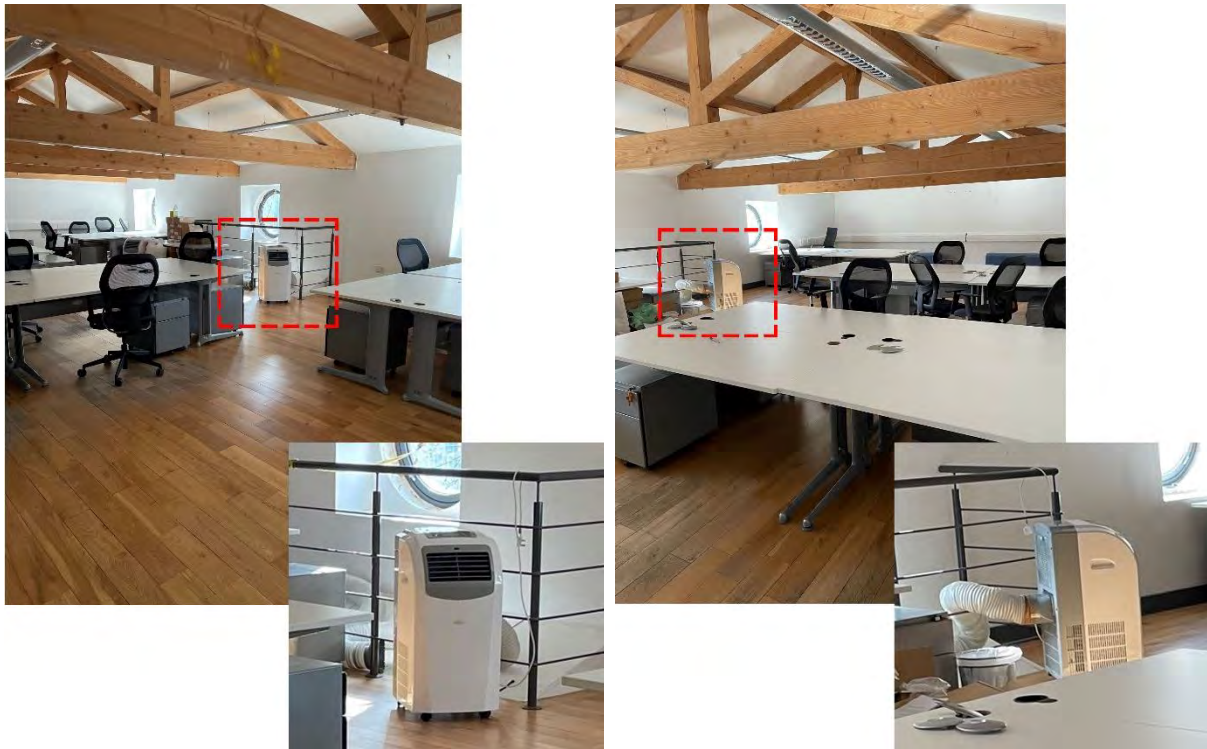
Their response confirms the anecdotal evidence provided by previous tenants. This is supported by record photographs which show that the previous tenants of Unit 3 managed the poor internal working environment through the installation of multiple freestanding, portable air conditioning units. These units rely on flexible extract pipes crudely draped through existing, wedged opened windows to exhaust stale air and trailing cables for their connection to power outlets.

This type of installation is hugely inefficient, unsightly and the resulting loose ducting/cables constitute a safety hazard. It does not provide the modern environmental standards required in office accommodation and does little to sustain ongoing positive use. This is confirmed through Hydrock's 'Thermal Comfort Assessment'.

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for Europium World UK Ltd

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Photographs taken from Marketing Brochure form March 2021



Photographs taken with office space in use.

The Canning O'Neill report goes on to establish the current requirements of the commercial market and the imperative for viability to be sustained through adapting to current demands. Clearly, the addition of a integrated air conditioning system will make the unit more attractive in the office rental market and will encourage its ongoing maintenance and upkeep.

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9.00 Public Benefit

It is widely acknowledged that securing continuing viable use of a listed building is in many cases the preferred option for ensuring continuing preservation and maintenance of the heritage asset. Indeed, guidance set out in the NPPF (Para. 208) advises 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”.

The Thermal Comfort Assessment prepared by Hydrock (submitted as supporting documentation) clearly concludes that, without intervention, the existing building is at continuing risk of overheating. The assessment recommends provision of a fixed heating and cooling system as now installed, in order to achieve a comfortable and reasonable temperature during summer months, in line with relevant legislation and industry guidance.

The assessment concludes furthermore that, when the system is also set up to provide heating during the winter as in this case, then the building can be adequately heated at an increased efficiency compared to traditional boiler fed or electric radiator systems. The combined fixed heating and cooling system as installed is fully supported by Hydrock as the recommended solution, offering the greatest benefit in terms of both thermal comfort, reduced energy consumption and reduced carbon emissions.

The Hydrock assessment concludes that the installation of the fixed heating and cooling system has clearly improved the buildings demonstrably poor environmental performance and that, as a result, it has increased the buildings desirability as high-quality office accommodation thereby ensuring its longevity.

The report notes that an ever-increasing proportion of quality UK rental office space now includes comfort cooling as standard. Furthermore, it is noted that as global warming increases, office spaces without cooling may struggle to attract tenants and thereby increase the risk of buildings like this falling into disrepair through lack of continued use.

Installation of the cooling system in this case will enable the building to remain viable in spite of the forecast rising temperatures. This will be essential in ensuring the sensitive ongoing maintenance of the listed fabric, retaining positive use and thereby its contribution to the local community and economy for future generations.

Hydrock’s views regarding continuing viability and longevity of the building are fully supported by the submitted letter report of commercial agents Canning O’Neil dated 10th October 2023 (see Appendix 8). Canning O’Neil confirm experience of a greater demand from tenants in recent years for air conditioning as a standard requirement, further fuelled most recently as a result of the Covid pandemic and increasing focus upon global warming. Canning O’Neil confirm that offices without air conditioning are harder to let and inevitably attract lower rental values.

Canning O’Neil also report a “flight to quality” following Covid, as companies are now often seeking less space as a result of an increase in home working. The agents advise that lack of air conditioning means not only lower rentals, but also longer void periods and higher “holding costs” on vacant offices. Inevitably this results in increased risk of building maintenance being neglected and a growing risk post-Covid, of office buildings (particularly of older age) falling into long term disrepair and neglect.

In the Thermal Comfort Assessment, Hydrock note that the previous occupier (who owned the building for over 20 years) did appear to have encountered problems with overheating and climate problems and might have attempted to address those problems without taking the proper remedial action required. This they consider might be either because their tenure was not critically affected by the problem or, perhaps, because they were unable to make the significant investment required in implementing a viable long-term solution.

Canning O’Neil furthermore confirm that they had direct experience of the building prior to the heating and cooling system being installed and that it was clear that there were problems keeping the building warm in winter and cool in summer.

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Canning O'Neil report witnesses the use of unsightly portable a/c units (with extract tubes/vents hanging out of windows) in the summer months and recall occasions when staff had to be sent home as result of the uncomfortable/unhealthy working environment. They consider that such issues could well have been an influencing factor in sale of the property by the previous owners.

The problems previously experienced are confirmed in the 'Statement of Fact' provided by Ian Boulger, Managing Director of Outgoing Limited who owned and occupied the building from 2008 until 2021 (see [Appendix 9](#)). Mr Boulger confirms that staff in the building suffered with extremes in temperature between winter and summer months to such extent that it affected productivity and morale.

The problems in fact led to staff complaints and were often cited in exit interviews as one of the negative points about working at the Stables. Mr Boulger confirms that, whilst mobile a/c units and fans were used in attempt to deal with the excessive temperatures, they were not practical due to the noise created, high moisture content and due to them proving potential health and safety hazards with trailing wires and ducted vents out of windows.

It is clear from the above that provision of the heating and cooling system now installed is necessary in order to improve environmental conditions within the building and so secure viability of the building for employment purposes moving forward. Alternative solutions have been carefully considered and discounted for reason of greater impact and harm upon/to, the character and appearance of the heritage asset. Securing such viability is key to securing ongoing maintenance and preservation of the listed building in the future. This in turn accords with the legislation, policy and guidance enacted, adopted and issued with the objective of preserving heritage assets in the public good.

In addition to helping secure preservation of the listed structure, the thermal comfort assessment prepared by Hydrock also sets out how the fixed heating and cooling system now installed will serve to heat the building at an increased efficiency compared to traditional boiler fed or electric radiator systems. The system installed therefore results in reduced energy consumption and reduced carbon emissions and is therefore in accordance with the stated commitment of UK Government to reduce reliance on fossil fuels and achieve net zero by 2050.

All energy saving strategies implemented will have the result of benefitting the public in the long term. Public benefits therefore result not just from helping to secure viability and preservation of the heritage asset but also in helping to reduce reliance on fossil fuels and assist with climate change. In addition to these clear benefits, the improved conditions that will result for employees must also be considered as a public benefit in its own right.

The technical justification provided also clarifies the employers legal requirement under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations, to assess risks to workers and to put controls in place to protect them. Furthermore, the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations require employers to provide a reasonable indoor temperature in the workplace. The Health and Safety Executive also advise that all workers are entitled to an environment where risks to their health and safety are properly controlled.

In summary, the provision of the fixed heating and cooling system will result in clear public benefit in:-

- securing viability and preservation of the listed structure moving forward,
- improving energy efficiency, reducing reliance on fossil fuels and assisting with climate change and
- by way of improving conditions for and safeguarding the health of employees.

The installation is considered to be in accord with relevant guidance set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and with relevant policies set out in the statutory development plan. Both the NPPF and the statutory development plan are documents prepared to guide future development at national and local level in the public interest.

Unit 3, The Stables, Parrs Wood, Manchester.

for Europium World UK Ltd

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10.00 Alternative Approaches

A further issue highlighted through the Inspectors dismissal raises the potential for alternative approaches to providing suitable environmental conditions. The Inspector considers that alternative approaches:

***‘.....do not appear to have been fully considered by both main parties and accordingly I cannot be certain that a similar benefit could not be achieved from a less harmful proposal.’
Accordingly, the justification for the proposal, as required by the Framework, is not clear or convincing. As such, the public benefit of the proposal is limited. (Paragraph 14)***

Hydrock’s ‘Thermal Comfort Assessment’ examines a number of alternative approaches which reduce the requirement for plant/equipment and concludes that these would not address the overheating experienced.

We would confirm that in the course of our discussions a range of potential alternative approaches have been assessed. We would summarise these as follows.

Option 1 – Natural Ventilation.

The use of openable windows to provide fresh air for cooling while allowing stale air to be expelled.

The limited openable windows at both ground and first floor level simply does not deliver sufficient cross ventilation to provide adequate cooling. This could only be improved by the introduction of substantially more window openings in the external elevations of the listed building. Obviously, this would have a much greater impact on the significance of the asset and would involve the loss of a substantial amount of existing listed fabric.

It has been argued that that the building has operated as an office for the last twenty years and whilst there has been clear deficiencies these have not proved to be an impediment to its ongoing viable use. However, this does not acknowledge that the environment is warming year on year and the need to provide effective control will only get greater. Inevitably, this will critically affect the attractiveness of the space to potential tenants and the rental values achievable. If this is not addressed, this will impact on the long-term viability of its beneficial use.

Option 2 - Forced Mechanical Ventilation.

Introducing ducted and powered systems to introduce treated/cooled air into the internal spaces and allowing stale air to be extracted to an external outlet.

It is clear that the existing available windows do not provide enough natural ventilation to cool the office spaces at peak times, Hydrock’s report examines whether implementing forced mechanical ventilation could address this and concludes that this would have little effect and would require much the same degree of additional equipment potentially resulting in a greater visual impact than the installed system.

The introduction of a forced mechanical ventilation approach would still require that the necessary fans, heat recovery plant, ductwork and cabling would all still need to be unobtrusively located. Allied to this, external extract outlets would need to be situated on the elevations of the building or once again directed to outlets hidden within the roof valley area. Most importantly, such an approach would still not deliver the degree of control required to reasonably address the extremes of temperature experienced across all seasons.

Option 3 – Portable Air Conditioning Units.

The use of individual portable air conditioning to temper the internal environment.

It has been argued that the established environmental conditions have not been an obstacle in the units continued office use through the last twenty years. However, that is clearly not the case and photographic records and the evidence from third parties (letting agent and previous tenant) confirm that less than optimum continued use has only been possibly through the use of portable air conditioning units.

The resulting office architecture is characterised by loose flexible ducting exiting to external air through the few opening windows available and cabled power supplies trailed across the floors. Both present a trip hazard and neither deliver the quality of office environment demanded by the market.

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In accepting that environmental conditions are only going to get worse, the continuation of this strategy will only mean additional temporary units and more unstructured ducting/cabling. And even in doing so the environmental conditions will be deficient with the comfort and well-being of occupants compromised. The option to continue with this strategy is simply not sustainable.

Option 4 - Traditional Air Conditioning.

The installation of air conditioning with condenser units mounted externally on the vertical elevations of the building in the least intrusive location.

Prior to occupation (April 2021), EWUK did engage with the authorities Planning Officer (Linda Marciniak) to discuss the possibilities of providing an air conditioning solution to address the clear discomfort issues. Our understanding is, that these discussions were conducted solely to investigate whether the 'traditional' approach to providing air conditioning with condenser units mounted externally on the elevations of the building would be acceptable. This type of installation has been found to be acceptable on non-listed buildings and in some instance is found on listed buildings although these may not have the formal consents required.



Typical example of wall mounted unit



This approach has been used on the adjacent house (GII*) which is now in educational use.



It was made clear at this meeting that the impact upon the visual appearance (principle value) of the listed building would not be acceptable. It must be noted that at this time, the planning history for the site had neither been investigated by the clients' representatives or the planning officer involved. As such, the hidden location previously approved was not raised as a viable alternative approach.

It must also be recognised that EWUK's legal ownership is up to the extent of the external walls and ends at the back of footpath. Any projecting equipment would also inevitably extend beyond the limits of their ownership and without the necessary complex legal agreements this approach would not be possible.



North and west external elevations with limited extent of Unit 3 ownership indicated by broken red lines.

Unit 3, The Stables, Parrs Wood, Manchester.

for Europium World UK Ltd

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Option 5 – Remotely Located Condensing Units.

The installation of air conditioning with condenser units located remotely in a discrete location away from principle elevations.

In examining the principles of Option 4 further, we have also looked at whether such units could be located in a less intrusive location adjacent to the listed building and whether they could be fixed within an enclosure to hide their presence.

Around the external perimeter of the Stables, the public domain extends up to the back of the footpaths and right against the external faces of the buildings. Siting equipment in these locations would conflict with pedestrian movements and may result in both security and safety concerns. Outside of this and irrespective of the resulting legal complications, creating an enclosure in such close proximity to the listed fabric would have an unacceptable visual impact on its principle significance.

Locating units within the internal courtyard area has also been considered. Whilst this is a semi private area, it is essentially a reception space for visitors and recreational space for users. As such units would need to be located where they would affect the enjoyment or use of the space but also where they would not have an unacceptable impact on the listed building.

The legal permissions regarding the use of the space will again have an influence on the possible location of equipment. We do not believe that such an opportunity exists within the courtyard space and any units or enclosure will critically impact the visual appearance of both the listed building and the courtyard landscaping.



Courtyard looking towards south west corner with limited extent of Unit 3 ownership indicated by broken red lines.

Even if a location could be identified where any visual impact was acceptable, the ducting and cabling required to 'join' the remote location to the building would again constitute a further element with unacceptable intrusion on the listed fabric and the setting. This is not a feasible or technically acceptable option.

Further images to illustrate the implications of the limitations of EWUK's ownership are included in Appendix 10 (Ownership Constraints: External & Courtyard) of this document.

Option 6 - Alternative Technologies.

The installation of air conditioning adopting a water-cooled system which utilises a concealed and discretely located internal condenser unit.

Finally, it has been suggested that at the site meeting in April 2021, EWUK were '***advised that there were conservation alternatives***' to adopting a 'traditional' approach. Those who were present at this meeting have no recollection of the specific alternatives that this refers to and no further clarification of the exact nature of the '***conservation alternatives***' proposed has been provided through the course of the previous applications.

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Without such clarification, we would assume that the conservation alternative referred to is one which removes the need for external condenser units and positions all of the necessary equipment internally within the envelope. These are generally water-cooled systems which utilise a concealed internal condenser unit.

Such systems tend to be appropriate in the conversion of listed buildings to residential use where loads are relatively low and the spaces being served relatively small. A typical examples of this type of installation can be found at

<https://acs-installations.co.uk/residential-air-conditioning/listed-buildings/>

however, it must be noted that the information provided is vague on where and how the promoted systems reject their heat from or to.

Even if this approach were suitable, an internal water-cooled unit sufficient to manage the commercial load to serve the building volume at the Stables, would require a much larger heat rejection unit than the compact systems shown to serve residential applications. Typically, a heat source/rejection device (to/from air) to accompany a water source unit would look something like the dry cooler images below and would inevitably require external location similar to that current used.



The size and servicing requirements of the equipment needed to adopt such an approach would deliver no advantages over that which has been installed and may impact on the efficiency and energy consumption delivered by the adopted system.

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Conclusion

The significance of the heritage asset and impact of the installation of the fixed heating and cooling system upon its values have both been thoroughly assessed. This process clearly demonstrates that the development results in less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated asset. In accordance with guidance contained within the NPPF (Para 208), the less than substantial harm identified has been weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing optimum viable use of the heritage asset.

It has been shown that in this case provision of the fixed heating and cooling system will result in clear public benefit in securing viability and preservation of the listed structure for future generations moving forward. Furthermore, the installation will result in other clear public benefits including improved energy efficiency, reduced reliance on fossil fuels/impact upon climate change and improved conditions necessary to safeguard the health of employees.

It is therefore considered that the 'less than substantial harm' resulting from the fixed heating and cooling system as installed is clearly outweighed by the public benefits properly identified. The clear and convincing justification required for development by the National Planning Policy Framework has therefore been demonstrated.

16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

195. Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value⁷⁰. These 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 generations⁷¹.
196. Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. This strategy should take into account:
- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
 - b) the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
 - c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
 - d) opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.
197. When considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.
198. Local planning authorities should maintain or have access to a historic environment record. This should contain up-to-date evidence about the historic environment in their area and be used to:
- a) assess the significance of heritage assets and the contribution they make to their environment; and
 - b) predict the likelihood that currently unidentified heritage assets, particularly sites of historic and archaeological interest, will be discovered in the future.

⁰ Some World Heritage Sites are inscribed by UNESCO to be of natural significance rather than cultural significance; and in some cases they are inscribed for both their natural and cultural significance.

¹ The policies set out in this chapter relate, as applicable, to the heritage-related consent regimes for which local planning authorities are responsible under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as well as to plan-making and decision-making.

199. Local planning authorities should make information about the historic environment, gathered as part of policy-making or development management, publicly accessible.

Proposals affecting heritage assets

200. In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.
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.
202. Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of, or damage to, a heritage asset, the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision.
203. 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.
204. In considering any applications to remove or alter a historic statue, plaque, memorial or monument (whether listed or not), local planning authorities should have regard to the importance of their retention in situ and, where appropriate, of explaining their historic and social context rather than removal.

Considering potential impacts

205. 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.
206. 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 exceptional⁷².
207. 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.
208. 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.
209. The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

⁷² Non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest, which are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, should be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets.

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210. Local planning authorities should not permit the loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred.
211. Local planning authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible⁷³. However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted.
212. Local planning authorities should 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. 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.
213. 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.
214. Local planning authorities should assess whether the benefits of a proposal for enabling development, which would otherwise conflict with planning policies but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset, outweigh the disbenefits of departing from those policies.

⁷³ Copies of evidence should be deposited with the relevant historic environment record, and any archives with a local museum or other public depository.

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for Europium World UK Ltd

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Appendix 2: Statutory Listing & Pevsner Citation

Statutory Listing.

Heritage Category: Grade II

List Entry Number: 1254972

Date first listed: 03-Oct-1974

National Grid Reference: SJ 85617 90420

Details

SJ89SE WILMSLOW ROAD, Didsbury 698-1/9/679 (East side) 03/10/74 Former Coach House/Stable Block to N of Parrs Wood House and attached yard wall

Coach house and stable block, with attached yard wall, now Rural Studies Centre. Late C18 or early C19, altered. Red brick in English garden wall bond, the outward facing walls painted white, slate roofs. L-plan formed by double-pile main block facing west with receding wing on south side. Two storeys, symmetrical west front with 3-bay main range flanked by gabled wings breaking forwards; the main range has 3 blank arches, the centre with a multi-pane glazed screen and the outer containing 12-pane sashed windows, and a blocked pitching hole over each, the wings have two 12-pane sashes at ground floor and a semi-circular blank arch at 1st floor containing a segmental-headed 12-pane sash. Chimneys at the junctions. The left return of the left wing (former ostler's cottage) has a blank arch at 1st floor, a segmental-headed 12-pane sash in this and an added porch below, a segmental-headed 16-pane sash on each floor to the left, 3 blocked round-headed windows at ground floor and a blocked segmental-headed window above these. The long south wing has a giant round-headed archway in the centre, under a simple open pediment with a blind oculus flanked by groups of 3 pigeonholes, altered or inserted tall windows in the former stable to the left, small segmental-headed windows to the right and a doorway with a blind oculus over. The courtyard side of this range has an arcade of 4 elliptical arches on sandstone columns, filled in except that at the left end which has a sliding door, and that in the centre which has a stable door; a 6-pane fixed window over the first and blocked pitching holes over the others; and to the right of the entrance archway, an elliptical arch now filled in and containing a window. The rear of the main range has mostly altered openings. North and east sides of yard enclosed by brick screen wall approx. 3 metres high. Interior: roof of rear portion of main range has 2 oak king-post trusses with raked struts and curved principals and re-used oak purlins.

Pevsner Citation.

It is of note to recognise the relevant section of 'The Buildings of England - Lancashire: Manchester and the South-East' (Hartwell, Hyde & Pevsner 2004). The citation understandably concentrates on the main house but make a single references to the Stable Block. This declares :-

"Handsome contemporary STABLES, burnt out , but reinstated 2002".

Importantly, this appears to indicate the perilous state of the Stables prior to the restoration carried out at the turn of the century.



Air Conditioning and Refrigeration

Planning permission will normally be required to install air conditioning and refrigeration units on the exterior of buildings.

The preferred location for units within conservation areas is:

- Free standing within garden or courtyard areas, subject to appropriate screening and discreet ducting.
- Within rear basement areas.
- Inconspicuous locations on the roof (within roof valleys or adjacent to existing plant). However, aerial views will also be considered.
- Internally behind louvres on inconspicuous elevations. This should not result in the loss of original windows.

Where it is not practicably possible to locate units in any of the above locations, it may be acceptable to fix units to the wall of an inconspicuous elevation, as low down as possible; they should not be located on the front elevation.

Units should be limited in number, as small as practicably possible and painted to tone with the surrounding stonework or background.

Ducting must not detract from the character and appearance of the building and area.

Unit 3, The Stables, Parrs Wood, Manchester.

for Europium World UK Ltd

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Appendix 4:

Record Photographs - Pre-Construction 2021



Aerial view of roof valley prior to installation of air handling equipment.



Google Earth image shows immediate context with enlarged inset image of roof valley.

Record photographs prior to the installation confirms that the difficulties of access impeded routine maintenance.

The roof valley is prone to the collection of leaf fall from the many mature trees which surround the site and is also subject to a degree of informal misuse.

The installation of the rooflight access allows more regular inspections to ensure all drainage outlets are kept clear and that the listed building is protected.



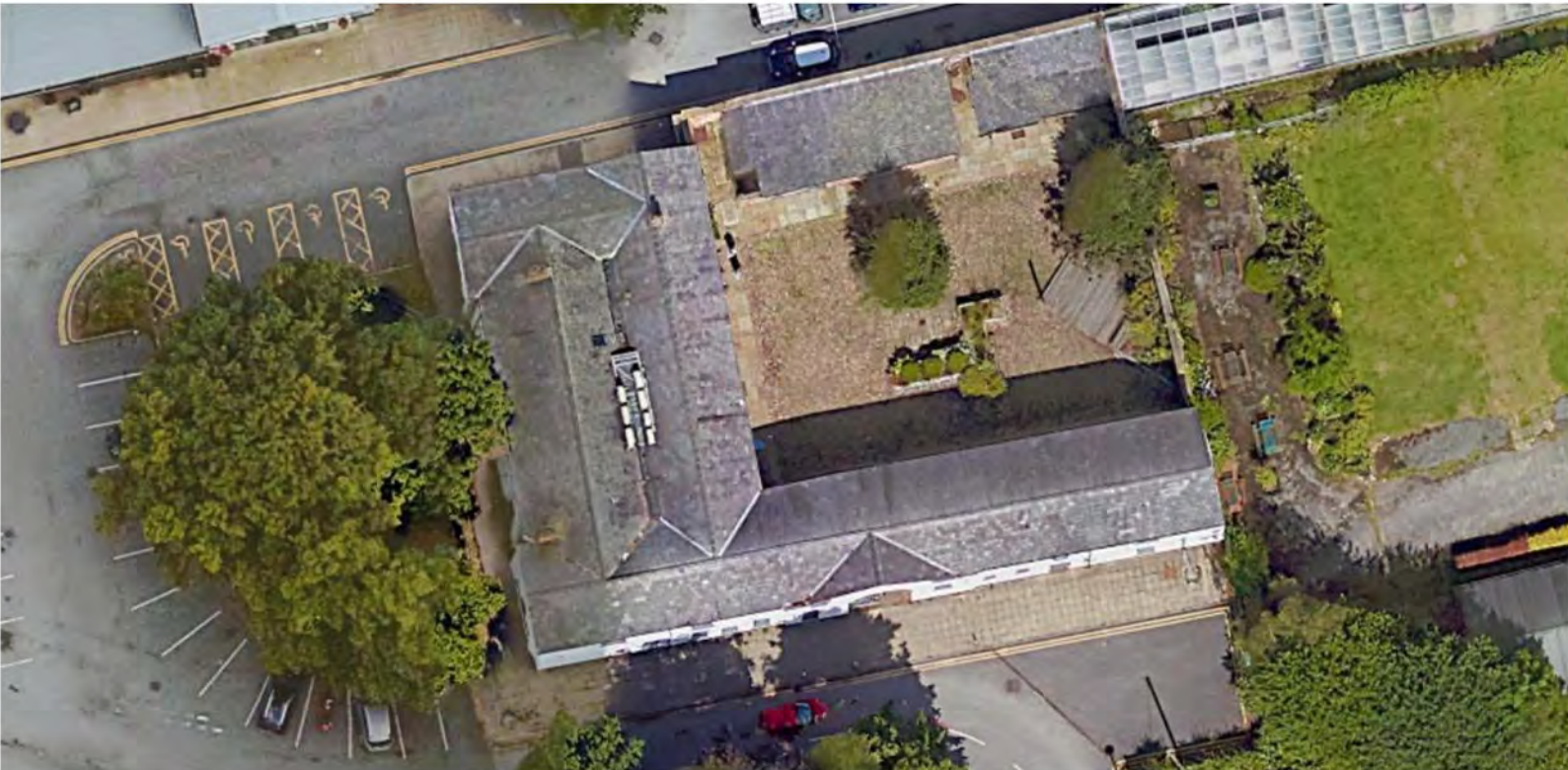
Roof valley condition.

Unit 3, The Stables, Parrs Wood, Manchester.

for Europium World UK Ltd

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**Appendix 5:
Record Photographs - As Built 2023**



Aerial view of roof valley showing the air handling equipment in place.



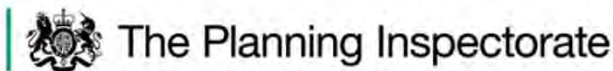
Views at roof level of the hidden installed air handling equipment and discrete cabling.



View of installation from the 4th floor bedrooms of the adjacent Hotel.



Enlarged view to show the new light grey finished equipment sitting on top of the galvanised steel platform.



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 12 December 2022

by S Ashworth BA (Hons) BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20 December 2022

Appeal A: APP/B4215/W/22/3301586

The Stables, Wilmslow Road, Manchester M20 5PG

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a failure to give notice within the prescribed period of a decision on an application for planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Dharmesh Bhayani of Europium World UK Ltd against Manchester City Council.
 - The application Ref 133055/FO/2022, is dated 20 April 2022.
 - The development proposed is installation of air handling equipment at roof level in concealed valley gutter structure. Addition of new conservation rooflight to inner slope of concealed valley structure to provide access to equipment for servicing and routine maintenance.
-

Appeal B: APP/B4215/Y/22/3301573

The Stables, Wilmslow Road, Manchester M20 5PG

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 against a failure to give notice within the prescribed period of a decision on an application for listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Dharmesh Bhayani of Europium World UK Ltd against Manchester City Council.
 - The application Ref 132890/LO/2022 is dated 20 April 2022.
 - The works proposed are installation of air handling equipment at roof level in concealed valley gutter structure. Addition of new conservation rooflight to inner slope of concealed valley structure to provide access to equipment for servicing and routine maintenance.
-

Decisions

1. Appeal A: The appeal is dismissed and planning permission is refused.
2. Appeal B: The appeal is dismissed and listed building consent is refused.

Preliminary Matter

3. The Council did not make a decision on the above applications within the prescribed time period. However, the Council subsequently resolved that planning permission and listed building consent would have been refused for reasons set out in its Statement of Case, upon which the appellant has had the opportunity to comment. I have dealt with the appeals on that basis.

Unit 3, The Stables, Parrs Wood, Manchester.

for Europium World UK Ltd

Heritage Impact Assessment: Retention of Installed Rooftop Air Handling Equipment

Appeal Decisions APP/B4215/W/22/3301586, APP/B4215/Y/22/3301573

Main Issue

4. The Stables is a Grade II listed building. Sections 16 (2) and 66 (1) of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) sets out that in considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works to a listed building and planning permission for development which affects a listed building, special regard should be had to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest the building possesses.
5. The main issue in this case is therefore whether the proposal would preserve the special interest, or significance, of the listed building.

Reasons

6. The building, dating from the late 18th or early 19th century, was originally a coach house and stable block. The 'L' shaped building is two storeys high with a 3-bay, symmetrically designed main range flanked by gabled wings. To the centre of the south wing is an archway leading to a courtyard.
7. Part of the upper floor of the building was destroyed by fire some time ago and this element was re-built in 2000 to replicate the design and form of the original building. The rebuilding incorporated some new materials including new roof trusses and new insulation although externally it appears that the replacement was carried out sympathetically on a like for like basis. The roof of the main range incorporates a concealed double pitched structure with a valley gutter. It is proposed to erect a steel platform within the valley to support a series of 7 condenser units associated with a new air conditioning system, and a rooflight to allow access. No specific objection has been raised to the rooflight in itself and I have no reason to disagree although it must be considered in the context of the proposal as a whole.
8. The stables were once associated with Parrs Wood House, itself a Grade II* listed building now in use as part of Parrs Wood High School and sixth form. The two buildings stood within extensive landscaped parkland. The setting of these buildings has changed significantly in recent times including with the construction of a 4-storey hotel and associated car parking immediately adjacent to the stable building, and a sizeable entertainments complex and school also within the original parkland grounds. The presence of these buildings has had a negative effect on the legibility of the historic association between the house and stables. Nevertheless, the stable building is a notable feature in its present surroundings largely because of its age and relatively small scale. The building, clearly recognisable as a late Georgian stable block, indicates how the site was once used and therefore has both historic and evidential value. In addition, the form and appearance of the building is similar to what it would have been at the time of its construction and accordingly, as set out in the Heritage Statement, it has a high aesthetic value. These matters make a significant contribution to the special architectural and historic interest of the building.
9. The proposed air conditioning units would not be seen from ground level, being concealed by the existing structure although there is no analysis before me as to whether they would be seen from the upper floor windows of the adjacent hotel. Notwithstanding this, listed buildings are listed for their inherent qualities, irrespective of whether they can be seen or not. The

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proposed steel structure and air conditioning units would be an incongruous feature on a building of late 18th century origin. In addition to that their form, colour and appearance would be wholly at odds with that of the roof, a matter exacerbated by the number of units proposed.

10. The steel frame would be fixed to the roof trusses by way of steel posts. Details of the fixings and methodology are limited and in this respect I cannot satisfactorily assess the impact of the intervention on the appearance or significance of the building. Whilst that intervention would be made into non original fabric, that fabric is nevertheless part of the listed building and currently makes a positive contribution to it.
11. Accordingly, taking these matters together, the proposal would cause harm to the significance of the listed building as set out above.
12. In terms of the approach set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), because the works would affect only one part of the building, the harm to the significance of the listed building would be less than substantial. This is not disputed by the main parties. The Framework requires that any harm should require clear and convincing justification and in cases where it would result in less than substantial harm, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
13. The proposal is sought to provide temperature regulation within the building particularly during the summer months although there is no technical evidence before me on this matter. However, even if the proposal represents a more efficient means of temperature regulation over the existing arrangements, I am unconvinced that without it the use of the building for offices is unviable given it has been used as such for almost 20 years. There is no convincing evidence before me that the existing air conditioning measures have made it difficult to attract and retain high quality staff or has otherwise adversely affected the current or previous business operations. Accordingly, I am unconvinced that the proposal is required to secure the ongoing use of the building such that it could be seen as a public benefit of the scheme. As such, the public benefit of the proposal is limited.
14. Furthermore, it seems to me that even if a new air conditioning scheme was required to secure the future use of the building, consideration of alternative schemes suitable for listed buildings do not appear to have been fully considered by both main parties and accordingly I cannot be certain that a similar benefit could not be achieved from a less harmful proposal. Accordingly the justification for the proposal, as required by the Framework, is not clear or convincing.
15. I acknowledge that a previous permission for air conditioning units in a similar position was granted in 2006¹ albeit prior to the introduction of the Framework and the Council's Core Strategy in 2012. That permission was not implemented and cannot therefore be considered as a fallback position. I do not know the circumstances of that case or the evidence available at that time on which a decision was made. Accordingly, the previous decision carries limited weight in my considerations.

¹ Application Refs: 077800/FO/2005/S2 and 077809/LO/2005/S2

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16. The appellant contends that the harm to the significance of the heritage asset lies at the lower end of less than substantial harm. However, the Framework does not require an assessment against a spectrum of harm and the harm I have identified carries considerable importance and weight. As such, on the basis of the evidence before me, the public benefits of the proposal do not outweigh the harm to the significance of the asset.
17. Given the above I conclude that the proposal would fail to satisfy the weighty requirements of the Act and the requirements of the Framework set out in Chapter 16, and would conflict with Policy EN3 of the adopted Manchester Core Strategy 2012-27 and saved Policy DC19.1 of the Unitary Development Plan, which seek in various ways to ensure that new development is designed to preserve listed buildings. As a result, the proposal would not be in accordance with the development plan. There are no other material considerations which indicate that permission should be granted.
18. As such, taking into account all other matters raised, the appeals are dismissed and planning permission and listed building consent are refused.

S Ashworth

INSPECTOR

Unit 3, The Stables, Parrs Wood, Manchester.

for Europium World UK Ltd

Heritage Impact Assessment: Retention of Installed Rooftop Air Handling Equipment

Appendix 7: Photomontage - Painted Equipment

Unit 3, The Stables, Parrs Wood, Manchester.
for Europium World UK Ltd

Heritage Impact Assessment: Retention of Installed Rooftop Air Handling Equipment



Aerial view from the north to illustrate the equipment within the wider context of modern development.

It has been argued that the clearly contemporary, utilitarian structure could be considered as being an incongruous addition to the listed building. However, any degree of incongruity is limited by its hidden location and even in accepting a degree of impact, this does not critically affect the primary component of the assets values, its aesthetic significance.

It is clear that in 99% of publicly accessible views the installation has no visual impact and therefore cannot be considered as being incongruous in those views. The installation does have an impact in a very limited number of viewpoints. In mitigation, it must be recognised that these are restricted to the transient residents of the few rooms of the adjacent modern hotel (2004) which directly overlook the roof top of the listed building.

Even in these ‘affected’ views, the impact of the wider immediate context must be considered. Whilst the affected rooms look directly across the roofscape of the Stables beyond this they look onto the incongruous industrial backdrop provided by the substantial north wall of the entertainments complex. Slightly to the east of this the three-storey massing of the modern extension to the original house obscures any view of the Grade II* listed building. In both cases, these contemporary flat roof structures both accommodate mechanical plant over the extent of their roof areas.

The simplest and least intrusive way to mitigate any perceived visual impact would be to paint the roof mounted equipment in a colour which more closely matched the predominant slate grey colouring of the roof vfinishes.

This will not ‘hide’ the installation but will reduce the degree of contrast it has with its immediate physical context. This would be the most ‘honest’ way to present the installation and would require no further materials/finishes to be appended to the existing structure. To acheive this we would suggest painting the equipment casings and the galvanised steel platform in Slate Grey RAL ref 7015.



View of the equipment painted in slate grey (RAL 7015) to match the slate roofing finish.



Enlarged image to show effect of painted finish.

3 - Photomontage to Illustrate Painted Equipment

Unit 3, The Stables, Parrs Wood, Manchester.

for Europium World UK Ltd

Heritage Impact Assessment: Retention of Installed Rooftop Air Handling Equipment

Appendix 8:

Canning O'Neill Letter 10th Oct 23

CANNING O'NEILL
THE NORTH WEST'S SPECIALIST OFFICE AGENTS

10th October 2023

6 Hewitt Street
Manchester M15 4GB
0161 244 5500
0161 244 5505
canningoneill.com

To whom it may concern

Importance of temperature control in commercial buildings

I am writing to provide you with my thoughts relating to the installation of air conditioning to office buildings in general and in particular relating to 3 The Stables, Parrswood Entertainment Centre, Manchester.

I have been a leasing agent in the Manchester office market for over 30 years and my practice, Canning O'Neill is responsible for more lettings in South Manchester than any other firm of surveyors in the North West of England.

Over the last 3 to 5 years I have experienced a greater demand for air conditioned office space from occupiers. This is due to a number of factors including a general presumption that landlords need to provide air conditioning as a basis of their general office specification. In addition, the warmer summers (only likely to get warmer due to global warming/climate change) we are experiencing means that air conditioned space is now a very important factor when making on a decision on a relocation to a new office space.

The lack of air conditioning in an office space/commercial building naturally leads to the space being more challenging to let and also impacts on a lower rental value. Air-conditioned space tends to attract a £2.00 per sq ft 'premium' compared to none air-conditioned space.

Post Covid, the office market has gone through a lot of changes and one of these has been a reduction in space required due to the 'working from home culture' and also a movement towards 'hybrid working'. A lot of businesses are still struggling with employees working from home and would prefer them to be working in the office. When looking to move offices we have seen what many call a 'flight to quality' as business's are looking for less accommodation (20 to 30% is the general trend) but higher specification space in order to encourage a 'home from home' experience for their staff.

Air conditioning is very high up most occupiers list of a required specification when contacting us to try and identify their new home for their business. A good temperature-controlled environment is fast becoming a key requirement.

From a landlords' point of view not having space with air-conditioning not only means a lower rental but also longer void periods and hence higher 'holding' costs on vacant offices. Inevitably this will increase the risk of building maintenance being neglected. There is a growing risk post-Covid that office buildings (particularly of older age) falling into long term disrepair and neglect.

Without giving specific examples, there are several offices in the North West that have remained vacant for a long time because of lack of adequate air-conditioning. It is also more of a factor now given the push toward higher specification to encourage a return to office working. Older buildings that are more difficult to modernise are more likely to become prone to remaining vacant, with obvious adverse community problems being created (e.g. vandalism, rodents etc).

Unit 3, The Stables, Parrs Wood, Manchester.

for Europium World UK Ltd

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CANNING O'NEILL

We have historically been involved with The Stables office scheme over the years and most recently with 3 The Stables. We advised the previous owners on the sale of the building to the current owner.

When I first inspected the space, it did not benefit from adequate temperature control system and the lack of it was clear as they experienced problems with keeping the building warm in the winter and cool in the summer. I witnessed portable a/c units when the temperatures were high in the summer months which were unsightly and needed tubes to hang out of windows etc which was not easy or attractive externally in a property with a lack of window openings at 1st floor level.

I recall that there were occasions where staff had to be sent home as it was just not a comfortable / healthy working environment and no doubt may have been an influencing factor for the sale of the property by the previous owners, so that the business could relocate to a more modern environment offering good temperature control.

We have also dealt with another property scheme in the Didsbury area, commonly known as the Towers Mansion. This property is Grade II listed and does benefit from partial air-conditioning. This has no doubt allowed the project to pre-let as small units, which may otherwise have remained vacant.

Well-being for staff is incredibly important for the modern business in the year 2023 and a comfortable working environment is very important and quite possibly a legal obligation for employers. Having no air conditioning in an older property with a lack of good natural ventilation is a real challenge, that will only intensify moving forward.

In conclusion, the provision of air-conditioning in office space is much more the norm than it ever has been and the benefits to the people who work in the buildings is clear. There is no doubt that the provision of adequate temperature control equipment, particularly air-conditioning will also increase the chances of the building staying in productive use in the longer term. This in turn will avoid an exacerbated potential future problem of a build-up of empty properties that brings its own set of challenges for any community and its people.

Your faithfully



James Dickinson
DIRECTOR

Unit 3, The Stables, Parrs Wood, Manchester.

for Europium World UK Ltd

Heritage Impact Assessment: Retention of Installed Rooftop Air Handling Equipment

Appendix 9:
Outgoing Letter 1st Aug 23



OUTGOING

Outgoing Ltd

1st August 2023

To whom it may concern,

RE: Statement of Fact: 3 The Stables, M20 5PG

I am writing to you as the Managing Director of Outgoing Ltd who had been the owner occupiers of: 3 The Stables, Wilmslow Road, M20 5PG from 2008 until we sold the premises in July 2021.

Over this period the staff based in the building suffered with extremes in temperatures between the winter and summer months so much so that it affected productivity, morale and lead to staff complaints.

At our busiest we would have 30 plus staff in the building at any one time.

During the winter months we would often go several days during cold snaps that staff had to wear coats to work at desks and have blankets on laps. This was despite having the wall mounted heaters around the building but due to the size of the premises they were ineffective.

We would have the reverse of the winter months during the summer with conditions getting far too hot to work with the lack of adequate ventilation due to limited window openings, especially on the top floor. It was impossible to control temperatures internally. We did try to remedy the extremes in heat by bringing in mobile air conditioning units and fans but we found them not to be practical due to the noise created by them, the high moisture and them being potential H&S hazards with the wires plus vents out of windows causing us extra challenges.

The extremes in weather had been felt by all in the office across both floors and it was often cited in exit interviews as one of the negative points about being based at Stables office in Parrswood. We did try to rectify the issues we had with temperatures across the office but we found all the measures to be ineffective and the temperature extremes created an uncomfortable working environment that is not appropriate for a modern day office.

I firmly believe that there would have been a huge public benefit, particularly for the staff concerned if there had been adequate temperature maintenance within the building. They would have been happier in their environment, would have remained in our employment longer and we would have been able to create more employment for the local community.

If you require any more information please do not hesitate to contact me on ian.boulger@outgoing.co.uk or 07714 759 712.

Regards

Ian Boulger
Managing Director
Outgoing Ltd

outgoing.co.uk

customerservice@outgoing.co.uk

Tel: 08443 264 264

Registered in England and Wales No. 04045495 VAT Number 837237514

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Unit 3, The Stables, Parrs Wood, Manchester.

for Europium World UK Ltd

Heritage Impact Assessment: Retention of Installed Rooftop Air Handling Equipment

Appendix 10: Record Photographs - Ownership Constraints



View 1 Looking from outside the adjacent Hotel at the north and west external elevations (Extent of Unit 3 ownership shown in broken lines).

The limited extent of EWUK’s ownership on the north and west elevations clearly restrcits opportunities to identify an acceptable location of face fixing externally mounted condenser units. Around the external perimeter of the Stables, the public domain extends up to the back of the footpaths and right against the external faces of the buildings. Siting equipment in these locations would impact on pedestrian movements and may result in both security and safety concerns. Creating an enclosure to hide the equipment in such close proximity to the listed fabric would have an unacceptable visual impact on its principle significance.



View 2 Looking towards west elevation.

The extent of EWUK’s ownership across the west elevation of the stables is very limited. Irrespective of this, siting face mounted equipment in this location would have an unacceptable visual impact. Legal ownership is up to the extent of the external walls and ends at the back of footpath. Any projecting equipment would also inevitably extend beyond the limits of their ownership and without the necessary complex legal



View 1 Looking towards south west corner and entrance archway. (Extent of EWUK ownership shown by broken line).
The internal courtyard area is a semi private area, it is essentially a reception space for visitors and recreational space for users. Units located here would impact on the enjoyment/use of the space and would also have an acceptable impact on the listed building.



View 2 Looking towards storage area in north west corner of block.
The small service area sits within the ownership of an adjacent tenant and would require legal agreements to enable use for equipment in an enclosure. Even if this was possible, the ducting and cabling required to 'join' the remote location to the Units 3 area would result in additional unacceptable intrusion on the listed fabric and the setting.



View 3 Looking towards north west corner and single storey north range of Stable block. (Extent of EWUK ownership shown by broken line).
Locating units within the internal courtyard area will critically impact the visual appearance of both the listed building and the courtyard landscaping.