

Heritage Assessment

Part of the application building is Grade II Listed and the whole site falls within the George Street Conservation Area. In order to comply with government guidance contained in the NPPF, as well as policies contained in the adopted Development Plan, it is necessary for the application to be supported by a heritage assessment that considers and assesses the impact of the proposed development on significance of the building and its setting as well as the impacts on the Conservation Area.

Listed Building

The official list entry for 110-114 Portland Street describes the building as follows:

Warehousing (probably textiles or clothing), now shop and offices. 1880, by Charles Heathcote; altered. Sandstone ashlar ground floor, red brick with sandstone dressings above, slate roof. Irregular trapeziform plan. Romanesque style. Three storeys with basement and attic, 5 bays, symmetrical above ground floor; with cornice to ground floor, brick pilasters and stone sill-bands to both upper floors, stone eaves cornice on brick corbel table, and shallow 3-bayflat-roofed attic dormer. Round-headed doorway to left, shouldered waggon entry to right, and windows and doorways with rounded corners between these; windows of 1:2:2:2:1 lights on both upper floors, those in the centre at 1st floor set in round-headed arches and with round-headed lights, brick pilasters and moulded stone imposts, and those in the flanking bays with segmental open pediments; those in the centre at 2nd floor with square-headed lights, set-in square pilasters and brick corbel tables, and those in the flanking bays segmental-headed with corniced brick architraves. Unusual dormer with 3 groups of 3 small round-headed windows and stone cornice. All these windows sashed without glazing bars. Rear and interior not inspected. Small building of boldly-modelled mid-Victorian character. Forms group with No.106 and No.108 to right (q.v.) and Nos 116 (etc) to 126 to left.

It is necessary to assess the significance of the Listed building in order to fully assess the harm inflicted upon it by the proposals. The NPPF defines significance as “value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. This interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.”. Taking account of this we have identified that the heritage significance of 110 – 114 Portland Street is derived from its architectural features as well as its setting with the Conservation Area.

The original form of the building remains intact and represents a good example of a nineteenth century urban commercial building. The bays, cills, cornicing and other significant architectural features noted in the listing remain intact, visible and well preserved. The preservation of these architectural and historic features contributes to the significance of this heritage asset.

These features will not be impacted by the installation of this simple signage scheme that has been designed to fit with surroundings and fit with the architectural features of the host building.

The proposed signage complies with government guidance contained in Chapter 16 of the NPPF as well as local development plan policy as no harm is inflicted upon the significance of this heritage asset.

George Street Conservation Area

The proposal site sits on the edge of the George Street Conservation Area, which is a busy commercial district of Manchester city centre. As well as being home to the City's China Town the area contains many shops, restaurants as well as some residential buildings.

The significance of this Conservation Area is derived from its architectural features as well as its historical background as a commercial district. The appraisal notes that much of the significance of the area comes from its regular grid pattern of streets established in Georgian times as well as the Georgian architecture and its associated scale.

The appraisal specifically mentions signage and notes that the commercial nature of the area means that there is a demand for illuminated signage. The conservation area appraisal states that signs should be designed and located so as not to compete with the architectural details of buildings and it further notes that care should be taken over the design and positioning of signs.

We consider that the installation of the proposed signage will not inflict harm on the significance of the Conservation Area and therefore the proposal is fully compliant with the tests set out within chapter 16 of the NPPF, specifically paragraph 202.

Conclusion

The proposed signs are of an appropriate scale and are proportionate in size and scale to the hotel. They have been specifically designed to bring the hotel signage up to date with current Premier Inn branding and are required in order to keep the hotel up to date. The current signage has been in place since circa 2008 and is therefore tired and in need of replacement.

The scheme is acceptable from a heritage perspective as it has been demonstrated that it will not cause harm to the significance of the Listed building or Conservation Area.