

6th Floor, Bridgewater House, 58-60 Whitworth Street.

British Council

Planning Statement, Heritage Statement and Statement of Significance

Application for Full Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent

CBRE Limited
On Behalf of British Council

April 2023

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by CBRE Limited on behalf of British Council (the ‘Applicant’) in support of a Full Planning and Listed Building Consent application submitted to Manchester City Council (‘MCC’) for internal alterations and refurbishment works to the Grade II listed Bridgewater House, 58-60 Whitworth Street, Manchester (the ‘Site’).

DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

- 1.2 This application seeks Full Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent for internal alterations and refurbishment to works to part of the 6th floor of the Grade II listed Bridgewater House.
- 1.3 The description of development for the Listed Building Consent is as follows:
- “Listed Building Consent for internal alterations and refurbishment of part of the 6th floor office suite of the Grade II Listed Bridgewater House, including roof top plant and associated works”.*
- 1.4 The description of development for the Full Planning Permission is as follows:
- “Full planning permission for the installation of 10 no. louvres to the 6th floor and additional external plant to the roof level of the Grade II Listed Bridgewater House.”*
- 1.5 This Planning Statement seeks to assess the proposed development against relevant Development Plan policies and other material considerations, including national guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND TO THE APPLICATION

- 1.6 Bridgewater House has undergone significant investment over the years to improve the existing office accommodation and deliver Grade A office accommodation for future occupiers. The refurbishment of a number of floor levels has previously been undertaken to bring the space back into productive and efficient office and educational use.
- 1.7 The refurbishment of the building has been completed in a manner that is sensitive to the history and architecture of the listed fabric of the Grade II Listed building.
- 1.8 The Applicant, British Council, previously occupied the entirety of the 6th floor, however due to changing market conditions, has taken the decision to reduce the amount of floorspace occupied and seek the refurbishments to meet their occupational requirements. British Council have completed similar refurbishments of their other offices across the UK, such as Cardiff.

SCHEDULE OF SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 1.9 This application is accompanied by a suite of supporting information, as detailed in table 1.1 below, having regard to the Council’s Validation Checklist (September 2018).

Table 1.1: Schedule of Supporting Information

Supporting Information	Author	Date	Full Planning	Listed Building Consent
Planning application form, certificates and notices	CBRE Limited	March 2023	X	X
Covering Letter	CBRE Limited	March 2023	X	X

Supporting Information	Author	Date	Full Planning	Listed Building Consent
Planning Statement incl. Heritage Statement and Statement of Significance	CBRE Limited	March 2023	X	X
Design and Access Statement	HLM Architects	March 2023	X	X
Noise Assessment	BWB Consulting	March 2023	X	
MEP Statement including plant specification	CBRE Limited	March 2023	X	

- 1.10 A full suite of planning application drawings prepared by HLM Architects and CBRE have been scheduled within **Appendix 1**.
- 1.11 This application for Full Planning and Listed Building Consent has been submitted online via the Planning Portal (PP-12005287).
- 1.12 There is no fee associated with the Listed Building Consent application. The fee for the planning application is £462.00

STRUCTURE OF THE STATEMENT

- 1.13 This Planning Statement is structured as follows:

Chapter 2 - Site and Surroundings – describes the application site, its wider context, accessibility, and planning history.

Chapter 3 - Proposed Development – outlines the scheme proposals including internal layout, access and parking and M&E proposals.

Chapter 4 – Statement of Significance and Heritage Statement – outlines the aesthetic, communal and historic value of the heritage asset and an assessment of the likely impact of the proposals on the special architectural or historic interest of the building and its setting.

Chapter 5 - Planning Policy Context – sets out the relevant policies of the statutory development plan and other material considerations, including specific policy tests against which the proposals will be determined.

Chapter 6 - Assessment of the Scheme Proposals – assesses the proposed scheme against Development Plan policies and other relevant material considerations.

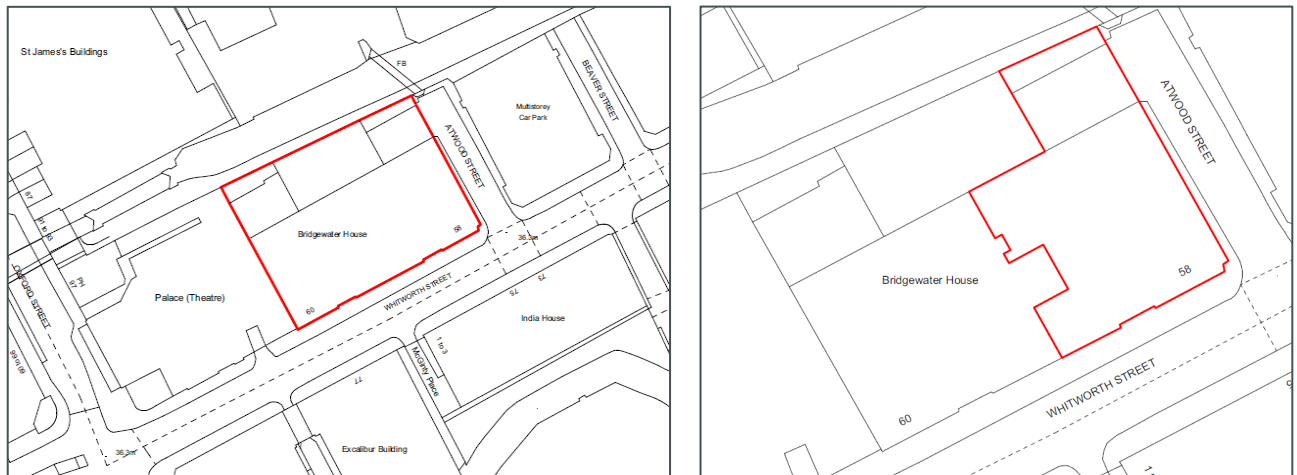
Chapter 7 - Summary and Conclusion – summarises the main findings of the Planning Statement, establishes the planning balance, and concludes on the overall merits of the scheme.

2.0 Site & Surroundings

THE SITE

- 2.1 The Site, edged red on the accompanying Site Location Plan, comprises the Grade II Listed Bridgewater House, 58-60 Whitworth Street, Manchester. The Site is located in Manchester City Centre and within the Whitworth Street Conservation Area.
- 2.2 The application relates to part of the 6th floor of Bridgewater House as shown in Figure 2.1 below:

Figure 2.1: Site Location Plan and 6th Floor Plan



- 2.3 Bridgewater House was designed by Harry S. Fairhurst and constructed in 1912 as a textile packing and shipping warehouse for Lloyds Packing Warehouses. The building is ten storeys in height including ground floor and basement. It has a steel frame and is clad with sandstone ashlar and white glazed terracotta with a concealed roof and is in keeping with the typical construction techniques of the period.
- 2.4 Bridgewater House formed part of a similar group of warehouse buildings along Whitworth Street and Princess Street all designed by Harry S. Fairhurst, including:
- Grade II* Listed India House;
 - Grade II* Listed Lancaster House;
 - Grade II* Listed Asia House.
- 2.5 The 6th floor is currently in use as an office, this application does not propose a change in use. The Applicant previously occupied the entirety of the 6th floor, however due to changing market conditions, has taken the decision to reduce the amount of floorspace occupied and seek the refurbishments to meet their occupational requirements. The application does not propose any alterations to the external fabric of the Grade II Listed Building.

SITE SURROUNDINGS

- 2.6 The Site is bound to the north by Rochdale Canal and Tow Path, to the east by Atwood Street and the Grade II Listed Central House; to the south by Whitworth Street, Grade II* Listed India House and Grade II* Listed Former Refuge Assurance Company Offices and to the west by the Grade II Listed The Palace Theatre, Oxford Street and Grade II Listed Oxford Road Railway Station.
- 2.7 The area surrounding the Site comprises key heritage assets as listed below and the wider Whitworth Street Conservation Area:

- Grade II* Listed India House;
- Grade II* Listed Lancaster House;
- Grade II* Listed Asia House;
- Grade II* Listed Former Refuge Assurance Company Offices;
- Grade II Listed Central House;
- Grade II Listed The Palace Theatre; and
- Grade II Listed Oxford Road Railway Station.

2.8 Buildings within the surrounding area are of mixed uses, including offices, retail, hotel, restaurants, bars, residential and a theatre including the Palace Theatre and Kimpton Clock Tower.

Access and Parking

- 2.9 The Site is located within a highly accessible location in Manchester City Centre, affording it excellent accessibility by pedestrians, cyclists, public transport (trains, buses, and trams) and private vehicle.
- 2.10 The Site is located within Greater Manchester Accessibility (GMAL) Level 8 which translates as an area of 'Very High' public transport accessibility. GMAL are a detailed and accurate measure of the accessibility of a point to both the conventional public transport network (i.e. bus, Metrolink and rail) and Greater Manchester's Local Link (flexible transport service), taking into account walk access time and service availability GMAL 8 is the highest possible GMAL rating and confirms the excellent opportunity the Site offers for travel by public transport services.
- 2.11 Bridgewater House is situated in an accessible location and is well served by walking and cycling links, public transport and the strategic road network. The Site is well connected to the public transport network. Two rail stations are located within walking distance, with Manchester Oxford Road accessible within a 200m radius and Manchester Piccadilly within a 0.4 mile radius to the east. Several bus stops are located on Oxford Road and Whitworth Street, connecting the Site to a number of bus routes.
- 2.12 There are good walking and cycling links to the Site along Oxford Road and Whitworth Street.
- 2.13 Bridgewater House benefits from vehicular access from Atwood Street to a surface level car park at the rear of the building.

Vehicle Parking

- 2.14 The existing car parking arrangement for the building is located to the rear of the Site and comprises 25 car parking spaces, two of which are allocated to British Council and are both accessible parking spaces.
- 2.15 The development proposal does not propose any changes to the existing car parking arrangement.

Access and Servicing

- 2.16 Primary access into the 6th floor office suite for staff and visitors will be as existing, accessed via the lifts and stairwell on the Atwood Street side of the building (currently used as a fire exit to the floor) from the ground floor reception area.
- 2.17 The existing arrangement of the building requires that public access be provided from Whitworth Street, with second means of escape provided at the rear of the building which exits onto the car park.

- 2.18 In terms of disabled access, the finished floor level of the refurbished office will match that of the existing office with ramp access to all exit and entrance doors. All internal doors will facilitate inclusive mobility and wheelchair access and will have colour contrast with adjacent walls. All ironmongery will be easy grip with colour contrast.
- 2.19 Vehicular access and deliveries to the building will be undertaken via Atwood Street and through the underpass to the building's car park and service area.
- 2.20 Weight and height restrictions are in place for vehicles accessing the rear car park and service area.

STATUTORY DESIGNATIONS

- 2.21 The following designations are applicable to the Application Site and surrounding area.

Heritage

- 2.22 The Site is Grade II Listed (List UID: 1270606) and is located within Whitworth Street Conservation Area.
- 2.23 The area surrounding the Site comprises key heritage assets as listed below and the wider Whitworth Street Conservation Area:
- Grade II* Listed India House;
 - Grade II* Listed Lancaster House;
 - Grade II* Listed Asia House;
 - Grade II* Listed Former Refuge Assurance Company Offices;
 - Grade II Listed Central House;
 - Grade II Listed The Palace Theatre; and
 - Grade II Listed Oxford Road Railway Station.

Flooding

- 2.24 The Site is located within Flood Zone 1 and therefore carries a low probability of flooding.

Trees

- 2.25 There are no trees within the Site boundary.

Rights of Way

- 2.26 There are no public rights of way crossing the Site.

HERITAGE CONTEXT

- 2.27 Bridgewater House, 58 – 60 Whitworth Street, was designed by Harry S. Fairhurst and completed in 1912 for Lloyds Packing Warehouse as a textile packing and shipping warehouse, a prominent example of the cotton trade legacy and remains a distinguished element of the streetscape.
- 2.28 Historically, Lloyds Packing Warehouses offered flexible rental space for office staff for packing arrangements alongside the provision of labour and machinery for packing and despatch. Tenants could rent portions of a floor dependent on the size of their business. Bridgewater House formed part of group similar warehouse buildings on Whitworth/Princess Street – India House, constructed in 1905; Lancaster House, constructed in

1909; and Asia House, constructed in 1910; all designed by Harry S. Fairhurst, a prominent Manchester architect in the Edwardian era. From excavation to final completion the building took approximately 11 months to construct and was noted as being the biggest packing warehouse in the world.

- 2.29 The building is ten storeys in height, including ground floor and basement, and is built around a steel frame with sandstone ashlar cladding and white glazed terracotta in large rectangular plan with a car park and service area to the rear of the building.
- 2.30 Bridgewater House is of a fireproof construction, with a grand frontage and efficient, functional interior and rear elevation. The Whitworth Street elevation is alternating bays and flat windows, faience blocks above the granite plinth. Two original entrances are clad in granite with bust of Duke of Bridgewater over the door.
- 2.31 Two original pedestrian entrances at 58 and 60 Whitworth Street led to internal halls containing stairs and double lifts.
- 2.32 The ground floor was split into three large, open warerooms along the front of the building, behind which were five large hoists serving the floors above. Beyond the warerooms, the width of building was open to a loading bank serving a covered private street that ran round the building and allowed up to 30 lorries to be loaded /unloaded at one time with space for vehicles to circulate. The rear half of the building was essentially a single space covered with a glazed canopy which spanned the loading bank, to the boundary wall with the tow path on the canal.
- 2.33 With the decline of the cotton trade the building was used as offices and was owned by Standard Life Assurance of Edinburgh by 1974. In 1975, the building underwent major refurbishment works during which the external stonework was cleaned and repaired and the majority of the steel framed windows were replaced with aluminium units. Between 1975 and 1985, further works were undertaken including the installation of an additional fire escape. Further external works have been undertaken in recent year including the insertion of a new entrance to the Whitworth Street elevation in 2001.
- 2.34 Bridgewater House was first listed on 6th June 1994 with a Grade II listing and List Entry Number 1270606. The official List Entry reads as follows:

“Shipping warehouse, now offices. 1912, by Harry S. Fairhurst. Steel frame with cladding of sandstone ashlar and white glazed terracotta (roof concealed). Large rectangular plan, with loading bay at rear. Eclectic style. Eight storeys with basement, 19 bays, symmetrical, with strong horizontal division, the first 2 floors of stone, treated as a rustic with channelled rusticated piers, moulded frieze and prominent modillioned cornice, the upper floors of white glazed terracotta, the 2nd floor with a prominent panelled cornice on coupled brackets, the next 4 floors with tiered canted bay windows in alternate bays, and a modillioned main cornice interrupted in the centre by a 5-bay penthouse with pilastered end bays and a parapet with upstand. The ground floor has a massive sill-band (over rock-faced piers at basement level), interrupted between the 6th and 9th and the 14th and 17th bays by square-headed entrances with doorways which have profile medallions of the Duke of Bridgewater on the lintels and 3-light overlights at 1st-floor level; otherwise, each bay has metal-framed windows to the ground and 1st floors and bronze panels between these. The upper floors have square windows (except the canted bays) and various forms of enrichment including geometric panels, fascies, wreaths and corrupt-leaf pendants. Return sides have 2 bays in matching style (with monogram at 6th floor level), and continue in plain rectilinear grid form. Interior not inspected. Forms group with Palace Theatre to left (q.v.), and Refuge Assurance Buildings (q.v.) and India House opposite (q.v.).”
- 2.35 However, the above listing is not entirely accurate. The building plan is ‘U’ shaped rather than rectangular and the stone plinth is granite rather than sandstone.

PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.36 Bridgewater House has been subject to a significant degree of, primarily, internal alterations with various refurbishment works undertaken in recent years. The planning history of relevance to the proposals is set out below:

Table 2.1 Planning History

Application Reference	Description Of Development	Decision
135486/JO/2022	Variation of condition 2 (approved drawings) attached to application ref no 134350/LO/2022	Approved
134350/LO/2022	Listed Building Consent for the refurbishment of 5th and 6th floor offices including reconfiguration of the lobby entrance doors from lift on 5th and 6th floor and the introduction of new glazed entrance doors	Approved
127759/LO/2020	Internal alterations to provide further changing rooms, lockers and shower facilities within the basement of the building for use by cyclists.	Approved
124419/FO/2019	Change of use of part of 3rd floor from offices (Use Class B1) to non-residential education and training (Use Class D1)	Approved
124420/LO/2019	Listed Building Consent for installation of partitions to part of 3rd floor in association with use of space for non-residential education and training	Approved
123089/LO/2019	Listed Building Consent for Internal refurbishment and decoration of the 9th floor office suite.	Approved
119147/LO/2018	Listed Building Consent for internal alterations at basement and ground floor level in conjunction with existing gym use, installation of internally applied graphic vinyls to entrance windows and display of 1 no. illuminated projecting sign to Whitworth Street elevation with thickness of 30mm from side to side	Approved
119091/LO/2018	Listed Building Consent for internal alterations to ground, second and seventh floor office suites together with refurbishment of two separate stair cores between first and tenth floor inclusive	Approved
115760/FO/2017	Remodel of existing entrance and reception including Change of Use to part of Ground Floor for (A3) cafe use, external alterations include new doors and cladding and associated works.	Approved
115761/LO/2017	Listed Building Consent for the remodelling of existing entrance and reception including Change of Use to part of Ground Floor for cafe use, external alterations include new doors and cladding. Internal reconfiguration to circulation and reception areas to form new cafe and relocation of WC facilities. Ground floor rear elevation refurbishment, including door.	Approved
110877/FO/2015/C2	Facade renovation works including repair/ replacement of damaged faience terracotta, render repairs, roofing repairs and replacement of external lighting scheme.	Approved

Application Reference	Description Of Development	Decision
110878/LO/2015/C2	Facade renovation works including repair/ replacement of damaged faience terracotta, render repairs, roofing repairs and replacement of external lighting scheme.	Approved
105904/LO/2014/C2	Listed Building Consent for the refurbishment of the 9th floor office space.	Approved
105264/FO/2014/C2	Installation of a new backup generator, acoustic enclosure and screen to rear yard.	Approved
105265/LO/2014/C2	Listed Building Consent for the installation of a new generator, acoustic enclosure and screen to rear yard	Approved
104337/LO/2013/C2	Listed Building Consent Internal and external alterations including: works to pavement / highway; new entrance from Whitworth St. via original delivery gates; installation of louvres on rear elevation; and installation of plant equipment to facilitate the change of use of: basement from storage to gym; and part ground floor (suite G01) from offices (Use Class B1) to educational establishment (Use Class D1).	Approved
101029/FO/2012/C2	New entrance from Whitworth St. via original delivery gates. Basement conversion from storage to gym. Ground floor suite G01 conversion from offices to educational establishment.	Approved
101030/LO/2012/C2	New entrance from Whitworth St. via original delivery gates. Basement conversion from storage to gym. Ground floor suite G01 conversion from offices to educational establishment.	Approved

3.0 Development Proposals

- 3.1 This section describes the proposed development for which Full Planning and Listed Building Consent is sought and should be read in conjunction with the accompanying Design and Access Statement and supporting application drawings prepared by HLM Architects and CBRE.

DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

- 3.2 This application seeks Full Planning and Listed Building Consent for internal alterations and refurbishment works to part of the 6th floor of the Grade II listed Bridgewater House.

- 3.3 The description of development for the Listed Building Consent application is as follows:

“Listed Building Consent for internal alterations and refurbishment of part of the 6th floor office suite of the Grade II Listed Bridgewater House, including roof top plant and associated works”.

- 3.4 The description of development for the Full Planning Permission is as follows:

“Full planning permission for the installation of 10 no. louvres to the 6th floor and additional external plant to the roof level of the Grade II Listed Bridgewater House.”

Existing Use

- 3.5 The existing part of the 6th floor level comprises 985 sq.m of floorspace which is currently in use as an office suite within Use Class E(g)(i).
- 3.6 There is no change of use proposed.
- 3.7 The Applicant previously occupied the entirety of the 6th floor, however due to changing market conditions and the need to cater for current and future needs following the Coronavirus pandemic, has taken the decision to reduce the amount of floorspace occupied and seek the refurbishments to meet their occupational requirements. British Council have completed similar refurbishments of their other offices across the UK, such as Cardiff.
- 3.8 At present, the existing part of the 6th floor level is open plan in nature and lacks the meeting room and collaboration space required by the occupier. The subdivision of elements of the 6th floor will allow for the occupier to maximise the use of the floorspace and increase efficiencies by reducing the amount of vacant space.
- 3.9 However, the building is Listed therefore Listed Building Consent is required for any internal and external alterations to the listed fabric of the building.

Proposed Use

- 3.10 The proposed internal alterations and refurbishment works to the office suite on part of the 6th floor level of the Grade II listed Bridgewater House would include interventions that would allow the existing floorspace to be subdivided creating the following:
- 17 call rooms ranging in occupancy from 1 to 3 people;
 - 1 large meeting room;
 - 2 medium meeting rooms;
 - 6 small meeting rooms;
 - 189 sq.m exam area;
 - 83 sq.m of collaboration space;

- 12 sq.m IT room;
 - 11 sq.m of print and post space;
 - 11 sq.m faith room;
 - 7 sq.m of wellbeing space;
 - 6 sq.m exam store space;
 - Accessible shower unit;
 - 78 desks;
 - Roller racking storage; and
 - Circa 60 storage lockers for staff.
- 3.11 The entrance lobby area, lift and staircase areas will remain as existing.
- 3.12 To create the spaces listed above, new slab to slab partitions will be constructed to meet client acoustic requirements. Currently, there is a raised access floor throughout, this will be removed, made good and/or replaced in the necessary areas.
- 3.13 Special care is to be taken when designing elements that connect with listed fabric of the building, for example new partitions connecting with exposed brick walls, these have been designed to drawing ref. BCM-HLM-01-06-DR-I-2501 – Internal Wall Partitions. The Design and Access Statement prepared by HLM Architects, shows the exposed brick wall in an existing meeting room that the new partitions will adjoin, to create new rooms. All other exposed brick areas are to be unaffected.
- 3.14 The internal partitions are proposed to be sealed to the exposed brick and all fixings will be reversible. The partitions will not penetrate the listed fabric of the building.
- 3.15 The internal nature of the proposed refurbishment works means that the works will not impact on the external listed fabric of Bridgewater House, or its setting within the Whitworth Street Conservation Area.
- 3.16 The proposed external roof-top plant will be attached to the existing raised plant platform which is well concealed on the roof, and will therefore not be fixed to the listed fabric of the building. The proposed M&E strategy uses the existing routes through the building to the roof to connect to this additional plant, i.e. no new penetrations will be made through the building to accommodate this plant connection.

Layout

- 3.17 The proposed 6th floor level would be accessed from the existing entrance lobby area with both stair and lift access and the alterations noted above will allow the floorspace to be subdivided, using partitions which have been sensitively designed to not interfere with the listed fabric, into a number of meeting rooms, call rooms, collaboration space and desk space among others.
- 3.18 The northern part of the office floorspace will comprise an exam store, exam area, print area and call rooms that will be divided from the remainder of the office space with a partition wall and accessed via two doors. The staircase will remain as existing.
- 3.19 The southern part of the office floorspace will comprise collaboration space, small meeting rooms, medium meeting rooms, a large meeting room, call rooms, wellbeing space, faith room, cleaning store, facilities office and an IT room. The server room will remain as existing. The existing shaft structure will also remain as existing, with a storage wall located flush to the existing shaft structure but not connected to it.

- 3.20 The central part of the office space proposal around the existing entrance lobby area comprises a pantry, print and post area, roller rack storage, c.60 storage lockers, a small meeting room, a medium meeting room, call rooms and an accessible shower unit. The existing toilet block will remain as existing.
- 3.21 In order to accommodate all users, the finished floor level of the new office will match that of the existing office with ramp access to all exit and entrance doors.
- 3.22 All internal doors will facilitate accessible and wheelchair friendly access and will have colour contrast with the adjacent walls. All ironmongery will be easy grip with colour contrast. Floor finishes will contrast with adjacent walls and have anti-slip qualities where appropriate. All sockets and switches will be positioned to accommodate ease of access. The collaboration pantry will also have a knee recess and lower worktops.

Materials

- 3.23 The refurbishment of the 6th floor level has been designed to meet the specification of the occupier, British Council, and to include a palette of materials and finishes to reflect their branding.
- 3.24 The existing raised access floor present throughout the 6th floor level, will be removed, made good and/or replaced in the necessary areas.
- 3.25 Refurbishment works will include stripping out all existing floor finishes and ceilings, which are to be replaced with new in line with design guidance from British Council.

Access and Parking

- 3.26 The Site is located in a highly sustainable location and is well served by cycling links, public transport and strategic road networks. There are walking and cycling links to the Site along Oxford Road and Whitworth Street.
- 3.27 Bridgewater House also benefits from vehicular access from Atwood Street to a surface level car park at the rear of the building.
- 3.28 The existing car parking arrangement for the building is located to the rear of the Site and comprises 25 car parking spaces, two of which are allocated to British Council as fully accessible car parking spaces.
- 3.29 The development proposal does not propose any changes to the existing car parking arrangement.

MEP Engineering Services

- 3.30 To sufficiently service the proposed office suite and facilitate the building services system, the installation of new ventilation, heating, cooling and lighting system will be required throughout. All services will be located within the new demountable suspended ceiling and raised access floor.
- 3.31 The proposal includes installing 10 new louvres into the existing windows located on the rear elevation and Atwood Street elevation of the building rather than the prominent Whitworth Street frontage, as shown on drawing ref. BCM-HLM-01-XX-DR-I-0032 – Proposed GA Elevations. The proposed louvres mimic the design and location of existing louvres on the 7th floor level of Bridgewater House and have been designed to minimise impact on the elevation of the building when read as a whole.
- 3.32 The existing windows are not part of the original external fabric of the Grade II Listed Building, having been a later addition to the building in circa 2000.
- 3.33 New power and data locations will be provided throughout the part of the 6th floor level to suit the new office layout and client requirements. Electrical supply will be taken from distribution boards located in the existing

riser stairwell. This electrical infrastructure will not impact upon the listed fabric and will use routes running through the ceiling below.

- 3.34 The drainage strategy for the new office will be to utilise existing Soil Vent Pipes (SVP) that currently serve the 6th floor. All waste routes to connect into the nearest existing SVP. Water pipework will also connect into the existing circuits within the 6th floor.

Roof Top Plant

- 3.35 The proposed installation of the new external plant is required at roof level, as part of a new ventilation, heating, cooling and lighting system which will facilitate the refurbishment of part of the 6th floor of Bridgewater House.
- 3.36 The new external plant will be located on the eastern elevation of Bridgewater House and will be located on an existing raised metal platform and will therefore not be fixed to the listed fabric of the building, as shown in Reference 2 of the MEP Statement prepared by CBRE Limited. The platform is well-concealed and therefore the plant will not have a visual impact on the Grade II Listed building.
- 3.37 The proposed roof level is restricted for maintenance access only.
- 3.38 The proposed new external plant will match the existing plant at roof level and consist of two twinned units which are expected to be no larger than 1640(H) x 1240(W) x 765(D), with an area of 3.1 sq.m.
- 3.39 The new external plant will be connected to existing servicing and ductwork routes across the roof level and into an existing disused staircase to access the 6th floor level, therefore no new penetrations will be made through the building to accommodate this plant connection.

4.0 Statement of Significance and Heritage Statement

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

- 4.1 Bridgewater House is Grade II Listed in recognition of its significance to the Whitworth Conservation Area in terms of its grouping with similarly designed Listed Buildings including Grade II* Listed India House, Asia House and Lancaster House. The Listed Building Consent application proposes the refurbishment of part of the 6th floor of Bridgewater House and is considered to have negligible heritage impact on the building and the wider Conservation Area.

Aesthetic Value

- 4.2 The building's aesthetic value is significant in terms of its dominance on Whitworth Street and the remaining impression that the building has on the townscape value associated with the Conservation Area. Externally Bridgewater House is dominating in terms of its height and massing, creating a canyon effect along Whitworth Street when viewed as a group with the other Grade II* Listed warehouses designed by Harry S. Fairhurst including the Grade II * Listed India House, Asia House and Lancaster House.
- 4.3 Bridgewater House retains many of its original characteristic and operational features including the cantilever iron structure of the overhanging loading bay to the north of the Site, reflecting its relationship with the adjacent Rochdale Canal.

Historic Value

- 4.4 The building is of significant historic importance. Bridgewater House represents a key example of an early 20th Century shipping warehouse, in an area of Manchester of which previously formed the Victorian/Edwardian trading heart of the city. In addition to this, Bridgewater House represents the early architecture of nationally renowned Manchester architect Harry S. Fairhurst, a prominent Edwardian architect who designed many iconic warehouses within Manchester and many for Lloyds Shipping Warehouses.

Communal Value

- 4.5 Bridgewater House has a poignant communal value for the citizens of Manchester. The building provided many opportunities for the employment of local people through its use as a shipping warehouse and offices since its construction in the early 20th Century.

HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 4.6 The NPPF (paragraph 194 and 195) requires that applicants for Listed Building consent justify their proposals and provide the local planning authority with full information to carry out an assessment of the likely impact of their proposals on the special architectural or historic interest of the building and its setting.

Entrance Lobby Area, Lift and Staircase

- 4.7 The 6th floor entrance lobby area is deemed to have high heritage significance due to the partial survival of the stained hardwood corridor enclosures, comprising door entablature and wall tiles. The existing office doors are replacement modern fire doors and are of no heritage significance. It is also understood that the lift enclosures, ceilings, lighting and floor surfaces are modern interventions and are of no heritage significance.
- 4.8 The office will make use of one of the existing entrances into the building as well as the existing lobby area, entrance, staircase and lift onto the 6th floor level, these areas will be unaffected by the development proposal and therefore there is no impact to the existing listed fabric of the building.

Office Space

- 4.9 The refurbishment of part of the 6th floor of the building is a considerable benefit allowing for more modern and efficient work space.
- 4.10 The new partition walls that are proposed to be installed will involve the subdivision of part of the 6th floor level to allow for a flexible working arrangement and meeting space. All partition walls will be sealed to the existing exposed brick and will not penetrate the listed fabric of the building. All fixings are designed to be reversible.
- 4.11 The proposal does not involve the removal of or permanent alterations to any parts of the listed fabric of the building.

M&E Requirements and Roof Level

- 4.12 The M&E proposals for the 6th floor and the roof level facilitate the refurbishment of the office space. The proposals have been sensitively designed, using existing services, ductwork and connections were appropriate and will not impact on the listed fabric of the building.
- 4.13 New ventilation systems are proposed via Mechanical Ventilation Heat Recovery Units (MVHR) installed within the ceiling void. Louvres are proposed to be fitted to the windows of the rear elevation and Atwood Street elevation as shown on drawing ref. BCM-HLM-01-XX-DR-I-0032 – Proposed GA Elevations for enhanced ventilation for the office. These windows do not form part of the original listed fabric of the building as they are later additions circa 2000. Therefore there is negligible heritage impact from the proposed louvres.
- 4.14 All services will be located within the new demountable suspended ceiling and existing raised access floor. New power distribution will be provided via a busbar system under the raised access floor, connecting to the existing vertical busbar distribution. Therefore, there is negligible heritage impact.
- 4.15 No electrical connection points have been proposed via desk top power units and flex power stands. These sockets and switches will be positioned to accommodate ease of access. Electrical supply will be taken from distribution boards located in the existing riser stairwell. Therefore there is negligible heritage impact from the proposed electrical connections.

Roof Level

- 4.16 The roof level of Bridgewater House is largely concealed from view and does not form part of the official Historic England List Entry for the building.
- 4.17 The heritage value of the roof level is negligible due to the modern interventions present, allowing Bridgewater House to function, including external plant, ductwork and services.
- 4.18 The proposal does not involve the removal of any parts of the listed fabric of the building.
- 4.19 The views of the roof level from the surrounding Whitworth Street Conservation Area will not be affected as the proposal mimics the existing plant in situ.

SUMMARY

- 4.20 The development has been sensitively designed to respect the conservation and heritage value of the Grade II Listed Building, responding appropriately to its existing architectural form. The development proposal will involve no alteration of any original listed fabric of the building, therefore there is no demonstrable harm to the significance of Bridgewater House or the character and appearance of the Whitworth Street Conservation Area.

5.0 Planning Policy Context

5.1 This Section sets out the relevant policies of the statutory development plan including specific policy tests and other material considerations against which the proposals will be determined.

STATUTORY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

5.2 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (“The Act”) establishes the legislative framework for town planning in England and Wales. Section 38(6) of The Act requires that proposals are determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

5.3 The statutory development plan for Manchester currently consists of:

- Saved Policies Manchester Unitary Development Plan (1995);
- The Manchester Core Strategy (2012); and
- Greater Manchester Joint Waste Development Plan (2012).

5.4 There are also a number of emerging planning policy documents for Manchester including:

- Places for Everyone Plan – Composite Plan (January 2023); and
- Manchester Local Plan.

Site Allocation

5.5 The Site is located within the Regional Centre and City Centre boundary. The Site is also located within the Whitworth Street Conservation Area.

SAVED UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

5.6 The Unitary Development Plan (UDP) for the City of Manchester was adopted in 1995. However, it has now been largely replaced by the Manchester Core Strategy. There are some saved policies which are considered relevant. The relevant policies are as follows:

Table 5.1 Relevant Saved UDP Policies

Relevant ‘Saved’ UDP Policies	Commentary
Saved UDP Policy DC18 ‘Conservation Areas’	Seeks to preserve and enhance the settings of Listed Buildings by appropriate control over the design of new development in their vicinity, control over the use of adjacent land, and where appropriate, by the preservation of trees and landscape features. Demolition will only be granted where there are approved detailed plans for redevelopment and where there is evidence of a firm building contract.
Saved UDP Policy DC19 ‘Listed Building’	Aims to preserve and enhance the settings of Listed Buildings by appropriate control over the design of new development in their vicinity, control over the use of adjacent land, and where appropriate, by the preservation of trees and landscape features.
Saved UDP Policy DC26 ‘Development and Noise’	Where the Council believes that an existing noise source might result in an adverse impact upon a proposed new development, or where a new proposal might generate potentially unacceptable levels of

Relevant 'Saved' UDP Policies	Commentary
	noise, it will in either case require the applicant to provide an assessment of the likely impact and of the measures he proposes to deal satisfactorily with it. Such measures might include the following: a) engineering solutions, including reduction of noise at source, improving sound insulation of sensitive buildings or screening by purpose-built barriers b) layout solutions, including consideration of the distance between the source of the noise and the buildings or land affected by it; and screening by natural barriers or other buildings or noncritical rooms within a building; and c) administrative steps, including limiting the operating times of the noise source, restricting activities allowed on the site or specifying an acceptable noise limit. Any or all of these factors will be considered appropriate for inclusion in conditions on any planning permission.

CORE STRATEGY (2012)

5.7 The Core Strategy was adopted in July 2012 and is the key document in the Local Development Framework. It replaces significant elements of the 'saved' UDP and establishes the long-term strategic planning policies for Manchester's future development.

5.8 The Core Strategy sets out MCC's vision for Manchester over the Plan period to 2027, along with the planning policies that provide the framework for delivering that vision.

5.9 A key spatial objective of the Core Strategy is to (CBRE emphasis in bold):

*"...support a significant further **improvement of the City's economic performance** and spread the benefits of this growth across the City to reduce economic, environmental and social disparities, and to help create inclusive sustainable communities.*

*The Regional Centre will continue to be the **main focus for business**, retail, higher education, leisure, cultural and tourism development, to further develop its role as the **main employment location and primary economic driver of the City region...**"*

5.10 The following policies are of specific relevance:

Table 5.2 Relevant Core Strategy Policies

Relevant Core Strategy Policies	Commentary
Economy	
Policy SP1 'Spatial Principles'	Details the key spatial principles which will guide the strategic development of Manchester to 2027 including the Regional Centre being the focus for economic and commercial development, retail, leisure and cultural activity. The supporting text at paragraph 6.5

Relevant Core Strategy Policies	Commentary
	establishes that the Regional Centre, with Manchester City Centre at its core, is the economic driver of the City Region and has greatest potential to drive its continued economic growth, and to do so with the least environmental costs.
Policy EC1 'Employment and Economic Growth'	States that development will be supported in sectors that make significant contributions the economic growth and productivity including health, education, retailing, cultural and tourist facilities. The City Centre is identified as key areas for employment, and the policy recognises that employment can be provided through a range of activity, including education, retailing, culture and tourism. The policy states that a minimum of 200 ha of employment land will be developed between 2010s and 2027 for offices (B1a), research and development (B1b), light industrial (B1c), general industry (B2) and distribution and warehousing (B8). Priorities for ensuring continued economic growth include: • "Improving access to jobs for all via public transport, walking and cycling; • Demonstrating that employment-generating development has fully considered opportunities to provide jobs for local people, through construction or use; • Improving the portfolio of employment premises, by providing a range of employment sites and premises for small, medium and large businesses; • Improving digital infrastructure delivery to businesses and residents; • Creating business destinations by enhancing the primary business use with ancillary commercial facilities; • Ensuring the continued social, economic and environmental regeneration of the City; • Ensuring connectivity to international markets for the import and export of goods to ensure competitiveness in international markets"
Policy EC3 'The Regional Centre'	Encourages the development of employment generating uses including offices and other commercial development provided that they are in locations which are well connected by sustainable transport to both the City Centre and residential areas, and the scale and type of office development does not undermine delivery of employment space within the City Centre.

Relevant Core Strategy Policies	Commentary
Policy CC1 'Primary Economic Development Focus: City Centre and Fringe'	Acknowledges that the City Centre is a strategic economic location and focus of employment growth in the City and City Region. The City Centre is expected to accommodate 33ha of office or similar employment development with a variety of a variety of high-quality accommodation types, sizes and floor plates encouraged by the Council in order to boost investment by local, national and international businesses. The provision of a range of economic development uses, such as retail, leisure, entertainment, cultural and tourism facilities will also be supported in order to facilitate the creation of a vibrant employment location attractive to businesses, employees and visitors to the City Centre.
Heritage	
Policy EN3 'Heritage'	States the Council will encourage development that complements and takes advantage of the distinct historic and heritage features of its districts and neighbourhoods. New developments must be designed so as to support the Council in preserving or, where possible, enhancing the historic environment, the character, setting and accessibility of areas and buildings of acknowledged importance.
Policy CC9 'Design and Heritage'	The policy is clear that development in Manchester City Centre should preserve or enhance the heritage assets that have been identified, including listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled ancient monuments.
Amenity	
Policy DM1 'Development Management'	All development should have regard to the following specific issues for which more detailed guidance may be given within a supplementary planning document:- • Effects on amenity, including privacy, light, noise, vibration, air quality, odours, litter, vermin, birds, road safety and traffic generation. This could also include proposals which would be sensitive to existing environmental conditions, such as noise.

EMERGING PLANNING POLICY

Places for Everyone

- 5.11 Places for Everyone (PfE) is a new long-term plan for jobs, new homes and sustainable growth prepared by GMCA on behalf of nine Greater Manchester districts (Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan). Upon adoption it will form part of the Development Plan for Manchester.

- 5.12 A final period of public consultation was undertaken with regards to the Publication Draft 'Places for Everyone' Plan between 9th August 2021 and 3rd October 2021. The Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for examination on 8th March 2022. Examination hearings are currently being undertaken. At the time of writing, it is considered that that Plan holds some weight in the determination of planning applications within Greater Manchester.
- 5.13 The emerging plan has a strong focus on creating conditions for inclusive economic growth and creating ambitious plans for good quality employment to contribute to and benefit from growth as part of a thriving Northern Powerhouse.
- 5.14 The following draft Places for Everyone Plan policies are of specific relevance:

Table 5.3 Relevant Draft PfE Policies

Relevant Draft PfE Policies	Commentary
Policy JP-Strat 1 'Core Growth Area'	Aims to protect and enhance the economic role of the Core Growth Area (including the City Centre) with sustainable development that will support major growth in the number of jobs within Greater Manchester.
Policy JP-Strat 2 'City Centre'	The City Centre will continue to provide the primary focus for business, retail, leisure, culture and tourism activity in Greater Manchester. Over the period 2020-2037, land to accommodate around 2,200,000 sqm of office floorspace.
Policy JP-J1 'Supporting Long Term Economic Growth'	Aims to seek a thriving, inclusive and productive economy with an emphasis of maintaining economic diversity and maximising key growth locations that raises competitiveness, especially in the north, by ensuring that employment growth opportunities are well connected and accessible.
Policy JP-J3 'Office Development'	At least 1,900,000 sq.m of accessible new office floorspace will be provided over the plan period. The City Centre will account for more than half of all new office floorspaces, taking advantage of existing and proposed public transport infrastructure. The refurbishment of existing office accommodation will also be encourages including improving standards of accessibility.
Policy JP-P2 'Heritage'	Development proposals affecting designated and non-designated heritage assets and/or their settings will be considered having regard to national planning policy. Development proposals will also be expected to avoid harm to other non-designated heritage assets.

Manchester Local Plan

- 5.15 As set out in the Council's Executive Report dated 15th January 2020, the new Local Plan will replace the Core Strategy and the remaining 'saved' UDP policies, taking account of the Our Manchester strategy, the emerging Places for Everyone, the NPPF and Greater Manchester's devolved planning powers.
- 5.16 The new Local Plan will need to respond to key strategic issues including achieving a zero carbon Manchester by 2038 at the latest; delivering a sustainable transport system that supports existing and further development;

balancing competing demands for space; ensuring critical infrastructure requirements are addressed; and creating neighbourhoods that promote and enable healthy lifestyles.

- 5.17 The Issues and Options consultation was undertaken between 7th February and 3rd April 2020. Consultation on a draft plan is expected to be undertaken in Summer 2023.

OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.18 Statutory protection for built heritage is principally provided by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

- 5.19 In July 2021, the Government published the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF must be taken into account and is a material consideration in planning decisions.
- 5.20 In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:
- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
 - the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
 - the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness (paragraph 197).
- 5.21 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 (paragraph 199).
- 5.22 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 grade I listed buildings should be wholly exceptional (paragraph 200).
- 5.23 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 (paragraph 201).
- 5.24 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 (paragraph 202).

SUMMARY

- 5.25 This Section sets out the Development Plan policies and other material considerations that are of specific relevance to the scheme proposal and which have informed the development of the proposal. An assessment of the proposal against policy guidance is provided in Section 6 'Assessment of Scheme Proposal'.

6.0 Planning Assessment

- 6.1 This section assesses the proposed development against relevant local Development Plan policies and other material considerations, including national guidance, as detailed in Section 5 of this Statement. In assessing the scheme proposals, the key matters are as follows:

Principle of Development

- 6.2 At a local level Policy EC1 'Employment and Economic Growth', Policy EC3 'The Regional Centre' and Policy CC1 'Primary Economic Development Focus: City Centre and Fringe' are clear that within the City Centre, planning permission will be supported for proposals for office development. The application proposal represents the refurbishment of the existing office floorspace to create modern, efficient, 'best in class' office space that will meet the needs of occupiers.
- 6.3 The existing office use is compatible with the Development Plan and the wider uses within Bridgewater House.

Noise Assessment

- 3.40 To inform the development proposals, BWB Consulting have prepared a Noise Assessment to show that the proposed external plant will not have an adverse impact on the amenity of the surrounding buildings.
- 3.41 A baseline noise survey was undertaken at the site on 23rd February 2023. The results of the survey and subsequent assessment work have been undertaken in accordance with current standards and guidance, and Manchester City Council requirements.
- 3.42 An assessment of proposed external plant has shown that the requirements of Manchester City Council will be achieved. Therefore, based on the results of the assessment, it is considered that noise need not be a determining factor in the granting of planning approval for the proposed external plant.
- 3.43 Overall, the proposal is acceptable in noise terms and fully complies with Core Strategy Policy DM1 and 'Saved' UDP Policy DC26.1.

Heritage

- 6.4 The NPPF is clear that development proposals that will lead to less than substantial harm should be weighed against the public benefits, including securing its optimum viable use. LPAs should also take account of the desirability of new development sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets; the positive contribution that heritage assets can make to sustainable communities; and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- 6.5 The proposed refurbishment of part of the 6th floor of Bridgewater House will result in less than substantial harm to the building and when weighed against the key benefits associated with the proposal (as set out below).

Scheme Benefits

- 6.6 The scheme will deliver a number of benefits, including:
- Refurbishment of an existing office space to create more efficient, modern and 'best in class' office space in Manchester;
 - Bringing part of a prominent Grade II Listed building back into full operational use whilst respecting the buildings' heritage;
 - Delivering continued economic benefits through the employment of full time and part time staff; and
 - Enhance the internal aesthetic of the building.

- 6.7 The assessment in section 4 of this Planning Statement demonstrates that the proposals would not cause harm to the significance of the heritage asset and would therefore be compliant with the NPPF.

7.0 Summary & Conclusions

7.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by CBRE Limited on behalf of British Council in support of a Full Planning and Listed Building Consent application for internal alterations and refurbishment to works to part of the 6th floor of the Grade II listed Bridgewater House.

7.2 The description of development for the Listed Building Consent is as follows:

“Listed Building Consent for internal alterations and refurbishment of part of the 6th floor office suite of the Grade II Listed Bridgewater House, including roof top plant and associated works”.

7.3 The description of development for the Full Planning Permission is as follows:

“Full planning permission for the installation of 10 no. louvres to the 6th floor and additional external plant to the roof level of the Grade II Listed Bridgewater House.”

The Site

7.4 The Site comprises part of the 6th floor level of the Grade II listed Bridgewater House. The Site is located within the Whitworth Street Conservation Area.

7.5 The Site is not subject to any statutory or non-statutory nature conservation or landscape designations. The Site is situated in flood zone 1 (low probability).

Proposed Development

7.6 The proposals seek internal alterations and refurbishment to works to part of the 6th floor of the Grade II Listed Building to facilitate the creation of modern and efficient office floorspace to meet the needs of the existing occupier.

7.7 As detailed in the accompanying Design and Access Statement, a contextual approach has been taken in designing the scheme which seeks to positively respond to its heritage value and setting.

7.8 As detailed in Section 4 of this Statement, the internal alterations and refurbishment works will have no impact on the listed fabric of Bridgewater House and the overall significance of the Grade II Listed Building.

Conclusion

7.9 In summary, it has been demonstrated that the proposed development represents sustainable development and no potential adverse impacts have been identified that would significantly or demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposed scheme, when assessed against the Development Plan and NPPF. As such it is respectfully requested that Full Planning and Listed Building Consent be granted without delay.