



Atelier MB
Urban Architects

Listed Building Consent Application

Design and Access Statement

Category B fit-out of the First Floor
Lee House 77 Oxford St, Manchester M1 6EG
Client: Slater and Gordon
Date: 06/09/2023
Revision: _





Aerial view of site

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Atelier MB have been instructed to act for Slater and Gordon, the prospective tenants, in preparing this Listed Building Consent application to support a Cat B fit-out of the 1st Floor of Lee House. This work is to be done sympathetically and without comprising the special and unique features of this Grade II listed building.

This report should be read alongside the full package of information submitted as part of the Planning and Listed Building consent applications for this property, including a Heritage Statement prepared by our in-house heritage consultancy Atelier Heritage.

2.0 SITE APPRAISAL

Context

The property is located on Great Bridgewater Street, and with The Tootal Building in front, forms a full courtyard and urban block, bounded on the other two sides by Oxford Road and the Rochdale Canal.

Planning History

The buildings have undergone a significant upgrade in recent history to ensure the office suites and the communal areas remain of a high standard, and are continuing to attract high quality tenants. The courtyard has recently been repaired and upgraded to improve the amenity space offered.

Over the past few years, many of the floors have been refurbished in accordance with Listed Building consents. These fit outs were carefully considered and strike a necessary balance between the need to preserve the Heritage Asset and the need to sustain the building at commercial rent with all the requirements of modern servicing.



Photo of elevation of Lee House



3.0 THE BRIEF

To fit out the 1st floor to suit the needs of the new tenant.

4.0 DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

OPUS prepared proposals which Atelier MB and Atelier Heritage reviewed and advised upon. This advice was based on similar schemes on other floors and in other parts of the complex all of which have gained consent.

5.0 DESIGN

Slater and Gordon is a leading national law firm providing a range of consumer legal services such as personal injury, disputes, medical negligence, family law, abuse and public enquiries, employment law, wills and probate.

They have multiple business areas which are particularly sensitive, often receiving national coverage. Lawyers relating to these functions often must comply with personal undertakings and police handling requirements. This often includes the documentation only being visible by the Lawyer handling the case. The risk of viewing such documents needs to be by way of secure partitioning.

The scheme has been carefully designed to suit the requirements of this sensitive user whilst maintaining as much open space character as possible. As a result of the sensitivity of the work carried out the proposed scheme requires space which is partitioned off by way of some additional localised partitions, some of which are glazed.



Current installed and approved partitions

The proposal seeks to introduce a new set of 3 island meeting rooms to allow private meetings to occur and allow sensitive documents to be viewed in privacy. These are grouped together to minimise any visual disruption and are anchored to the large columns on one side whilst are free from the existing structure on the canal side.

Partitions are also proposed in the former central core area to form a document services area. Historically this area was taken up by the WCs on each floor, but these were moved to the North East corner some years ago. This central core area therefore has some precedent for being a separate element in the space. Slater and Gordon has justified the need for this as follows:

“Slater and Gordon has minimised its use of hard copy documentation wherever possible, this has meant a reduction to two centralised postal processing rooms, one of these is housed in Manchester. These functions have been consolidated from 4,000sqft in our existing offices to 1,600sqft at Lee House. We have looked at options to reduce further, but these are not possible in the medium term future whilst 3rd parties rely on hard copy documentation for correspondence.

The space provided for managing this function includes a sortation table for sorting mail, desks for scanning mail, storage for storing hard copy documents securely and further layout space and equipment for printing (where necessary). Due to the nature of hard copy documents access to the space is restricted, the risk of viewing such documents is significantly reduced by providing glazing only where absolutely necessary.”

There are minor changes proposed to the existing approved and installed lighting arrangement. The previously approved mechanical and electrical installation is also remaining in place with minor alterations proposed to suit the new layout.



Internal view of existing

The columns and downstand beams in this building are bulky and the number of columns is high in relation to the size of the floorplate. This is reflective of the fact that the building was designed to be much taller than it is today. For this reason, and in common with other schemes in this building, it is appropriate to butt up the columns with the new partitions. The columns are large enough to remain fully expressed with the partitions in place and the large downstands and regular layouts allow the structure to be read and visually expressed clearly with or without partitions.

M&E approach

All services are exposed, allowing the structural soffit to remain visible and avoiding suspended ceilings. Modern comfort standards and sustainability aims require mechanical ventilation with heat recovery.

Access Statement

These works will not impact the existing building access strategy.

6.0 SUMMARY

The proposed works are designed to meet the needs of modern office use and ensure the floor can be continually let as a viable space. They have been designed to minimise the impact on the listed building whilst ensuring that this nationally respected organisation can occupy the building. All changes requested in this application are fully reversible allowing the floor to revert to a more open plan again sometime in the future. No external alterations are proposed.



Internal view of existing