

**Design and Access Statement and Heritage Impact Assessment Proposed Fire
Exit Door**

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Manchester Cathedral Visitor Centre

10 Cateaton St, Manchester M3 1SQ



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History and Context

Manchester Cathedral Visitor Centre, dating back to 1881, is a multi-purpose visitor centre located in the precinct of Manchester Cathedral and within the Cathedral Conservation Area boundary. In 2002, as a part of the Millennium Quarter redevelopment there was a complete internal refurbishment carried out in the building to accommodate the visitor centre. The building was formerly a narrow office building called Hanging Bridge Chambers and derived its name from its location on the Hanging Bridge, a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The bridge was a medieval bridge over a stream known as Hanging Ditch which ran from River Irk to the River Irwell. This bridge dating from 1421 now forms one side of the basement of the visitor centre. Apart from being the Cathedral Visitor Centre it also houses a café, an exhibition space, office spaces and a conference room. The Visitor Centre is currently a resource for the local community, with rooms available for hire by local businesses and voluntary organisations, whilst simultaneously providing services for the Cathedral community and the Cathedral Volunteer Programme.

Description and Condition of Existing

The proposed works relate to fire exit door to the east elevation of the building. The existing double doors are timber panelled with glazed upper lights. It is assumed that the existing fire exit door and windows in the building were installed as part of the refurbishment works carried out in 2002. The door is a fire exit and as such has panic bolt ironmongery internally. It opens into the alleyway enclosed between 10 Cateaton St. and 6 Cateaton St. This alleyway has access from the North and South side through metal gates which are ideally supposed to be locked. Due to the Southern gate, which approaches from the Cateaton St., remaining unlocked there have been incidents in the past where the fire exit door has been tampered from the exterior and thus poses a safety threat to the building. The specific weak point is the point at which the double doors meet.



Existing fire exit door - Exterior

Proposal

To replace the existing double timber and glazed fire exit doors with a new single timber and glazed fire exit door with an outside access device for enhanced security.

Design and Justification

The repairs proposed to the fire exit door have been carefully planned so that works result in the least possible harm to the existing building and retain as much historic fabric as possible. The repairs are essential for the long-term care and safety management of the building. The main impact on the building will be its aesthetic value which has been maintained to a large extent by matching the design and material of the new door to the existing fixed timber and glazed panels on either side of it. The new fire exit door will also be painted to match the existing fixed timber and glazed windows on the east facade of the building. The new locking mechanism on the door will maintain a safe exit route to the alleyway in case of a fire while increasing the required security of the door from the exterior which was the main security concern with the existing door.

The proposals do not affect the historic, communal, or evidential value of the site and setting.

Ground Floor Plan of the Cathedral Visitor Centre

