



Atelier
Heritage

Tootal Buildings
EV charging points (former Lee House)
Heritage Statement

Date: February 2023
Job: 1997



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Image 01: 56 Oxford Street, Oxford Street and canal side elevations.

1.0 Introduction

This heritage statement has been produced by Atelier Heritage to accompany a listed building consent application for the installation of electric vehicle (EV) charging points to the side elevation of the former Lee House (now Tootal). It was written in February 2023 by Laura Jessup, MA History and Theory of Architecture, PGCert. Conservation of the Historic Environment.

2.0 Location and Description

The Tootal building is located on Oxford Street in Manchester city centre. It forms a block alongside the Rochdale canal (to the south east) and Great Bridgewater Street (to the north west). The main entrance is positioned on the front elevation, facing Oxford Street. The later part of the building (formerly known as Lee House), is accessed off Great Bridgewater Street. The site was constructed as the headquarters of textile company, Tootal, Broadhurst & Lee and is Grade II* listed. An extract from the Historic England listing is included below.

Listing NGR: SJ8402497647
 SJ8497NW OXFORD STREET 698-1/32/265 (West side)
 03/10/74 No.56 Tootal, Broadhurst & Lee Building

GV II* Textiles warehouse, now offices. 1896-8 (dated 1896 over doorway), by J.Sankey Gibbons. Probably steel-framed, clad in red brick with liberal dressings of buff and yellow terracotta (roof not visible). Large rectangular plan. Baroque style. Five storeys with basements and attic, 7 bays plus canted corners; glazed terracotta to ground floor with raised banding, alternating bands of red brick and yellow terracotta to all upper floors; cornice over ground floor, banded piers to 1st floor serving as pedestals to giant Corinthian colonnade at 2nd and 3rd floor which has a modillioned cornice and finishes as an arcade of semi-circular windows at 4th floor; very prominent modillioned cornice, attic treated as a parapet and raised in the centre; set-in semi-octagonal corner turrets rising from 2nd floor and capped by colonnaded octagonal cupolas with prominent cornices and apex finials with flag masts.

Massive central round-headed doorway with banded surround and cartouche dated 1896, set in architrave of coupled banded columns and broken pediment; 6-light windows with transoms.



Image 02: Great Bridgewater Street and Lee House side elevations.



Image 03: Aerial view of building, 1926 taken from Manchester Archives.

Right-hand return to Great Bridgewater Street, 5:2:5 bays in matching style, but the 2-bay centre with coupled round-headed loading-bay arches at ground floor (furnished with wrought-iron gates in Art Nouveau style), and pedimented attic. Interior not inspected.

3.0 History and Significance

Tootal, Broadhurst, Lee

The Tootal block was initially built to provide city centre premises for the Tootal, Broadhurst & Lee Co. Ltd. textile company.

The company was established by Robert Gardner in 1799. In 1817, Gardner's company was absorbed by Atkinson, Tootal & Co. Edward Tootal had previously been working with his brother Henry in a silk manufacturing company in Cannon Street, Manchester. Following Atkinson's departure in 1851, Henry Lee and Henry Tootal Broadhurst became partners and Tootal Broadhurst Lee and Co was formed. The company's address is given as 56 Mosley Street, Manchester.

In the 1860s the company acquired Sunnyside Mills in Bolton and Newton Heath Mills in Manchester. There were a series of name changes until, on the 17 January 1888, Tootal, Broadhurst & Lee Co Ltd was formed and took over the business of spinners and manufacturers with addresses in Manchester and London. The company also traded as Lee Spinners.

Following success and expansion, the company acquired a site for their own building alongside the Rochdale Canal, on Oxford Street. Its location close to the Great Northern Goods Warehouse and Central Station was useful for import/export trade.

Building

In 1895 Salford architect Joseph Gibbons Sankey commenced the design of a building to contain warehousing and offices for the company. His original design was described by Pevsner as 'large, in red brick striped with orange terracotta, but comparatively classical'. It is generally classed as being in 'Edwardian Baroque' style.



Image 4: The basement of main Tootal building, taken in 1900 (Historic England archives).

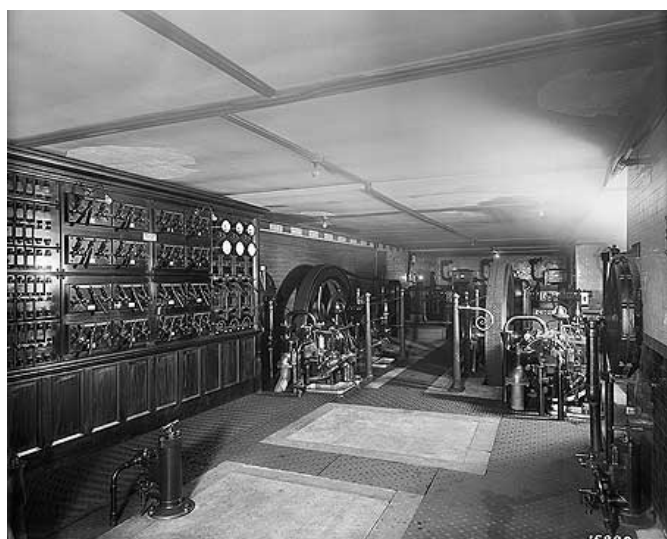


Image 5: Basement engine room, taken in 1900 (Historic England archives).

The building was completed in 1898/1899 and was one of Joseph Gibbons Sankey's last works: he died before it was finished, aged 37. His practice continued as Sankey, Cubbon and Cubbon, overseeing the building to completion. The date stone over the entrance reads 1896, a reference to the year works started.

The continued success of TB&L resulted in a brick store house being built on site: alongside the canal on land to the west, but separate from the main building. Designs by Sankey, Cubbon and Cubbon, dated 1900, were executed and appear on the OS map of 1922.

In February 1910, a further extension was proposed to the north wing, alongside Great Bridgewater Street. This was also designed by Sankey and Cubbon in a style which closely echoed the original building. At ground level the two buildings are separated by two openings allowing access to the courtyard whilst, above, doorways were formed to link the buildings. Windows had to be in-filled at all levels. This extension was designed as an open plan space and the aim was to accommodate a further 200 workers.

Alterations over the next few years were confined to a glazed roof over the rear loading bay (1911 by Sankey and Cubbon and altered in 1916 by the same company) and some changes to WC provision.

J. Henry was commissioned to design a 17-storey warehouse on the west end of the site in 1928. Clearly influenced by American skyscrapers, at 217ft it would have been the tallest building in Europe, but was capped at 8 storeys in 1931, with no further additions. This building became Lee House, prior to the site being re-branded as Tootal.

Little architectural change took place until after World War II when, in the early 1950s, the two loading ways were in-filled to the height of ground and first floor and in 1953 an 8-storey canal side building connected the 1898 building to Lee House (facilitated by the demolition of the 1900 warehouse). The initial use for this building was 'comptometers' and the 'invoice department': an indication of the scale of the operation of Tootal, Broadhurst and Lee.



Image 6: Churchgate House in 1900 (Historic England) archives.

As the 20th century progressed the cotton industry boom ended and, in 1963, Tootal Broadhurst and Lee merged with the English Sewing Company Ltd. In 1966, the Manchester architect Harry Fairhurst produced designs for alterations to the 1950s canal side buildings and to remove the partitions on the first floor alongside the Oxford Street elevation, creating showrooms for Barlow & Jones and Ogden & Madeleys. At the same time suspended ceilings were installed and many of the original features, including parquet flooring, timber and glass partitions, fireplaces, board room panelling, wall tiles and doors, were removed as part of a 'modernisation'. The proposals also show the windows on the south canal side elevation replaced with double glazing.

It is probable that the mosaic floor to the entrance hall was also lost at this time as it was not in-situ when the 2002 re-modelling took place. During the 1980s other alterations were made, including the creation of the basement car parking in 1989. In the early part of the 1990s the building was extensively stripped out to create offices to rent. In 1995 the main elevations were restored, and replacement terracotta was supplied by Shaws of Darwen.

Further re-modelling by Buttress Fuller Alsop Williams took place in 2002 and whilst there were some attempts to reinstate the spectacular tiling of the entrance hall, the result was significantly different to the original.

In 2012 the building's new owners undertook a strip out of the first floor. The restoration revealed the column heads and better views of the window heads by cutting back the suspending ceilings. A succession of approved changes have been implemented since this date, including a re-design of the foyer, courtyard area and works to different floors to provide modern office accommodation within the original historic spaces. A recent application to install PV panels to the roof of the main building was approved in 2022.

The building has a basement and a partial sub-basement. The ground floor circulation and entrance hall were finished in new mosaics incorporating the logo TBL in intertwined Arts and Craft style, at various locations. The elevation to Oxford Road contained a board room, together with private offices with timber and glass walls to the corridors. On return to the canal side elevation was a large room with tiled walls and columns and plaster cornices to the beams. This room was known as the counting house and was adjacent to the cashiers office.

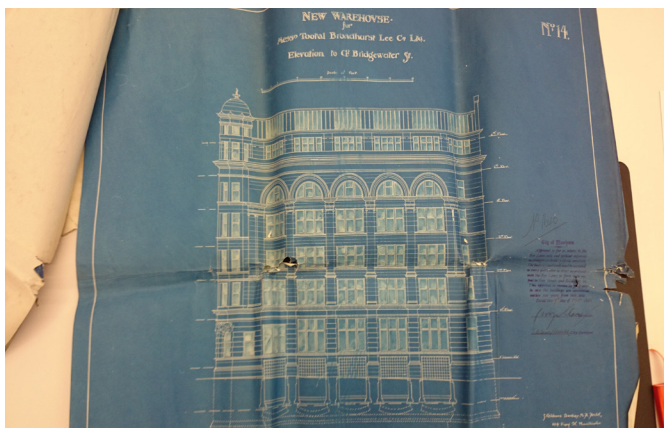


Image 7: Original design for Gt. Bridgewater Street elevation.

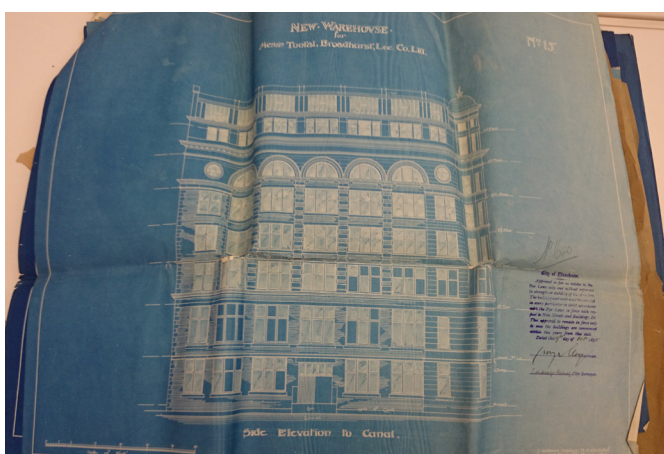


Image 8: Original design for canal-side elevation.



Image 9: Original Oxford Street section.

The plan of this original building was 'E' shaped: the Counting House occupied the south leg of the E (along the canal side) whilst the north leg is labelled as 'No. 10 Department and Sales Room'.

Separating the two legs from the centre section were two loading ways entered from the west end, which was an open area. These loading areas had loading docks opening into the central leg of the 'E', two on the south side and one on the north, and each side has two crane wells. The two loading ways were linked at the east end by a gangway which appears to have been separated from the main building by a mixture of masonry walls. A timber and glass screen wall, to the west of the gangway, separates the area from what was known as the 'Towns Room'. The meaning is unclear but it had two pairs of double swing doors opening onto the loading dock of the south loading way and a single pair to the north side, indicating it was a receiving and shipping facility. In addition to crane wells, there were 3 hoists which travelled up the building. Two of these opened onto the gangway and the most northerly one seems to have opened into the loading way.

The function of the counting house was a place where the goods were 'counted' in and out, or, as it was next to the cashier office, related to book-keeping. Found images suggest the latter. At the rear of the Towns Room there were another set of taking-in doors flanked by windows. A stub jetty is shown on the drawings, to enable vehicles to load/unload. The windows and doors were separated by large piers which have the appearance of masonry, though what is evident on site is a cast or wrought iron frame with uprights in the positions shown on the blueprint. The ground floor was always sub-divided whilst journeying up the building, the sub-division was much less defined: there are notes on the 5th and 6th floors which refer to areas being sub-divided to suit departmental requirements, indicating more partitions. Photographs show that the top floor was partially used by the pattern makers, but it is clear that most of the upper floors were open spaces used for manufacturing or storage.

Similar to many other commercial buildings in the city, Tootal Building was used for warehousing, though the presence of power lines feeding each floor makes it likely that some processes did take place in addition to export and packing. The architect's original drawings note that 'floors are to be sub-divided to meet the requirements of the several departments'.

Significance

The Grade II* listed status recognises the historical and architectural significance of Tootal building as an example of large commercial premises built specifically for a leading 19th century textiles company.

Historic England set out considerations for significance in Conservation Principles. This criteria has been applied below.

Evidential value: the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity. The building is important evidence of the Tootal company, a well-known UK business of its time. It also gives insight into the economy of Manchester and the architectural style of 19th and 20th century commercial properties. Its evidential value (overall) is high, however, the changes to the interior have degraded some of this value, removing features which allowed the purpose to be better understood, and, in places, obscuring historic fabric. In relation to proposed changes, the columns, windows and original walls hold evidential value of original form and architectural intent. Modern additions and interventions have no heritage significance.

Historical value: 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. The building is a reflection of commercial business in Manchester in the 19/20th centuries and the importance placed on company headquarters. It offers interesting insight into the early plans for skyscraper structures (proposed Lee House). The original fabric is of medium/high historical value, including the columns, walls and windows. Modern additional interventions have no heritage significance.

Aesthetic value: the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place. This is a building of high design quality and with carefully crafted decoration. It is a dominant feature on Oxford Street and adds to the character and identity of this part of the city. It has a high aesthetic value. Internal features on the third and fourth floors are limited in value and the historic columns and windows are the main elements of aesthetic interest, along with the spatial qualities of the space, revealed through the more recent refurbishment works. Modern interventions, alterations and additions have no heritage value.



Image 10::View of former Lee House, side elevation.



Image 11::Detail of clad external elevation, proposed site of chargers.

Communal value: the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory. This is a recognised landmark building in the streetscape and is experienced by a great number of passers-by and by those who work and have worked there. It retains a medium level of communal significance, related to its external elevations and those remaining internal features.

The front elevation and more decorative original internal details are of a high heritage significance and good design quality. The majority of the upper floors are of medium evidential significance with the columns and windows identifiable as the main features. The side elevations to the canal side have significance as part of the whole. The basement has evidential significance, illustrating past use and giving an insight in to the architectural hierarchy of the internal spaces. However, the loss of the majority of features from within the space detracts from its potential significance.

Lee House is of high evidential value in terms of the evolution of the work space and architectural style of commercial buildings. It also has associative and historical value as part of a larger original plan to create an unusually tall building for the period (albeit not fully executed). The side elevations face a car parking area which is of lower significance but does form a buffer in the setting and view of the building. The design of the elevation with regular windows between structural columns has aesthetic and historical value. The band of white stone was originally intended to run up the building but was confined to lower storey when the idea of a skyscraper was shelved.

4.0 Proposals and Impact

The proposals consist of the fitting of 5 no. EV charging points to the face of the former Lee House (car park-facing elevation.) Chargers are rectangular box forms, fitted centrally to the columns/walls and requiring a limited number of penetrative fixings through fabric at ground floor level. The associated charger cabling route will run a short way down the external wall, contained within painted steel conduit (colour matched to wall), through the existing louvre openings and down to the existing sub-station via existing openings within the concrete floor slab.



Image 12: View of typical louvre on former Lee House elevation.

Impact: Minor adverse

The fixings to charging points will require fixings through existing historic fabric. These are limited in number and size as the charging points are not overly large. Elevation-fixed conduit will also require minimal fixings to attach it to the wall. These holes can be filled should the EV points be removed at a later date, with very minimal resulting damage. Conduit will be colour matched to walls to minimise visual impact.

The cabling will utilise existing louvre openings (limited minor alterations may be necessary) and will also follow through existing holes within internal floor slab. A degree of visual impact will result from the proposals, though in the wider elevation, this change is limited.

An alternative scheme of free-standing charging points was considered. It involved taller charging stations, requiring ground excavation for foundations, the fitting of additional safety bars in front of charge points to protect chargers from vehicles, and holes through the walls at underground level to access the sub-station. Whilst there was less resulting intervention with historic fabric, it was considered to create greater visual interference with the elevations. Positioning the chargers within the internal car park would create a fire risk which would require more extensive intervention to create barriers and compartmentalising areas of the internal space. The proposed solution is considered to demonstrate a lower level of harm than either of these two alternatives.

The limited amount of harm is less than substantial and deemed to be outweighed by the clear public benefit of EV charging provision, with the associated wider positive environmental benefits and positive contribution towards an ongoing lower carbon strategy across the site and the wider city.

5.0 Planning Context

National policy

Heritage policy is contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (revised 2021).

Paragraph 194 states that applicants should be required to describe significance of the assets effected by proposals.

This report meets that requirement.

Paragraph 197 states that local 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.

This application is considered to be a positive response to the above policy. Changes will have a minimum impact upon the overall significance of the asset, the harm being considered limited and minor. Charging point provision is contributing to a more sustainable future for the building and the wider city.

Paragraph 202 state 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 less than substantial level of harm is considered to be outweighed by the greater public benefit of EV charger provision.

Local policy

Manchester's Local Development Framework, Core Strategy, adopted July 2012, contains local policy and the council's vision for the city from 2012-2027.

- Policy CC9 states 'design in Manchester City Centre should preserve or enhance the heritage assets that have been identified, including listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled ancient monuments.'
- Policy EN3 concerns heritage and notes that 'proposals which enable the re-use of heritage assets will be encouraged where they are considered consistent with the significance of the heritage asset.'

Levels of harm are generally categorised as substantial or less than substantial. The works proposed do not constitute substantial harm and are considered to be minor adverse in their impact, outweighed by wider public benefit. Mitigation through routing cables through existing openings, minimising the amount of fixings required and colour matching cable housing has been suitably applied.

7.0 Conclusion

The proposed works are designed to meet the needs of tenants. The provision of EV charging stations is necessary to respond to increased electric vehicle use and encourage more sustainable practices.

It is acknowledged that the fixing of charging point to the external elevations will result in a degree of harm, both in visual terms and by required fixings into existing fabric. The level of harm is considered to be limited in the context of the whole building elevation and mitigation measures have been applied.

Of the options available, it is considered that the proposal is the least harmful approach and will result in less than substantial harm. This harm is considered to be justified, with the public benefit outweighing the limited adverse impact.



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