

Ref: STAT:01

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT (Revision P1)

THE OLD STATIONMASTER'S HOUSE, LIVERPOOL ROAD, MANCHESTER

Conversion of redundant museum building to form new holiday accommodation business.

1.1 Introduction

This statement has been prepared in accordance with the advice given in the DCLG publication "Guidance on Information Requirements and Validation" (April 2010), in particular Section 6.

1.2 Brief Summary of Scheme

The brick built building referred to as the Old Stationmaster's House sits at the end of a terrace of contrasting stone buildings and together they form the highly significant 1830 Liverpool Road railway station. The complete terrace of buildings is listed as a group 'Grade I' and the international significance of this being that it is the terminus for the first commercial railway ever built. The brick house dates to around 1808 and this was incorporated into the operational plan form and platform layout for the station around 1827. Due to a rapid evolution in how railways were used the passenger facilities were redundant by 1844 and the station was mothballed and used only for freight. The whole site survived significant adaptation or change right through to its closure in 1975.

The significance of the site and its role in the history of Railways was recognized at the point of closure and a preservation trust was set up to set up to create a new museum. Work on the buildings started in 1980 with 'Restoration' being the policy rather than what we would now think of as 'conservation'. The Old Stationmaster's House was an early candidate for significant reconstruction as it had been stripped out and converted to a shop early in the C20.

In recent years, the building has been occupied by the Science Museum Group staff as an office but this use was becoming increasingly superseded as the wider site was developed and management functions concentrated around the east site entrance. In 2020 a conversation was started with the Landmark Trust about this building becoming an unusual urban holiday accommodation business, something which would provide a sustainable use and compliment the history and educational profile of the wider site.

The Landmark Trust offer is a holiday accommodation business managing a large number of listed properties across the British Isles. They specialise in offering unusual, eccentric and historically significant buildings for their customers. Whenever they take on a building, a great deal of research is done into the history of the building for the visitors with interpretation and archive resources available in the property or publicly via an on line database. They also provide opportunities for wider public access through heritage open days and other free events.

The Landmark Trust never seek to over-develop any site they take on and they have a lot of experience into what level of occupancy is sustainable. In this case the proposals are to create a relatively low-occupancy development within the building, providing four bedrooms, living spaces and bathrooms for up to eight persons. The fit out should meet the high quality of specification shared by all of the Landmark Trust properties.

To meet the best practice encouraged by Visit England the development should be suitable to wheelchair- bound visitors. There should be easy access into the building and at least one bedroom, bathrooms and the principal living space available.

To achieve this the building would need to have a modified form of entrance, probably with some form of mechanical lift. The need for access across multiple floors means that some form of mechanical lifts will be required within the building interior. They do not need access the entire height of the building, but certainly the key spaces that are shared need to be accessible.

WILES & MAGUIRE

A further element of brief is meeting the Landmark Trust's policy on carbon reduction. This will be achieved by a pragmatic and balanced approach to improving the environmental performance of the building eg. looking at reducing heat loss through the roof, windows or external walls and using a sustainable heating technology such as heat pumps.

The following sections are a headline summary of the key data of the design. The full description of the scheme, and the detailed thinking behind the design choices made, is developed in the appendices of this document. Please also refer to all of the submitted drawings describing the scheme for details of materials to be used.

1.3 Amount

The total site area is 159sqm and the available external area is 27sqm.

The proposals involve the addition of no additional floor area.

1.4 Layout

The current layout of the building is that of a domestic property with a main 'front door' onto Liverpool Road and a back door to the enclosed rear yard.

The proposals do not change that historic arrangement.

We are proposing in the alterations to add a second door into the rear yard and for this to have a level access for wheelchairs but we are not proposing that this door becomes the new main entrance for all. This is because this is not a building open to the general public and each individual group of visitors can decide which door to use depending on the needs of those in their party.

1.5 Scale

Please refer to the attached drawings. We feel is no significant change to the scale of the building.

1.6 Landscaping

The site is set on a tight footprint in a densely occupied urban environment, the only available outside space is currently a concrete hard standing.

The proposals will not provide any new planting as the outside space is at a premium for waste storage, access and heat pump mounting. We will though be changing the current concrete hard standing for a natural stone paving finish.

1.7 Appearance

The carefully considered approach to the design of the external and internal alterations are discussed in full detail in the later appendix of this statement.

Overall we believe that the appearance to the key visible external elevations of the building will remain as existing and any significant changes happen on the hidden rear elevations. Where changes are proposed the design language, and materials used, are muted and follow the traditional vernacular style for an urban building at the time of the whole Station's foundation.

1.8 Context and Consultation

Prior to the submission of this application there has been a site walk around consultation with members of the planning department. This was a largely informal meeting and the comments received during that visit have been worked into the final detail of the design now presented for approval.

1.9 Use

The application site is currently part of the Manchester Museum of Science and Technology and has been vacant since early 2020. It is isolated at the very corner of their large site and while it has housed some storage, office and meeting facilities these are all now located in their redeveloped entrance building.

The proposed change of use is for the building to become a holiday accommodation business managed by The Landmark Trust. The change will provide valuable new public access possibilities to what is an under appreciated and closed off heritage asset. More so in that it will be specifically adapted to provide the same access and accommodation for persons with a range of disabilities.

Responding to validation questions

How many units of holiday accommodation are provided or clarification that the property would be let as one single unit.

-Details on how the short term lets will be managed.

Set up in 1965 the Landmark Trust are both a conservation charity and a commercial holiday company renting out the cottages they restore. They have around 200 properties **available to book only through their own website** (www.landmarktrust.org.uk). They were recently voted the best company to rent a cottage from in the UK in a Which magazine poll.

The property will always be let as **one single unit** and the usual time slot is for a weekend or 5 days midweek. The booking process provides the visitor with detailed instructions of how to find and access the property. When staying at the property there will be written instructions about how access the bins and deal with waste and re-cycling generally.

Each property has a designated housekeeper who will clean and prepare the property for each letting. The applicant has a great deal of experience on managing holiday properties and has standing contracts in place across the region for waste collection and laundry. There is a service yard at the rear of the property which can be accessed independently by service providers without disturbing the visitor letting.

1.10 Access

The 700mm difference between the building interior and the pavement means the building is currently not accessible to wheelchairs.

Providing level access and making the core accommodation across the ground and first floors generally accessible is a core part of the clients brief and represents the biggest alterations to the fabric. The way that this is achieved, and the other options that were explored before deciding on the submitted approach are covered in a later appendix to this statement. (See section 3.0).

Responding to validation questions

-Details of vehicular and pedestrian access points details of proposed vehicle parking (if any is proposed) (including disabled car parking spaces and electric charging points).

WILES & MAGUIRE

There is no vehicle parking proposed with the development. The site has a tiny external yard area with a tapering side which makes it too small for a vehicle without overhanging the pavement. Visitors to the building will be encouraged to use public transport. There are two pedestrian access points to the site: The front door and the rear yard.

-Details of space and facilities (i.e., location and number of spaces) for any secure cycle parking to be provided.

We include 2no 'Sheffield' type galvanised hoop cycle racks located in the rear yard of the property. These would be sufficient for a minimum of 4no adult cycles. Please see drawing STAT 4335

1.11 Relevant Planning Policy Considerations

We do not wish to quote any specific planning policies are relevant to this application.

Comments on the Waste management on site

A completed Waste Management Strategy and a new drawing STAT 4335 is enclosed. The following summary is of what is stated:

The applicant has a great deal of experience on managing holiday properties and **has standing commercial contracts in place across the region for waste collection**. There is a service yard at the rear of the property which can be accessed independently by service providers without disturbing the visitor letting.

We are proposing that there will be 3no wheelie bins for general waste, pulp-able waste and mixed recycling. The usual time slot is for a weekend or 5 days midweek and visitors are encouraged to take their waste out to the bins as it accumulates rather than hold it in the building. Each property has a designated housekeeper who will clean and prepare the property for each letting and clear any waste that has not been dealt with.

Andrew Wiles AABC

For Wiles and Maguire, Nov 2022

Revision P1 – 26/11/22

2.0 APPENDIX 1

DETAILED STATEMENT ON THE PROPOSALS PREPARED BY THE ARCHITECT:

2.1 The Significance of the Old Stationmasters House

Please refer to the separate Heritage Impact Statement for a full description of the building:

The Old Stationmasters House is recognised as having a high level of significance reflected in its Grade I listing. The building is interesting in its own right but has been much altered in the C20 leaving little of the original 1808 fabric intact. It carries this Grade I designation mainly through its grouping with the whole Liverpool Road Station site.

The half-Georgian, half-Victorian character of Liverpool Road Station makes it a fascinating microcosm of railway station evolution. The entire site documents the interconnection between the development of railways, industrial development and the growth of trade in the nineteenth century. It has always been a nexus of forward-looking innovation and technology. The large collection of structures further constitutes a very rare example of the development of a working station and railway yard over 150 years.

Based on the collected research we feel that the primary significance of the Stationmasters House can be summarised as follows:

- 1) The Liverpool Road Passenger Station of 1830 is **highly significant cultural value** as it is the only surviving original passenger station from the pioneering phase of railway development and is therefore the oldest passenger station in the world. The Stationmasters House shares this significance as it was pivotal in how that early station operated.

Liverpool Road Station became relatively obscure in histories of railways because none of the Station buildings was the work of a leading architect, nor self-consciously designed as an exemplar of a particular architectural style. The single-platform station model, of which the Liverpool & Manchester Railway termini were the prototypes, was short-lived.

The early loss of the passenger service function further reduces its profile. However, the Liverpool & Manchester Railway was the key source of inspiration and practical information for the planning of the first railways approved in the 1830s. Few railway companies during this period engaged architects to design their stations, being content to assign this responsibility to their chief engineers. Despite the well known exception of Brunel's broad gauge tracks for the Great Western Railway, most other railway companies adopted the tried and tested Stephenson track and station templates pioneered at this Liverpool Road Station, making it the blueprint for stations in the first wave of railway development.

The further social and cultural significance of Liverpool Road Station was its impact on the lives of ordinary, mostly anonymous, people in their capacities as travellers, consumers and workers. This is more relevant to the main Station site which was a public area rather than the private Stationmasters House on its own. There will be very little cultural memory about what took place in the interior of the house whereas the exterior was well known since the beginning as the approach to the Station.

- 2) The **external fabric** of the Stationmasters House, while much altered through the C20, is **highly significant** as it still contains fabric dated to its original construction of 1808. This predates the development of the whole station site. The exterior of the building is represented in many early paintings and etchings of the Station from the C19 and what we see now has a direct continuity with these early views. The adjacent elevation of the Station building is also largely unchanged so together, they ensure the Liverpool Road elevation to the site is very much as it has been since 1830.

- 3) There is some contrast between the significance of the exterior fabric of the House to the **interior**. We feel that this has only a **moderate significance** due to the extent of alterations in the 1980s refurbishment. In 1975 the Stationmaster's House was in a pretty sorry state and around 1980 was thoroughly 'restored' with the shop frontage removed and the brickwork and a replica of the historic doorway reconstructed. All of the windows were replaced at that time with single glazed sliding sashes and the upper gables were rebuilt incorporating concrete blockwork on the inside.

The whole of the interior was stripped out and refurbished at that time, with all floors, doors, skirtings and architraves replaced, leaving only isolated fragments of the original interior intact. The principal of these survivals were the main staircase and some of the fire places on the upper floor. While the exterior retains a great significance physically and historically to the street setting of the 1830s station the significance of the interior is fragmentary.

2.2 Why a change of use represents a sustainable future for this building

In recent years, the Old Stationmaster's House had been occupied by the Science Museum Group staff as an office but this was becoming increasingly superseded as the wider site was developed. The building is at the very extreme corner of the museum site and quite difficult to use as part of a overall management infrastructure. The temporary closure of the building in the pandemic accelerated the realisation that this was now a surplus facility and a new use should be explored.

A conversation was developed with the Landmark Trust about this building becoming an unusual urban holiday accommodation business, something which would provide a sustainable use and compliment the history and educational profile of the wider site.

The Landmark Trust offer as a holiday accommodation business of a large number of listed properties across the British Isles. They specialise in offering unusual, eccentric and historically significant buildings for their customers and In each case, a great deal of research is done into the interpretation and understanding of the building for the visitors. Each of the developments are intended to be quite simply fitted out so as to let the building tell its own story. There is an avoidance of modern technology, such as TVs and internet – just a comfortable high standard of basic, well designed accommodation.

For the museum, this partnership would be a good outcome, as it would mean that the building could be transferred into an organisation that respects the significance of the building and would allow it to be appreciated by members of the public again as it once was: ie, a separate residence.

For the Landmark Trust, the building offers a new opportunity for them to have a building location in a vibrant city, which broadens their offer from the isolated rural locations in which most of their properties are situated. This opens up access to a different type of clientele from their usual customers. It could also be one that specifically suits disabled or wheelchair-bound visitors.

2.3 The Client's Brief for the Development

The development brief issued by the Landmark Trust is summarised as follows:

- i) The baseline requirement was to create a relatively low-occupancy development within the building, providing bedrooms, living spaces and bathrooms for up to eight persons. This should meet the general quality and specification for all of the Landmark Trust properties.
- ii) At least one bedroom, bathroom and the principal living space should be available to wheelchair- bound visitors. To achieve this the building would need to have:
 - A level access to the street.
 - The development should not be too densely occupied by partitions, etc., so that there is plenty of space for wheelchair visitors to manoeuvre.

- Bathrooms and kitchens should be capable of being used by wheelchair bound visitors.
 - The need for access across multiple floors means that some form of mechanical lifts will be required within the building. They do not necessarily have to access the entire height of the building, but certainly the key spaces that are shared.
- iii) There are some repairs that will be needed and these will follow current best practice principles for building conservation. Consideration to be given to incorporating some logical adaptations to the roof form and drainage which would reduce the load on the gutters and reduce future erosion stress on the brickwork and mortar. This is particularly a concern as there is an increasing risk of heavy rain and flash flooding due to climate change.
- iv) A further element of the design brief was to improve the environmental performance of the building, looking at reducing heat loss through the roof, windows and external walls. The interior of the building should be heated by a sustainable technology such as heat pumps.
- v) The building needs to be open in 2023.

2.4 The architect's evaluation of the existing building form and how the brief could be met with minimal change:

The development of the design evolved over a 6 month period and involved detailed evaluation of the structure and the site context. A preliminary evaluation of the building's historical significance was collated by the Landmark Trust's own historian and schemes were worked up by the architect to look at the options.

The significance, and the impact changes may have on it, is developed in our Heritage Impact Assessment. This has been forefront in our minds throughout and is hard to summarise in a short statement. The shortest summary would be that while the exterior retains a great significance physically and historically to the street setting of the 1830s station the significance of the interior is fragmentary and may have greater scope for modification.

It was observed that the interior of the building has useable accommodation over 3 floors plus a basement. It is easily large enough to provide bedrooms for eight persons without the need for extension or radical sub division.

The existing 1980 conversion of the building created one large space on the first floor on the street front where two rooms were joined together. Logically this remains the best location for a communal lounge and dining area as there is better light and a good view too at that level.

Sleeping accommodation is split over the ground and second floors and this offers a commercial benefit as it can be let as a 4 bed or 8 bed property and still work in a comfortable layout using the best lit rooms.

All of the rooms that face onto Liverpool Road and Water Lane are of elegant proportions and enjoy reasonably good views over the streetscape. But contrast the rooms in the north extension are darker and set back from the street. It is part of the Landmark Trust design policy to avoid carving up rooms to create en-suites and so we have made the decision to concentrate as much of the subdivision and servicing needed for bathrooms into that northern block.

Access to the building for those in a wheelchair will be by creating a new door in the rear elevation and lowering part of the internal floor to suit the external level. Once inside the building there will be compact lifts introduced to make the ground and the first floor accessible. The full details of this proposal, and why that has been chosen over any other option is covered in section 3 of this statement.

2.5 External alterations related to Building Conservation measures

The building was subject to a full condition inspection by a conservation accredited architect and structural engineer in late 2021. These reports are included in our application

Overall the building has been considered to be structurally sound although there is modest evidence of distortion on the external walls caused by the settlement of the roof structure. The refurbishment of the 1980s was extensive and this movement was arrested by a fair amount of internal rebuilding of cross walls and gables in concrete blockwork. Much of this is hidden away in the roof spaces.

Externally, it is noted that the brickwork and the mortar to the faceted south-west corner has been eroded over time. The open condition of this brickwork has allowed water to penetrate to the interior, bringing plaster from the walls, and there are still visible signs of active damp penetration. There is though no evidence of the water coming in through the roof itself and we believe that the external gutter has a tendency to overflow in storm conditions at this faceted external corner, spill down the wall and wash out the mortar from the brickwork.

The external gutter to the south and west walls is not of particularly large carrying capacity, and it drains to a single small diameter rainwater pipe on the north elevation. The top of this same rainwater pipe has an offset and there is a further offset at lower level. It would not take very much debris for this to block and for rainwater to back up in the gutter and this will be why overflowing is a problem.

In future decades we are looking to expect increased incidences of storm deluges and we consider it is important that a strategy is developed to better share out the rainwater load on the roof.

The proposed solution is to add a new rainwater pipe onto the main south street front elevation. This would be a traditional cast iron rainwater pipe with a new gulley at the base. The benefits would be to almost halve the water load on the gutter and the rainwater would also run 'away' from the difficult to seal segmented joints, rather than having to pass over them.

While there is no rainwater pipe on the Street elevation at the moment, we think it is reasonable that one would be expected on an elevation like this and would not look out of place. There are numerous downpipes on the street front elevation of the 1830 Station.

We think that this intervention could be justified based on the effect it would have on protecting the historic brickwork and reduce the risk of water penetrating past the brick infill of the blank windows.

The other adaptation that is proposed to manage rainwater load is to infill a section of the rear roof slope where it is currently offset over the staircase WCs. The current roof in that location drains down into a lead back gutter, which then has to wind its way around a projecting chimney breast before meeting the out fall. This is quite a complicated arrangement, and it is difficult to access and maintain.

The proposal shown is to carry on the pitch of the existing north roof over this void so that the eaves lines up with the rest of the roof. The benefit is that the gutter can then flow the full length of the eaves and drop into a more readily accessible discharge point by the rear access door. This changes the roof shape, but viewed from the significant streetscape elevation vantage points, the change will be undetectable.

We think that it will have a conservation benefit for future maintenance and should be supported.

2.6 Alterations related to energy conservation.

The heating for the building will be provided by a set of heat pumps hidden away in the service yard at the rear of the building. This will for most areas be connected to an underfloor heating circuit that will mean the existing chipboard floors will be removed and changed to a hardwood engineered board or parquet. This will make a significant improvement to the look of the interior too.

As part of the general refurbishment and updating the 1980s interior we plan to add an insulated dry lining to the external walls. This will be around 50-75mm and will use a sustainable product such as directly fixed, breathable, wood fibre slab with a lime plaster finish. This may require the removal of the existing plaster but we understand from the salt damage to the damp areas that this is 1980s gypsum plaster not lime.

The only impact on the external elevations related to energy conservation will be to install new upgraded vertical sash windows in all locations. All of the existing windows are from the 1980s so we will not be removing any original components.

The window frames will be made of timber but they will be made to a higher degree of precision and integrate draught seals at the parting beads and mid-rail. Only the bottom sash will be opening for ventilation and this will be on a spring balance rather than a traditional rope balance. This is because it will provide a more precise run against the draught seals. The glazing bars will be 22mm, the existing are 19mm. The window inserts will be 4-6-4 gas filled sealed units, the existing glass is 4mm float glass (not hand made or historic)

2.7 A unified interior design approach that reflects the unique story of this building.

The review of significance (and the separate Heritage Impact Assessment) identifies that the current interior was stripped out and extensively 'restored' in 1980. The simple skirtings and moulded architraves are common 'off the shelf' items producing a very simplistic representation of what the interior of an early Victorian building might have looked like. It is an uninspiring and ordinary interior and says nothing about the wider context for a building that the international significance it shares. This is something that we feel should be celebrated.

The Landmark Trust care greatly about the authenticity of their buildings and will always seek to avoid speculative restoration of detail if a building has lost its original interior. They also want their buildings to be inspiring and, where appropriate, unique.

The proposal to add insulation to the external walls means that most rooms will have the current skirtings and architraves removed. The current profiles are a misleading pastiche, close but not actually right, and the opportunity arises then to consider whether the original profiles should be put back.

Both designer and client feel that adopting a fresh aesthetic and different profiles could highlight the unique story of this building and unify the style across all spaces. An overtly modern approach is not considered appropriate and so we have looked back at what the buildings of the early steam age looked like.



Early view of the Edge Hill Tunnel entrance and Station building (Liverpool)



The western approach with the Stationmasters house at the right hand side,



The Stationmaster House pre-dates 1830s Liverpool Road Station but it can not really be separated off from how the 'surge' of this sites development proceeded in those key early years. The background is of a leap forward in engineering that will have been built quickly in the race to get the railway line opened. Architects were not involved and it would have been down to engineers to lead on the style and detail of these ancillary structures.

There are plenty of paintings and etchings recording these early railway structures and there is a strong theme that while 'classical' was the baseline language of the time they limited the use of fine detail. There were plinths and pilasters on these structures but they carried deep square edges so that shadow breaks up the run of the wall rather than embellishment. They favoured a 'Tuscan' or 'Doric' style and the resulting simple, bold and 'muscular' structures that are not unlike what became known as 'Modern' architecture of the 1920s and 30s.

Our proposal for the style and character of the interior is for a clean, simple and honest approach that draws on the precedent of simplified classical themes in early railway buildings. The simplicity of the approach will provide the new contemporary feel the client desires without the speculative invention of new profiles.

The retained 6-panel internal fire doors and sash windows will always have a traditional look and we plan to frame these with a traditional classically styled moulded architrave. They will be, bold pieces 150mm wide and have a deep ovolo edge as shown in the adjacent photo. They would be similar to the window surrounds in the Edge Hill Tunnel etching above. The attached drawings show the proportions sit very well with the size of the existing doors and windows.



Each room will have a skirting again and we propose to add cornice feature too. In each case they will not have any additional curved detailing and just be square edged and of a be of a bold size, but still in balance to scale of the room. The skirtings are intended to read as a plinth and the cornice a plain flat frieze as seen in the 'Euston Station' etching above. Please refer to the sections and internal room elevations to see these features in context.

The Bathrooms

The North Extension of the building is to be more densely occupied with subdivision to create all of the bathrooms and storage areas the building needs. This allows all of the larger rooms to stay clear and free of divisions.

For these smaller rooms we will be leaping forward in railway ages to the chrome and 'metro' tiling of the 1920s. Trims around windows and doors will be smaller flat sections and instead there is a deep coved cornice to the ceilings.

The Historic Staircase

The original staircase will remain as existing and the contrast between the heavier new mouldings and this more finely detailed feature will help to identify this as a historic feature.

The staircase is indeed elegant, and ascending it should be a grand experience. At the moment, when one gets to the top of the staircase, the half landing is narrowed to as little as 600mm by the encroachment of the toilet wall, and there is a fairly boring sloping ceiling at the top, with a crude roof light in it.

The drawings show a proposal to cut back the masonry wall to the old toilet on the top floor to increase the width of the half landing. This will make it more elegant and also improve the width of the stair in the case of a fire escape.

The ceiling at the top of the stair will be changed to a flat ceiling, within which will be set a large oval framed leylight. This will have translucent glass inserts, back-lit from the roof light above.

Viewed from the bottom of the staircase, this would be quite a dramatic feature, which would make one want to climb the staircase to investigate. It would also provide a degree of balance and elegance to the top floor landing, which currently has none.

2.8 Acoustic design considerations

We are aware that with a change of use from office to holiday accommodation there will be people now sleeping on site where they have not done so before. Externally there are the usual sounds of any city as well as the specific noise associated with the adjacent high level rail line approaching Piccadilly Station.

While this will be a change for this building the district is a mixed use of commercial and residential buildings with many homes sharing the same acoustic environment. Compared to being alongside the urban motorway, for instance, background noise is not excessively loud or constant through the night.

Visitors are not in this building for extended periods and the proximity to the railway is one of the unique and celebrated benefits of the building. We do not feel that the basic level of background noise in the area will affect the future sustainability of this development.

The design changes that we propose on this site to reduce heat-loss through the fabric also have a positive impact in reducing any residual sound transmission. This is particularly the case for the windows where we are changing to sealed unit double glazing and sashes that have air seals at their edges.

The external brick walls are solid and thicker than a typical Victorian house. These will be solid enough to resist many sound frequencies on their own and the proposed addition of an insulation board inner lining will only increase the level of protection.

3.0 APPENDIX 2

DETAILED STATEMENT ON DISABLED ACCESS APPROACH:

The following section discusses the options explored by the architect to make the building accessible to persons in a wheelchair.

3.1 Proposed alterations to make the building accessible from the street.

This is one of the key aims of the development but it presents the greatest risk of impact on the building fabric. The internal ground floor level is 700mm above the external pavement level at the rear of the building, and around 400mm above at the front. This provides a significant challenge in getting wheelchairs into the building.

The following comments cover the options tried:

3.1.1 External ramp to the front door

We accept that ideally all users, able or disabled, should use the front door and we looked at an external ramp or removing the steps and creating a lowered landing inside the front door.

The difference between the internal and external levels at the front of the property is 400mm and a 1:12 ramp would need to be 4.8m long. It would need handrails, a landing in front of the door and a set of steps.

This was rejected for two reasons:

The first reason is that the applicant does not own the land on which the ramp would have to be built. It is on the public pavement. Permission from the local authority might be achieved for this to happen but it is in no way guaranteed.

The second reason is that the key significance for the building is the relationship of this elevation of The Old Stationmaster's house to the 1830 Station building and how together they define the unchanged look of Liverpool Road. This view has appeared on reference paintings, photos and etchings since the 1830s and the introduction of a set of steps and a ramp to the front door would have a dramatic impact on the setting.

We do not feel that this can be in anyway suggested to be a reasonable option if the significance is to be respected and so was rejected.

3.1.2 Level access to the front door and internal steps/lift

This was rejected for two reasons:

The internal entrance corridor has a short amount of clear space before there are existing doors into the side rooms (1.5m). Building regulations require steps start no closer than 400mm from any opening and accommodating this, and the 3 steps needed, means there is no space to achieve this. There is certainly no space for a platform lift of any form.

The external door would have to open into the street which would be very strange.

The internal doors could be moved further down the corridor but that would move them of the centre line of those side rooms and disrupt their internal symmetry and balance.

The second disadvantage would be that the stone door surround would be changed by having the steps removed and the proportions of the door stretched downwards to ground level. The replica door surround is already awkwardly proportioned (door too narrow) and this would just make it look even stranger still. Again, the unchanged look of Liverpool Road is one of the most significant aspects of the site and this change would be an impact we feel should be avoided.

3.1.3 Creating an external access ramp in the service yard

The existing rear door to the house is around 700mm up from the yard. A 1:12 ramp would need to be 8.4m long and, if it needed handrails both sides, at least 1.2m wide. There

WILES & MAGUIRE

would need to be landings every 2m so that would add at least 4.4m to the straight length of the ramp. The overall raw area of the ramp would be a minimum of 14sqm.

The total available space in the rear yard is 20.5sqm but this is trapezoid in space being 3.9m at its narrowest and 5.6m at its greatest. We have tried to lay out a ramp in the space available and this will simply not fit.

Add to this the need to use that space for the storage of waste and recycling, plus there being a large water filled chamber associated with train platform maintenance that needs access and it is *clear that this option has to be rejected*.

3.1.4 Installing an external access lift in the service yard

We are aware that there are manufacturers that can supply external grade access lifts and while there is space to locate one of these in the yard we have concerns that it could be difficult to maintain and keep in serviceable condition.

The aim of making the building fully accessible for a holiday visitor is to offer a warm welcome to the site and easy access in the case of poor or wet weather (of which Manchester gets its fair share). We feel that it would be a fairly undignified for a party with a member in a wheelchair to be waiting in the rear yard, in the rain, while an external lift is turned on and deployed.

We looked at creating a porch structure in the rear yard that could enclose an external lift but this impacts the significance in that it adds a new element to the plan footprint. It would also cut across the front of one of the main windows in the North extension and would be hard to weatherproof without impacting the use of that window.

We consider that the need to provide a weather cover in the form of a porch for the lift is essential for offering an equal quality of access to the building for all users. Given that the interior of the building has a fair amount of surplus space (due to the modest density of the proposed development) we feel that the impact that this new structure would have on the exterior or the historic footprint would be far greater than moving the weight of the changes into the interior. *This is why we have rejected this option*.

3.1.5 Installing an internal access lift and a new rear entrance

The review of the above options show that we have tried to deliver equal access to this building in a way that respects the significance of the primary elevations of the building and works within the very small footprint on which the site sits.

For the reasons stated we are not able to offer 'equal access to all' through the front entrance to the original house but we do not want the alternative access to be a lesser quality experience. We feel that an open air lift to the existing door would be discriminatory it that it would be a significantly lesser experience.

The solution proposed is to improve the landscaping of the rear yard of the property and make a new level access door into the building from there.

The scheme involves adapting the design of the current boundary wall and timber gates so that there is a section that creates a 1m wide boarded door providing level access to the street and yard. Once within this yard, the building can be accessed through a new door introduced into the north wall and into the room beyond (which has its floor lowered to suit).

The form of this new external door is generally similar to the other six-panel doors on the elevation and has a simple traditional glass ley light and curved brick lintol. The door will be easy to use and the experience for a wheelchair user will be as smooth and welcoming as any other user.

There is a physical and visual impact on the north elevation of the building but we feel for what this achieves in terms of equal access the impact is minimal.

- *Physically* there is a new opening in the external wall but this will be into a part of the structure that is more rustic than the pristine orange brickwork of the streetscape elevation. There is a line down the corner of the building at this point where the quality of the materials change and this north wall may even be a later rebuild.

- *Visually* there is an impact but as we plan to retain the tall outer yard gates it would be all but hidden apart from part of the ley-light and a brick lintol. The detail of those element would match other doors and windows on this elevation so it would certainly not stand out as being a new intervention.

It is noted that the ground floor of the building had been converted to a shop in the C20 and floors, fixtures and fittings are likely to be part of the 1980s' reinstatement. The internal alterations provides access to the full ground floor of the building. We think that the alteration and the impact upon the existing fabric is reasonable for what it can achieve.

Inside the building at this point, the internal suspended timber floor would need to be lowered by 700mm. This would take away the headroom in the cellar below, but as there is quite a lot of unused space within these cellars, the loss of this small area does not seem significant.

3.2 **Proposed alterations to make the ground and first floors accessible.**

The north extension feels like it is a supplementary structure to the original 1805 building, but we can not say for certain that is the case. It certainly feels ancillary to the primary rooms that make up the Liverpool Street frontage and we feel that it is more appropriate to subdivide this space for bathrooms and other service functions.

Underneath the north extension, there is a vaulted structure, with a timber suspended floor over. The vaulting does provide a reasonably strong base and we have selected this location as the position for a simple, compact vertical lift between the ground and the first floor. There is an impact upon the upper floor structure as it passes through, but we feel that this impact is moderate for the access to the communal areas that it achieves.

The intention is not to make an every-day feature of this lift but offer it, by arrangement, to visitors who include a wheelchair-bound member in their party. The design shows that this lift is set behind sets of panelled doors to stop it being tampered with by children.