

CSM - Whiteley Hall



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Introduction

This document has been prepared by Buttress for Chetham's School of Music to support a Listed Building Consent for works to Whiteley Hall following a significant fire in 2021. These works include:

- Specialist cleaning and redecorating of damaged surfaces.
- Replacement of fire damaged secondary glazing to the east windows and introduction of new secondary glazing to the west elevation. New concealed automated blinds and specialist microfilm will be installed to all windows.
- Removal of all damaged floor surfaces and reinstatement with new engineered oak floorboards and new carpet to the mezzanine level.
- Repair and reinstatement of decorative ceiling in co-ordination with fire compartmentation works.
- Removal and replacement of fire damaged organ and associated structural works to existing floor to support installation.
- Removal of fire damaged auditorium seating and reinstatement of new tiered seating.
- Replacement of fire damaged doors and screens on the mezzanine level.
- Removal and replacement of fire damaged building services including lighting and heating installations.
- Removal of the fire and water damaged suspended ceiling and lighting installation to the Gym below Whiteley Hall and removal of asbestos containing materials in co-ordination with the works.

Context

Whiteley Hall is one of the principal spaces within the Millgate Building at the Chetham's School of Music. The Millgate Building is part of the wider school estate.

The first buildings including College House were built in 1421 to act as accommodation for the Cathedral priests. Later Dr John Dee became warden and developed the library and in the Civil War the site was a key point for defending the town. The first school to use the site was founded in 1653 as an educational charity. At one point the site was home to three schools: Manchester Grammar School, Nicholls Hospital School, and Chetham's School. In 1969 the Chetham's Grammar School changed to a co-educational specialist music school and has developed an international reputation for excellence in music and performance. In 2017 Stoller Hall was opened with contemporary learning rooms and specialist performance spaces, allowing a new stage in the school's future.

The grade II listed Millgate Building sits on the east side of the Chetham's site. It was purchased by the school in 1978. This was formerly the Manchester Grammar School building and is formed of three sections – the 1869-70 Barker and Ellis building and the 1911-13 Figgis and Munby building with the 1950s Nicholls Building behind these.

Whiteley Hall is located in the older Barker and Ellis structure. The Hall's character has been compromised by 20th century interventions and redecoration but retains a moulded ceiling and double height volume with tall windows overlooking Cathedral Gardens.

In 2021 a significant fire broke out on the upper mezzanine of Whiteley Hall. The upper mezzanine floor has been significantly burnt and damaged and a large portion of the rest of the Hall has been smoke and water damaged.

Chetham's School of Music appointed buttress to develop the application for listed building consent based upon a schedule of work devised by Gateley Vinden.

This document forms part of the application for the repairs of the fire damaged fabric.

Where possible proposals include the removal of inappropriate interventions and allow for reintroducing historic architectural details.



The Millgate Building, Long Millgate:
The double height windows in Whiteley Hall are visible before the fire.



Whiteley Hall Before the Fire

Objectives

This application seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- Purpose: To carry out the necessary repairs to allow the recovery of one of the principal spaces within the school estate in an informed and sensitive manner.
- Conserve: To retain and carefully conserve as much of the historic fabric as possible.
- Protect: To introduce strategies that provide the highest possible level of protection to the passage of fire in the unfortunate event of a re-occurrence of an incident of this type.
- Record and Reinststate: to record all historic fabric to inform the reinstatement of any details lost/missing/damaged beyond repair.
- Restore: To clean and repair the fabric of the Hall to retain the character and significance of the room.
- Specialist clean: To allow the specialist clean of all fire, smoke, and water damaged fabric.
- Enhancement: To remove inappropriate interventions and reintroduce lost and missing architectural details.

Proposals

Whiteley Hall:

Floor

The existing floor of Whiteley Hall is plywood boarding which has been badly damaged following the recent fire. It is proposed that the 20th century plywood will be removed, and the floor insulated. A higher quality engineered oak board floor will be installed.

Impact:

The plywood floor is a 20th century addition. Removing this fabric will have potential to impact the more historic walls and floor beams. However great care will be taken during the works to prevent damage to the historic fabric. Installing the new oak boarded floor will enhance the Hall by introducing higher quality materials – responding to the character and significance of the Hall.

Walls

The walls and plaster are significantly smoke damaged from the recent fire. It is proposed that the plaster be removed from the walls back to sound to a straight edge and replaced with a breathable lime plaster with a micro-porous paint finish to match the existing plaster thickness.

Impact:

Removal of the plaster may impact historic fabric however the fire has already impacted the walls. The proposed work can't reverse the harm of fire but will mitigate the impact by using traditional materials and maintaining the character of the room by replicating existing thicknesses and details.

Windows

The existing external windows have minimal impact from the fire and will be cleaned and redecorated. Where isolated glass panes have been damaged or removed these will be replaced to match the existing and adjacent panes. It is proposed that the fire damaged 20th century secondary glazing will be removed and replaced with higher quality units designed to respond to the transoms and mullions of the external glazing. Refer to appendix photos. New secondary glazing will be added to the west elevation to provide additional protection to the external glazing. All new work will be recessed back from the reveals so that the historic details remain dominant.

Impact:

In this way the works will address the impact of the fire on the historic fabric through a program of cleaning and repair. Furthermore, the works aim to enhance the

appearance of the window reveals by removing the 20th century secondary glazing with details that compliment rather than contrast with the historic fabric.

Ceiling

The ceiling is comprised of plaster mouldings with panels above which have been plastered over. At a later stage this has been underdrawn with a fibrous board fixed back on a metal mesh wire and plastered over. It is clear there have been several phases of intervention and repair to the ceiling of Whiteley Hall.

It is proposed that the ceiling be removed in its entirety and a line of FireLine plasterboard installed in order to provide a fire secure separation between the Hall and the dormitories above. Given the precedent of fire in the Hall it is essential that the client protects the upper floors as far as possible. The new ceiling will include new mouldings with profiles designed to match the existing exactly in every respect. In this way the works will both protect the Millgate Building long term and retain the visual character of Whiteley Hall.

Impact:

This work will inevitably lead to a loss of historic fabric in order to provide fire protection. Visual character will be retained by reinstating the ceiling mouldings from careful copies of the existing scheme. Refer to appendix photos.

Lighting

The proposed lighting scheme largely replaces the existing units which were formally in the Hall. However, in some instances additional discrete lighting is proposed to improve the Hall as a performance space. The existing wiring and services will be concealed and rationalised wherever possible.

Impact:

The impact of the lighting scheme will be minimal as existing fixings will be reused, particularly for the large pendent lights. Where additional discrete lighting is proposed the fixings will be made into areas of 20th century boxing or plasterwork to ensure minimum impact on historic fabric.

Seating

The retractable seating is a 20th century addition to the Hall and has no direct contact with the historic fabric. Seating will be removed and replaced with a new system as a result of the damage from the fire.

Impact:

The works will reduce the impact of the fire and have minimal contact with historic fabric. Care will be taken

during removal of the existing and installation of the proposed to ensure no fabric in the Hall is damaged during the process.

Organ

The existing organ is not original to the Hall and has been significantly damaged by the recent fire. It is proposed that this is removed and replaced with the new organ as described in the drawing set.

Impact

This work will involve the isolated strengthening of the floor of the Hall to allow for the additional weight of the new organ but will otherwise have minimal impact on the Hall. The strengthening of the floor will be done in co-ordination with the installation of the new floor ensuring minimal disruption to the historic fabric. Refer to appendix photos.

Millgate Gym:

Ceiling

The ceiling of the lower floor gym has been water damaged by the fire event in Whiteley Hall. The ceiling will be upgraded by removing the existing suspended ceiling and plaster board lining to the structural ceiling. New FireLine board will be introduced to improve fire performance to the structural ceiling and a new suspended ceiling grid will be installed.

Impact:

The works will have minimal impact on the building fabric as the works to be removed are poor quality 20th century interventions. Care will be taken during the removal to ensure that no harm is made to historic fabric or to junctions with adjoining walls.

This area is known to contain asbestos and so no work will be undertaken until all suspect material has been removed in controlled conditions by a licensed specialist.

Lighting

A new scheme of lighting is proposed to the lower floor gym. The lighting will make use of existing electricity runs and all fixings will be either to existing positions or on to the structural grid of the new suspended ceiling.

Impact:

The new lighting will have minimal impact as it largely replaces existing units and positions. Any new fixings will be into new fabric and will avoid fixings into historic fabric.

Conclusion

The proposed works aim to address the recent fire damage to Whiteley Hall and protect the wider Millgate Building.

In some cases, it has been unavoidable that historic fabric will be lost in order to ensure that future fire spread is prevented.

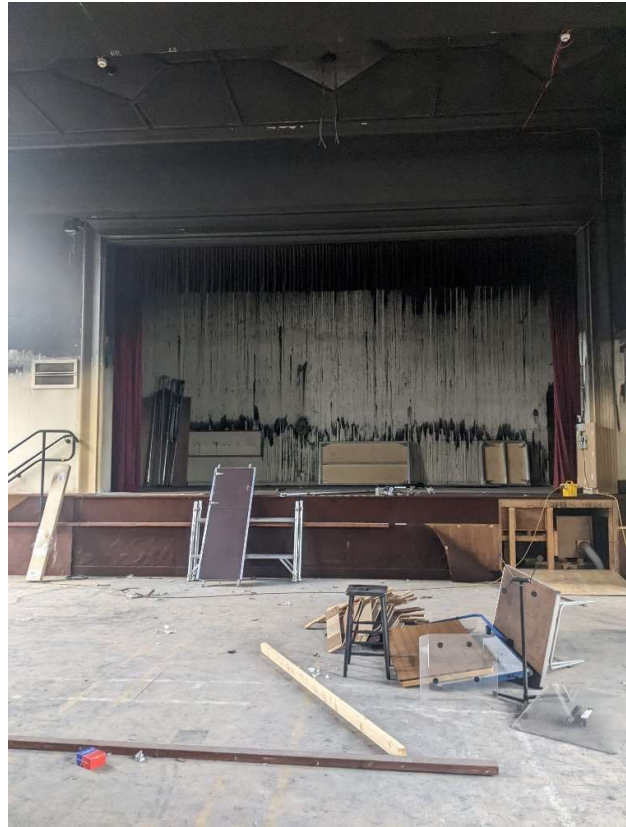
However, the proposals will ensure the survival of the historic character of Whiteley Hall through careful attention to replicating the detailing and existing thicknesses of materials and depths of reveals within the Hall.

As a result, the proposals represent the opportunity to provide long term protection to the Whiteley Hall and the wider Millgate Building, protecting this historic structure with a continued and prominent use at the centre of Manchester.

Appendix - Photos



Whiteley Hall - Fire Damaged Ceiling



Whiteley Hall - Damage to the Stage



Whiteley Hall - Damage to Secondary Glazing



Whiteley Hall - Damage to Existing Organ

