



3rd October 2022

PEARL ASSURANCE HOUSE, PRINCESS STREET, MANCHESTER
ADDENDUM HERITAGE STATEMENT: Visual Impact Assessment

1.0 Introduction & Background

This Addendum Heritage Statement has been produced by Stephen Levrant Heritage Architecture (SLHA) to accompany a Section 73 application for amendments to the approved scheme ref: 123522/FO/2019 and should be read alongside the original Heritage Statement (SLHA, April 2019) and the revised set of drawings produced by Stephenson Hamilton Risley Studio.

The proposed amendments include:

- Increase in height of rooftop plantroom louvres
- Addition of gas flue pipe to roof
- Removal of transoms and obscure glazing to top floor windows
- Reduction in canopy thickness to Clarence Street elevation
- Variation of Bow Lane ground floor elevation to accommodate new substation and ventilation louvres
- Addition of handrail to first floor on Bow Lane

The Section 73 application follows an earlier set of amendments, which were previously assessed in an addendum note (SLHA, January 2021). This current, revised addendum note assesses the minor material changes proposed. The key aim of the following note is to identify whether the changes proposed would incur any additional impact (visual or physical) on the Grade II listed building or upon the character and appearance of the St Albert Square Conservation Area, of which the building is located.

2.0 Addendum VIA

The addendum VIA presents the previous six views considered within the Heritage Statement, presenting the existing view, the view of the approved scheme, and the view of the amended scheme.

As the VIA table below makes clear, despite the proposed amendments, the degree of visual change will be negligible at most, and will not give rise to any additional impact and crucially, will not incur any definable “harm” on the built historic environment.

View 1.

Existing view:



Approved scheme and impact:



The Proposals will be highly visible from this viewpoint, articulating the

		eastern corner of the junction. Its assertive form, detailing and materiality continues and exploits the strong 1950s design ethos of the existing building. The modest height and form of the proposed roof extension does not change the ability to understand and appreciate the elaborate and robust design of the Grade II Northern Assurance Building, and its setting will not be adversely impacted.
Revised scheme and impact:	2022 and	 In accordance with condition 32a of application 129141/JO/2021, the transoms and obscure glazing have been removed from the design and now reflect the consented scheme. The additional changes proposed (such as the increase to plant) will not result in any meaningful, visual change. Neutral impact.

View 2.

Existing view:



Approved scheme
and impact:



The Proposals can be appreciated as being part of an enclosed streetscape of multi-level and varied rooflines. The extended height of the Proposals continues the original design ethos of the 1950s building and allows for the elaborate parapet level of the adjacent Grade II No. 31 Princess Street to be better extenuated against the proposed continuation of light-coloured cladding to the eastern side elevation. The

	retention and celebration of the existing Pearl Assurance House also maintains the strong rhythm of deep-revealed fenestration, which are dominant characteristics of the existing building and the adjacent No. 31 Princess Street.
Revised 2022 scheme and impact:	 Revised proposals will result in minimal, visual change from View 2. Neutral impact.

View 3.

Existing view:



Approved scheme and impact:



The roof and rear new-build extensions of the Proposals will be highly visible from this viewing place, and will be seen to be modest additions to the existing building. The former rear, service part of the building will be enlivened with a narrow rear extension which will maximise the building plot, combining the original 1950s modernist design features with a respective, modern design approach, which does not diminish the

	heritage values of the existing building. The setting of Manchester Town Hall is not best appreciated from this location, and is better understood and viewed when moving further east or west along Clarence Street. The simple continuation of the existing design of Pearl Assurance House in its Proposed additions, allows for the setting of the adjacent Grade II No. 10 Kennedy Street to be maintained.
Revised 2022 scheme and impact:	 Due to detailed design development of the Services design, it has been proposed to add a Substation and new ventilation louvres on Bow Lane elevation. This will result in negligible visual change from this location – no change to heritage impact.

View 4.

Existing view:



Approved scheme
and impact:



The composition and height of the Proposed Development site is indistinct from this viewpoint, this is largely due to the high-rise development at Chancery Place, Brown Street. The glass office building dominates the far distance of the viewpoint and is architecturally

	disunited within the otherwise, historic townscape.
Revised 2022 scheme and impact:	 The additional changes proposed (such as the increase to plant) will demonstrably not result in any meaningful, visual change. Neutral impact.

View 5.

Existing view:



Approved scheme
and impact:



The Proposals will be seen in conjunction with the immediate setting of the Grade I Manchester Town Hall from this viewing place, however, the oblique angle of Princess Street and its continuation into John Dalton Street, allow for the modest increase in height of Pearl Assurance House to be largely overlooked through the scheme's complimentary design, materials and the retention of the original building, which allows for the building to merge comfortably into the existing streetscape. The settings of the identified heritage assets, including the Albert Square Conservation Area, will not be affected from this viewpoint.

**Revised 2022 scheme
and impact:**



Negligible visual change to the modern extension from this location – no change to heritage impact.

View 6.

Existing view:



Approved scheme and impact:



The Proposals are seen within the immediate setting of the Grade I Manchester Town Hall and Wider Albert Square Conservation Area. Through the simple articulation of windows and glazing to the Proposed roof extension, along with the retention of the original Pearl Assurance House building below, the Proposals allow for a modest and complimentary scheme, which is sensitive to the design and materials of the original building, and subservient in terms of design, height and materials to the dominant highly decorative Victorian character of surrounding buildings.

Although this incidental view of the lower part of the clock tower of Manchester Town Hall is partially concealed, its dominant Gothic character remains and encourages further exploration southwards

	where kinetic views moving into Albert Square allow for the building to be fully appreciated and enjoyed in its entirety.
Revised 2022 scheme and impact:	 Due to detailed design development of the Services design, it has been proposed to add a Substation and new ventilation louvres on Bow Lane elevation. This will result in negligible visual change from this location – no change to heritage impact.

3.0 Conclusion

As with the original and subsequently amended scheme, the current proposals are considered to have a **neutral impact** upon the settings of the identified heritage assets and will have **no impact** on the significant character and appearance of the Albert Square Conservation Area.

The overall impact of the Proposals is thus considered to result in a **neutral impact** on the built historic environment, which equates to no “harm”, as defined within the terms of the NPPF (2021). The proposed changes will not result in any material change and are thus considered to comply with local and national planning policies.