

Chorlton Library
Open Libraries Development
Design and Access Statement
June 2022

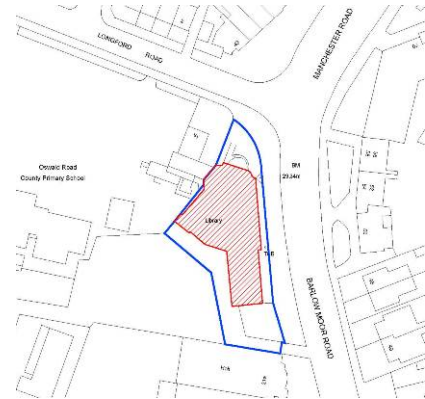


DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

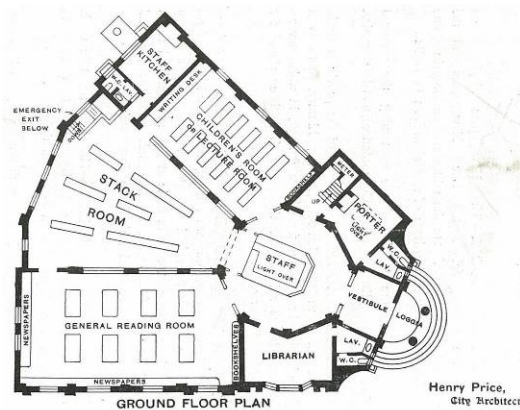
1.01 Layout

The Grade II Listed Chorlton Library was built in 1914 to the designs of Henry Price, who was appointed Manchester Corporation's first City Architect in 1902. The design was completed in 1912 but Price's original plan drawings were lost in transit to Andrew Carnegie, the industrialist and philanthropist (and benefactor through a donation of £5,000), when RMS Titanic sank. Duplicate copies were sent for approval, but it is likely that the disaster delayed construction.

The building occupies an irregular shaped site at the corner of Manchester Road and Longford Road, Chorlton cum Hardy, and the fan shaped plan form of the original building responds to the irregular shape of the land given by the Withington Committee for the building.



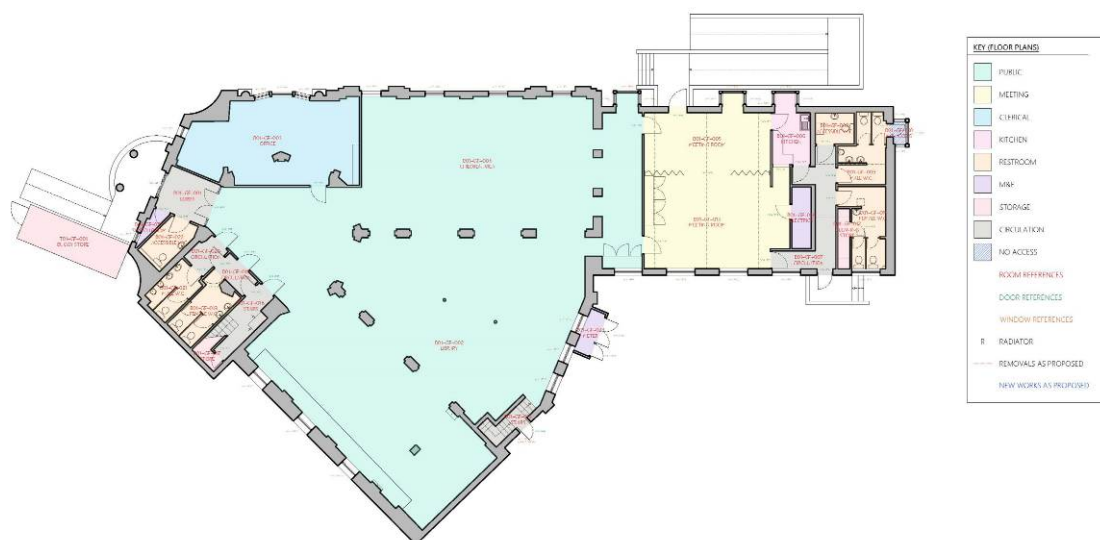
Location Plan.



The original plan of the building.

This resulted in an entrance at the thin edge of the wedge addressing the junction between the thoroughfares, which opened into a domed rotunda flanked by office and sanitary accommodation, beyond which 3 no. large rooms, originally separated by screens but now open plan, housed a central 'lending library' flanked by 'childrens library' and 'reading room'.

Over the years the various elements of the building were repurposed, but the form changed little until 1964 when an extension was constructed to the south of the eastern element of the 'fan' along the Manchester Road frontage.



Chorlton Library: Plan as Existing

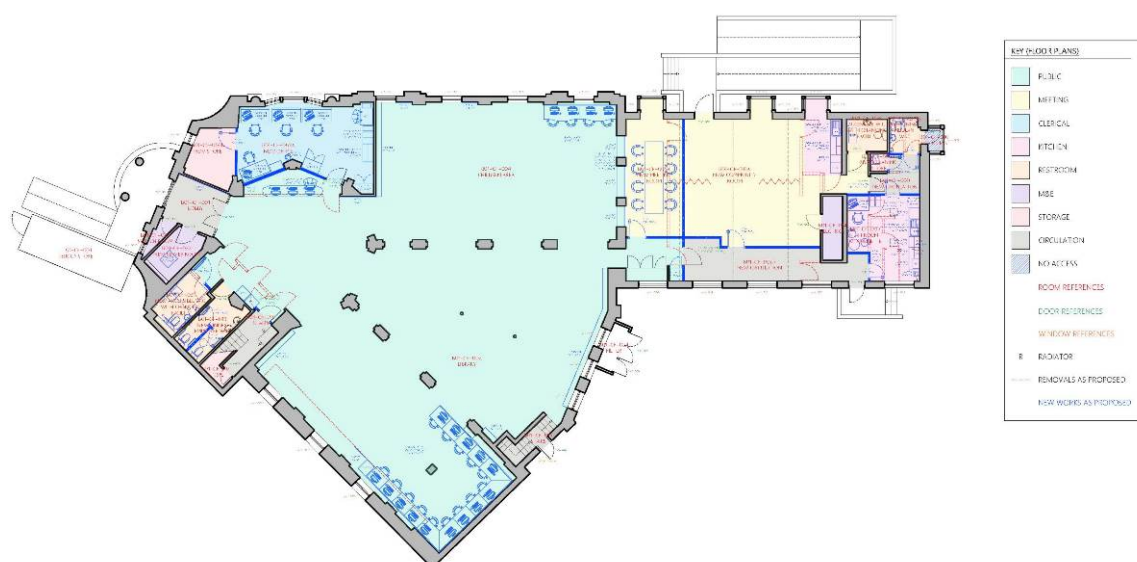
This unlisted building originally provided additional space for the lending library and housed staff facilities. The plan form recognisable today is a result of internal works undertaken 1983/4, which saw rearrangement and enclosure of the area around the rotunda to create a staff room at gallery level and larger office and staff facilities below.

At the same time the accommodation in the extension was rearranged to provide meeting room, kitchen and WC facilities capable of stand-alone, community use

1.02 Scale of the Proposal

The client (Libraries) within Manchester City Council wishes to operate an Open Plus library from the building which requires public use of the library unstaffed outside of normal working hours. To facilitate this this additional infrastructure and servicing is required such as CCTV network, access controls, control box and cabling, the design of which has been undertaken by in-house specialists, and their proposals supplement this application.

In connection with this the client wishes to make improvements to the user experience on entering the building by reinstating the original form of the rotunda with its balustraded gallery and top lit dome, and meeting room and staff facilities are to be included in an internal reordering of the extension, which will also enhance its viability as a stand-alone facility.



Chorlton Library: Plan as Proposed

Whilst undertaking the internal works the Corporate Landlord wishes to make improvements to the condition of the external building fabric by addressing issues identified in a condition survey undertaken in October 2019. The buildings' needs were reviewed in October 2020, and further necessary works were identified in a site inspection undertaken in January 2020 and by KPS when reviewing the scope for this submission.

The full extent of the external fabric works is noted in Section 2.01 of the accompanying 'Heritage Impact Assessment'.

The additional works necessary to provide the building services necessary for the library to operate unstaffed also presented the opportunity for the client to make end of life improvements to the Mechanical and Electrical Systems.

The scale of the proposals is considered minor in terms of impact on the composition and elevational appearance of the building, as all the external fabric repairs are to be executed materially 'like for like', and the works do not extend or alter the treatment of the elevations in any way.

Internally the works are more extensive, but those in the listed building reverse previous interventions considered to have a negative impact on the historic asset, by reinstating the lost form and detail of the rotunda, with its gallery and top lit dome. Other than this the most significant internal interventions required by the scheme occur in the later extension which does not form part of the listing, but this work respects the original plan form and structure.

Given the scope and extent of the works it is considered that Planning Permission will not be required, but this statement supports an application for Listed Building Consent.

1.03 Previous Planning History

It is understood that Planning Permission was granted for the extension in 1964, and that the alterations in the 1980s would have required Listed Building Consent, but we have not had sight of any correspondence or records to substantiate this.

As there have been no significant changes to the form and layout of the building since it is unlikely that there will be any recent Planning history.

1.04 Pre-Application Consultation

At the time of writing contact had been made with Paul Mason, Manchester City Council's Conservation Officer, regarding the scheme with a view to arranging a pre-application consultation, although the date for this had still to be confirmed. In advance of establishing a definitive time copies of this document and the Heritage Impact Assessment were circulated for information.

1.05 Structural Condition.

The structural condition of the listed building is generally sound, although the proposed works will address local damage to the reinforced concrete structure at the base of one of the facets of the rotunda dome. Structural Engineering advice has been sought, and repair details circulated.

Movement evident above the windows in the rear, south-west, wall of the central element of the 'fan' has been subject of some local opening up works, the findings from which have proved inconclusive to date. Further investigation will be undertaken when the contractor is on site and better access can be afforded.



Opening up works to investigate movement in rear wall.

1.06 Design Parameters

Except for 'like for like' fabric repairs the works are confined to the interior of the building, and other than the rearrangement of the library office and sanitary accommodation to the east and west of the rotunda significant changes to the plan form of the building are concentrated in the extension rather than the listed building.

Around the rotunda it is proposed to strip back partitions encroaching into the space at ground floor level and reinstate the original double height octagonal form of the area with gallery walkway open to the top lit dome. This will flood the ground floor reception with light from the lantern surmounting the dome to provide a more welcoming entrance in keeping with the original design intent.

The balcony and balustrade are to be reinstated as part of the project, based on historic evidence gleaned from historic photographs and drawings, and the ornate plasterwork repaired / renewed where lost based on the surviving details. The original gallery support, lost when steel beams were inserted to support the staff room floor, will be reinstated based on evidence to be uncovered, when we are able to undertake more extensive breaking out when the building is closed to the public for the proposed works.

A major part of the project is the upgrading of the building's mechanical and electrical services to accommodate the installations necessary to allow the library to be used outside of normal opening hours. In respect of the electrical installation in the listed building the existing distribution equipment is to be renewed, and new distribution boards relocated so that they are not visible. Existing sub-floor ducts will be utilised where possible to run the power, data, security, and fire alarm cables which rise up to serve dado trunking, fixed equipment, and lighting. For further details of the servicing strategy refer to Section 2.02 of the accompanying 'Heritage Impact Assessment'.

Alterations to the mechanical services in the listed building include provision of additional heating to compensate for increased heat loss when the dome and lantern are exposed. Compensatory heating will be supplied by finned tube and/or column style radiators at balcony level working in combination with de-stratification fans mounted high in the atrium to re-direct warm air towards the ground floor space.

The creation of Meeting and Community Rooms in the extension will require new means of ventilation, as forming an access corridor against the service yard wall interrupts means of natural ventilation. Heat recovery ventilation is proposed via units located above new suspended ceilings, with ducted to outside and ceiling diffusers/grilles, with fresh air inlet and extract routed over the newly created corridor to the existing 4 no. high-level windows, where the fixed light in each is to be modified to incorporate louvres.

1.07 Access Arrangements



Ramp to the main library entrance.

The proposals do not impact on any of the existing access arrangements. The listed library building is entered via a door beneath the portico in the north wall, which addresses the junction of Manchester Road and Longford Road, and this also acts as the main entrance to the extension during normal opening hours.

This entrance is served by a wheelchair ramp to the west of the elevation which leads up to a level platform beneath the portico which corresponds to the floor level in the library.

A separate entrance from Manchester Road serves the door opening in the east wall of the extension to allow this part of the library to be used independently. This is also served by a DDA compliant ramp, and, internally, the 2 no. sections of the building are set at the same floor level.