



Paul Butler Associates
Planning, Development & Heritage Consultants

Huckletree

Express Building – 2nd Floor

Heritage, Design and Access Statement

21 June 2022

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Heritage, Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Paul Butler Associates on behalf of Huckletree. The statement has been provided in support of an application for Listed Building Consent relating to the Express Building at 9 Great Ancoats St, Manchester M4 5AD. The proposed scheme relates to the internal fit out of the second floor of the building, with works primarily comprising the installation of solid and glazed partitions.

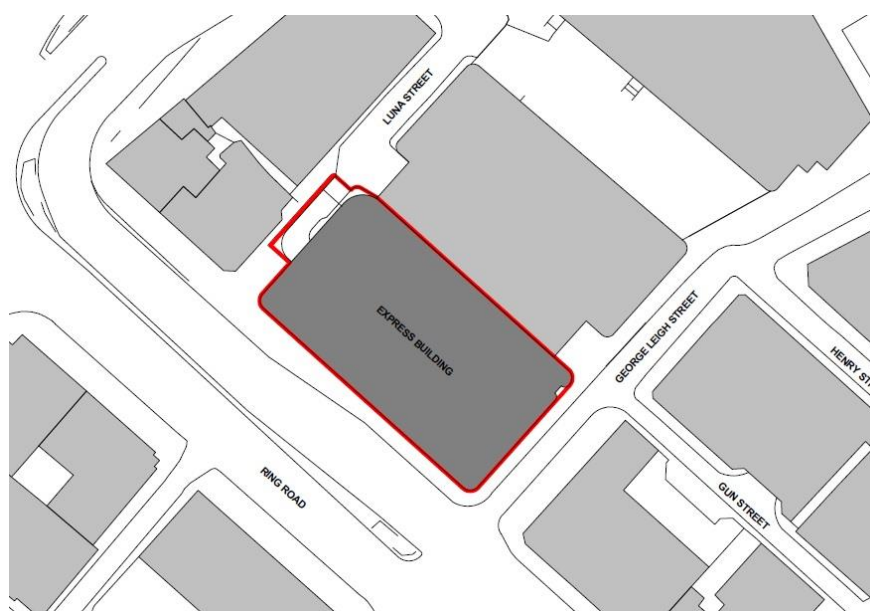


Image 1: Site Location Plan

- 1.2 The building is Grade II* listed and located within the Ancoats Conservation Area. The main purpose of this statement is to consider the heritage significance of the building and to appraise the impact of the proposed scheme on this significance.
- 1.3 This statement has been prepared in accordance with the policies and procedures of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) July 2021, following a visual and photographic survey of the affected part of the building (undertaken on 12 May 2022). In recent years, the building has undergone a comprehensive refurbishment with several floors recently fitted out and now occupied. The application proposals will reflect approved works in other parts of the Listed Building and this Statement will refer to previous reporting undertaken at the site rather than rehearsing this.

- 1.4 This Statement should be read alongside the submitted plans which have been prepared by OBI Property.

Design and Access Statement

- 1.5 This Assessment should also be read as providing the necessary information required in accordance with the National Planning Practice Guidance¹ to be submitted as part of a Design and Access Statement. Applications for listed building consent are required to be supported by a Design and Access Statement, which must include an explanation of the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the proposed works, and how they have taken account of:

- the special architectural or historic importance of the building;
- the particular physical features of the building that justify its designation as a listed building; and
- the building's setting.

- 1.6 Design and Access Statements accompanying applications for listed building consent must also explain how issues relating to access to the building have been dealt with. As the building is operational, it already must be able to provide access to all.

- 1.7 In accordance with the guidance, Design and Access Statements accompanying applications for listed building consent must also provide information on any consultation undertaken, and how the outcome of this consultation has informed the proposed works.

2. The Application Site and Surrounding Area

- 2.1 The former Daily Express Building is a Grade II* Listed Building located on Great Ancoats Street within the Ancoats district of Manchester. At its maximum extent the Express Printers business occupied a site bounded by Great Ancoats Street to the west, Luna Street to the north, Cornell Street to the east and George Leigh Street to the south. Following cessation of printing on the site the buildings were refurbished for new uses.

¹ Paragraph: 032 Reference ID: 14-032-20140306



Image 2: The Express Building, from Great Ancoats Street

- 2.2 The buildings formerly occupied by Express Printers are located within the Ancoats Conservation Area and the National Grid Reference of the site is SJ 84745 98693. Archive mapping suggests the site was built upon from at least the mid-19th century. The Historic England listed entry notes the Daily Express Building was constructed in 1939 by Sir Owen Williams. The building was extended in 1960 with the addition of what is now the Express Building One, itself extended upwards and to the side in 1979. The site ceased to be a printing location in the 1980s with Express Printers Ltd gradually relocating production to other plants.
- 2.3 The six storey building utilises a steel frame with glazed curtain walling and occupies a back of pavement siting. The two top storeys are set back with a narrow 7-storey tower occupying the left end side when viewed from Great Ancoats Street. The building is noted for its futuristic looks with black glass in continuous bands and strips, with clear glazing between.
- 2.4 The building was listed in 1974 in recognition of its modernist art deco appearance, specifically streamline moderne with its horizontal lines and curved corners. The curtain wall cladding system with its combination of opaque and vitrolite glass was considered radical at the time of construction and this with the early structural use of reinforced concrete is likely to have been an important contributory influence on the decision to list the building.

The listed building description acknowledges the 'Early use of glazed curtain walling'. Whilst the building followed similar Daily Express buildings in London and Glasgow, the Manchester Daily Express building is considered to be the finest and worthy of its prominent position on Great Ancoats Street, the inner ring road.

- 2.5 The former Daily Express building was refurbished for new use in the 2000s when the clear glass was made reflective thereby preventing views in from the pavement outside. Express Building One to the rear occupies a less prominent position although care was taken by Sir Owen William to ensure the appearance of the 1939 building was not compromised by the 1960 addition.
- 2.6 The application proposals relate solely to the interior of the second floor of the original and main Express Building fronting Great Ancoats Street.

The Ancoats Conservation Area

- 2.7 In addition to being Grade II* listed, the Express Building lies within the Ancoats Conservation Area where it fronts Great Ancoats Street which forms part of its perimeter. The Conservation Area was designated by Manchester City Council in 1979. This densely developed conservation area retains much of its Victorian grid iron street pattern which has shaped the siting of many of the buildings which followed including influencing the siting and evolution of the Daily Express complex.
- 2.8 Between 1780 and 1825, Manchester rapidly developed into the world centre of textile manufacturing. The City was arguably the birth place of the industrial revolution, and Ancoats developed as the world's first factory suburb. Lying just beyond the north east perimeter of the city, Ancoats provided cheap, accessible land for the establishment of new factories and densely packed workers' housing.
- 2.9 The Conservation Area is bounded by Great Ancoats Street, Oldham Road, Kemp Street and the Rochdale Canal. The Ancoats Conservation Area is described as having historical significance. The Conservation Character appraisal describes the importance of Ancoats noting that the streets were laid out during the latter part of the 18th Century, with little development taking place other than small houses and shops along Great Ancoats Street and Oldham Road.

- 2.10 The Manchester City Council Conservation Leaflet for Ancoats references that 'In 1939, the Daily Express newspaper company opened new premises, which were built in the functional style, using new curtain-wall technology identical to that on the company's buildings in London and Glasgow'.
- 2.11 Whilst the great textile mills were the primary reason for the designation of the Ancoats Conservation Area in June 1989 there can be little doubt that the Express Printing building is important since it represents one of the few major new employers to expand in Ancoats as the textile industry declined. The sheer scale of the futuristic printing complex they developed is arguably as important to the Conservation Area as the scale of the nearby renowned textile mills.

Relevant Planning History

- 2.12 Planning Permission (118001/FO/2017) and Listed Building Consent (118002/LO/2017) was secured on 31 January 2018 for external works and the internal refurbishment of the Listed Building. Subsequent to that, further Listed Building Consent applications (122969/LO/2019 and 126505/LO/2020) have been submitted and approved relating to the internal fit out of the lower ground floor, ground floor, and first floor, and the 5th, 6th, and 6th floor mezzanine floors of the building respectively. Reference to these consents has been helpful in terms of confirming the preferred design approach within these spaces, and the scope of information required in support of the application.

3. The Proposed Scheme

- 3.1 The proposed scheme involves the fit out of the building's vacant second floor. This space has already undergone 'CAT A' refurbishment further to securing the 2018 consents mentioned above. Following the successful launch and occupation of other floors within the building, Huckletree (a managed workspace operator) is now ready to fit out the second floor. This application submission matches Huckletree's specific requirements for this floor. The proposed additional elements include:
- Demountable stud partitions with solid doors.
 - Demountable glazed partitions with glazed doors.

- Carpet and vinyl floor finishes.
- Paint finishes / Hygienic wall paints.
- Writeable and magnetic whiteboards.
- Pegboard wall cladding.
- Plasterboard ceilings, existing ceiling to be retained behind proposed elements.
- Internal feature lighting.
- Bespoke joinery.

3.2 The internal fit out has been designed to ensure that architectural features of heritage interest are maintained and remain exposed as far as possible. The large and characterful columns which feature a 'cruciform' arrangement of triangular buttresses have been identified as such a feature.

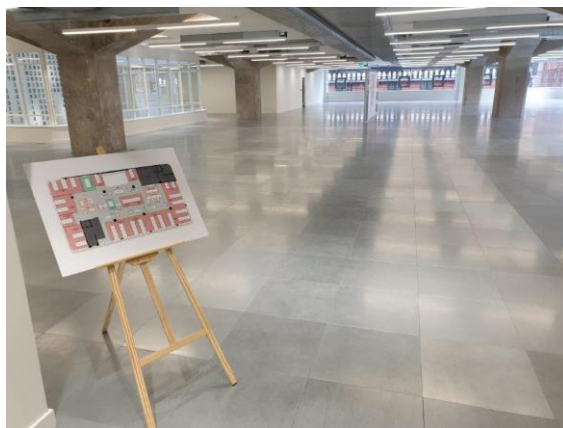


Image 3: 2nd floor interior



Image 4: 2nd floor interior

3.3 In order to allow these areas of interest to be appreciated whilst also enabling the floor area to be subdivided, only glazed partitions have been utilised within the footprint of these 'cruciforms'. This increased area of glazing allows the columns to be viewed from a distance across the floors.

3.4 All proposed solid partitions have been detailed to present a shadow gap at any abutments with heritage ceilings/soffits and walls. This includes where solid partitions are required to extend through the modern CAT A plasterboard ceilings to create a slab to soffit partition (Refer to plan 34_002). Where possible the columns of heritage interest have no proposed partitions abutting to them.

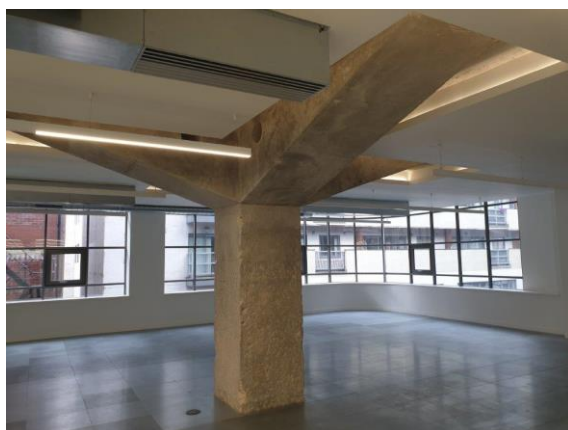


Image 5: Cruciform concrete column



Image 6: Underside of cruciform concrete column

- 3.5 No alterations are proposed to the CAT A ceiling arrangement. All glazed partitions span from the floor to the CAT A ceiling level to accentuate the level of visibility in the space.
- 3.6 A light touch design approach has been taken to ensure that the impact of the proposed works on the fabric of the Listed Building is as limited as possible. This includes with regards to the other proposed works which are set out above, all of which have been designed to be sensitive to the character of the Listed Building whilst also providing a standard of office accommodation suitable for modern high quality occupiers.
- 3.7 MCC officers have had extensive involvement in the Express Building projects over the last five years. As the proposed works broadly reflect those previously approved within the building, specific pre-application consultation was not regarded as necessary. The team look forward to engaging with officers during the course of the application where necessary.

4. The Policy Context

- 4.1 Planning policy guidance of relevance to the proposed development, and which provides the context for its assessment, is set out within national and local planning policy guidance.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 4.2 The Revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in July 2021 and sets out the government's planning policies and how these should be applied. The NPPF should be taken into account during the preparation of the development plan, and is also a

material consideration in the determination of applications. In terms of the NPPF policies relevant to the application proposals, the following are of note:

Chapter 8 Promoting healthy and safe communities

- 4.3 Planning decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which are safe and accessible. (Paragraph 92)

Chapter 12 Achieving well-designed places

- 4.4 Planning decisions should ensure that development will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development, are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, are sympathetic to local character and history, establish or maintain a strong sense of place, and create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being. (Paragraph 130)

Section 16 Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

- 4.5 Section 16 states that Heritage Assets are ‘an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations’. (Paragraph 189)
- 4.6 Paragraphs 194 and 195 requires applicants to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting; sets out that the level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance; and, states that local planning authorities should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

- 4.7 The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) was originally published in March 2014, is updated periodically, and collates guidance previously published in a number of separate documents. The NPPG has been taken into consideration in formulating development proposals for the redevelopment of the site.

- 4.8 With regard to assessing substantial harm, National Planning Practice Guidance advises: 'Whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgment for the decision taker, having regard to the circumstances of the case and the policy in the National Planning Policy Framework. In general terms, substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases. For example, in determining whether works to a listed building constitute substantial harm, an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest. It is the degree of harm to the asset's significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed. The harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting.' (Paragraph: 018 Reference ID: 18a-018-20190723).

Historic England Guidance

- 4.9 Historic England has published guidance to assist with the management of the historic environment. This assessment has been prepared having regard to the following Historic England Guidance.

Historic England Advice Note 2: Making Changes to Heritage Assets

- 4.10 Published in February 2016, this advice note illustrates the application of the policies set out in the NPPF in determining applications for planning permission and listed building consent.

Historic Environment Good Practice Advice 2: 'Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment'

- 4.11 This document was published in March 2015 and provides advice to local authorities, planning and other consultants, owners, applicants and other interested parties. It sets out practical guidance to assist interested parties in making an assessment of the impact of proposals on the significance of heritage assets

Historic England: Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance

- 4.12 This Guidance was published by Historic England (then English Heritage) in April 2008. The Document is designed to provide a logical approach to making decisions and offering guidance on all aspects of England's historic environment. Guidance is provided on

understanding heritage values (evidential, historical, aesthetic, and communal), and assessing heritage significance.

Manchester Core Strategy Development Plan Document (July 2012)

4.13 The Core Strategy, adopted in July 2012, sets out the long term strategic policies for Manchester's future development. Core Strategy objectives and policies of particular relevance to the proposed scheme include:

- Spatial Objective SO6 'Environment' seeks to protect and enhance the natural and built environment of the city, and secure a high standard of design in all development proposals.
- Policy SP 1 'Spatial Principles' states that the Regional Centre will be the focus for economic and commercial development, retail, leisure and cultural activity; and, that development should create well-designed places that enhance or create character; protect and enhance the built and natural environment.
- CC 9 'Design and Heritage' states that development in the City Centre should preserve or enhance heritage assets including listed buildings and conservation areas.
- Policy EN 1 'Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas' sets out that opportunities for good design to enhance the overall image of the City should be fully realised. In the City Centre, consideration should be given to the City's heritage; there will be opportunities to contribute to the experience at street level.
- Policy EN 3 'Heritage' states that new developments must preserve or enhance the character and setting of areas and buildings of acknowledged importance.
- Policy DM 1 'Development Management' sets out various issues that development should have regard to, including: appropriate siting, layout, scale, form, massing, materials and detail; impact on the surrounding areas; effects on amenity; accessibility; community safety and crime prevention; effects relating to built heritage.

4.14 Policy EN 3 'Heritage' advises that 'Throughout the City, the Council will encourage development that complements and takes advantage of the distinct historic and heritage

features of its districts and neighbourhoods, including those of the City Centre. New developments must be designed so as to support the Council in preserving or, where possible, enhancing the historic environment, the character, setting and accessibility of areas and buildings of acknowledged importance, including listed buildings and conservation areas’.

Saved Policies of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) for the City of Manchester (adopted 1995)

- 4.15 The UDP was superseded by the Core Strategy. However, a number of UDP policies have been ‘saved’, including Policy DC18 ‘Conservation Areas’ which advises that ‘The Council will seek to preserve and enhance the character of its designated conservation areas.

Other Relevant Policy Documents

Guide to Development in Manchester Supplementary Planning Document (April 2007)

- 4.16 The guidance identifies the City’s heritage as an asset. Paragraph 2.6 states that buildings and areas of architectural and historic importance together with their setting will be preserved and enhanced; paragraph 11.45 states that proposals should preserve or enhance the character of a conservation area; and, paragraph 12.7 states that developers are encouraged to look positively at the role that older buildings can play in delivering a sense of place within the City Centre, and that the need for old buildings to have an economic use is recognised.

Ancoats Conservation Area

- 4.17 The Ancoats Conservation Area Appraisal will be a material consideration in the determination of the proposed scheme. The guidance sets out the various elements that contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area, against which any development proposals should be assessed.

5. Statement of Significance

- 5.1 A Heritage Statement (dated October 2017) was prepared by Stephen Levrant Heritage Architecture (SLHA) and submitted in support of applications 118001/FO/2017 and

118002/LO/2017 which were approved on 31 January 2018. This included a review of the site's historical development (Section 3) and a statement of significance (Chapter 4). With regards to the statement of significance, the elements of significance which are of relevance to the submitted proposals are set out at Section 4.2 and summarised below:

- *The building retains much of its original open-plan planform, and original structural concrete frame/floors and cruciform columns which are of high significance.*
- *The building retains few original internal fixtures and fittings – where these exist they are considered to be of high significance:*
 - *the two original internal concrete staircases;*
 - *The internal concrete cruciform columns, and*
 - *The original main entrance steps (although partially altered).*
- *The unique concrete structure incorporating Williams characteristic 'cruciform' columns, which are a key part of the design and structure of the building, which can be seen in many other buildings he designed during this period, and are of high significance.*
- *Due to the substantial alterations and refurbishments in 1992-5, the significance of the building largely focuses on the remaining completeness of its structural design, planform and unique futuristic Modernist design/Art Deco style.*
- *The building has high streetscape value and is a positive contributor to the Ancoats Conservation Area.*
- *The heritage values that the building yields are primarily related to its associative connection to its architect: Sir Owen Williams, and the unique and advanced structural frame and unusual Modernist design. The heritage values of the building are:*
- **Considerable Evidential value** *The building is an important and unusual building type of a 1930s printing works, and was designed with interiors, decorations and fixtures/fittings which were purely functional, and although substantial alterations have taken place during the 1990s, including extension, rebuilding, replacement of curtain-walling and the*

total refurbishment of the building, these have not entirely impacted on the understanding of the building's original design or circulation/planform.

- **High Historical value** is derived from the Modernist/Art Deco design of the building, and its use of modern materials to create a unique example of this style and date that was not rivalled in Manchester, as well as through the associative links to the renowned Modernist architect and concrete engineer Sir Owen Williams. The building forms one of three similarly designed printing works designed for the Daily Express by Sir Owen Williams during the 1930s in London, and Glasgow, with the Manchester example being thought to be the only one entirely designed by him.
- **High Aesthetic value** is derived from the conscious design of the building including, which uses a futuristic Modernist/Art Deco style, incorporating many finely designed and artistic detailing. This includes the strong and clear architectural composition, form, proportions and massing, and the use and exploitation of modern materials such as Crittal metal-framed windows, structural concrete, continual curtain walling in clear and black glass, and remaining internal features such as the original concrete staircases and tiling.
- The survival of the structural concrete frame, which was advanced for the period, allowing for wide open spans for the accommodation of modern printing presses, along with the two remaining original concrete stair cores (now altered) and key elements of the original planform and structure of the building.
- The building is located in a position which commands medium-range/long-range views of its principal elevations, and is enjoyed as a component of the historic streetscape.
- **Considerable Communal value** is derived from the fact the building was home to a long-running and large employer of local workers. Communal value is also yielded by the original design intent to position the double-height press hall on Great Ancoats Street and George Leigh Street so as to allow for the public to witness the many large newspaper presses in active use day and night.

- *The building was also originally designed with several large, sometimes electrically-lit signs around its perimeter, which would have been seen for some distance and would have formed local focal points.*

5.2 Whilst there have been some minor policy changes since the SLHA report was completed and some additional guidance published, none of this would impact upon the way the report was completed or its findings and the statement of significance is therefore regarded as being up to date. Further information on the significance of the Express Building is set out within the SLHA report.

6. Impact upon Significance

6.1 This section appraises the proposals against the heritage significance of the building. It should be highlighted that from the outset of developing the proposed scheme, the architect has sought to design a solution which has little or no impact upon the Listed Building's heritage significance.

6.2 The scheme involves the works set out within section 3, and these reflect works to other floors which were approved as part of consents 122969/LO/2019 and 126505/LO/2020, and which have now been implemented. (See images 7 – 10)

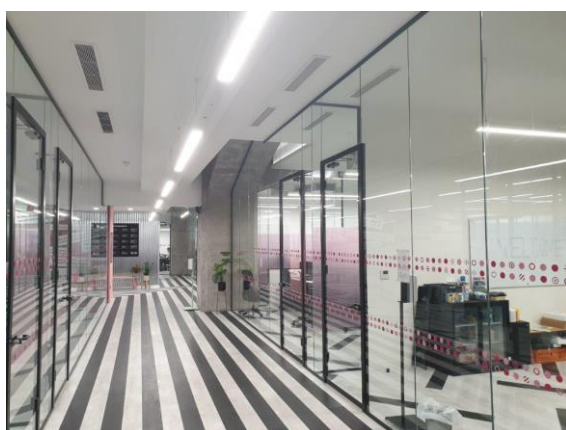


Image 7: Fitted Out Ground floor.



Image 8: Fitted Out Ground floor.

6.3 The works have been designed in such a way as to have as limited an impact as possible on the fabric of the listed building, as well as seeking to ensure that the internal elements of significance and the historical operation of the spaces can continue to be read and understood as far as possible.



Image 9: Ground floor. Fully exposed cruciform.



Image 10: Ground floor. Glazed partition abutment.

- 6.4 In terms of the visibility of the ‘cruciform’ columns and the appreciation of the historic open layout of the floor, this is jointly achieved via the use of glazed partitions within the footprint of these features. This enables them to be viewed in their totality up close and also enables more distant internal views which help the viewer to understand their historic internal setting as well as the proportion and function of the floor generally. Where possible, the cruciform columns have been left fully exposed with no partitions attached. With regards to solid partitions, the submitted details confirm that these will include a ‘shadow gap’ at any abutment with original ceilings/ soffits and walls.
- 6.5 In terms of physical impact, the proposed glazed partitions simply abut the cruciform columns and do not attach to them meaning that the physical impact of the proposals on the internal elements of significance is neutral. The partitions can easily be removed with no physical impact upon significant elements of the Listed Building, should building requirements change. The other proposed works and additions set out within Section 3 will not have any material impact upon the significance of the building’s interior.
- 6.6 Whilst the works result in some harm (in terms of the appreciation of the crucifix columns and internal spaces), **such harm is regarded as less than substantial, and extremely minor**, particularly when balanced against the public benefits of the re-occupation of this office space, which ultimately helps to secure the future of this nationally important Grade II* Listed Building within the Ancoats Conservation Area. The proposed scheme will not have a significant adverse impact upon any of the values set out within the SLHA Heritage Statement.

- 6.7 As the proposed works are fully internal to the building, the character and appearance of the Ancoats Conservation Area will be unaffected. Approval and delivery of the proposed scheme will help to secure the future of the Listed Building which significantly contributes to the significance of the Ancoats Conservation Area.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 This Heritage, Design and Access Statement sets out analysis of the heritage significance of the Express Building, Manchester with specific analysis to the affected part of the building which the subject application relates to.
- 7.2 The identified heritage significance has helped inform the design of the proposed works. The proposed works have been designed in such a way as to ensure that the appreciation of the heritage significance of the building is unaffected and interventions to the Listed Building's original fabric will be extremely minor and reversible.
- 7.3 Whilst the Listed status of the building, along with its original design does present accessibility challenges to parts of the building, these challenges have previously been met with works approved under previous consents ensuring that the second floor of the building is fully accessible.
- 7.4 This Statement has been prepared in accordance with national and local planning policy guidance. The design team look forward to working further with the Council in progressing the proposals through to determination.