

DAS & HERITAGE STATEMENT

Renewal of the CIS systems, PA system and clocks
at

Oxford Road Railway Station

July 2022



Introduction

This statement gives an outline of the design principles adopted by the proposal in context to the heritage status of the application site.

Lancaster Railway Station is a Grade II listed building. The station was designated a listed structure in April 1990.

The application seeks Listed Building Consent for the replace the existing Public Address (PA) speakers, Customer Information System (CIS) displays, and clocks along with modified and new ductwork, containment, and conduit. The present assets are toward the end of their life-cycle.

As a consequence, the accompanying Listed Building Consent application relates to twenty-five PA speakers; fourteen CIS displays that are replacing existing displays in the same position; and five refurbished clocks which will be installed in their existing enclosures.

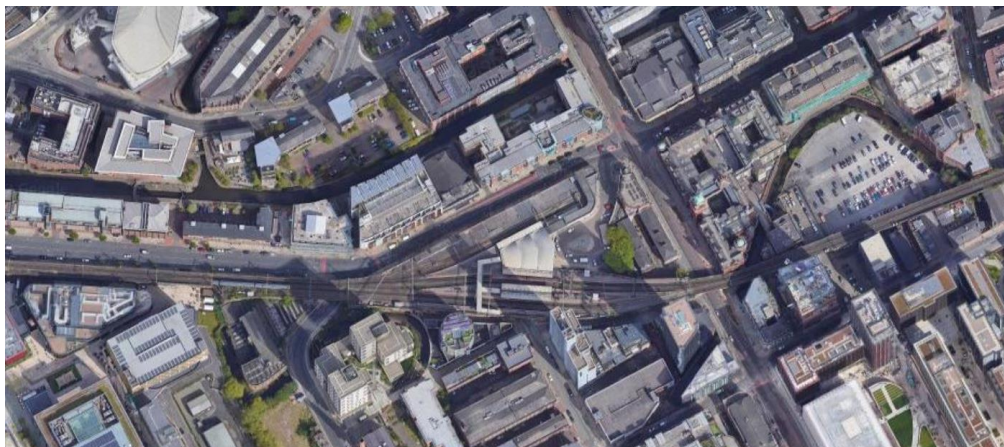
In addition, a new control cabinet will be installed along with new associated ductwork and containment, with the existing containment being modified as appropriate to protect the data and electrical infrastructure. The opportunity will be taken to remove all equipment that is being replaced, along with redundant cabling, containment and conduit, and to make good legacy damage to a high standard.

It should be noted that the proposals represent Permitted Development under Part 8, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 and as such no separate application for planning permission will be required.

Site Location and Context

Manchester Oxford Road railway station is a railway station in Manchester, at the junction of Whitworth Street West and Oxford Street. It opened in 1849 and was rebuilt in 1960. It is the second busiest of the four stations in Manchester city centre.

The station serves the southern part of Manchester city centre and consists of four through platforms and one terminating bay platform. The station lies on the route of the original Manchester South Junction and Altrincham Railway (MSJ&AR), one of the country's earliest suburban railways and the first in Manchester.



Manchester Oxford Road Station is built over a Grade II listed viaduct constructed by the MSJ&AR in 1839. This impressive structure comprises two hundred and twenty-four brick arches and a series of decorative Gothic-style ironwork bridges, which extends for one and three quarter miles from Manchester Piccadilly Station via Deansgate Station to Castlefield, where the viaduct bifurcates to provide both north-south and east-west trans Pennine rail routes. A new stretch of line at Castlefield, the 'Ordsall Chord' introduced in 2017, provides a direct route through Manchester Oxford Road Station for trains to run from Manchester Piccadilly to Manchester Victoria. To reduce load on the underlying viaduct, Manchester Oxford Road Station uses wooden laminations extensively.

Heritage Context

Manchester Oxford Road Railway Station was Grade II Listed as a Building of Special Architectural or Historic Interest initially on the 24th November 1995. The listing has subsequently been amended and last revised on the 26th February 2013. English Heritage describe Manchester Oxford Road Railway Station as a 'building of outstanding architectural quality and technological interest; one of the most dramatic stations in England'. Historian Elain Harwood, a leading expert on post-war architecture regards Manchester Oxford Road Railway Station as 'one of the ten most important modern buildings in England', and architectural critic Nikolaus Pevsner described the station as 'one of the most remarkable and unusual stations in the country'.

The viaduct over which Manchester Oxford Road Railway Station has been built and subsequently developed is also independently listed.

A suburban railway line operating the route between London Road Railway Station (now Piccadilly) in Manchester, and Altrincham in Cheshire was authorised by the Manchester South Junction and Altrincham Railway (MSJ&AR) Act of Parliament in 1845. The MSJ&AR opened Manchester Oxford Road Station on the 20th July 1849, which also operated as its headquarters. The station was built on the site of 'Little Ireland' described in 'The Condition of the Working Class in England' by Friedrich Engels, as 'a slum in which about four thousand people lived in measureless filth and stench'. The station buildings were temporary wooden structures, accessed by an inclined esplanade winding clockwise from Gloucester Street (now Whitworth Street West).

From 1854 onwards, Oxford Road served as the terminus for a service to Liverpool. Initially, there was a single platform on the north side of the line through to Manchester London Road (latter day Manchester Piccadilly) and a second platform on a west-facing siding. In 1857 additional temporary platforms and

sidings were built to provide extra trains for the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition, but these were subsequently removed. At a meeting in 1863, the MSJ&AR received a series of complaints regarding its poor time-keeping ‘...especially at Oxford Road Station...’!

In contrast to other improvements, the platform layout of 1849 remained the same until the turn of the century. The popular press of the time referred to Manchester Oxford Road Station as ‘somewhat of a museum piece’, pointing-out that had it been designed today it would have a platform either side of the main line with better use made of the space taken-up by the terminating platform. This criticism remains valid to this day as the removal of Platform 5 is part of the proposed Manchester Piccadilly and Manchester Oxford Road Capacity Scheme.

When reconstruction finally took place in 1903, the approach was improved, the ticket office and the refreshment room were expanded, and the MSJ&AR offices removed, and an island platform was added on the through lines. Subsequently, Manchester Oxford Road Station was totally rebuilt as the present-day station between 1958 and 1960 with electrified through-running.

When Manchester Central Railway Station closed in 1969, further rebuilding took place. One of the bay platforms was taken out of use and replaced with the new through Platform 1, the other platforms being renumbered accordingly. In 1992, the Altrincham line stopping service was converted to light rail operation as part of the Manchester Metrolink network.

Since then, the station has been further developed, including the roof being refurbished to prevent leaking; installation of new passenger shelters and disabled toilets; improved customer information, CCTV and PA; and re-surfacing the concourse and footbridge steps. In 2013, the station was thoroughly refurbished with improved access, including lifts, and an emergency exit at a cost of £1.8 million. In 2019, Network Rail conceded that the ‘Castlefield Corridor’ is a critical bottleneck with over three-quarters of services departing Manchester Oxford Road Station doing so behind schedule; earning it the unenviable title as ‘The Most Delayed Major Station in the United Kingdom’ - Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose! From its MSJ&AR origins served almost entirely by suburban stopping trains, Manchester Oxford Road Station now provides comprehensive connections from the City of Manchester to destinations throughout the United Kingdom and is an important interchange from metro services.

The present-day Manchester Oxford Road Station opened on the 12th September 1960 to architectural acclaim, designed by W.R. Headley and Max Clendinning of British Rail's London Midland Region, supported by structural engineer Hugh Tottenham of the Timber Development Association. Tottenham had been

researching timber-shell roofs since 1956, and Manchester Oxford Road Station is generally regarded as his finest work.

The station's unique design employs a prominent level of sophistication and innovation through its use of conoid shells supported on cruck-frames. This approach not only creates a dramatic aesthetic form, but endows the building with a light and spacious interior. The main building is set between Platforms 4 and 5. Reminiscent of the Sydney Opera House, completed the previous year; three distinctive overlapping conoid shells of laminated-wood are used as an alternative to barrel vaulting, each diminishing in size.

The front conoid over the main entrance has a recessed glazed upper section. The booking office, buffet, toilets, and staff facilities are constructed of timber and concrete, with hardwood strip ceilings to the shell roofs. The integrated platform canopies are supported on cruck-beams also formed from laminated-wood, with strip linings similar to the main building. All are on a single level. Sadly, this innovative design and use of materials requires frequent and costly maintenance.

There are also integrated curved canopies over the station's two central island platforms supported by cruck-beams similar to those of the main building; but incorporating a central spine with raised arched glazing. All the canopies have lozenge-shaped skylights with resonance to the lozenge shape of the booking office and buffet in the main building, and have deep diagonal laminated down-board fascia.

The main concourse incorporates an original semi-circular concrete and timber bench, and two curved back-to-back timber benches remain on the central island platforms. Two later sympathetically styled waiting shelters are located between the central island platforms, and on Platform 1 on the far side.

Architecturally, Manchester Oxford Road Station is one of the finest post-war railway stations in the country with a striking and highly elegant design. Being the only large station in Britain to have been constructed of prefabricated materials, Manchester Oxford Road Station represents technological advancement by its dramatic composition of conoid shell roofs, and pioneering use of laminated timber. It is complete and virtually unaltered from the original and in a good state of preservation.

Proposal

Existing Equipment

The following drawings show the location of all existing equipment:

MCO/NWR/OPL/PLAN/100000/Y642_P01-Layout 1 of 14 – PA Speakers

MCO/NWR/OPL/PLAN/100000/Y644_P01-Layout 1 of 10 – CIS Displays

MCO/NWR/OPL/PLAN/100000/Y645_P01-Layout 1 of 8 - Clocks MCO/NWR/OPL/PLAN/100000/Y650_P01-Layout 1 of 9 – Ductwork, Containment, and Conduit.

Equipment to be Replaced in the Same Position

Drawing - MCO/NWR/OPL/PLAN/100000/Y644_P01-Layout 2 of 10 shows the location of the CIS displays which will be replaced by new equipment using the same fixings in the same position.

Drawings MCO/NWR/OPL/PLAN/100000/Y644_P01-Layouts 6 to 10 of 10 present views of the CIS displays to be replaced with photomontages of the existing condition and after the proposed works have been completed.

Equipment to be Recovered and Permanently Removed

Drawing MCO/NWR/OPL/PLAN/100000/Y642_P01-Layout 3 of 14 shows the location of the PA speakers which will be recovered and permanently removed along with the associated fixings and containment.

Drawings MCO/NWR/OPL/PLAN/100000/Y642_P01-Layouts 6 to 14 of 14 present views of the PA speakers to be recovered and permanently removed from the station with photomontages of the existing condition and after the proposed works have been completed. Manchester City Council records would suggest that the installation of the existing speakers is uncontrolled development undertaken previously by 'others'.

As a consequence, the application for which Listed Building Consent is sought will regularise the situation and represents an enhancement to the overall preservation status of Manchester Oxford Road Railway Station.

Equipment to be Enhanced

The following drawings show the location of existing equipment which will be refurbished or otherwise enhanced.

MCO/NWR/OPL/PLAN/100000/Y645_P01-Layout 4 of 8 - Clocks MCO/NWR/OPL/PLAN/100000/Y650_P01-Layout 4 of 9 – Ductwork, Containment, and Conduit.

Drawings MCO/NWR/OPL/PLAN/100000/Y645_P01-Layouts 6 to 8 of 8 show the locations of heritage clocks that are to be refurbished and enhanced to be compatible with Network Rail's centralised master-clock and time-keeping system, along with photomontages of the existing condition and after the proposed works have been completed. Each clock will be re-instated in its original enclosure in its existing position.

As a consequence, the application for which Listed Building Consent is sought enhances the preservation status of these heritage features, whilst providing accurate time-keeping.

Drawings MCO/NWR/OPL/PLAN/100000/Y650_P01-Layouts 5 to 9 of 9 show the location of legacy ductwork, containment, or conduit that is to be upgraded to provide additional capacity for data and electrical infrastructure and to ensure its integrity and security.

Manchester City Council records would suggest that there has been piecemeal uncontrolled development of the existing containment and conduit undertaken by 'others'. It is noted that the preservation status of the laminated-wood cruck-beams and ceilings mentioned in the listing statement has been compromised.

As a consequence, the application for which Listed Building Consent is sought will seek to redress this damage with the aim of enhancing the overall preservation status of Manchester Oxford Road Railway Station in consultation with the Conservation Officer prior to work commencing.

New Equipment to be Installed

The following drawings show the location of new equipment to be installed, along with the associated fixings and containment:

MCO/NWR/OPL/PLAN/100000/Y642_P01-Layout 5 of 14 – PA Speakers

MCO/NWR/OPL/PLAN/100000/Y650_P01-Layout 5 of 9 – Ductwork, Containment, and Conduit.

Drawings MCO/NWR/OPL/PLAN/100000/Y642_P01-Layout 6 to 14 of 14 show the location of new PA speakers to be installed, along with photomontages of the existing condition and after the proposed works have been completed.

Drawing MCO/NWR/OPL/PLAN/100000/Y650_P01-Layouts 6 to 9 of 9 shows the location of new ductwork, containment, or conduit to be installed, along with photomontages of the existing condition and after the proposed works have been completed.

Fixings

Existing fixings of the equipment to be replaced will be re-used wherever practical. Where the existing fabric of the building has already been penetrated, adapter plates will be made in order that the existing holes may be re-used without causing further damage to the fabric of the building.

Where the existing fabric of the building has already been penetrated and adapter plates are not suitable, the existing equipment will be recovered along with the associated fixings and containment. Damage to the fabric of the building will be first made good to a high standard before the installation of new equipment commences. New fixing-holes will then be made to accommodate the new fixings with prior consultation with the Conservation Officer. In all other situations, new fixings will be fully reversible such as clampings that do not damage the fabric of the building.

All fixings will be painted to match the existing structure in consultation with the Conservation Officer.

Full details of the proposed fixings and associated making good will be submitted to the Conservation Officer for approval before work commences.

Containment and Conduit

Existing containment and conduit of the equipment to be replaced will be re-used wherever practical. Where appropriate, existing containment and conduit will be repositioned to make the lowest visual impact.

Legacy damage to the fabric of the building revealed by the removal of containment and conduit will be made good to a high standard.

The principal conservation design objective is the unobtrusive introduction of new associated containment and conduit that may be necessary to protect the data and electrical infrastructure. Towards this end, a commitment is given that:

- (i) only new containment and conduit that is essential will be introduced
- (ii) otherwise only pre-existing containment will be used
- (iii) in all other locations cables will be clipped to existing structural members and concealed wherever practical
- (iv) any removals including containment and conduit will be made good to a high standard.

All containment and conduit will be cleaned and painted to match the existing structure as appropriate in consultation with the Conservation Officer.

Assessment of heritage significance

The requirement for applicants proposing to undertake works to heritage assets to describe the significance of the heritage asset affected is set out in the NPPF. Guidance to assist with assessing the asset's significance is provided in the PPS5 Practice Guide. Notwithstanding the fact that PPS5 was deleted following the publication of the NPPF, the associated Practice Guide remains a valid and Government endorsed document.

Paragraph 54 of this document states 'being able to properly assess the nature, extent and importance of the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting is very important to an applicant in order to conceive of and design a successful development and to the local planning authority in order to make decisions in line with the objectives of the PPS and the development plan'. When evaluating the existing significance of an asset, the Guide recommends assessing the nature of significance, extent of fabric and level of importance. These are all considered below.

The Historic England document 'Designation listing Selection Guide: Transport Buildings' (2011) is of a particular importance when assessing the historic value associated with railway infrastructure. This sets out four 'ages' of railway construction which, in descending importance, is as below:

- The pioneering first phase – 1825 – 41
- The heroic age – 1841 – 50
- The third phase – 1850s – 1870's, the consolidation of the network and
- The fourth phase, up to 1914, the completion of the network.

The station was originally opened in 1849 and was rebuilt in 1960. The initial construction fell within the heroic age of railway construction and the period of 'railway mania' in which commercial speculation and the competition for routes led to the frantic construction of lines, including the Great North Railway and the laying of many of the main trunk lines that form the basis of today's Inner-city network.

Assessment against Planning Policy

The key statutory test in the determination of an application for Listed Building Consent is set out in Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Act 1990), this states:

'In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.'

Relevant National and Local planning policy is set out below.

National Planning Policy Framework

The NPPF was published in March 2012 and established the Government's vision for planning to help achieve sustainable development. Central to this is that economic, social and environmental gains should be sought through the planning system. The NPPF's approach to Heritage is fundamentally unchanged from that of PPS5, in that there is still a focus on the identification of 'heritage assets', outlining their 'significance' and considering any impact upon that significance as a consequence of any proposed works.

NPPF paragraph 128 establishes the information requirements for an application for consent affecting a heritage asset. Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. 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.

Paragraph 129 details the policy principles that should guide LPAs in determining applications in relation to heritage assets. It states that in considering the impact of a proposal on any heritage asset, Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They 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.

When determining applications, LPAs should take account of (paragraph 131):

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality;
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Paragraph 132 states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.

Paragraph 134 states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

Local Planning Policy

Manchester Core Strategy

When developing the proposals, regard was had to the policies within the Manchester Core Strategy, including the following:

Policy EN 3 – Heritage

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.

Policy EC 1 - Employment and Economic Growth in Manchester (supporting text)

Ensuring access to job opportunities via sustainable transport such as walking and cycling, and public transport, such as bus routes, Metrolink and heavy rail is vital to improving the quality of life of residents through job opportunities, raising residents' wages and thereby increasing wealth.

Policy T 1 - Sustainable Transport

To deliver a sustainable, high quality, integrated transport system...the Council will support proposals that: -
Contribute to improvements to the extent and reliability of the public transport network.

Policy EN 1 - Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas

Developers will be expected to consider the City's heritage and continue the rich pattern of activity in the core area.

Network Rail understands the importance of approaching these works with care, to ensure that any proposed works at the station do not detract from its listing, or the character of the Conservation Area. The above policies place significance on both preserving and enhancing heritage assets and ensuring that future work will not be detrimental to the character of the listed structure. The NPPF confirms that wherever possible, heritage assets are put to an appropriate and viable use that is consistent with their conservation. That they are an infinite resource.

Retaining a historic building in its original use is known to be one of the best ways of preserving its character and maintaining it in good order. The demands of a modern railway mean that alterations have taken place across the railway estate to cater for faster, more frequent train services, growing passenger numbers, requirements for digital real-time information and improved security.

Manchester Oxford Road station already has a network of CCTV cameras, digital CIS screens and a PA system. Renewal and enhancement of this equipment to comply with modern standards will ensure the safe and efficient use of the station for passengers and staff.

The station operators have a legal duty and responsibility under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, for the health, safety and welfare of its employees and for protecting others against risks to health or safety in connection with their undertaking. This includes a responsibility for the safety and security of staff working at the station, and passengers. Guidance on CCTV coverage at stations is set out in the joint DfT and British Transport Police (BTP) "Secure Stations Scheme" (2012), which is a national scheme covering a rail and underground networks.

Upon consideration of the scheme's impact on the heritage significance of the listed station building, it is clear that the scheme proposals will not give rise to any unacceptable harm to the station's significance.

The proposed scheme will introduce new fabric to the station, but at the same time old equipment will be removed. The majority of the new PA system is less visually intrusive than the existing equipment, contained within slimmer housing and installed with concealed junction boxes. The new equipment is commensurate with the vast majority of the Country's stations (both historic and modern) and will not appear as overly dominant features when viewed in the wider context of the station as a whole. They will read as clearly being subservient to the main structure and will not harm the overall visual significance of the building.

Manchester Oxford Road Railway Station is a major station owned and operated directly by Network Rail. An obligation incumbent on Network Rail is to enhance the sense of safety and security of using or meeting trains at Manchester Oxford Road Railway Station. The proposed works discharge this obligation. The replacement PA speakers and CIS displays are of contemporary design and state-of-the-art technology, which will have a reduced impact on the heritage of Manchester Oxford Road Railway Station, both visually and by the removal of redundant supporting infrastructure. Additional benefits include lower operational and maintenance costs.

The refurbished clocks will be installed in their original enclosures contemporary with the construction of the station. This will ensure the preservation status of these heritage features by maintaining accurate functional time pieces for a further generation.

Sensitive fixing details will be used to minimise damage to the fabric of the building, together with the reuse of existing cable runs to reduce the appearance of clutter. Where new conduit is required, it will be coloured to match the background to reduce its visual prominence.

To conclude the assessment, it is apparent that the proposal will not generate unacceptable harm to the significance of Manchester Oxford Road station. This is in compliance with the thrust of policies EN3, EC1, T1 and EN1 of the Local Plan.

Given this, the proposal should be weighed against the scheme's public benefits, as set out in NPPF paragraph 134. When considering this, the degree of intervention proposed represents the minimum work necessary in order to provide the necessary passenger information. Therefore, the scheme is considered to be in accordance with the provisions of the NPPF.

Conclusion

In summary, it is considered that the works proposed are respectful to the special character, appearance and historic significance of Manchester Oxford Road station. There is a sound justification for the proposed works, in that they are essential to ensure the safety and security of passengers, staff, and the station itself, together with providing an up to date passenger information system commensurate with the expectations of today's rail user.

In light of the above, the proposals are considered to be in accordance with relevant policy stipulated by the NPPF and the Local Plan. Consequently, it is requested that Listed Building Consent should be granted for the proposed development.

