

No.3 Circle Square,
Manchester

Heritage Impact Assessment

June 2022

Consultancy for the
Historic Built Environment

KMHHeritage

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report has been prepared to support the application for planning permission for redevelopment of the site known as 3 Circle Square, Manchester.

Purpose

- 1.2 The purpose of the report is to briefly set out the history and heritage significance of the area and consider the impact of the proposed scheme on key agreed views where they would potentially affect heritage assets.
- 1.3 This report should be read in conjunction with documentation prepared by Bridge Architects and the other members of the professional team.

Organisation

- 1.4 This introduction is followed by a description of the site and background history of the area. Section 3 analyses the heritage significance of the site and its context. Section 4 sets out the national and local policy and guidance relating to the historic built environment that is relevant to this matter. An assessment of the scheme in terms of its impact on heritage significance is provided in Section 5 followed by a consideration of the scheme's compliance with policy and guidance in Section 6.

Author

- 1.5 The drafting of this statement was undertaken by Nick Collins BSc (Hons) MSc MRICS IHBC. Nick has been a Principal Inspector of Historic Buildings & Areas in the London Region of English Heritage. Most recently he was a Director of Conservation at Alan Baxter & Associates. Nick has extensive experience in dealing with proposals that affect the historic environment and also has a background in research, in policy analysis and in understanding historic buildings and places.

2 The site and historical context to the area

- 2.1 The Site forms part of the Circle Square Masterplan and was originally known as Plot 12. The Circle Square Masterplan and Delivery Strategy was endorsed by Manchester City Council's Executive Committee in April and July 2015.
- 2.2 It is now almost 7 years since the original masterplan, phasing and delivery strategy were endorsed and Phase 1 has been largely delivered.
- 2.3 The revised Phase 2 and 3 masterplan takes the development and design principles established in 2015 and evolves these to respond to the changed spatial context of the Manchester Technology Centre (MTC) and the new electrical sub-station which prevents Plot 11 as originally envisaged – as well as the evolved market.
- 2.4 A scheme for the development of the site, formerly known as Plot 12 by Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios received planning consent in February 2020 however works have not been progressed.
- 2.5 The site is bounded by Newman Street to the north, the NCP car park and Premier Inn hotel to the south, Princess Street/Brook Street to the east and an area of temporary landscaping to the rear of MTC to the west.
- 2.6 To the north of the site on the eastern bank of the River Medlock are Princess House and Montana House both of approximately 11 storeys and comprise of residential units. To the south of the site lies the University of Manchester North Campus comprising of a number of buildings for education and research purposes.

Historical Development

- 2.7 Manchester was unlike some of its contemporaries in that it followed a different pattern of growth evolving from a much older settlement. 'Manchester and Salford were twin towns separated by the River Irwell, a tranquil stream in the Middle Ages when the manorial boundaries were drawn, but a flood of liquid manure in early Victorian England'¹ and each retained buildings and traditions of an earlier age. The part of Manchester around the Cathedral form what was the medieval heart of the city – where the Rivers Irwell and Irk converged.

¹ Briggs, Asa, *Victorian Cities*, 1968, Penguin, p29

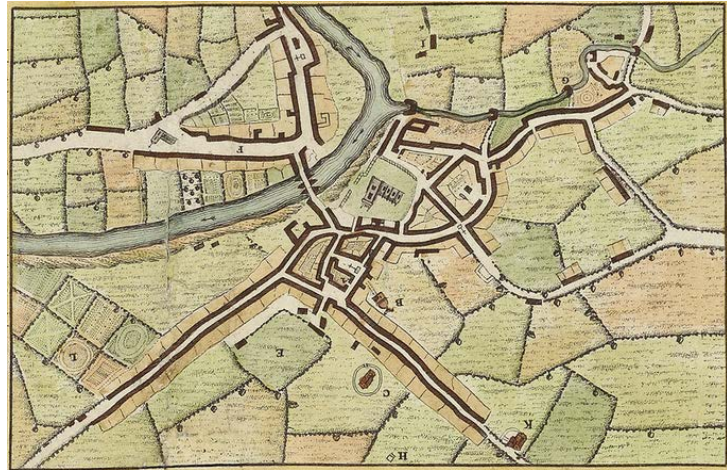


Figure 1: Map of Manchester, 1650 – originally drawn with south at the top, so shown here upside down.

- 2.8 The catalyst which precipitated central Manchester's architectural and planned growth was the construction of St Ann's Church, opened in 1709 to the south of the old town. This 'opened new regions: a new Square was formed from existing corn fields and about 1735 the garden ground of the inhabitants was encroached upon by buildings, which now form the lower end of King-street, not then communicating directly with Deansgate'. St Ann's, the work of either Christopher Wren, or one of his pupils, survives. This classical church, displaying the motifs of the English Baroque, is the second oldest church in the city.
- 2.9 Manchester, which became a city in 1853, is now defined by its commercial and industrial character, representing a broader pattern of Victorian civic design, yet incorporating disparate architectural elements rarely seen elsewhere. Unlike most other manufacturing cities which are epitomised by the classicism of the 19th century, Manchester is a fusion of the neo-Gothic, the Edwardian Baroque and the Art Nouveau. Although 'lacking specific historical precedent, the ambitious town halls of industrial England, like that of Leeds by Cuthbert Broderick from the 1850s, gave their towers an impressive classicism... the Gothicists had their day in places like Manchester'². This eclecticism is 'displayed, often ostentatiously, not only in individual Victorian buildings but in Victorian city streets'.

² Kostof, Spiro, *The City Shaped: Urban Patterns and Meanings through History*, 1991, Thames & Hudson, p305

- 2.10 Manchester's role in the cotton industry was directly related to the growth of the city. The earliest cotton mills were in Ancoats, and the need for warehouses to store their products led to specially designed buildings being built nearer the centre of the city. By the middle of the nineteenth century, Manchester had become the largest textile centre in the world. As a result, the need for warehousing grew and it is these buildings, larger than before and built with considerable architectural characteristics that can still be found close to the site.
- 2.11 The distinctive architecture which arose was both functional and expressive of the wealth of the owners. The front of the warehouses facing the main street was often used for offices whilst the rear of the building was used for storage space and for the inspection of the cotton goods in natural light. The building style reached its zenith in the early years of the twentieth century and culminated in the grand Edwardian commercial architecture that can be found on Whitworth Street.
- 2.12 Whilst the Circle Square area itself forms part of a large previously cleared site to the south and west of the River Medlock, the historic grid-iron street plan still remains intact to the north and forms the boundaries of the wider masterplan area. The river and canal wind their way through the area and the railway viaduct also bisects the area to the north, with the Oxford Road Station close by.
- 2.13 The Kimpton Clocktower Hotel, by Alfred Waterhouse, and many of the former industrial, commercial warehouse buildings in the Whitworth Street and Princess Street still remain to the north of the site, with many of them over the course of their lifetimes having been adapted and converted to different uses. The Kimpton Clocktower Hotel was originally built as office premises for the Refuge Insurance Company and similarly many of the warehouse buildings have been converted to residential use, particularly with the rise in popularity of city centre 'loft-style' living.

3 The heritage significance of the site and its context

- 3.1 This section of the report describes the heritage significance of the site and its surroundings.

The heritage context of the site

- 3.2 The site does not contain any listed buildings and does not lie within a conservation area. However, the Whitworth Street Conservation Area is located to the north. This conservation area also contains a number of listed buildings.

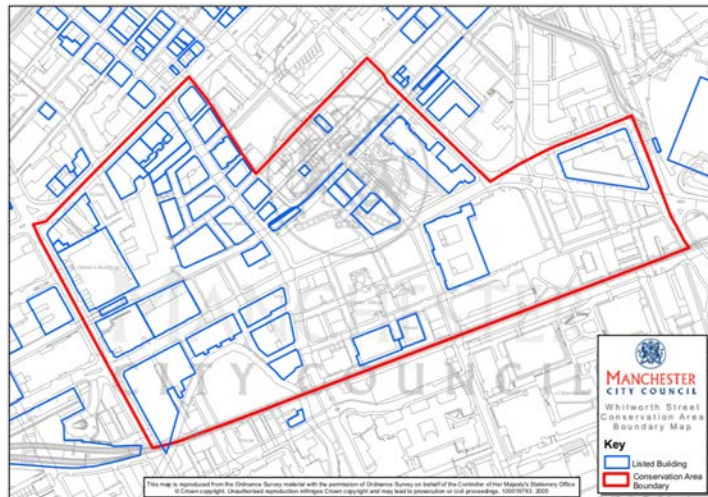


Figure 2: Whitworth Street Conservation Area © Manchester City Council

- 3.3 There are a number of statutory listed buildings to the north and west of the site

- 3.4 These include:

- Lancaster House, Princess Street – Grade II*
- Asia House – Princess Street – Grade II*
- Kimpton Clocktower Hotel, Oxford Road – Grade II*
- Manchester House – Princess Street – Grade II
- Lass O’Gowrie Public House, Charles Street – Grade II.

The heritage significance of the site and its context

The relevant heritage assets

- 3.5 The conservation areas and nearby listed buildings are ‘designated heritage assets’, as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework (the NPPF).

- 3.6 'Significance' is defined in the NPPF as 'the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic'. The Historic England 'Planning for the Historic Environment Practice Guide' puts it slightly differently – as 'the sum of its architectural, historic, artistic or archaeological interest'. 'Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment' (Historic England, April 2008) describes a number of 'heritage values' that may be present in a 'significant place'. These are evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal value.

Whitworth Street Conservation Area

- 3.7 The significance of the conservation area is articulated through its identified character and appearance. This has been identified by the Council thus:
- 3.8 The Whitworth Street/Princess Street conservation area is uniquely Mancunian in character, its physical form being established by the wealth of fine Victorian and Edwardian buildings erected between 1850 and 1920. They reflect the historical importance of the textile industry in the city.
- 3.9 The conservation area contains many of Manchester's most important buildings, and not only those related to the textile industry.
- 3.10 Part of the character of the conservation area is defined by the valley of the River Medlock, and this is marked by a distinct southerly slope and by large bends in the course of the river creating contrasting spaces within the overlying street grid system.
- 3.11 The great height of the warehouses along Princess Street, and especially on Whitworth Street, give the area its most obvious physical character of a canyon-like atmosphere. The Princess Street warehouses are relatively early in date, and for the most part are relatively plain and simplified developments of the Italian palazzo style. By the time the Whitworth Street warehouses were built, the Edwardian penchant for decoration was at its height, and the technology for constructing buildings with a steel or reinforced concrete frame enabled them to be taller than before. These later buildings also tended to abandon the use of traditional brick as a wall material, and instead favoured the then fashionable faience or glazed terracotta, which lends itself to rich decoration.

Listed Buildings

- 3.12 There are many listed buildings within the Conservation Area and in the broader vicinity of the site, however those identified are the ones which are most likely to be seen in the context of the proposed new development.
- 3.13 Along Princess Street towards its junction with Whitworth Street are the Grade II* listed Lancaster House and Asia House and the Grade II listed Manchester House. These buildings, in red brick and terracotta epitomise the epoche of Manchester's mercantile success. The level and quality of detailing highlights the power, status and wealth of the city and its merchants.
- 3.14 Built in the Edwardian Baroque style, each building fills a block, with ornate architectural detailing and devices to ensure eye catching corners.
- 3.15 Their significance lies in both their historical symbolism and also architectural richness.
- 3.16 The Grade II* listed Kimpton Clocktower Hotel is similarly striking, particularly with its prominent tower. Built for the Refuge Insurance Company by prominent architect Alfred Waterhouse (who also designed the Town Hall) it also symbolises the wealth of the city at the time.
- 3.17 It shares the terracotta and red brick materiality of the other buildings and is also resplendent with detailing and interest.
- 3.18 The Lass O'Gowrie public house is historically important for reflecting a different element of Manchester's commercial past. Built as a local pub for workers rather than merchants it is of a domestic scale and form in red brick with glazed tile detailing to the ground floor. Located to the south of the railway viaduct it does not form part of the grand groupings of warehouses and commercial buildings that largely make up the conservation area, but rather reflect the working class environment more typified by the surviving 72-86 Oxford Road.

4 The policy context

- 4.1 This section of the report briefly sets out the range of national and local policy and guidance relevant to the consideration of change in the historic built environment.

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

- 4.2 The legislation governing listed buildings and conservation areas is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ('the Act'). Section 66(1) of the Act requires decision makers to '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' when determining applications which affect a listed building or its setting. Section 72(1) of the Act requires decision makers with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area to pay 'special attention... to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area'.

The National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.3 The revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in July 2021.

- 4.4 Chapter 12. of the National Planning Policy Framework deals with design: Achieving well-designed places. It begins

'The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process' (paragraph 126).

- 4.5 Paragraph 130 advises that 'planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

a) 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;

- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and
- f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

- 4.6 Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework: 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment' deals with Heritage Assets describing them as 'an irreplaceable resource' that '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.'³

Proposals affecting heritage assets

- 4.7 Paragraph 189 brings the NPPF in line with statute and case law on listed buildings and conservation areas. It says that:
- 'In determining applications, local planning authorities 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.'

³ The policies set out in this chapter relate, as applicable, to the heritage-related consent regimes for which local planning authorities are responsible under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as well as to plan-making and decision-making.

- 4.8 In terms of the local authority, paragraph 195 requires that they ‘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 into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal.’
- 4.9 Further, ‘Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of, or damage to, a heritage asset, the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision (paragraph 196).
- 4.10 Paragraph 197. In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:
- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
 - b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
 - c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Considering potential impacts

- 4.11 Paragraph 199 advises local planning authorities 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 (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.
- 4.12 Paragraph 200 continues, ‘Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:
- a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;
 - b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and

II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.⁴

- 4.13 In terms of proposed development that will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, paragraph 201 states that 'local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:
- a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
 - b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
 - c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
 - d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use'.
- 4.14 It continues '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, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use' (paragraph 202).
- 4.15 In taking into account the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset the local authority should employ a 'a balanced judgement' in regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset (paragraph 203).
- 4.16 The NPPF introduces the requirement that 'Local planning authorities should not permit the loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred (paragraph 204).
- 4.17 Where a heritage asset is to be lost, the developer will be required to 'record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact,

⁴ Non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest, which are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, should be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets.

and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible' (paragraph 205).⁵

- 4.18 In terms of enhancing the setting of heritage assets the NPPF states that 'local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably. (paragraph 206).
- 4.19 It goes on however that 'Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 195 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 196, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole' (paragraph 207).
- 4.20 Finally, paragraph 208 requires that the onus will be on local planning authorities to 'assess whether the benefits of a proposal for enabling development, which would otherwise conflict with planning policies but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset, outweigh the disbenefits of departing from those policies'.

City of Manchester's Core Strategy

- 4.21 Manchester's Core Strategy was adopted on 11 July 2012 and is the key document in the Manchester Local Plan.
- 4.22 Policy EN3 deals with heritage, and says 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
- 4.23 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 scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings, registered parks and gardens, conservation areas and archaeological remains.

⁵ Copies of evidence should be deposited with the relevant historic environment record, and any archives with a local museum or other public depository.

- 4.24 Proposals which enable the re-use of heritage assets will be encouraged where they are considered consistent with the significance of the heritage asset’.
- 4.25 Some former UDP policies have been saved and form part of the Local Plan. They include Citywide Development Control Policies relating the heritage matters.
- 4.26 Policy DC18.1 deals with conservation areas, and says:
The Council will give particularly careful consideration to development proposals within Conservation Areas.
- a) The Council will seek to preserve and enhance the character of its designated conservation areas by carefully considering the following issues:
- i) the relationship of new structures to neighbouring buildings and spaces;
 - ii) the effect of major changes to the appearance of existing buildings;
 - iii) the desirability of retaining existing features, such as boundary walls, gardens, trees, (including street trees);
 - iv) the effect of signs and advertisements;
 - v) any further guidance on specific areas which has been approved by the Council.
- b) The Council will not normally grant outline planning permission for development within Conservation Areas.
- c) Consent to demolish a building in a conservation area will be granted only where it can be shown that it is wholly beyond repair, incapable of reasonably beneficial use, or where its removal or replacement would benefit the appearance or character of the area.
- d) Where demolition is to be followed by redevelopment, demolition will be permitted only where there are approved detailed plans for that redevelopment and where the Council has been furnished with evidence that the development will be undertaken.
- e) Development proposals adjacent to Conservation Areas will be granted only where it can be shown that they will not harm the appearance or character of the area. This will include the protection of views into and out of Conservation Areas.
- 4.27 Policy DC19.1 deals with listed buildings and says:
In determining applications for listed building consent or planning applications for development involving or having an

impact on buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, the Council will have regard to the desirability of securing the retention, restoration, maintenance and continued use of such buildings and to protecting their general setting. In giving effect to this policy the Council will:

- a) not grant Listed Building Consent for the demolition of a listed building other than in the most exceptional circumstances, and in any case not unless it is satisfied that every possible effort has been made to continue the present use or to find a suitable alternative use;
- b) not permit a change of use of a listed building, where it would have a detrimental effect on the character or appearance of the building;
- c) not permit any external or internal alteration or addition to a Listed building where, in its opinion, there would be an adverse effect on its architectural or historic character;
- d) seek to preserve and enhance the settings of listed buildings by appropriate control over the design of new development in their vicinity, control over the use of adjacent land, and where appropriate, by the preservation of trees and landscape features;
- e) permit demolition only where there are approved detailed plans for redevelopment and where there is evidence of a firm building contract;
- f) not permit alterations to a listed building which would prevent the future use of any part of the building, in particular upper floors or basements, or where poor maintenance is likely to result.

5 The proposed scheme and its impact on heritage

- 5.1 The proposals are described in detail in the Design & Access Statement prepared by Bridge Architects. However, in summary, the proposals comprise:
- 5.2 A new B1 office building of ground plus 14 storeys, including:
- Ground floor (with partial mezzanine areas)
 - 13 typical upper floors
 - 14th floor amenity space with outdoor terraces and plant spaces (incorporating mezzanines)
 - Roof deck area accommodation PV arrays
- 5.3 An important element of the proposed building design is the new public realm within the immediate vicinity of the building. This will include areas of hard and soft landscaping and tree planting, designed to complement the site-wide landscaping strategy and provide external spill out space associated with the café/restaurant unit at ground floor.
- 5.4 The proposals have been designed with not just the policy and strategic regeneration objectives of the Council in mind, but also its contribution to the wider urban environment of this part of Manchester.
- 5.5 The building has been designed to reflect and draw upon the city's merchant heritage. The proposed elevational materials draw inspiration from the warehouse and mill tradition of the area – with repetitive fenestration and use of brick for many of the Victorian and Edwardian facades.
- 5.6 A monolithic approach to the use of brick has been taken, where the massing has been carved out to form the entrance, arches, roof terraces and ground floor opening. Additional visual detail is provided through soldier courses, perforation to the brick ventilation recesses and sections of projecting brick relief pattern.
- 5.7 In response to feedback from Officers, a detailed study was undertaken to explore the relationship of the glazed 'dividing' slot to the Newman Street and Cloak Street elevation and its materiality and relationship with external ground level. A clearly expressed slot taken fully to the base of the building was agreed to be the preferred option.
- 5.8 As identified earlier in this report, the proposal site does not sit within a conservation area and there are no listed buildings within the immediate vicinity. However, there a number that

sit within sufficiently close proximity that they may be seen in the context of the proposed new development.

- 5.9 The views identified and agreed for the Townscape Visual Impact Assessment were chosen and agreed with Council Officers to consider not just the broader townscape impact but also with the site's heritage context in mind – in particular the Whitworth Street Conservation Area and nearby listed buildings. Those views are considered below, the others are discussed in detail in the TVIA.
- 5.10 From a heritage perspective View 1 is a particularly important view from within the Whitworth Street Conservation Area looking south towards the site along Princess Street.
- 5.11 In the foreground are the imposing listed Lancaster House and Asia House as well as listed Manchester House. These imposing buildings in red brick and terracotta reflect the epoche of Manchester's mercantile grandeur.



Figure 3: Verified View 1 looking south along Princess Street at its junction with Whitworth Street

- 5.12 The proposed building sits in the far distance alongside other modern development forming the Circle Square Masterplan area. In this view its scale is entirely commensurate to its neighbours and sits comfortably in the distance in the context of the listed buildings in the foreground.
- 5.13 The view is a good example of the expansion of the city in a modern yet contextual way.

- 5.14 Whilst the Lass O’Gowrie public house is the closest listed building to the site, the proposed new building will not be seen in the same context due to the extent of other buildings between it and the site – such that the proposals will have no impact on its setting.
- 5.15 The choice of brick and its ‘solid’ form should further ensure it sits comfortably and contextually in the backdrop.
- 5.16 View 2 is taken from the junction of Princess Street and Charles Street. This view is to the south of the Whitworth Street Conservation Area.

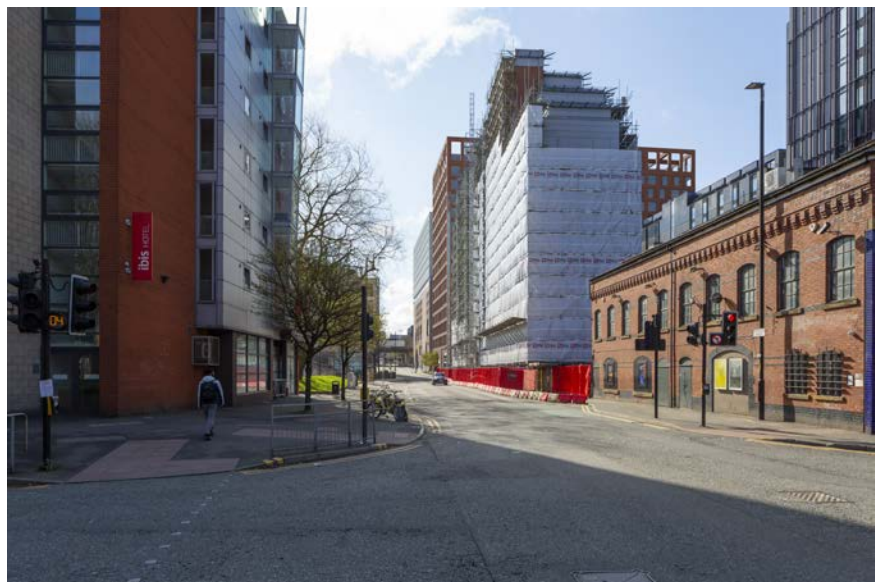


Figure 3: Verified View 2 looking south along Princess Street

- 5.17 Not forming part of the conservation area, the Factory clubbing venue (in the foreground to the right) is, nevertheless, a remnant of Manchester’s industrial past and reflects the red brick materiality that typifies many of the buildings. It already sits within the context of new development and the proposed building sits comfortably behind – again the choice of red brick will further ensure its contextuality in this view.
- 5.18 Other development forming part of the wider development of the area means that there is no intervisibility between the site and any heritage assets on Oxford Road or to the west – such as the Kimpton Clocktower Hotel or Oxford Road Station.

6 Compliance with policy and guidance

- 6.1 This report has provided a description and analysis of the heritage context of the site, as required by Paragraph 189 of the National Planning Policy Framework. In addition, the report also describes how the proposed scheme will affect that heritage significance. The effect is positive, and for that reason, the scheme complies with policy and guidance.

The level of 'harm' caused by the proposed scheme

- 6.2 As outlined in Section 4, the NPPF identifies two levels of potential 'harm' that might be caused to a heritage asset by a development: 'substantial harm...or total loss of significance' or 'less than substantial'. Both levels of harm must be caused to a *designated* heritage asset – in this instance, the Conservation Area and the setting of nearby listed buildings.
- 6.3 The proposed scheme, in our considered view, preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the setting of nearby listed buildings and thus complies with S.66(1) and S.72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. It does not lead to 'substantial' harm or any 'less than substantial' harm to any heritage assets.

The National Planning Policy Framework

- 6.4 In respect of Paragraph 197 of the NPPF, the proposed scheme will make 'a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness' through its contextual architectural approach.
- 6.5 The proposed scheme complies with Paragraph 201 of the NPPF - it certainly does not lead to 'substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset'. It also complies with Paragraph 202 for the reasons given in detail earlier in this report – the scheme cannot be considered to harm the setting and thus character and appearance of the conservation area or nearby listed buildings, but rather alters it in a fashion that enhances its setting. The choice of materials with good quality detailing will have a positive impact on the general townscape and setting of any nearby heritage assets.

Manchester's Local Development Framework

- 6.6 In positively addressing the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework, the works also meet the policy

requirements of the City of Manchester Local Plan relevant to the historic built environment and design.

- 6.7 With regard to Policy EN3, the proposals 'enhance the historic environment, the character, setting and accessibility of areas...of acknowledged importance' creating, with the rest of the Circle Square masterplan, a new vibrant part of the city that takes its cue from the commercial evolution of the city in the 19th and early 20th centuries.
- 6.8 The proposals 'preserve and enhance the settings of listed buildings' nearby through the considered approach to materiality and the mass and form of the proposed building as required by Policy DC19.1.
- 6.9 Likewise, this contextual approach to the site's surroundings ensures that the proposals will 'not harm the appearance or character of the area. This includes the protection of views into and out of...conservation area.'

7 Summary and conclusions

The proposed development site is located to the south of the Whitworth Conservation Area and within the Circle Square Masterplan area. There are no heritage assets on the site and the nearest listed buildings are to the north, primarily within the conservation area.

- 7.1 The proposals have been assessed from a series of key viewpoints agreed with the Council that consider both the wider townscape and nearby heritage assets and whilst the scheme will appear in the setting of a number of heritage assets (be it relatively some distance) it is not believed this will cause any harm or have any detrimental impact on their significance. The proposals should also be considered in the context of the benefits that the new development will bring to this part of the city.
- 7.2 The scheme has taken its cue from the commercial and architectural evolution of the city and will preserve the setting of heritage assets and townscape, delivering clear and substantial public benefits for Manchester.
- 7.3 For these reasons the proposed scheme complies with the law, and national and local policies and guidance for urban design and the historic built environment.

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