

India House, Whitworth Street, Manchester
Significance Statement
~~& Impact Assessment of Scaffold Proposal~~



March 2014

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Prepared for Guinness Northern Counties
by
The Architectural History Practice Ltd.

March 2014

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
1. INTRODUCTION.....	5
1.1. Background to the Report.....	5
1.2 Limitations.....	5
1.2 Authors and acknowledgements.....	5
1.3 Copyright	5
2.0 HISTORY AND CONTEXT	6
2.1 Early History and Commission.....	6
2.2. Historic Setting	8
2.3 Context: Architect Harry S. Fairhurst	9
2.4 Context: Manchester Warehouses	10
2.5 The Design of India House.....	12
2.6 Alterations and Planning History	25
3.0 SIGNIFICANCE.....	28
3.1 Assessing significance	28
3.2 Statement of Significance for India House: summary	29
3.3 Significance of India House: Exterior	30
3.4 Significance of India House: Interior	31
3.4 Setting and Contribution to Conservation Area.....	31
4.0 HERITAGE PLANNING CONTEXT	35
4.1 Introduction	35
4.2 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	35
4.3. The Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (ERR) Act 2013	36
5.0 IMPACT ASSESSMENT	37
 5.1 Introduction.....	37
 5.2. The proposals.....	37
 5.3. Impact of the proposals.....	38

6.0 CONCLUSION.....	40
SOURCES.....	41
Published	41
Unpublished	41
Appendix 1: Listed Building Description.....	43

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report was commissioned from The Architectural History Practice Ltd (AHP) in January 2014 by Guinness Northern Counties. Its purpose is to assess the heritage significance of India House, a former packing warehouse. Manchester City Council and English Heritage have asked the owners to provide an assessment of significance to inform proposals to erect scaffolding and repairs to the building.

India House is listed at Grade II* and lies within the Whitworth Street Conservation Area.

Section 2 provides a history of the site and its context. India House was constructed in 1905-07 for Lloyds Packing Warehouses Ltd to a design by Harry S. Fairhurst, one of the leading warehouse architects. It fell out of use in the late 20th century and was converted for residential accommodation by Northern Counties Housing Association, opening in 1989. There have been further alterations to the building since then.

Section 3 assesses the significance of the India House and the contribution made by the setting to significance, and by the building to the Conservation Area. The historic building is of exceptional significance as a fine example of a cotton warehouse built at the zenith of Britain's cotton industry, justifying its listing at grade II*. Architecturally, the most significant elements of the building are the elevations, front entrances, staircases, structural steel frame and fire-resistant floors. The frame is now mostly hidden by fire-resistant render or behind modern linings, however. The much altered interior is considered to be of no more than medium significance, as the original open spatial character of the warehouse floors, internal partitions and entrance halls were lost in the 20th century. It is possible that historic fabric, such as plaster ceilings survive behind inserted suspended ceilings and modern wall linings, but the extent of this has not been established for this study.

Section 4 outlines the heritage planning context (principally the NPPF) and gives guidance on the circumstances in which listed building consent (LBC) will be required, and the factors that will be taken into account by the local planning authority. There may be scope for a listed building Heritage Partnership Agreement, for this building, under the provisions of the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act, 2013, for some aspects of alteration, and future repair.

Section 5 considers current proposals to erect a 'tied independent scaffold' for general maintenance purposes. A method statement has been produced by John Ruddy of Capstone Consulting Engineers; this is tailored to the facing materials on the elevations, and takes account of the significance of India House so that the most sensitive facing materials will not be damaged. AHP considers that the proposals are reasonable; the proposed fixings are either neutral in impact or cause only slight harm which is justifiable to ensure that the building can be adequately maintained now and in the future.

Images

Frontispiece: Photograph of Whitworth Street elevation by Jenny Wetton

All photographs are by AHP unless otherwise credited

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background to the Report

This report was commissioned from The Architectural History Practice Ltd (AHP) in January 2014 by Guinness Northern Counties, to assess the significance of India House, a former cotton packing warehouse. India House, built in 1905-07 is listed at Grade II* and lies within the Whitworth Street Conservation Area. It is now in residential use.

The NPPF requires significance to be assessed when changes are proposed to heritage assets, and for the impact of proposals to be assessed in relation to significance. The owners need to erect scaffolding to enable maintenance to be carried out. To inform the determination of the application, Manchester City Council and English Heritage have asked the owners to provide a statement of significance and an impact assessment of the proposal.

1.2 Limitations

The research for report was limited by the lack of access to historic plans, due to the temporary closure of Manchester Local Studies and Archives, and the RIBA drawings collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Large parts of the interior have not been assessed, due to limited access to residential units, and the extensive modern linings that obscure the original interior and historic fabric.

1.2 Authors and acknowledgements

This report has been written by Marion Barter, BA MA IHBC, Director of the Architectural History Practice Ltd (AHP) and Jenny Wetton, BA MSc (Arch Cons) IHBC, Consultant. Research in the Riba Library, London was undertaken by Neil Burton, Director of AHP.

The authors are grateful to the owners for granting access to the site, and to the Riba Library for access to historic journals in their collection. Maps are courtesy of Manchester Libraries.

1.3 Copyright

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2.0 HISTORY AND CONTEXT

2.1 Early History and Commission

Whitworth Street was laid out as a new street in the 1890s parallel to the 1849 railway viaduct connecting stations at Deansgate and London Road (now Piccadilly). The street was first named in Slater's directory in 1890 when it was lined with mills, workers' housing, other industrial premises and open yards, backing onto and served by the Rochdale Canal. The arrival of the Manchester Ship Canal in 1894 prompted a boom in the building of cotton warehouses in the city, which coincided with new steel-frame construction.

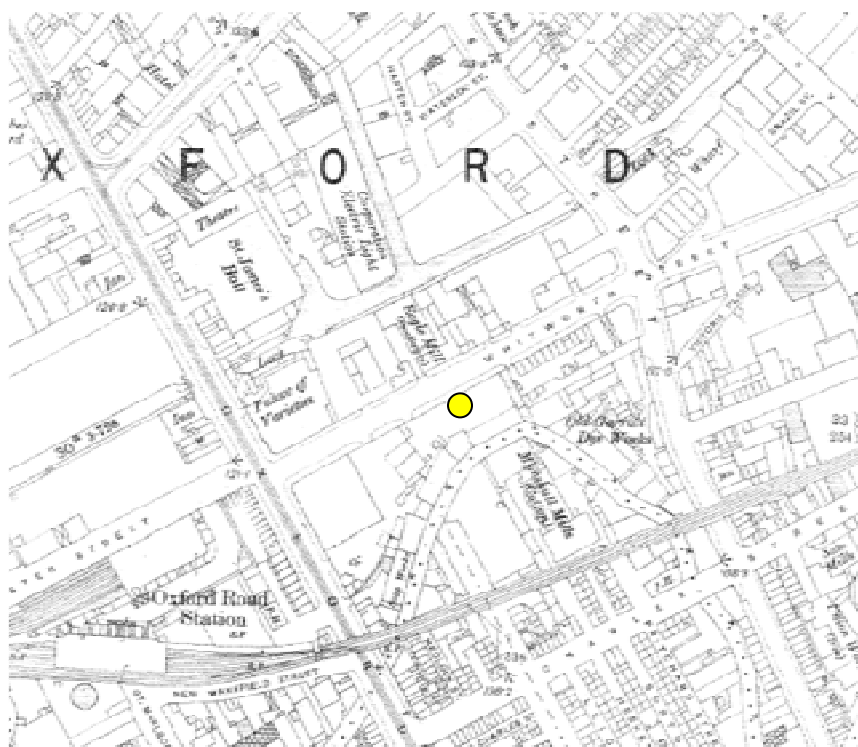


Figure 1: OS 1893, showing the site, prior to the building of India House

India House was built for Lloyd's Packing Warehouses Ltd, a company formed in 1896 in response to the expansion of the cotton trade, and which rapidly grew to dominate the export market. Their warehouses were designed for multiple tenant shipping firms, rather than one occupier. Lloyd's provided the labour and machinery for the packing and despatch of goods, and the shipping firms rented offices within the warehouse. The company commissioned a series of very large warehouses on Whitworth Street, designed by Harry S. Fairhurst.

In around 1905, land on the south side of Whitworth Street was cleared for the construction of warehouses India House and Lancaster House, a tramway was installed on Whitworth Street, and to the east of the site Beaver Street and Atwood Street were laid-out.

The building is first shown on the 1911 OS map, with a rectangular footprint and a service road (now McGinty Street) running along the west side to access the rear. The map shows glazed canopies above loading bays to the rear. A service road separates India House from Lancaster House, with a fine iron gate linking the front elevations.

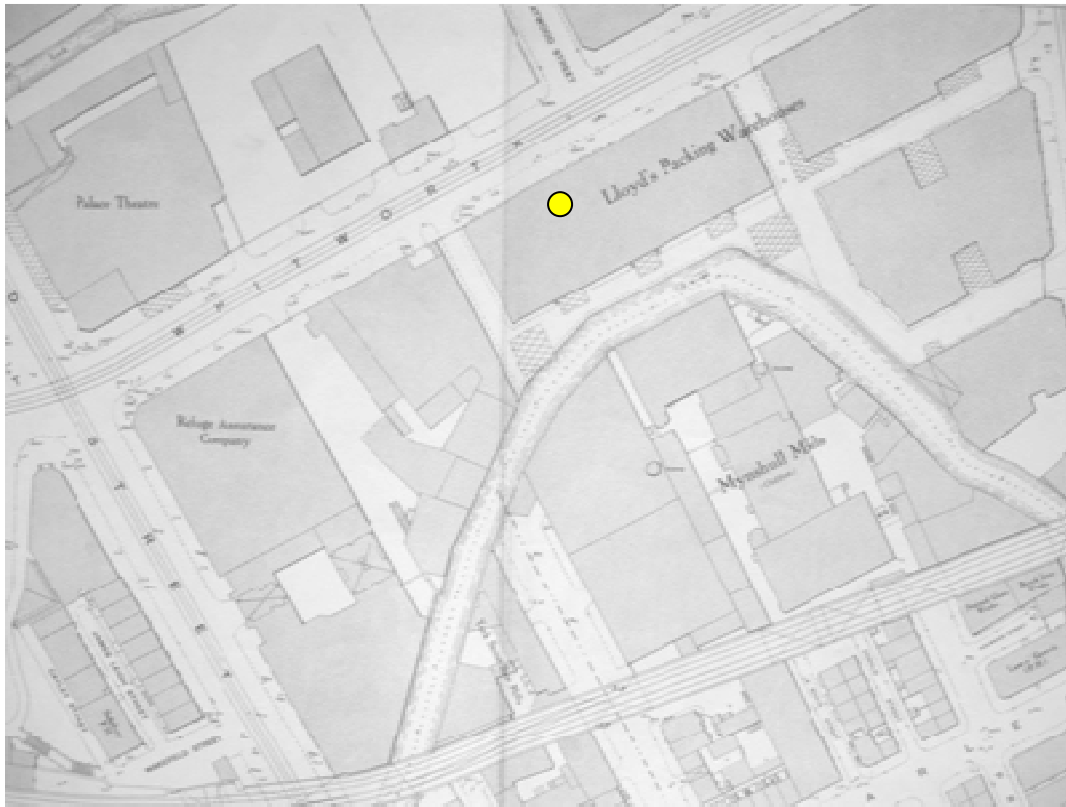


Figure 2: 1911 OS map, showing Lloyd's Packing Warehouses (India House and Lancaster House)

India House (built 1905-07) was Fairhurst's first major commission, and was favourably reviewed in the contemporary press, including *The British Architect* in 1907, that commented on its innovative features such as the quality of the fire-resistance and well-lit, flexible interiors. The main contractor for India House was Robert Neill & Sons of Manchester and the structural steelwork was supplied by Richard Moreland & Sons of London. The steelwork for the staircases was by the Glengarnock Iron and Steel Company of Glasgow and the external pavement lights supplied by Maclean & Company of Manchester and Hayward of London. The pink Aberdeen Correnie granite for the plinth and entrance stairs was supplied by John Fyfe & Sons of Aberdeen and the terracotta from the nationally regarded firm of Burmantofts¹.

¹ *The Builder*, 1.09.1906, 282



Figure 3: Perspective View by Harry S. Fairhurst (The Builder)²

2.2. Historic Setting

The 1893 OS map (Fig.1) shows the site of India House bounded to the south by the River Medlock with Minshull cotton mills on the south bank, the Refuge Assurance Company's new building to the west on the corner with Oxford Road and the Palace Theatre to the north west (both 1891), the Eagle Mill and a timber yard on the north side of the street and terraced housing to the east. Further afield lay the Whitworth Street West hydraulic power station (1894) and St Mary's Hospital, both now demolished. Bridgewater House was built opposite, on the site of Eagle Mill, in 1913 as a textile warehouse also for Lloyd's Packing Warehouses Ltd and also to designs by Harry Fairhurst, as part of the last major wave of warehouse development in the city. By 1922, there was also an electricity power station to the north, on the canal. By 1932, the Refuge Assurance Company building had expanded east along Whitworth Street. The scale and form of the latter is similar to the warehouses, creating a distinctive canyon-like streetscape framed by tall buildings, all built within a few decades.

By the 1920s, Lloyd's Packing Warehouses Ltd owned fifteen warehouses and the concentration of trade in the Whitworth area was so large that some

² *The Builder*, 1.09.1906, 282 (from Riba Library)

warehouses incorporated a bank; Lancaster House contained a branch of the Union Bank of Manchester. By 1932, a bridge had been built at an upper level connecting the east end of India House to Lancaster House.

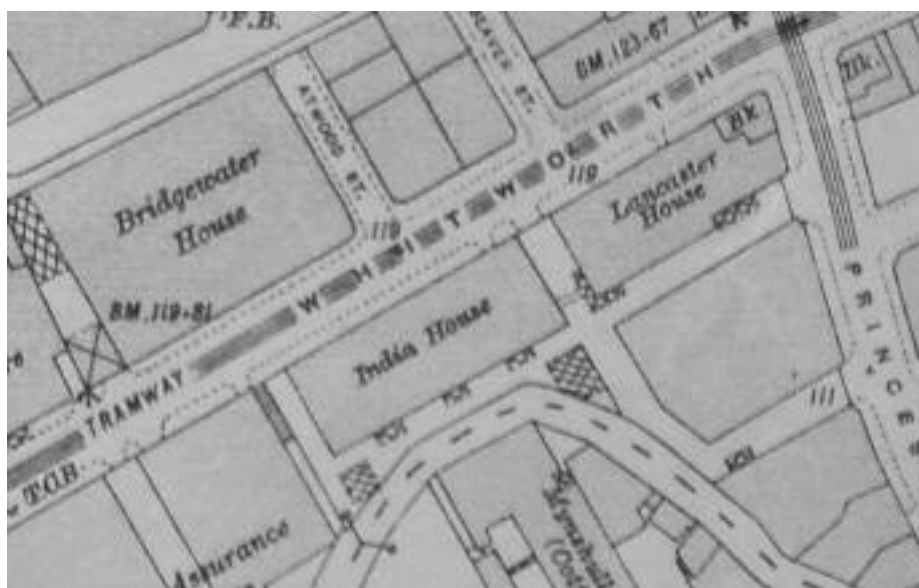


Figure 4: O.S. 1932

2.3 Context: Architect Harry S. Fairhurst

Harry Smith Fairhurst (1868-1945) was born in Blackburn, and articled to Maxwell and Tuke of Manchester in 1888. After travelling abroad, he worked with William France in Cardiff for a time. He established his own practice in Blackburn in 1895 and moved to Manchester in 1901. Fairhurst specialised in warehouses and thoroughly understood the needs of his client. His relationship with Lloyd's Packing Company was close; he had married into the Lloyd family. His first commission for Lloyd's was India House, built in 1905-7, followed by Lancaster House in 1909. The two are situated on the south side of Whitworth Street and are linked by an elegant arched iron gateway. The two warehouses were planned for function; India House was described in the *British Architect* in 1907, the correspondent noting the construction of moveable screens to suit the requirements of individual tenants and the use of large windows to provide optimum light levels. York House on Major Street (1911) represented the zenith of this approach, designed with a glazed sloping rear-wall to allow the maximum amount of light into the inspecting areas; the building was demolished in the 1970s. At Bridgewater House (1912) Fairhurst employed functionality at its best, with a new method of goods handling and transfer which incorporated the side street to the east.



Figure 5: Bridgewater House³

Harry Fairhurst's son, Harry Fairhurst junior, joined the practice and his grandson, P. Garland, in 1929; they continued to design innovative buildings, influenced by the architecture of the United States and the European modern movement, reflected in buildings such as the Rylands warehouse on Market Street (1929), the unfinished 'skyscraper' extension to Lee House (1928) on Great Bridgewater Street, and Ship Canal House (1924), the tallest building in the country at the time. The practice was also involved in technical hospital design, especially cancer research, and began the Christie Hospital and Holt Radium Institute in 1931. The practice continues today.

2.4 Context: Manchester Warehouses

Manchester's textile warehouses are the most distinctive building type in the city's streetscape, and reflect Manchester's dominance of cotton trading in the nineteenth century. This success developed from a small-scale woollen-weaving industry in the seventeenth and eighteenth century and grew

³ Illustration in the Manchester Guardian,

throughout the nineteenth century, reaching a production peak in the 1850s stimulated by the mechanisation of cotton spinning. The city's trading role became more important than manufacturing in the late 1800s and early 1900s, prompting the building of many large warehouses.

The construction of commercial warehouses provided textile manufacturers and merchants with the space to store, display, inspect, package and transport their goods. The design of warehouses depended partly on the method of moving the cotton or other goods, the carrier's warehouse was designed around transport links, the canals and railways, while the merchant's warehouse focused on storage, quality control and company prestige. The latter developed from utilitarian, brick-built buildings on side-streets, where cotton was loaded from the street, to exuberant Italianate palazzos in the 1840s, designed to impress the building owner's clients. These warehouses were designed to allow inspection of raw cotton in large ware or show rooms before it was packaged, and were located around Portland Street and Dale Street (e.g. S. & J. Watt's warehouse, Portland Street, 1851-6).

Alongside the home-trade warehouses were warehouses designed for the export trade, clustered around the south end of Princess Street, on Chepstow Street and along Whitworth Street. These were built around the early 1900s and their names (Orient House, Asia House, Canada House, India House etc) reflect the destinations for Lancashire's cotton in the export market. India, then part of the British Empire, was the most important overseas market for cotton; Alan Kidd notes that in 1896 India took 'nearly 40% of piece goods and 27% of manufactured goods exported' by the British cotton industry⁴.

The design and purpose of home and export warehouses followed a common pattern, with the most extravagant design and finishes reserved for the front elevation and entrance areas. The main doorways provided access to a lobby and staircase serving upper floors. Upper floors were plainer and more functional, used for the storage and inspection of goods, the latter took place on tables in front of windows. Packing was done in the basement, lit by pavement-level windows. Goods were loaded and unloaded in a recessed bay, called a 'hovel', at the side or front of the building, using a crane known as a teagle. This building feature was introduced in response to an 1848 bye-law to relieve traffic congestion on streets outside warehouses, which had been an issue with the earlier merchant warehouses.

As trade expanded and after the opening of the Manchester Ship Canal in 1894, larger warehouses were required, and the introduction of steel-framing from c.1900 enabled architects to build taller structures up to the height

⁴ Kidd, *Manchester*, 2002, p102

restriction of 108 feet. Steel frames also enabled large uninterrupted floor plates, lit by large windows. Below the window work-surfaces, the floor below was angled, to maximize the size of the windows (see Fig.6). The warehouse interiors were leased by separate shipping companies who used a small area for administration; the packing and despatch was undertaken by the landlord packer. One of the earliest packing warehouses was Lloyd's House, located off Albert Square and built for the Manchester Shipping Offices & Packing Co. This company merged with two others to form Lloyd's Packing Warehouses Ltd in 1896; Lloyd's first warehouses were Whitworth House and Watkin House (both 1899). The company grew to dominate the sector, and in 1926 was handling one third of all Lancashire's foreign cotton trade. The firm operated until at least 1949 when its brochure was still advertising space in Bridgewater House.

2.5 The Design of India House

Plan-form

Although a full set of historic plans was unfortunately not accessible for this study, the building's original form and layout can be understood from secondary sources. Contemporary accounts in the architectural press also provide descriptions of the internal layout, since altered. One of the best secondary sources is Cooper's doctoral thesis, *The Manchester Commercial Textile Warehouse 1780-1914*.

India House was planned to suit a specific function, although this is no longer legible above the basement. The warehouse was arranged with an upper ground floor over two basement levels used for the packing and despatch of bales of cloth. Steps for customers led up from the street via a pair of matching entrance into the entrance halls. Upper floors were accessed by a pair of internal staircases with 'economically short landings', according to the British Architect in 1907. Fairhurst provided as much light as possible to the interiors via large rear windows facing south and glazing in internal partitions. The upper floors for storage and offices had flexible partitions, 'jointed' to be 'rearranged at any time'.

Although internal floor plans of India House were not accessible for this study, Cooper's thesis illustrates the ground floor plan of Lancaster House, built shortly after India House (1909), for the same client and by the same architect (Plate 263). This plan indicates a clear separation between the public and private spaces, with the former shown as smaller, enclosed spaces containing fitted counters and desks, and the latter ware rooms being large and open with an inspection table or counter in front of rear windows.

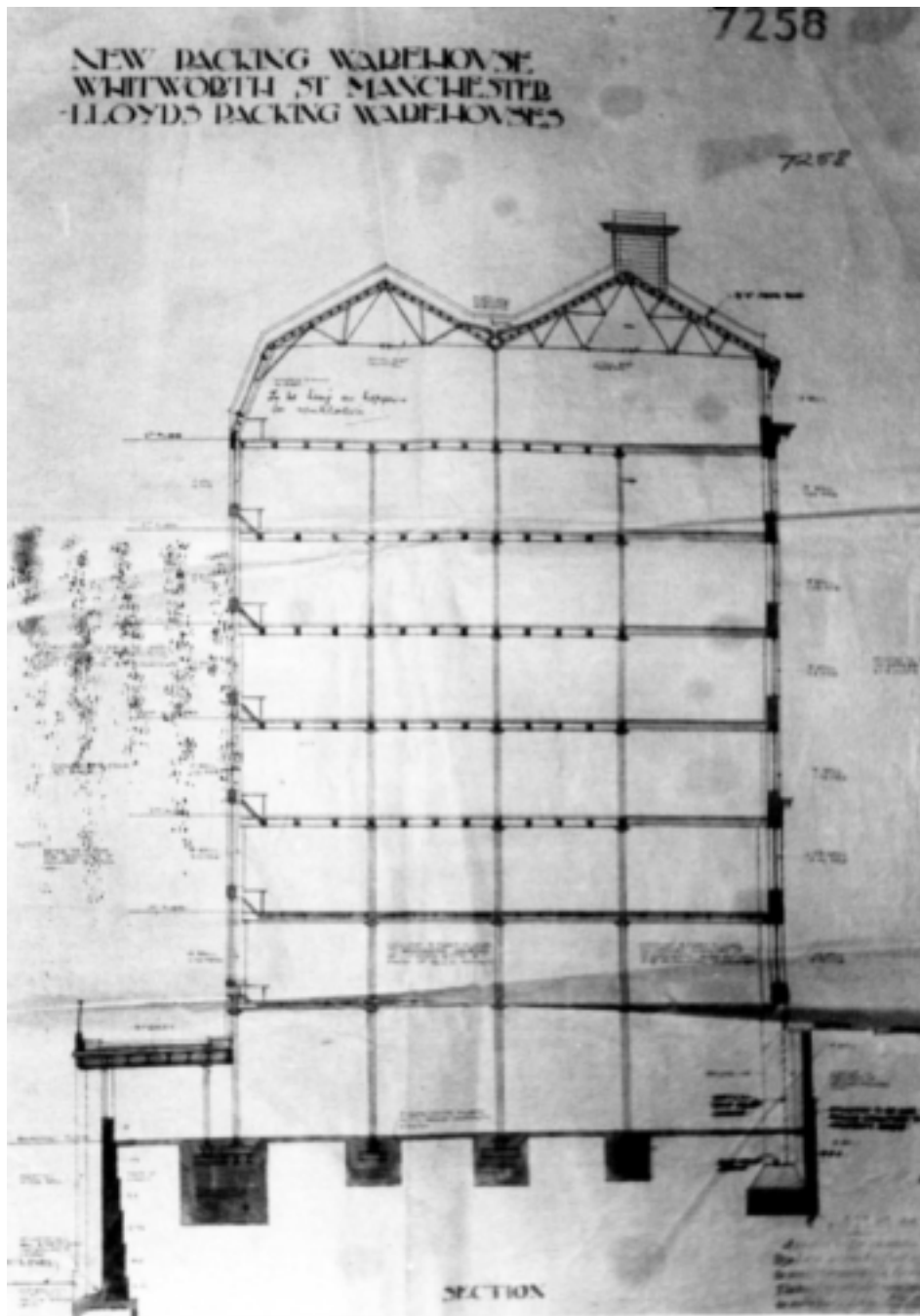


Figure 6: Cross section of India House by Harry S Fairhurst, Whitworth Street is to the right ⁵

The warehouse is built on a rectangular 14-bay grid plan. India House seems to have been originally designed with seven storeys over one basement, as shown on the cross section reproduced in Cooper's thesis (Fig.6). This shows the steel frame, foundations and details such as the inspection tables in front

⁵ from Cooper, Plate 254 – one of the drawings submitted for the City Surveyor's approval

of rear (south) windows above angled floor edges. The existing building differs from this drawing, as it has seven storeys over two levels of basement.

Loading arrangements at India House used bale holes with cranes, called teagles, from the rear and side access roads, built above the basement. This contrasted with the system at the later Bridgewater House where Fairhurst designed an internal covered access route through the building from Whitworth Street to Atwood Street, an improvement that ensured better security and protection for goods.

Exterior

The impressive front elevation to Whitworth Street is designed in the Edwardian Baroque style fashionable at the time, but on a large scale. The front facade is faced with three materials, arranged in horizontal bands. At the base is a rock-faced plinth of Aberdeen Correnie granite, then rusticated buff terracotta to the raised ground and first floors with red Accrington brick above, finished with buff terracotta dressings; this treatment continues to side elevations. In contrast, the rear is faced in plain glazed brick⁶. The 1907 article in *The British Architect* states that the front elevation was 78 feet (23.7m) long, with the eaves at 95 feet (29m) and the pair of towers up to 120 feet above street level.

The front elevation is described in detail in the list description (Appendix 1). It is arranged symmetrically, with two matching entrances at the base of vertical 'tower' elements that rise up above roof-level. The façade is articulated by a balance of horizontal and vertical features, such as string courses, cornices and pilasters. Most prominence is given to the raised ground floor and first floors; above the first floor is a modillioned cornice with a cartouche at each corner lettered 'INDIA HOUSE'. The next four floors are articulated by brick pilasters separating windows; above is an enriched terracotta frieze with swags, volutes and cartouches and a modillioned cornice. Above this, the upper floor is treated as an attic.

⁶ Parkinson-Bailey, J. *Manchester – an architectural history*, 2000, 139

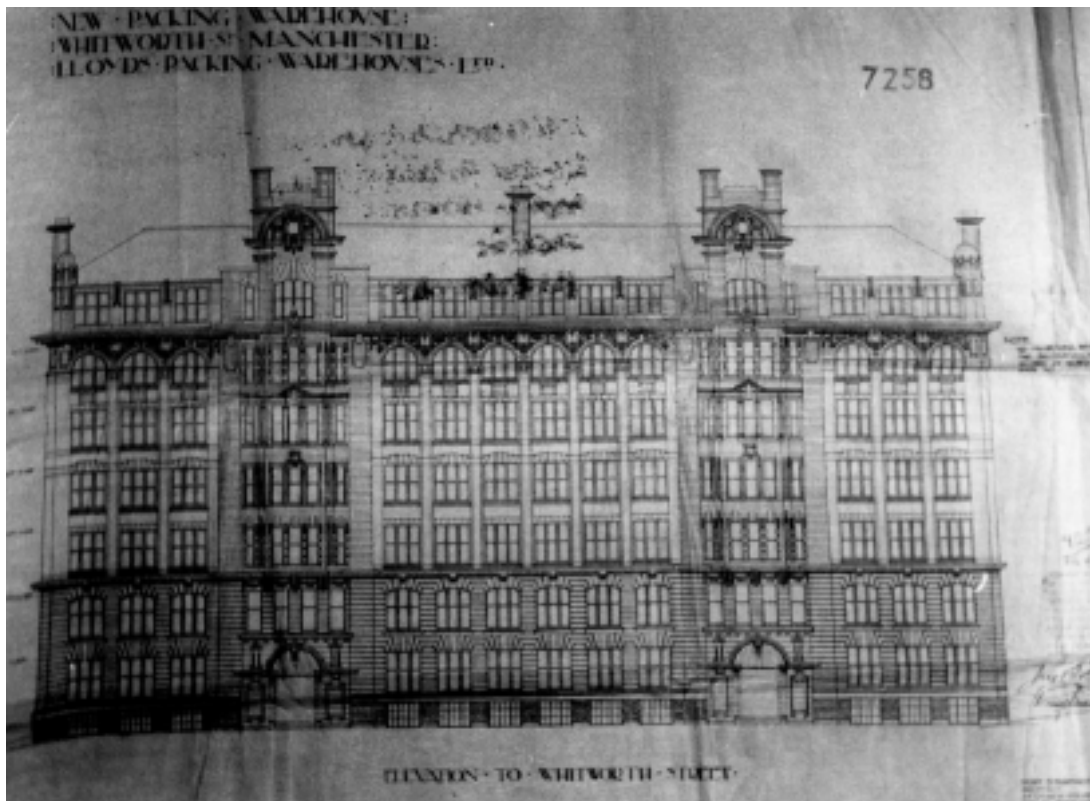


Figure 7: Front Elevation of India House by Harry S Fairhurst⁷

Each entrance each has an elaborate surround of grey granite within a semi-circular pediment. The doorways are flanked by Ionic pilasters, with cartouches numbered '73' and '75' respectively. During the day the entrances were open to the inner flights of steps, but after working hours, sliding iron gates could be closed. These are still in situ (Fig.13). Above the entrances the 'tower' features contain canted bay windows, with various forms of enrichment including corbelled plaques at the top proclaiming the date '1906'. At attic level the 'towers' are topped by semi-circular open pediments between chimney stacks. Other bays have segmental-headed windows at the first floor, round-headed at the fifth floor, and square-headed windows elsewhere, mostly containing tri-partite sashes, some with keystones. The return elevations are similar, but without the granite plinth.

The front elevation is almost unaltered; it retains original fenestration, entrances and facing materials as constructed. As noted in Capstone Consulting's report (2104), scaffold fixing points have been installed to the terracotta and Accrington brickwork in the past. There are 61 steel plate fixings on the rear elevation of the building. Many of the fixing holes have

⁷ from Cooper Plate 252, from drawings submitted for the Manchester City Surveyors' approval

been repaired by patching over/infilling with coloured mortar. These are not easily discernable from street level, however.



Figure 8: Front Elevation



Figure 9: terracotta details



Figure 10: Cornice, attic storey and chimney (L) and company logo (R)



Figure 11: Entrance (L) and Bay Windows (R)

The pitched Welsh slate roofs are double-pile with a central valley and up-standing rendered cross wall with coped verges. There are some rooflights, service fittings and vent cowls on roof pitches. The asymmetric roof has a mansard over attic windows at the back. Chimneys visible from the street have modillioned cornices and are faced in decorative terracotta to visible faces, with render to less visible faces. An iron railing at eaves level is carried on decorative brackets, an original feature.



Figure 12: Double-Pile Roof (L) and Central Chimney (R)(Warburton Associates)

Attached at the east end, and linked to No.71 (Lancaster House), is a fine iron gateway with double gates; a semi-circular overthrow forms a complete circle with the top of the gates. A lamp in Art Nouveau style is suspended from the overthrow (Fig.14).



Figure 13: rear elevation

The rear elevation is much plainer than the front and side elevations, and has a functional character. Vertical piers express the steel frame, faced in white glazed bricks. The façade is dominated by the glazing; effectively curtain-walling. Large single-glazed sash windows are arranged in pairs with stone sills that act as lintels for the windows below. In the centre and at either end are paired narrow windows, originally for lavatories. The rear service road projects above the River Medlock on a steel frame, with sub-basement windows built into the brick retaining wall. The rear pitch of the roof has a mansard, with roof light windows.

The central bay coincides with a former loading bay, the others are legible under the fourth and fifth bays from each end. All the former loading bays have been altered; the 1911 map shows glazed canopies at each bay which housed cranes, to enable goods to be loaded under cover. The loading arrangements were praised at the time, avoiding congestion on the busy Whitworth Street. There is now no surviving evidence of cranes or hoists. The louvred canopies and glazed porches are modern.



Figure 14: Gateway linked to Lancaster House (L) and altered former rear Loading Bay (R)

Interior

Contemporary descriptions show that the interior of India House was similar to other packing warehouses of this scale and date, but it had some innovations that drew comment at the time. The key features were the quality of the fire-resistance that resulted in it having some of the lowest insurance rates in the city, the steel frame that facilitated large uninterrupted spaces and the internal partitions that could be re-arranged to suit the tenants. No historic photographs have been found of the historic interiors, unfortunately.

Two entrances from the front lead via short flights of steps into the raised ground floor. Original architectural fabric and decorative detail is mostly intact here, and partly visible in the two front entrances. The entrance steps retain most of their classical detail, including walls decorated with panels of green glazed tiles, swags and a dentilled plaster cornice. Some of the wall tiles have been over-painted. Above the inserted suspended ceiling, surviving features in each entrance include a ribbed vaulted plaster ceiling with glass light fittings, and a tympanum over the inner doorway decorated with plaster female figures reclining against cartouches. The ceiling plasterwork has been damaged by the insertion of services and the suspended ceilings, but could be repaired. The part-glazed hardwood inner doors are original, as are the sliding iron gates to the outer doorways.



Figure 15: One of the two entrances (L) and rich plaster sculptural decoration above suspended ceilings (R)

The British Architect describes the entrance halls ‘fitted up with mahogany columns and pilasters’, features that are lost; there is no evidence that any of this survives behind inserted linings and the spaces have been substantially remodelled. It is not known precisely what works were done during the 1980s conversion, or whether the entrance hall interiors had previously been stripped. The only surviving features appear to be the decorative inner entrance doors, with partly glazed side-panels and architraves. A brass plaque in one entrance hall records the opening of the Northern Counties Housing Association flats on 17th February 1989, by Sir Hugh Cubitt.

Architectural detail in situ at Bridgewater House, also by Fairhurst for the same client, indicates the quality of wall finishes that could have existed in the high status entrance area at India House. Bridgewater House has richly moulded timber panelling incorporating mirrors around doors, green glazed tiles with decorative torch motifs, and dado tiling on the staircases, lift lobbies and corridors.

The upper floors were used for storage of cotton fabric, with display areas in ware rooms where cotton was laid out for inspection on tables in front of the rear windows. The latter arrangement is shown on the section in Fig.6. Fairhurst’s design provided for moveable ‘jointed’ partitions to create flexible spaces; small areas were partitioned for office use at the front of the building. The partitions were made of Kauri pine and were also glazed to maximise internal light levels. Most of the warehouse interior was probably functional with little decorative treatment, which was concentrated on the entrance steps and halls, seen by customers.

Due to the 1980s conversion, the interiors have lost their spatial character and original finishes are not visible. During site assessment for this report, a partial view was possible above a suspended ceiling on a typical warehouse floor, revealing a plain concrete ceiling soffit, an exposed steel beam and a

painted brick wall. This indicates the functional treatment used in the ware rooms, only seen by shipping firms and their employees.



Figure 16: inner doors (L) and 1980s entrance hall (R)

Floors were connected by plain service staircases, constructed of cast concrete on steel beams, with iron handrails. Doors off the stair landings were originally mahogany. The inner service stairwells have been retained to serve the residential use. The cast concrete staircases are carried on structural steel beams marked 'Glengarnock Glasgow'. The steel balustrades have plain handrails, with a curved landing rail on the first floor.



Figure 17: Vertical view of stairwell (L) and curved landing balustrade (R)

The building retains original windows, which are generally single-glazed vertically sliding tripartite sashes. Within the flats and offices, these have been lined with secondary glazing. Inserted suspended ceilings means that the upper part of some windows are within ceiling voids.



Figure 18: Window on Front (L) and at Rear (R) prior to secondary glazing being installed (photos courtesy of Warburton Associates)

The basements retain their overall plan and spatial character, unlike upper floors. The basement is on two levels, and now used for resident parking with access from the service road. The steel frame structure of the building is hidden behind linings on all upper floors and is now only apparent in the basements. The visible structure of steel beams and columns is mostly encapsulated in fire-resistant render, apart from beneath the external roadway in the sub-basement, where the detail of the steel frame is exposed (as this is not below residential accommodation, fire protection to the steel was not required). Walls in the basement are painted brick. The floors are concrete, with a ramp constructed in the late 20th century for vehicular use to link the parking levels.



Figure 20: Modern fire-proof render on steel structure in Basement (L) and detail of riveted beam exposed below roadway (R)

The front (north) is lit by natural light from pavement level windows and glass block pavement lights which serve internal brick light wells; these are painted white to reflect light into the sub-basement. The concrete soffits of the entrance staircases are also visible inside the front wall of the upper basement.

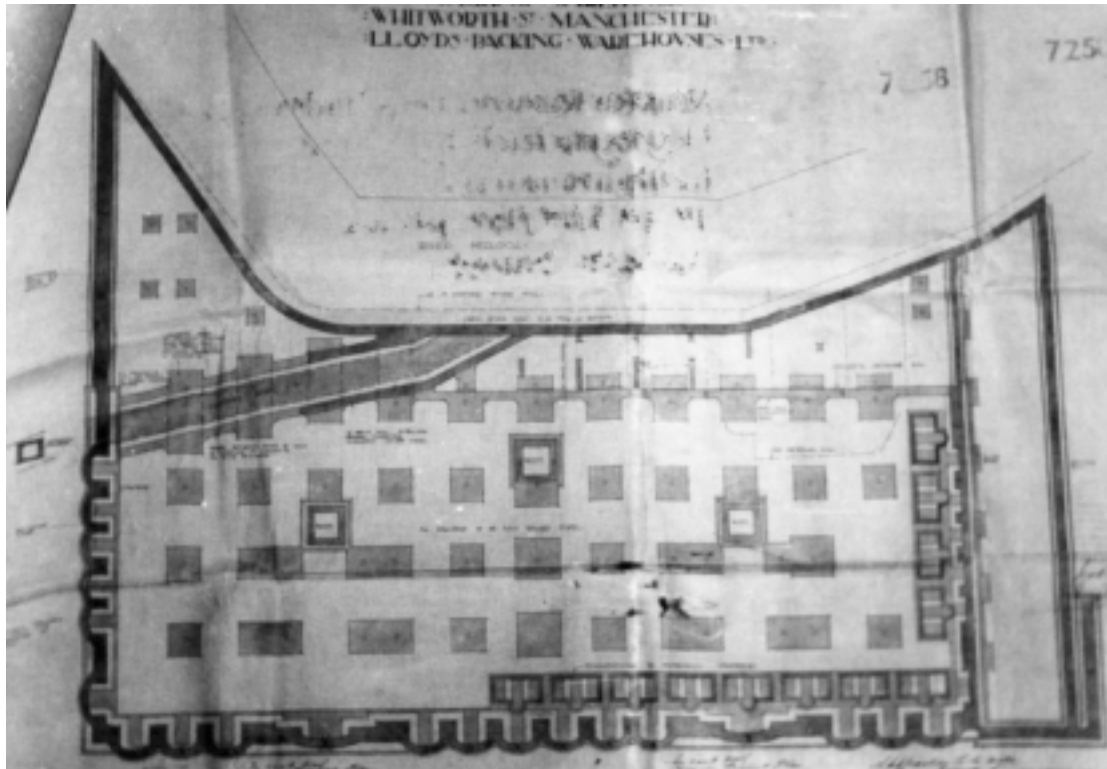


Figure 19: Basement Plan from Cooper, showing hydraulic presses along the front and west side of the basement, Vol. 4 Plate 253 (plan as submitted to City Surveyor for approval)

Parkinson Bailey describes the function of the India House basements:

‘In the basement were hydraulic presses for baling cloths; compression helped against theft and make the bulk smaller. It was possible for 2,500 pieces of cloth to be folded, stamped, packed and baled and on the dockside in three and a half hours.⁸’

In her PhD thesis, Cooper describes the presses and their arrangement in the basements:

‘...the plan of the foundations of India House indicates the substantial loading on the frame and illustrate how the foundations of the massive hydraulic presses rested on the bed rock. There were fourteen of these presses which were accommodated in the basement and sub-basement, arranged along the front wall (to Whitworth Street) and right-hand side wall.⁹’

⁸ Parkinson-Bailey, J. *Manchester – an architectural history*, 2000, 139

⁹ Cooper, A. *The Manchester commercial textile warehouse 1780-1914: a study of its typology and practical development* PhD thesis, Manchester Polytechnic in collaboration with Manchester University School of Architecture, 1991, Vol. 1, 104

English Heritage reports that the hydraulically-powered hoists in export warehouses were run using power supplied by the Manchester Corporation Water Works¹⁰.

During the late 20th century, at an unknown date, all the hydraulic presses and lifting gear was removed from the basement. Bale holes at each end of the basement were used for loading and unloading, with swinging cranes (removed) to lift goods onto wagons. Some historic basement equipment survives at Bridgewater House, built for the same client by the same architect. Although this was built seven years later, it indicates the type of good handling arrangements that may have existed at India House (Fig.20).



Figure 21: chute and lifting gear in Bridgewater House basement

Only a small part of the roof space was accessible for this study, but the Fairhurst drawings illustrate the double-pile roof plan with rear mansard (Fig.6). The slate roof is carried on metal trusses and steel I-beam purlins. The soffits are boarded with tongue and groove boarding painted white, and floors are laid with pine boards, suggesting that the attics were used, probably for storage.

¹⁰ Taylor, S., Cooper, M. and Barnwell, P. *Manchester, The Warehouse Legacy*, 2002, English Heritage, 28



Figure 22: Steel roof trusses (L) and steel purlins (R)

2.6 Alterations and Planning History

By the early 1970s, the cotton trade had collapsed and the building was vacant. In 1974, the then owner applied for permission to demolish the building and replace it with a 10-storey office block but this was refused. In the early 1980s, applications were made for the conversion of the building into a hotel which did not come about but it appears to have been used at this time for office accommodation. The present use dates from 1989, when it was converted for residential accommodation by the Northern Counties Housing Association Ltd. 140 apartments were created with access from existing stairwells and entrances. Suspended ceilings were inserted with sloping soffits at windows. The flats are generally constructed with plaster-boarded stud partitions. Lifts were inserted next to the stairwells, entrance halls remodelled and some alterations carried out at roof level.



Figure 23: Suspended ceiling in a typical flat (photo courtesy of Warburton Associates)

In around 2000, 16 of the ground floor flats in the west end of the ground floor were converted into office accommodation for the Guinness Northern Counties. This included the alteration of a window on the south elevation to provide a new entrance (the lintel was raised), a ramp to a vehicle entrance to the basement, canopied blinds and metal and glass covered fire escapes at the rear.



Figure 24: Window adapted as an entrance



Figure 25: Inserted vehicle entrance for car park



Figure 26: external canopies and Fire Escapes to rear



Figure 27: Offices at west end of ground floor

In c2002, repairs were carried out to the structural steelwork and to waterproof of the roadway over the sub-basement to the rear. An associated proposed alteration to replace the stone setts with asphalt and reform the concrete edging was refused. In 2003, an application to fit decorative black painted steel railings to the glazing panels of both entrance doors to Whitworth Street was also refused. Three years later, a security system antenna was installed on the roof behind the parapet. Metal-framed secondary glazing was installed in the board room in 2007, to five office windows a year later and to all the apartments in 2012.



Figure 5: Secondary Glazing, Office

3.0 SIGNIFICANCE

3.1 Assessing significance

Assessing significance is a key principle for managing change to heritage assets, and is embedded within current government policy; NPPF paragraphs 127 and 128 (CLG, *National Planning Policy Framework*, 2012). A key objective in the NPPF is ‘the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation ...’ (NPPF para.126). The NPPF advises that the more significant the heritage asset the greater weight should be given its conservation (para.132). English Heritage issued *Conservation Principles* in 2008 to explain its philosophical approach to significance and managing change and identified four main aspects of significance: evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal.

- *Evidential*, deriving from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity (particularly through archaeology);
- *Historical*, deriving from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present;
- *Aesthetic*, deriving from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place;
- *Communal*, deriving from the meaning of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience and memory.

Measuring significance is not an exact science; it relies on a combination of comparative analysis, an understanding of the building’s development and architectural history and the wider context. Assessments depend on the exercise of judgement in relation to the quality of the original design and fabric and the level of alteration. Within the four categories, significance can be measured according to hierarchical levels:

- **Exceptional** – an asset important at the highest national or international levels, including scheduled ancient monuments, Grade I and II* listed buildings and World Heritage Sites. The NPPF advises that substantial harm should be wholly exceptional.
- **High** – a designated asset important at a regional level and also at a national level, including Grade II listed buildings and conservation areas. The NPPF advises that substantial harm should be exceptional.
- **Medium** – an undesignated asset important at a local to regional level, including local (non-statutory) listed buildings or those that make a positive contribution to the setting of a listed building or to a conservation area. May include less significant parts of listed buildings.

Buildings and parts of structures in this category should be retained where possible, although there is usually scope for adaptation.

- **Low** – structure or feature of very limited heritage or other cultural value and not defined as a heritage asset. May include insignificant interventions to listed buildings, and buildings that do not contribute positively to a conservation area. The removal or adaptation of structures in this category is usually acceptable where the work will enhance a related heritage asset.
- **Negative** – structure or feature that harms the value of a heritage asset. Wherever practicable, removal of negative features should be considered, taking account of setting and opportunities for enhancement.

3.2 Statement of Significance for India House: summary

India House is of exceptional significance for its architectural value, as the first major commission designed by Harry S. Fairhurst, the leading designer of Manchester warehouses. The plan-form has high significance for evidential and historic value, illustrating the function of warehouses, although this value is reduced to low significance for most of the interior, due to the residential conversion. The front elevation is of exceptional significance for the architectural treatment of a multi-storey warehouse, using stone, brick and terracotta in classical-style. The building is of exceptional significance for its role in the townscape, where it forms part of a fine group of intact early 20th century warehouses, one of the most distinctive street scenes in Manchester.

The warehouse is of exceptional significance for technological and historic values, as an early example of a steel-framed commercial building, using new constructional technology to create an advanced building with well-lit, uninterrupted floor plates and a fire-resistant specification. It has high significance for its historical association with Lloyds Packing Warehouses Ltd, the leading export firm, which, by 1926, was packing and despatching one third of the foreign cotton trade of Lancashire. It has high significance for historic values, illustrating the boom in the export cotton trade in Manchester following the opening of the Manchester Ship Canal in 1894, and reflects the city's pre-eminence in an international context.

The building's historic significance is also enhanced as it features in two paintings by Pierre Adolphe Valette (1876-1942) who came to England in 1904 and studied at the Manchester School of Art where he later taught from 1906-1920; amongst his students was L. S. Lowry. The first painting, *India House, Manchester*, of 1912 shows the River Medlock, taken from Oxford Road Bridge, with the Refuge Assurance Building (now the Palace Hotel) on the left and the rear of India House beyond. In another view, *York Street leading to Charles Street, Manchester*, painted a year later the scene depicts York Street looking towards the railway bridge with tall buildings to left and right and a

grid of lights shining through the smog from a large office building, probably India House, in the background. Both these paintings are now held by the Manchester Art Gallery.

The building has medium to high significance for its associations with several regional and national suppliers and contractors. Robert Neill & Sons were important building contractors in the North-West and one of the main contractors for the Grade II* listed Central Station (opened 1880) and for the Ardwick Lads Club (1897). Glengarnock of Glasgow, Richard Moreland & Sons of London and Burmantofts are nationally significant suppliers.

The listing at Grade II* reflects its exceptional significance in a national context. India House was first listed in 1974. It forms a group with other Lloyds Packing Warehouses, Lancaster House Grade II* and Bridgewater House, listed at Grade II and with the former Refuge Assurance building, listed at Grade II*.

3.3 Significance of India House: Exterior

Aesthetic value: The historic building is of **exceptional significance for the aesthetic and architectural value** of the exterior, which makes an important contribution to the streetscene and complements other similar warehouses on the street. The exterior contrasts the architectural richness of the imposing front and side façades with the utilitarian character of the rear. In a hierarchy of importance, the front and rear elevations are considered of exceptional significance as these are most visible in longer views, express functionality and are fine examples of early 1900s specialised commercial design. The side elevations are of high significance; their importance is lower than the front as their design is less elaborate, views of them are more constrained by the proximity of adjacent buildings and the west elevation has been slightly altered.

The gate linking India House to Lancaster House is of **exceptional significance** for the aesthetic and architectural value of its design.

Evidential value: The building was used as a warehouse until the 1970s, and has **high significance for its evidential value**; the external form and appearance of the building expresses its function. The loss of external fittings, such as cranes, hoists and historic glass roofs over loading bays has affected the legibility of the original use, although this can be understood from historic plans. Subsequent alterations such the inserted entrances on the west elevation and alterations to the former loading bays at the rear have resulted in the loss of physical evidence for hoists.

Historical value: The building is of **exceptional significance for its historical value**, for its association with Lloyds Packing Warehouses which commissioned the building, expressed in the cartouches and plaques with

building and company names and the date, on the front, corners and west side. The gate linking India House to Lancaster House is of **high significance** as it links the two former Lloyds Packing Warehouses buildings.

The whole building has **high significance for communal values**; it is a highly visible part of the public realm, and now provides accommodation for over a hundred housing tenants.

3.4 Significance of India House: Interior

Evidential value: Internally, the building retains few visible historic features and is of **medium significance for its evidential value**. The interior is no longer legible as a cotton warehouse. An exception are the stairwells which retain steelwork by Glengarnock of Glasgow, which produced steel used in many buildings in Manchester and around the U.K. The spatial character and plan-form of the interior, internal dividing screens, the inner entrance hall appearance and finishes and all historic internal doors have been lost. The alterations for use as apartments have affected the evidential value of the interior, although some original fabric may survive behind inserted linings.

Aesthetic value: The building is of **medium significance for the aesthetic and architectural value** of the much altered interior. The two entrances retain decorative ceiling plasterwork (above inserted ceilings), steps, wall tiling, and internal doors; these areas are of exceptional significance as examples of decorative public entrances to textile warehouses. However, the walls, floor and ceiling of the entrance halls are all modern. The inserted partition walls, ceilings, joinery and fittings have a negative impact on significance, although most of this is reversible.

Communal value: The former warehouse has **high significance for communal value**. The building provided employment for Manchester warehousemen, and now provides city centre homes.

3.4 Setting and Contribution to Conservation Area

India House lies within the Whitworth Street Conservation Area. The setting varies in the extent to which it contributes to the significance of the heritage asset. The Whitworth Street setting enhances the significance of the building, and provides dramatic views of the front elevation and side elevations. Some aspects of the setting now detract from the setting of the historic buildings, notably the surface car parks alongside the river to the south.

The Council's description of the Whitworth Street Conservation Area describes the area:

‘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. This led to six- or seven-storey buildings with opulent and deeply modelled front facades in brick and/or terracotta, whilst the rear was almost entirely glazed either in a vertical plane or a stepped configuration. The building style reached its zenith in the early years of the twentieth century, and culminated in the grand Edwardian commercial architecture of Whitworth Street.

The architecture of textile marketing remains largely intact in the area around Princess Street and Whitworth Street, though its association with the industry has decreased since the cotton slumps of the 1920s.¹¹

By the early 20th century, the current character of the setting was established, consisting of large buildings of a similar form and scale, mainly used as cotton warehouses and insurance offices. These include the former Refuge Assurance building and Lancaster House (both now listed at Grade II*) on the south-east side of Whitworth Street. On the other side are the Palace Theatre, Bridgewater House and Central House, all Grade II. The grid-iron street layout affords tightly framed, long views in both directions along Whitworth Street, and shorter views along side streets.



Figure 6: View East along Whitworth Street (L) and West (R)

¹¹ *Whitworth Street Conservation Area: History.*

http://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/511/conservation_areas/970/whitworth_street_conservation_area/2



Figure 7: Bridgewater House (L) and Lancaster House (R)

India House contributes to the ‘canyon-like’ character of Whitworth Street due to its height, massing and position directly fronting the footway, which was followed by later warehouses built on the street.

On the south side of the River Medlock, the railway viaduct provides rail passengers with panoramic views of the rear of the important warehouses along Whitworth Street, although this view is marred by the surface car park south of the river. The grid-iron street layout continues to the south, beyond the Conservation Area boundary, affording important glimpsed views northwards of India House along side streets of smaller 19th century and early 20th century buildings and through the railway arches.



Figure 8: View of Rear of India House, Asia House and Manchester House (L) and former Refuge Assurance Building (R)



Figure 9: Glimpsed view of rear of India House through railway viaduct, from the south

Overall, the setting makes a positive contribution to the significance of India House.

4.0 HERITAGE PLANNING CONTEXT

4.1 Introduction

The 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act provides the legal basis for decision-making about heritage assets, by the local planning authority or by the Secretary of State. The 1990 Act refers to the ‘special architectural or historic interest’ of listed buildings, although current planning policy uses the term ‘significance’, to clarify the level of interest that a building has.

4.2 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in 2012 replacing all former planning policy statements (eg. PPS5). A new PPG (Planning Practice Guide) was produced as an online resource in 2014, and this contains guidance on applying the NPPF to heritage decisions. Local planning policies are also relevant.

NPPF Paragraphs 128 and 129 require local authorities to ensure they have a proportionate assessment of significance before determining applications that affect heritage assets. This report addresses this requirement, and has researched and assessed the significance of the historic buildings, as set out in sections 2 and 3 above.

NPPF Paragraph 129 advises on development affecting the setting of a heritage asset, and states that new development should ‘avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal.’ AHP has advised the applicant on the significance of the India House and this has informed the proposals, to ensure they do not conflict with the conservation of the listed building.

Para. 132 relates to proposals affecting designated heritage assets, including advice on the relationship between the level of the asset’s significance and the level of harm that a proposal may cause. The paragraph states that ‘Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification.’ AHP has advised the applicant on the relative significance of the India House and its components. In relation to the proposal, the exterior significance of the building is affected, and the proposals have been developed to minimise their impact on significance of the exterior fabric and views of it.

Proposals can have a neutral impact, enhance significance or cause harm to it. Harm is defined in two levels in the NPPF – substantial and less than substantial. Local authorities are advised to refuse proposals that will cause substantial harm to or total loss of a heritage asset’s significance, whether

through demolition, major alteration or impact on setting, unless this is robustly justified according to four criteria, or it can be demonstrated that there will be 'substantial public benefits that outweigh the harm or loss' (para. 133). Where the harm will be 'less than substantial' the local authority has to weigh any harm against the public benefits of the proposal (para.134).

Under the 1990 Planning Act, Listed Building Consent (LBC) is required for alterations which will affect the character of a listed building. It is normally not required for like-for-like repairs, nor for alterations to modern fixtures and fittings which are not part of the building's character and where the work will not affect historic fabric, such as the replacement or alteration of a modern partition or fitting. Where works to modern partitions or fittings could have an impact on the historic building, for example because they are attached to it, LBC may be required.

4.3. The Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (ERR) Act 2013

The ERR Act is intended to streamline some aspects of the planning system relating to listed buildings. There is provision for re-defining the extent of listed buildings, and for confirming that some works do not require LBC, through a certificate of lawfulness. The latter, for example, could cover works to recent interior layouts which would not affect the character of the listed building, and therefore not require LBC. A Heritage Partnership Agreement (LBHPA) for a listed building is also enabled by the ERR Act, and can include both these provisions, as well as an agreement on 'consented works' that need LBC. This can enable the advance agreement with the LPA and English Heritage, subject to conditions, of repetitive works such as replacing windows, roof or masonry repair works to avoid repeated applications for LBC. This aspect of the ERR comes into effect in spring 2014, and it is recommended that the scope for an agreement on India House is explored with Manchester City Council.

5.0 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 Introduction

In determining planning applications, local authorities have to take account of section 66 (1) the 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act: 'the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest...'. This duty is amplified by three key principles set out in the NPPF (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 the conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.'

The local authority has to take account of significance assessments when 'considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise the conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal' (paragraph 129). When considering the impact of a proposal on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset the greater the weight should be (paragraph 132).

Proposals may enhance, have a neutral impact or cause harm to a heritage asset. Where 'less than substantial harm' is likely to be caused as a result of development, the harm has to be justified in terms of public benefits which local authorities should balance against the level of harm when making a decision (paragraph 134).

5.2. The proposals

Capstone Consulting Engineers Ltd have produced a set of proposals to enable a scaffolding for maintenance to be erected that will minimise damage to the facings. This has taken account of the significance of the elevations, the varying materials used for facings and their sensitivity. The specification also takes account of existing steel plate fixings, already on the building, which can be re-used. Capstone propose a combination of different types of scaffold fixings, tailored to the building. Elevation drawings show where fixings are proposed and which type. The key points are:

- No fixings are proposed into the granite plinth.

- ~~For the terracotta facings, only 'reveal ties' will be used,~~
- ~~For the brick sections, anchor ties will be used,~~
- ~~For roof features, only 'box ties' will be used~~
- ~~For corners, 'return ties' will be used.~~

~~Where drilled anchor ties are proposed for areas of red brick, Capstone Consulting Engineers Ltd propose that:~~

- ~~a) existing anchor points be reused.~~
- ~~b) that anchors installed are grade A4 stainless steel fittings.~~
- ~~c) anchors are removed on completion.~~
- ~~d) where no appropriate existing anchor point is available, a new one be introduced.~~
- ~~e) when the scaffold is fully erected, a survey be undertaken to mark up on elevation drawings the location of these anchor points, and that they be reused in connection with future maintenance scaffolds.~~
- ~~f) if required, that the anchor points be plugged with pigmented mortar, as the scaffold is taken down.~~

~~5.3. Impact of the proposals~~

~~Scaffolding is a temporary construction, essential for maintenance. Some of the fixings (anchor ties) must be drilled into the fabric of the elevation, to ensure the structure is safe. These drilled anchor ties will be minimised and most of the fixings to the front will not entail drilled holes. Where drilled fixings are essential, they will be stainless steel, to avoid risk of corrosion and future damage to masonry; these holes will remain so they can be re-used, to avoid multiple drilled holes in the future.~~

~~Existing steel plate fixings can be re-used where possible, saving new drilled holes for fixings. Most of the fixings proposed will not cause mechanical damage to the fabric of the listed building; the use of 'reveal' fixings, for example will avoid drilling into areas of terracotta facings. These fixtures will have no impact.~~

~~Mechanical fixings that will cause permanent damage will be used only for the red brick areas of the front elevations, which are less sensitive as this material is high on the elevation and less visible from street level. On the side~~

~~elevations, there is a higher proportion of red brick than on the frontage, but as the sides are not as significant as the front elevation and they are less prominent, the impact will be proportionally lower and the slight harm caused is acceptable. Red brick is more easily matched and repaired than the granite or terracotta facings; drilling holes into the red brick is considered to be an acceptable part of the proposal. It causes slight harm but this is justified by the public benefits of proper maintenance for this listed building. The detail of the stainless steel fixings and the making good of holes after any anchor ties are removed, as the scaffold is struck, can be controlled by appropriate conditions.~~

~~AHP considers that the proposed scaffolding is well designed and will not cause harm to the most significant parts of the building. Where slight harm is caused this is justified by the public benefits of providing scaffolding to facilitate maintenance. The proposal is consistent with the NPPF, and Consent should be granted. Appropriate conditions can be agreed for fixing details, and the making good to drilled holes after scaffolding is removed.~~

6.6 CONCLUSION

India House is of exceptional significance overall, justifying its listing at Grade II*, particularly for the architectural quality of the exterior, the overall form of the building, its historic importance as a fine example of a steel-framed textile warehouse built in the early 1900s and its contribution to the character of Whitworth Street. In a hierarchy of importance, the front and rear elevations are of exceptional significance for their architectural detail and appearance, and are prominent in longer views. The side elevations are of slightly less significance as views of them are more constrained by the proximity of adjacent buildings and the west elevation has been slightly altered.

Some historic fabric and the spatial character of the interior was lost during the conversion for residential use in the 1980s and only limited parts of the interior retain any significance. The interior is now considered to be only of medium significance overall. Where detail or fabric survives it has varied significance, for example in the entrances the decorative plasterwork, hidden ceilings and tiling has exceptional significance, but on upper floors, the functional finishes retained above suspended ceilings are of medium significance. The service staircases have high significance. The structural steel frame and roof structure is part of the building's exceptional significance, as an early example of a steel-framed warehouse.

Section 4 outlines the heritage planning context. There may be scope for a listed building heritage partnership agreement (HPA) for some aspects of future works to India House; this could be explored with Manchester City Council and English Heritage.

~~Section 5 outlines proposals to fix an independent scaffold to the building. This is a temporary measure essential to enable maintenance now and in the future. The methodology proposed by Capstone will minimise damage to the building, by tailoring the approach to the facing material, which varies across the front elevation. No mechanical fixings that will cause permanent damage will be used for the front except for the red brick areas, which are less sensitive and more easily repaired than the granite or terracotta facings. AHP considers that the proposed approach to scaffold fixings is well designed and overall will not cause harm; consent should be granted, with appropriate conditions to agree details such as making good drilled holes after scaffolding is removed.~~

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Appendix 1: Listed Building Description

List entry Number: 1254836

MANCHESTER

WHITWORTH STREET (South side)

Nos.73 and 75 India House (including attached wrought-iron gateway linked to Lancaster House)

SJ8497NW

698-1/32/441

03/10/74

Packing warehouse, converted as apartments 1988-9. Dated 1906, built between 1905 and 1912; by Harry S.Fairhurst. Steel-framed, with cladding of buff terracotta and red brick with buff terracotta dressings (roof concealed). Large rectangular plan. Edwardian Baroque style. Six storeys with basement and attic, 3:4:6:4:3 windows at 1st floor, symmetrical; rock-faced plinth, channelled buff terracotta to ground and 1st floors with mutuled cornice on brackets (a cartouche under this at each corner lettered "INDIA HOUSE"), giant arcades to the next 4 floors with brick pilasters, very heavily enriched terracotta frieze (swags, volutes, cartouches, etc.) and modillioned cornice, and attic treated as a parapet. The strong horizontal emphasis of the facade is relieved by vertical features flanking the 6-bay centre: these have entrances at ground floor with elaborate surrounds of grey ashlar including large semi-circular open pediments with mutules over recessed doorways with flanking Ionic semi-columns, and panelled side-bays under mutuled cornices supported by cartouches (lettered "73" and "75" respectively); canted bay windows of terracotta tiered from 2nd to 5th floors, with various forms of enrichment including corbelled plaques at the top lettered "1906", and flanked by broad banded terracotta pilasters; and attics under hefty semi-circular open pediments with mutules and cartouches. The other bays have segmental-headed windows at 1st floor, round-headed at 5th floor, and square-headed elsewhere, mostly containing 3-light sashes and mostly also with triple keystones; and the attic has low recessed 3-light windows. Return walls similar. Attached at the left end, and linked to No.71 (Lancaster House), is a large gateway composed of double gates with ramped tops and semicircular 4-strand overthrow forming a complete circle from the apex of which is suspended a slender lamp in Art Nouveau style. Forms group with Nos 67 to 71 (Lancaster House) to the left (q.v.), with Refuge Assurance building to the right (Oxford Road, q.v.), and with Nos 58 to 60 (Bridgewater House) opposite (q.v.). Interior not inspected.

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