University of Manchester

Heritage Design & Access – William Kay House

Front Access Lift and associated works

October 2025

HALLIDAY MEECHAM ARCHITECTS

MANCHESTER 1824

The University of Manchester

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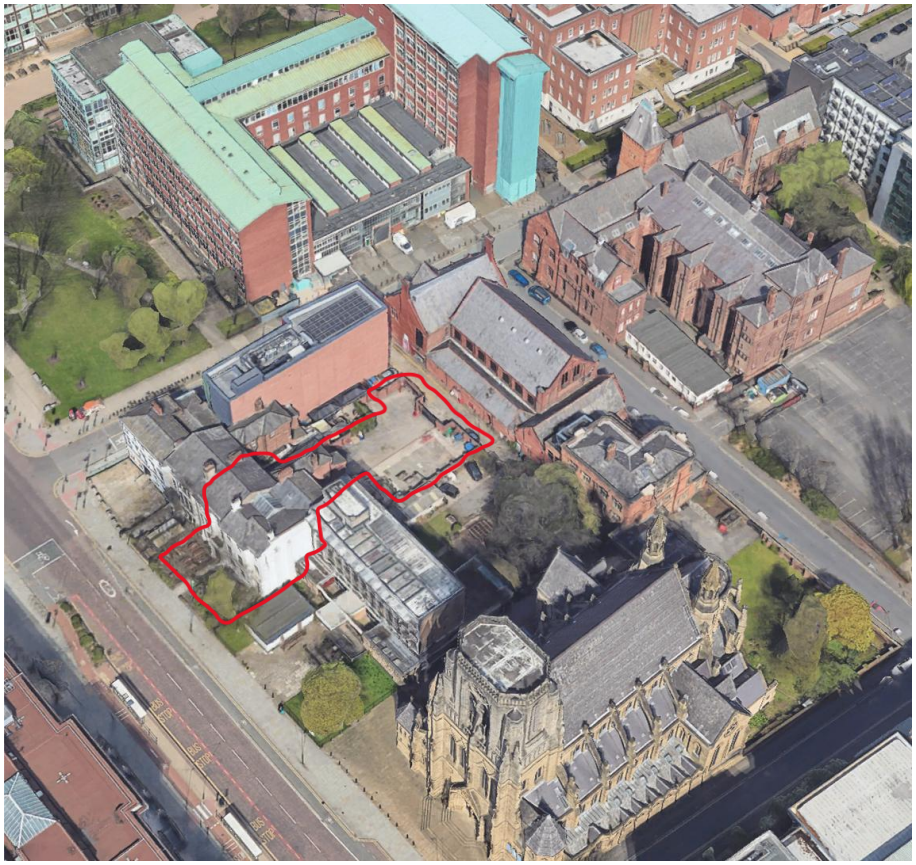
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1.0 Introduction

This Heritage Statement is intended to support an application for a Listed Building Consent made by Halliday Meecham Architects on behalf of our Client, The University of Manchester, for consent to provide a new lift access, staircase and associated external work to the front garden at William Kay House on Oxford Road.

The application follows the Listed Building Consent sought earlier this year **143502/LO/2025** (Approved), and **142319/LO/2025** (Approved). These were to upgrade the space at Basement Level, Ground floor, Level 1 and Level 2 at William Kay to facilitate new office space within the building.

The project has been developed by a Team with substantial knowledge and experience of refurbishment works within heritage buildings and is led by Gardiner and Theobald on behalf of the Client. Other team members include Halliday Meecham Architects, Tetra Tech and WML Consulting. The proposals have been developed through a heritage-led approach with an understanding of the significance and heritage of William Kay House.



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2.0 Historical Context

The buildings historic interest is due to the fashionable nature of the design at the time of construction; this terrace of townhouses was originally part of a wealthy residential suburb. The buildings external elevational features are noted as having more architectural and historical interest than the interior spaces.

Previous building uses have included a bank, offices, and residential use. It is currently owned by the University of Manchester and has previously accommodated the Universities Athletics Union Office and Unite, Workers Trade Union.

William Kay House was constructed in the 19th Century. William Kay House is comprised of two late Georgian terraces as part of a row of 4 town houses fronting onto Oxford Road, Manchester.

The building is grade II listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

The listing number for William Kay House is 1246282 and was first listed on the 03-Oct-1974.

These buildings do not sit within a conservation area.

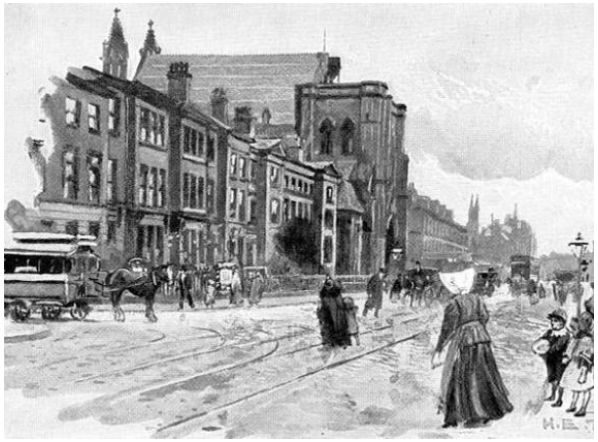


Figure 1: Oxford Road in 1880



Figure 2: William Kay House in 1939



Figure 3: William Kay House in 1959

2.1 Archaeological Interest

The property, although altered, retains a proportion of original fabric externally. Internally, the building has been significantly modified to accommodate commercial, office and university services and has undergone many refurbishments. There are buildings of similar construction, age and appearance within the Manchester area. The building is considered to be of low-medium archaeological interest.

2.2 Architectural and Artistic Interest

The architectural interest of William Kay House is considered to be medium-high, with external features of interest within the elevations. The proposed external works will allow for the repair and redecoration of the existing façade with originally detailing emphasised with a contrasting paint colour to mirror the adjacent Nat West Bank and archive photographs of William Kay House

2.3 Historic Interest

William Kay House was built as part of a row of townhouses in the 19th Century and reflects the style of building from that time. The row of townhouses was listed in 1974, and the historic interest is considered to be high. The internal works over many refurbishments have removed some interior fabric associated with the previous residential use of the building with the interiors now regarded to be of lesser interest to the exterior.

2.4 Historic England Listing

Historic England's' Listed Description is below:

'Row of 4 town houses; No.323 now a bank, No.325 now Friendly Society offices, and Nos 327 and 333 now in one as University Athletics Union office. Early to mid C19, altered. Stucco on brick, slate roof. Double-depth plan, No.323 double-fronted and the others all single-fronted, with individual back extensions. Three storeys over cellars. No.323 at the left end is a 5-window symmetrical range, with channelled rustication to ground floor, an altered doorway in the centre, and sashed windows without glazing bars, those at 1st floor with cornices on consoles. Nos 325 and 327 are a reflected pair, each of one and a half bays, the half bays with the entrances (to left and right respectively) having channelled rustication and the full bays between these breaking forwards, with 3-light windows to all floors. No. 325 has a wooden porch with square pillars, and 4-pane sashed windows; No. 327 has a stone porch with Tuscan columns distyle in antis, and top-hung casements imitating 4-pane sashes. No.333 to the right has 2:1 windows like those of No.327, and a recessed doorway to the right with set-in fluted Doric columns. Rear and interior nor inspected.'



Figure 4: Listed Building Map from Historic England

3.0 Condition Survey

A Photographic Condition Survey was undertaken by HMA in early 2024, see images below

Existing Photographic Condition Survey: External Images



Figure 5: Right side entrance

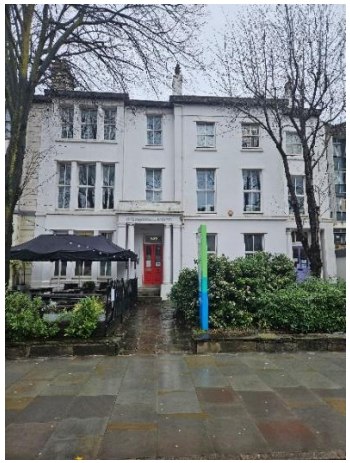


Figure 6: Oxford Road elevation



Figure 7: Basement stair Condition



Figure 8: Wall loose stone



Figure 9: 50mm step up from footpath



Figure 10: South boundary fence



Figure 11: Brighton Place access to rear



Figure 12: Rear access ramp

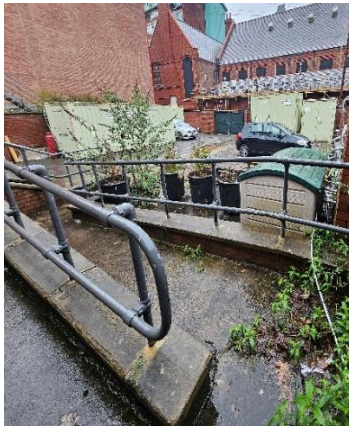


Figure 13: Ramp to rear entry

4.0 Conservation Philosophy and Approach

4.1 Overall Philosophy

The overall conservation philosophy for this project is as below. This is in line with the Building Condition Survey conducted by the University of Manchester in-house Estates Building Surveyors in October 2024.

- Existing historic elements that are in good condition are retained.
- Existing historic elements that are of high value are retained.
- New proposals are to complement the existing rather than replicate.
- Works to historic elements are to be as minimal as possible to retain character and decorative features
- Features of little historic interest/importance may be removed.

4.2 External Conservation Scope

- Proposed platform lift, new staircase and landing to the main access from Oxford Road
- Repairs to boundary wall stonework
- New railings and handrails to basement stair sympathetic to historic railings
- Maintenance to existing soft landscaping/vegetation
- All the remaining original late Georgian elements are to be retained.
- Cycle storage to be repositioned in front garden

5.0 Site

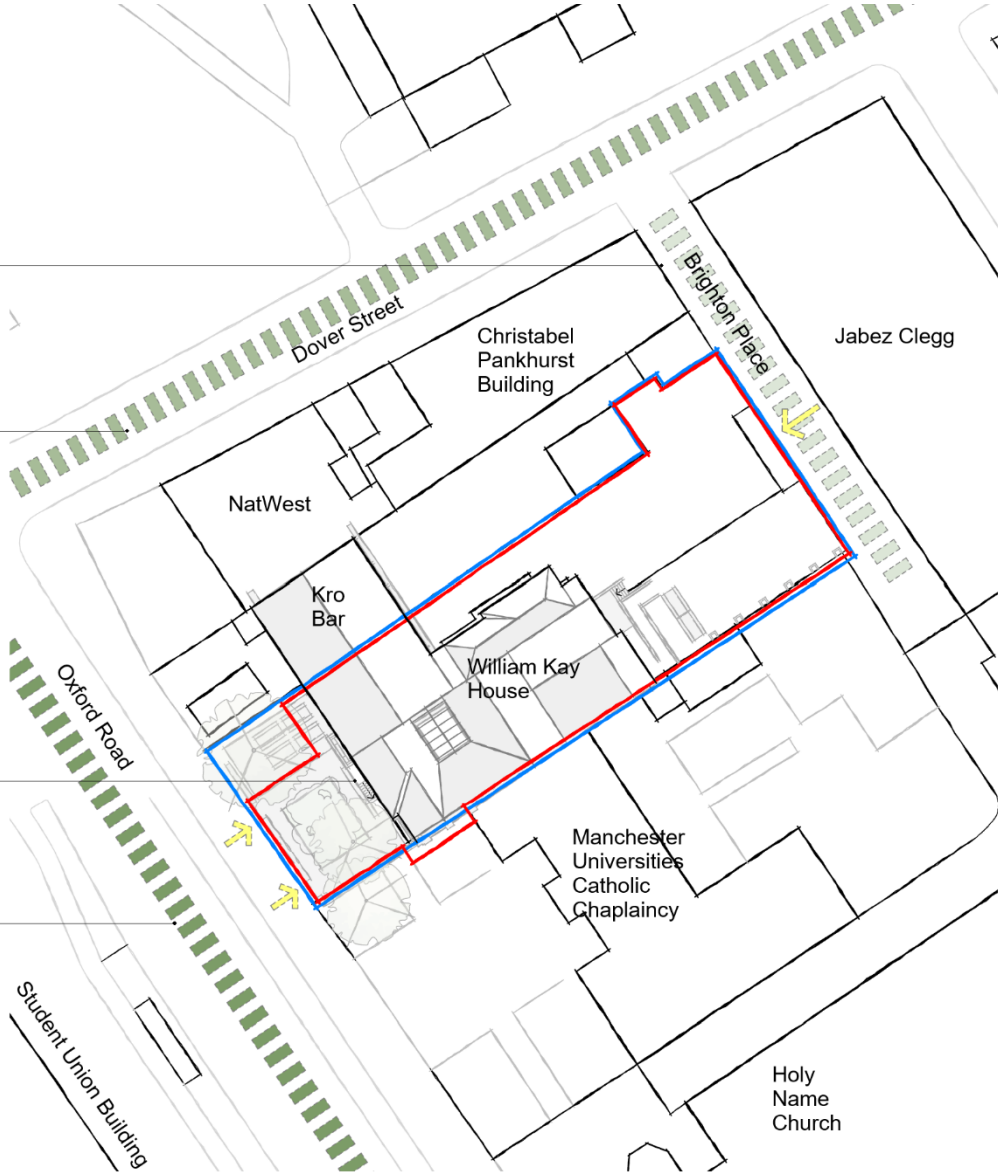
5.1 Site Analysis

Brighton Place is used as rear access to William Kay House. Not a through route.

Quieter pedestrian route down Dover Street

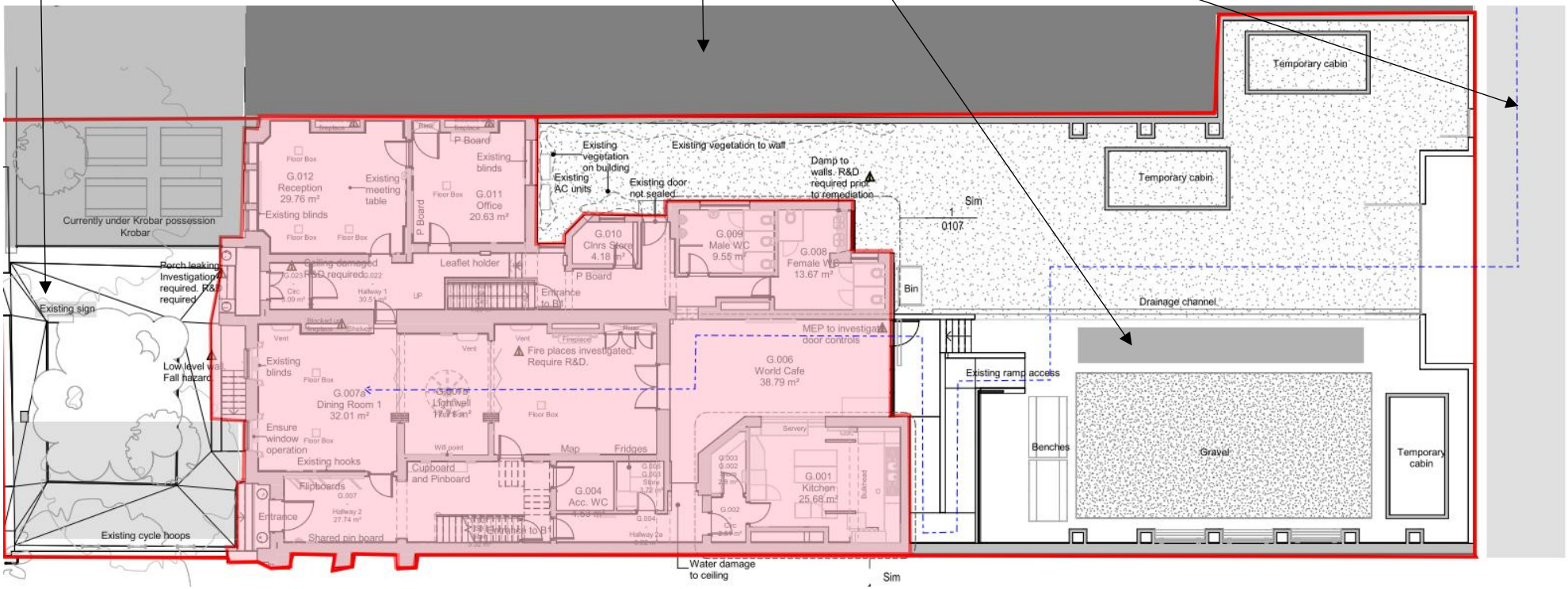
Horizontal black banding to street facade lost over time (as shown in figure 3)

Busy thoroughfare / key route through centre of University



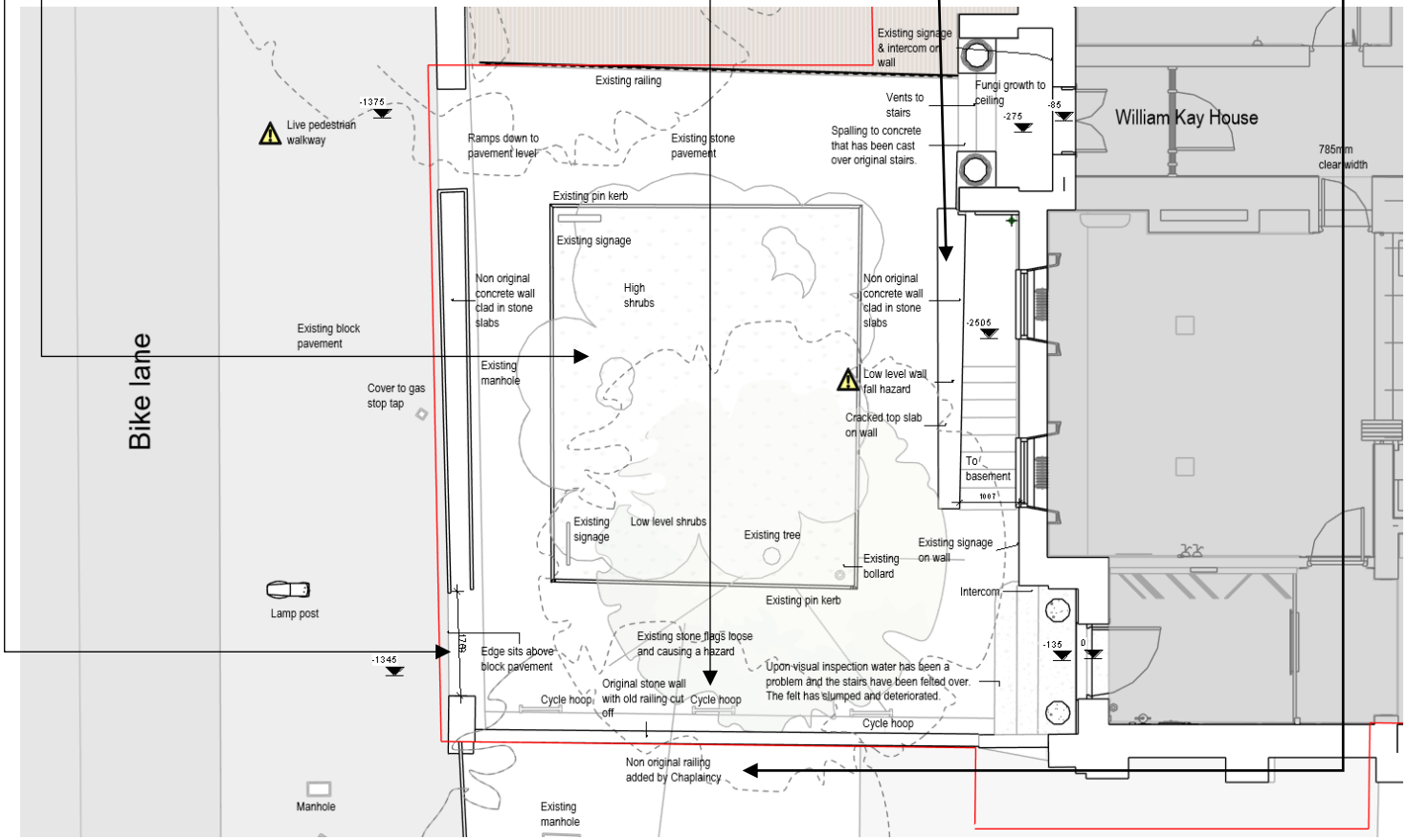
5.2 Site Constraints

- William Kay House site on Oxford Road and is bounded by Kro Bar to the North, Avila House Chaplaincy to the South, with Brighton Place to the East (rear of the site).
- There are two existing signage items. One is to be updated and the other is to remain in place and visible. Bushes and vegetation are to be retained but cut back.
- William Kay is accessed via 4.no. steps from Oxford Road (both entrances). Existing step free access is via Brighton Place over cobbled and unlevelled surfaces. Access also needs to navigate street furniture
- Neighbouring terrace is not under possession by the client



5.3 Front Garden Constraints

- The front entrance does not offer level access. Currently a 50mm step up from the pavement on the right hand side, with original stone stairs up to the front door that have been overlaid with felt.
- The front garden to William Kay is currently in poor condition. Vegetation is overgrown, the existing stone landscaping is loose in areas. Boundary walls have loose copings and stone cladding
- The south boundary with the chaplaincy has a black painted metal railing along the perimeter.
- The basement staircase has a low-level wall, creating both fall and security risks.
- Cycle provision to be repositioned



6.0 Project Proposals

6.1 Purpose of Project

The purpose of the project is to provide space for a University of Manchester (UoM) Enterprise Hub, that will provide a convening point for some of the core university business engagement and innovation functions, and key strategic and commercial partners and collaborators.

This helps the University undertake activities related to its Social Responsibility, to those related to the University itself, those in the vicinity of the University, and its global responsibility.

William Kay House, on Oxford Road, has been identified as a suitable location for the Innovation Hub given its availability, its prominent location on campus and general good condition.

There is existing ramped access to the rear of the building, and UoM are not required to provide additional means of accessibility. However, UoM wish to make the building more inclusive by offering access directly from the main entrance, rather than having users that require level access travel to the rear of the building.

The Building Condition Survey, compiled by UoM and received 8th November 2024, states the ramp at the rear is in poor repair and does not meet current building regulations for accessibility. The rear yard has vehicular access via Brighton Place. There is an accessible WC located in the entrance lobby on the ground floor. No lift is provided within the existing building. All ground floor rooms are accessible except for the communal WCs which have a single step to the entrance lobby.

6.2 Design Summary

The proposed works to the front garden that include the following:

- Proposed platform lift, new staircase and landing to the main access from Oxford Road
- Regrading of hard landscaping at front up to proposed lift/stair.
- Repairs to boundary wall stonework
- Reinstatement of front boundary railings similar to original
- New railings and handrails to basement stair
- Maintenance to existing soft landscaping/vegetation
- All the remaining original late Georgian elements to be retained.

A note that there will be an application made in future regarding the signage in the front garden once designs have been confirmed by the client.

6.3 Concept Development

The proposal has undergone thorough investigations to design the best approach to the new access. Ramped, stair and platform lift options as well as integrated retracting stairs have been explored for feasibility.

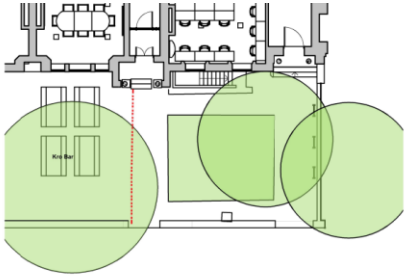
Option 1 – No works

Option 2 – Platform Lift (Left Hand Side)

Option 3 – Stair Lift

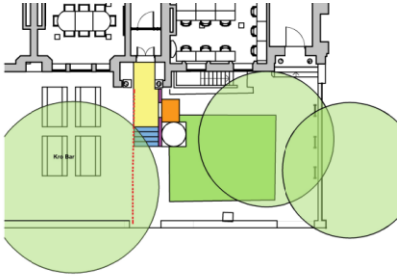
Option 4 – 10 – Ramped access

Option 11 – Platform Lift (Right Hand Side)



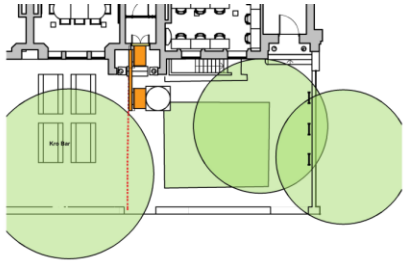
William Kay Access - Option One (No Works)

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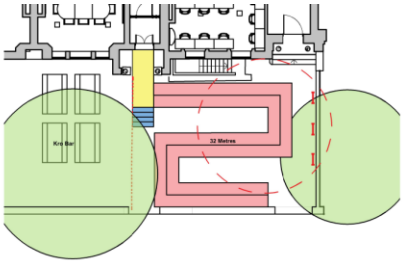
William Kay Access - Option Two (Platform Lift)

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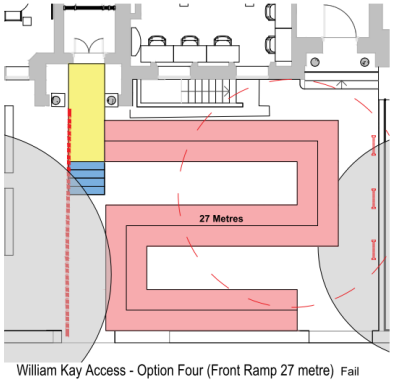
William Kay Access - Option Three (Stair Lift)

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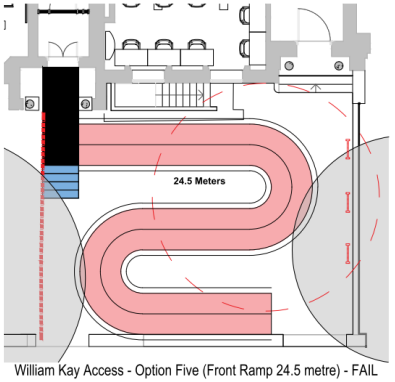
William Kay Access - Option Four (Front Ramp 26 metre)

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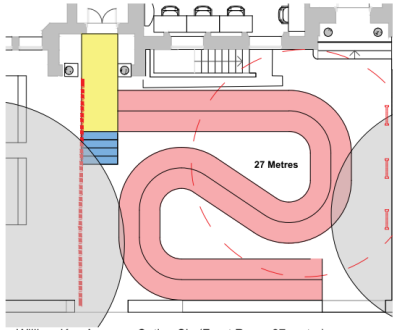
William Kay Access - Option Four (Front Ramp 27 metre) Fail

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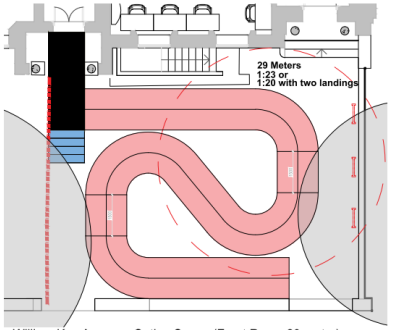
William Kay Access - Option Five (Front Ramp 24.5 metre) - FAIL

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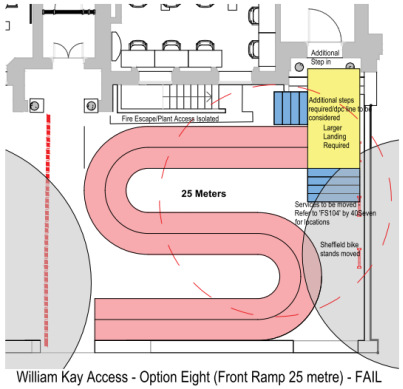
William Kay Access - Option Six (Front Ramp 27 metre) Fail

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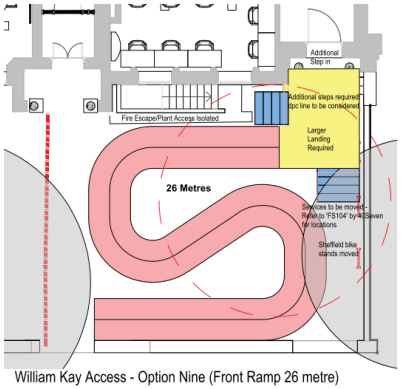
William Kay Access - Option Seven (Front Ramp 29 metre)

1 : 100 @ A3



William Kay Access - Option Eight (Front Ramp 25 metre) - FAIL

1 : 100 @ A3

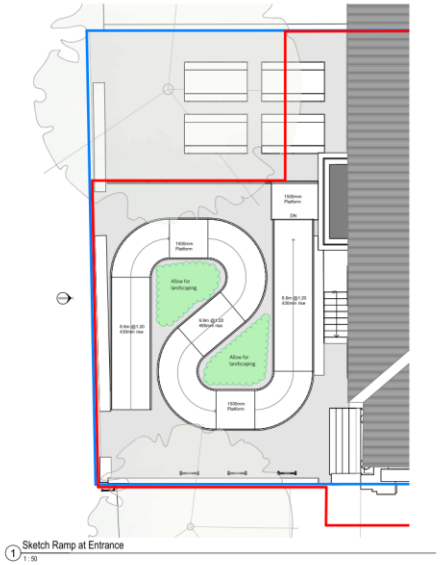


William Kay Access - Option Nine (Front Ramp 26 metre)

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Option 10

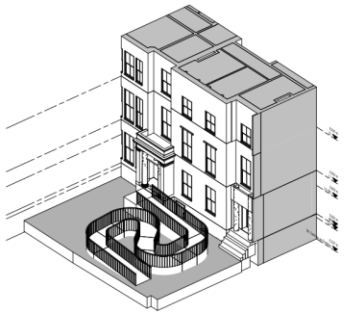
The most favourable ramp option was further investigated and modelled. Following discussions with the client this option was not brough forward due to the scale and mass of the ramp required to accommodate, removal of existing landscaping and the density of railings required that would detract from the main façade of the building.



1 Sketch Ramp at Entrance
1 : 50



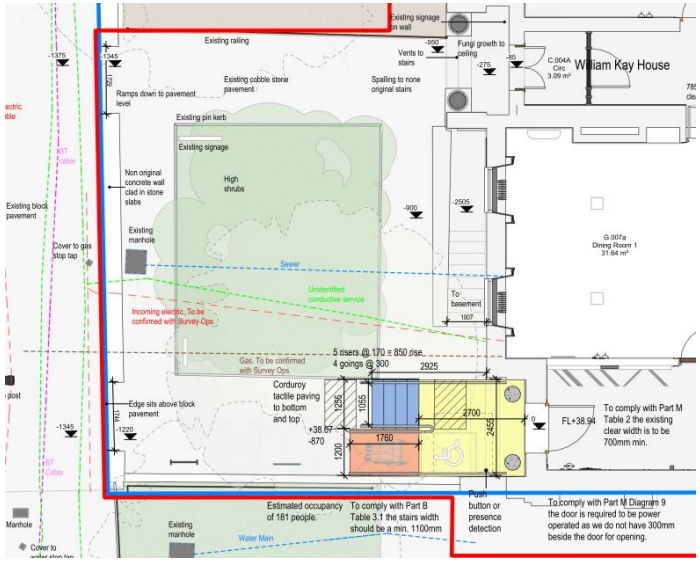
3 Elevation 1 - a
1 : 100



2 Sketch Ramp

Option 11

Following further design, and investigations into incoming services. A platform lift on the right-hand side is viewed as the best option. This offers minimal disruption and mass to the front elevation, better access via doors for wheelchair users with the accessible toilet also on this side. This option also allows the retention of the existing stairs .



Concept design summary

	Type	Feasibility	Pro	Cons
Option 1	No works	Yes – no works required	No works required No impact to façade and heritage	Ground floor not fully accessible by modern standards
Option 2	Platform Lift (LHS)	Yes	Ground floor becomes fully accessible Stepped access to become fully compliant Original staircase retained (overbuilt)	Impact to façade and heritage Close proximity to Krobar garden Not primary access to building Accessible toilet on opposite side
Option 3	Stair Lift	Yes	Ground floor becomes fully accessible	Limited design features
Option 4	Ramp	No – fail on required gradient	N/A	N/A
Option 5	Ramp	No – fail on required gradient	N/A	N/A
Option 6	Ramp	No – fail on required gradient	N/A	N/A
Option 7	Ramp	Yes	Ground floor becomes fully accessible	
Option 8	Ramp	No – fail on required gradient	N/A	N/A
Option 9	Ramp	Yes	Ground floor becomes fully accessible via main entrance Lower maintenance costs Not restricted by power Potential for new plant area to front	Significant cost of works Impact unknown to existing services, likely require to be moved Impact to façade of the building Large mass at front of building Existing trees and planting to be removed Railings required due to height gain, potential for overdevelopment of front garden Limited access to basement
Option 10	Ramp	Yes		
Option 11	Platform Lift (RHS)	Yes	Ground floor becomes fully accessible via main entrance, rather than using rear access Stepped access to become fully compliant Original staircase retained (overbuilt) Basement access retained and enhanced safety and security Potential to enhance front garden with contemporary design features Accessible toilet on same side	Impact to façade of the building Ongoing maintenance costs Potential for failure during power loss (mitigated by ramp to rear and battery backup)
Option 12	Hydraulic Transforming Stairs (RHS)	No – Clashes with basement plant and original stair, original stair to be removed, travel height exceeds 1m and so will not fit within width of opening. Stepped access to be lost whilst in use.	N/A	N/A

Green for option brought forward

6.4 Proposal

External Proposal

The key ambition of this application is to enhance the provision of ground floor accessibility at William Kay.

To do so, the proposal is for a new wheelchair accessible lift, accompanying stair with contrast nosing and lighting and a platform, overlaid on top of the existing staircase which is to be retained. This is to offer new access directly from the front of William Kay,

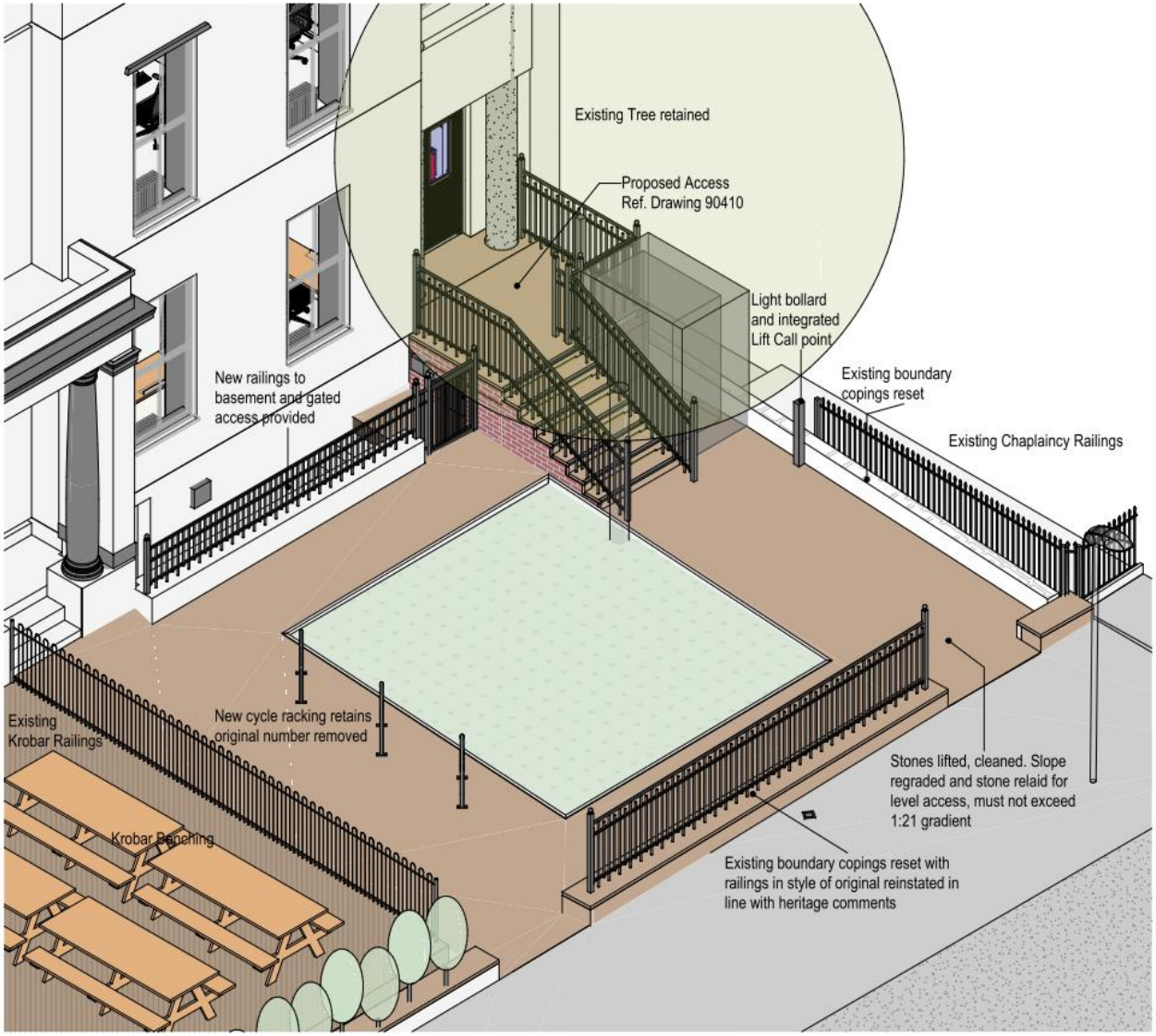
Existing stone slabs are to be lifted, cleaned, surface regraded to suit new level access from footpath up to lift and relaid.

The client has been made aware that the low wall to the basement is a fall hazard and therefore a railing is required. Heritage accepted the need for a railing and to detail on an elevation. This has been included with a gate for security.

The front vegetation will be managed and cut back to allow passive supervision. Boundary copings and stonework are to be repaired, reset and cleaned.



Front of the building, proposed new lift and stair access location in red



Front Garden as Proposed

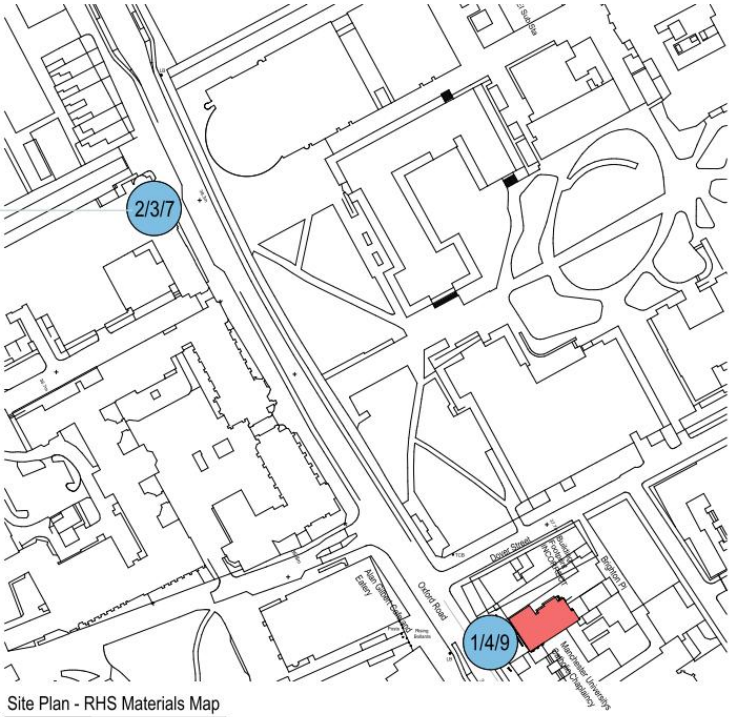
The existing soft landscaping is to be retained but cut back. Hard landscaping to be cleaned, regraded and re-laid. The new access with provision of accessible platform lift, staircase with handrails contrast nosings and lighting. Fencing to basement to mitigate fall risk and improved security. Existing totem signage removed. Boundary coping stones to be cleaned and reset and front railing reinstated.



Lift similar to proposed, located at Circle Square, at the junction between Charles Street and Prichard street. Opposite Yes Bar

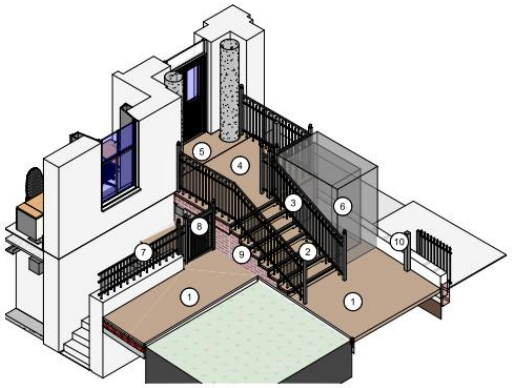


Stone clad stair with contrast nosings in similar fashion to the Manchester Museum access. Handrails similar finish and style



Site Plan - RHS Materials Map

1 : 1000 @ A1



RHS Access with Lift as Proposed Materials

Specification

1. Existing stone slabs lifted, cleaned. Slope regraded and stones relaid.
2. Yorkstone Steps, cast iron contrast nosings and integrated strip lighting
3. 1100mm Black handrail/fencing
4. New stone slabs to match existing
5. Aco Drain at entrance
6. External wheelchair lift, up to 1.1m travel
7. 1100mm high fence - Alpha Rail Churchill Rail metal fencing on existing stone wall
8. 1100mm high access gate to basement
9. Brickwork matching existing to sides of landing/stairs
10. Lift Call Point and Lighting bollard



Existing stone slabs cleaned, uplifted and relaid to suit new entrance.



Brickwork to the sides of the landing to match existing walls of Willam Kay

Existing RHS access and Proposed new access staircase and lift design

6.5 External Elevations



Existing Street Elevation



Proposed Street Elevation

7.0 Access

7.1 Consultant Advice

The project has been reviewed with the Universities EDI Directorate on 13-01-25.

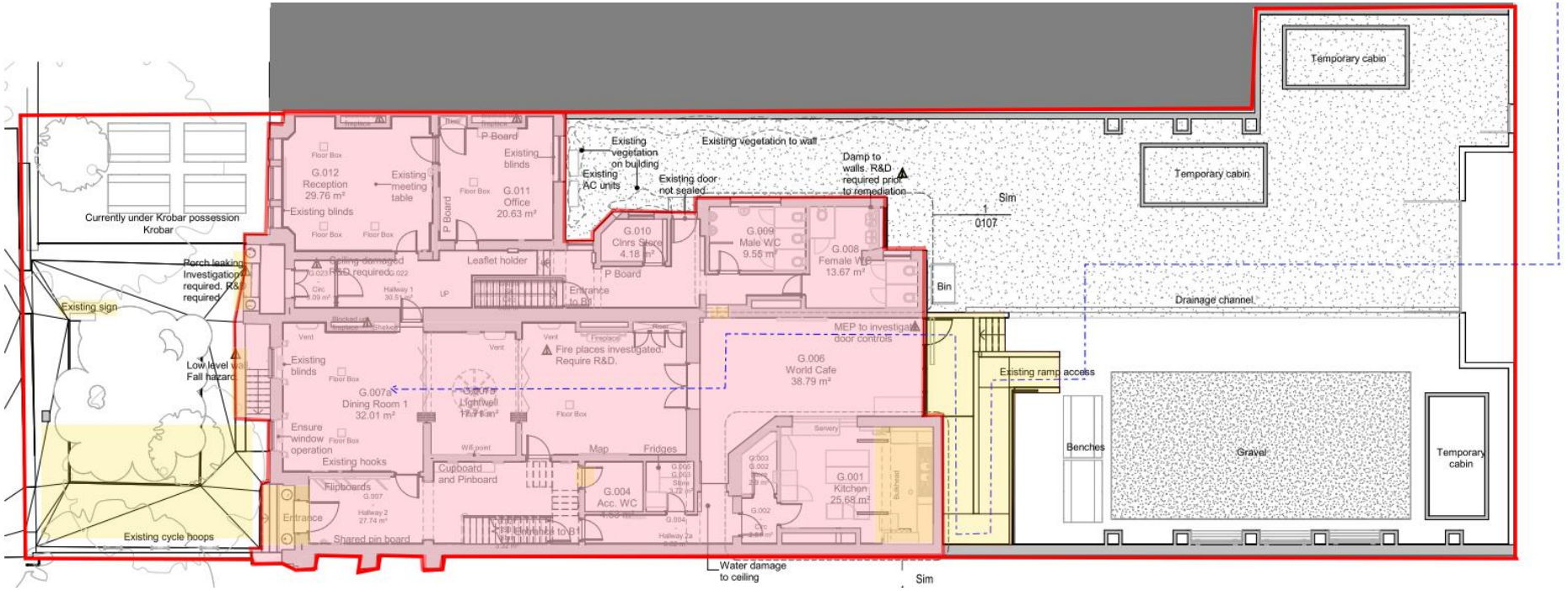
The following recommendations were made:

- A ramp to either one of the front entrance doors to allow for wheelchair access from Oxford Road. Ramp and Lift options to be considered
- Wheelchair access to the ground floor only was acceptable, however a variety of workspaces should be provided.
- Automated doors to be considered to ground floor. To be reviewed with Heritage and MEP.
- Push button access to Accessible WC should be considered. To be reviewed with Heritage and MEP.
- Dimmable lighting to support a Neurodiverse range of people should be provided.
- Handrail to the steps down to the WCs should be provided. WCs located 1no. step down below Ground Floor level.
- Braille to signage should be considered.
- To consider using document PAS6453:2022 in further design development.
- Considerations for powered wheelchair access
- Further design development will also align with University Disabled Access Guidelines EPM 14

Additional meetings have been held with Planning and Heritage representatives, see further detail in section 11.0.

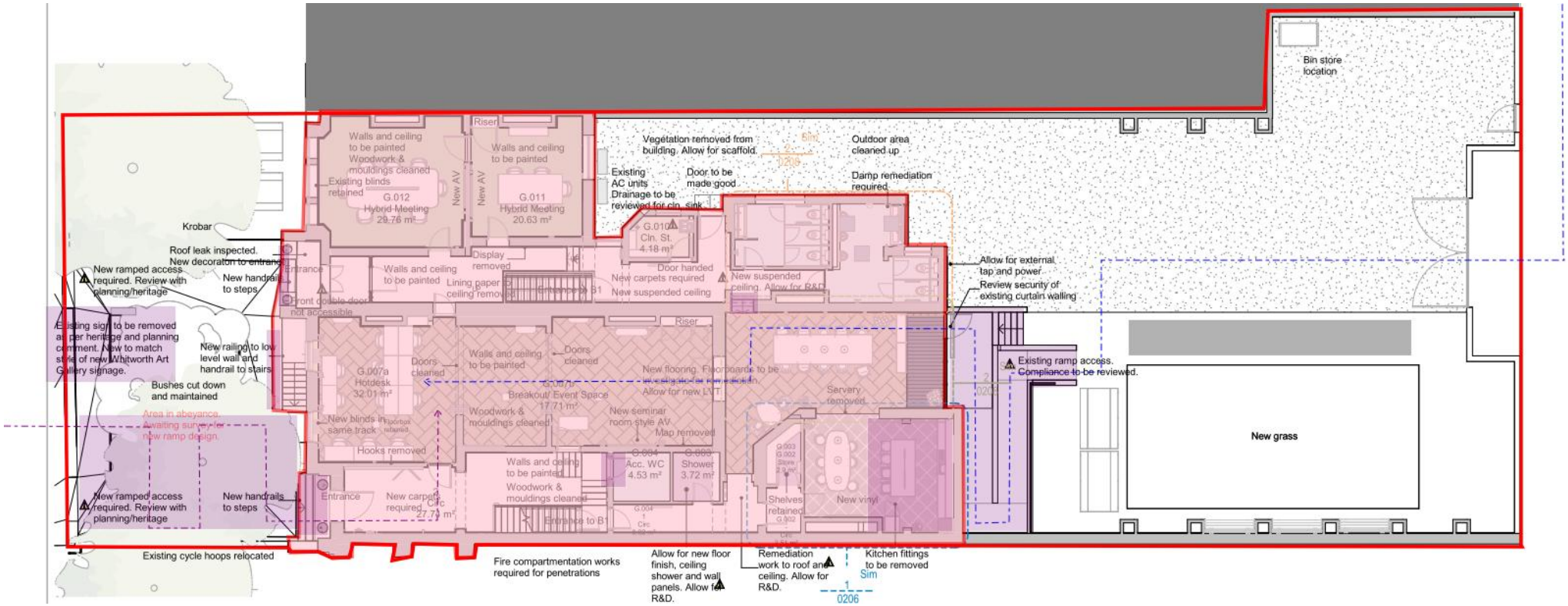
7.2 Existing Condition

- Existing rear ramp not compliant with Approved Document K of Building Regulations.
- Original stepped access to front of building
- Manually operated doors throughout
- Non-dimmable lighting to internal spaces
- Signage detracts from front elevation of building
- No Braille to signage
- Lack of handrails to steps both internally and externally



7.3 Proposed Condition

- New compliant access to front of building including new stairs with handrails and contrast nosing's, as well as platform lift providing level access to ground floor, all in line with current building regulations
- New automated opening doors with push buttons.
- Fencing and handrail to basement stairs and gate access for security
- New lighting to front garden and proposed stepped access
- Renewal and repair of existing hard landscaping, improving accessibility to more users of the building



7.4 Lift Management

Lift to be fully accessible during office hours to be agreed with the end use, and to be operated by swipe card access out of hours.

UoM Building Management team need to ensure that a suitable lift management strategy is in place to maintain the lift and access, as well as power failure and fire. This should include, but not be limited to the following:

- Plan for maintenance and regular inspections to align with manufacturers requirements
- Plan for evacuation in the event of a fire
- Strategy in the event of a lift/power failure
- Strategy for using existing rear ramp

8.0 Mechanical and Electrical Proposals

8.1 MEP Philosophy/Approach

New cabling is to be recessed within existing containment where possible. Where necessary, new cabling is to be housed within steel conduits fixed sympathetically and discretely to not detract from original features, conduits are to be painted to match adjacent surrounding. Where necessary, penetrations between rooms and through existing walls are to be limited to the size of the containment to ensure minimum disruption to the existing fabric. All penetrations are to be made good. Any penetrations to be marked on drawings and approved by heritage officer.

8.2 Lighting

- Integrated strip lighting to the stairs is to ensure that visibility is sufficient for users, as well as offering a contemporary aesthetic.
- A lighting bollard is proposed with integrated call point at the access to the platform lift.

8.3 Power

- Power for both lift and automated doors to be made to the front yard directly from the basement and concealed where possible under the landing at the front. There will be a power supply unit located on the left wall of the landing, behind the gated access to the basement
- The lift call points will be located on freestanding posts, with cabling concealed beneath the platform

9.0 National Planning Policy Framework

Reviewing the proposals described above against the policies of the NPPF we would state the following:

In reference to *Section 16 of the NPPF:*

- No heritage asset will be affected by the Proposed Works.

- The proposals will sustain the significance of the building and ensure that the spaces are viable for use as they were originally intended.

- The building has been well maintained by The University of Manchester and has been heated and ventilated, protecting the historic fabric. There is no evidence of deliberate neglect or damage to the asset.

- William Kay House is grade II listed. The building is 235 years old. The proposal is 'light- touch' with redecoration generally to the existing surfaces, walls, ceilings, and replacement floors. New additions such as partition walls, and replacement kitchen have minimal impact on the existing historic fabric (wall panelling & coving). Works are proportionate to the project and are sympathetic to the original features of the building. A couple of meetings have been held with the Heritage Officer, Jackie Whelan, was held on site to talk through the proposal. Comments from this are noted in section 11.0.

- The proposal involves minimal alterations to original building fabric. We are proposing retention of the original stone staircase, with sympathetic connection so that they can be reinstated in future if required. All the original late Victorian elements are to be retained and touched only for cleaning and painting to make good. Railings to the basement dwarf wall will provide full restraint and security these are designed to be sympathetic to the original architecture of the building and precedent sought from historic images and existing nearby buildings of a similar age.

10.0 Local Conservation Policy

Reviewing the proposals described above against the policies of the Planning [Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas] Act 1990) we would state the following about the building for which this application states, William Kay House:

The building is noted as Grade 2 listed, and the proposed works have been developed in line with preserving the architectural, artistic and historic interest. See Section 2 for further detail on the buildings listing description and areas of historical, architectural, artistic, and archaeological interest. In reference to paragraph 204 where the desirability of preservation or enhancement of a conservation area is outlined: The building does not lie within a conservation area.

In relation to paragraph 200 of the NPPF: this development can be integrated very easily within existing businesses and community facilities, as the ownership is not changing, and no change of use class has been requested as part of the planning application.

Paragraph 215 of the NPPF states that *'Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use'.* The positive heritage benefit from this proposal is that the works will facilitate the continued use of the building for the University, in a use which is sympathetic to both the existing form and layout of the building, and the current requirements of the business. It is our view that the public benefits of the proposed scheme outweigh the less than substantial harm caused, therefore the policy identified in Paragraphs 207, 215, and 218 are satisfied, whilst other relevant legislation, policy and guidance set out within Section 16 is also complied with.

Cumulative Impact:

We have believed that we have demonstrated that this proposal demonstrates as required in paragraph 207 of the NPPF that the impact of the works in relation to the historical significance of the building is low and of less than substantial harm to the significance of the building. The works identified as part of the proposal are of minimal intrusion and involve very little disturbance to the original building fabric.

11.0 Pre-Planning Advice

The following early engagement meetings have been held to support the design development in relation to accessibility and heritage:

21-10-2024 Planning Meeting with Jennifer Atkinson (UoM Drop in session)

20-01-2025 Site Visit with Jennifer Atkinson (Planning) and Jackie Whelan (Heritage)

20-02-2025 Advice sought from Heritage team via email on erecting new ramp

08-10-2025 Meeting discussing Lift Proposal with Emily Booth, Jennifer Atkinson (Planning) and Jackie Whelan (Heritage)

Summary of January Site Visit meeting notes is below:

Front Garden

- Building needs to be accessible for wheelchair users. Architects to consider new access to front elevation or requirement for platform lift
- Fall protection is required to the basement stairwell, architects to coordinate design of railings with requirement for accessible ramp
- Planning and Heritage requested details of any proposed railings to the garden.
- Architects to research historical photographs to evidence the history of the front access, vegetation and boundary treatment.
- Project to propose new monolith signage (current signage has advertisement consent 109739/AO/2015/C1). A slimline monolith using sympathetic colours to be proposed in a separate application in future.
- The existing felting works to the main entrance steps is aesthetically poor and should be reviewed
- Vegetation to be maintained/cut back to enhance front elevation.

Summary of October Teams meeting with Emily Booth, Jennifer Atkinson and Jackie Whelan below:

- Design Proposal was presented at pre-planning phase to gain insight to the acceptability of the proposal
- Overall positive response to improve the accessibility of the building
- Crossover of proposed boundary railings appears quite busy, look to reduce the visual impact of the railings.
- HMA to reconsider railing provision and heights
- Consider the location of the monolith signage in later application.

12.0 Summary

The University of Manchester are refurbishing William Kay House, following these approvals the decision has been made to improve the accessibility of this building, with a new access lift, staircase and landing with associated works to the front garden.

The impact of proposed works

The proposed works are reversible and involve minimal disturbance to sensitive fabric. They are regarded to have little or no impact on the significance or interest of William Kay House.

The changes are necessary to secure the future function of the building and will provide a new facility within the University of Manchester, allowing the building to be occupied, maintained, and secured.

The existing building condition has been identified as generally good, and areas of interest to Planning and Heritage as outlined in the site walkaround, as well as the projects conservation philosophy and approach are clearly noted within the report.

Completing these works will ensure the accessibility of the William Kay building will be improved.

13.0 Contact Us

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