

Planning

Growth & Development

Delegated officer report for planning application

Application no.	144062/LO/2025	
Date registered valid:	6 January 2026	
Proposal:	Listed Building Consent for the installation of signage, internal and external alterations and associated works.	
Address:	Atlas Chambers, Ship Canal House, 96 - 98 King Street, Manchester, M2 4WU	
Ward(s):	Deansgate	Ward
Applicant:	Costa Ltd	
Agent (if any):	Miss Anisha Ahmed Savills	
Case officer:	Sam Tel: 0161 219 Email: sam.elliott@manchester.gov.uk	Elliott 2856
Recommendation:	Refuse	
Date of recommendation:	12/02/2026	

Application details

Type of application:	Listed Building Consent
Development type:	Listed building alteration
Date of site visit:	22 January 2026
Standard consultations:	
Printed: 8 January 2026	Expired: 29 January 2026
Neighbour notifications	
Printed: 8 January 2026	Expired: 29 January 2026
Site notice	
Posted: 22 January 2026	Expired: 12 February 2026
Press advert	
Published: 13 January 2026	Expired: 3 February 2026

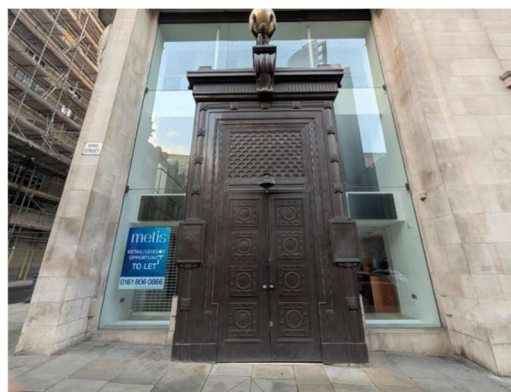
Departure from Development Plan: No

Environmental Statement: Not required

Description of site/building

The application concerns the ground, mezzanine and first floor of the Grade II-listed Atlas Chambers, which sits on the corner of King Street and Brown Street. The building complex is comprised of two other listings, namely the Grade II listed Ship Canal House and Lombard Chambers.

The former banking hall building adopts a classic twentieth century style, with its historic significance derived partially from its architectural features, including its grand proportions, a rectilinear, orthogonal design and vertical emphasis, with Portland stone masonry, bronze doorway set in the centre and surmounted by a bronze Atlas with golden globe, a bronze plaque on the corner and a cartouche above this. While the façade has been modified to some degree, with a plate-glass glazing either side and above the bronze door, as well as to the Brown Street Bays, the modern elements retain its grandiose proportions and design.





The site is currently vacant, occupied by Hervia for the sale of clothing between April 2021 and June 2023. Prior to this, Virgin Money occupied the Site from September 2012 to July 2019, operating as an office, restaurant and lounge area.

The internal fitout appears modern, with a mezzanine and modern partitioning. However, it is unclear from the submission if there are any remaining internal elements of historic fabric.

Listed building: Grade II

Conservation area: Upper King Street Conservation Area 1970

Tree Preservation Order: Not applicable

Description of area

The area relates to King Street in Manchester City Centre. The area lies within the Upper King Street Conservation Area (1970) and there are fourteen listed buildings on the street including the Grade I-listed former Bank of England building at number 82, the Grade II*-listed former Midland Bank at number 100, the Grade II-listed Pall Mall Court opposite the site, and the Grade II-listed Former Reform Club Manchester Club.

The character of the area comprises office, retail, dining and drinking uses. It is in a highly sustainable location, with a wide availability of public transport routes in the vicinity.

Advertisement in the street scene and within the setting of the Upper King Street Conservation Area is relatively restrained, with visible signage to nearby listed buildings including a roundel sign to the King Street Pizza Express approved in 2014, an ornate hanging sign to the Brown Street Flight Club approved in 2018, and an unauthorised bulky roundel to the Brown Street Black Cat Club.

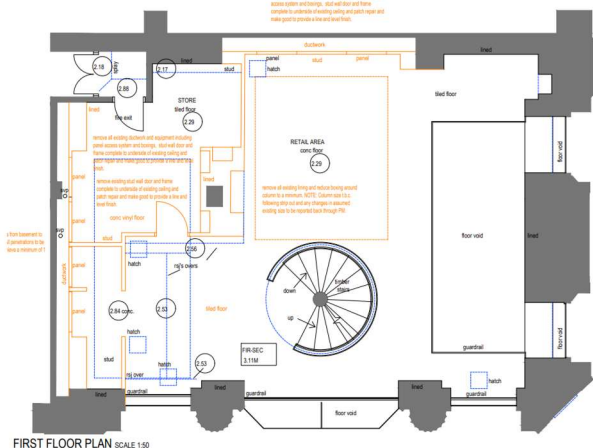
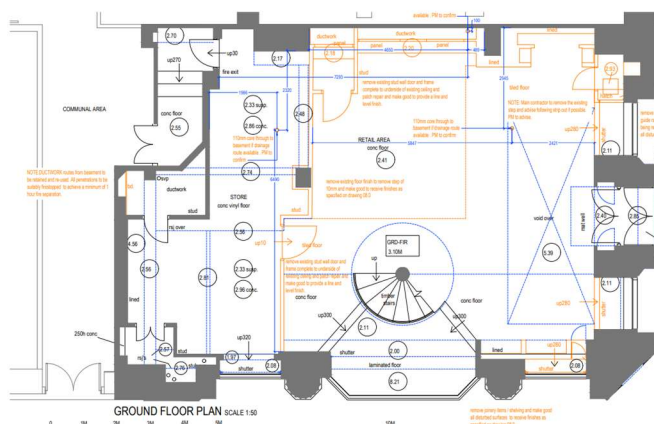


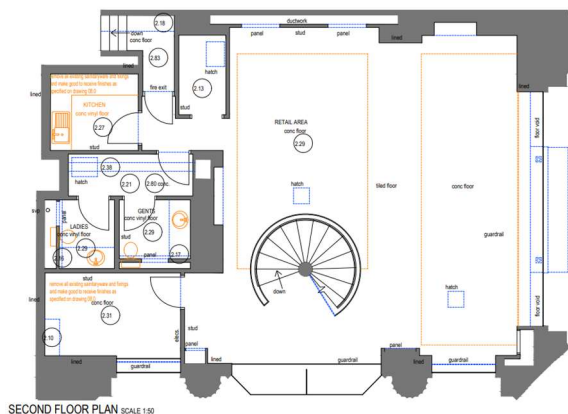
Description of development

Listed building consent is sought for the strip out of former tenant fitout and replacement fitout; signage consisting of 3no. aluminium tray fascia signs, 1no double sided digital LED screen, 2 no. external projecting signs, various vinyl stickers; and associated works including cleaning of the exterior of the building.

Strip out

The plans submitted 11/02/2026 refer to a series of strip out works including the removal of modern partitions, doors, ductwork, kitchenettes, floor finishes, steps, shutter housing and guard rails to facilitate more open space at ground and first floor for seating areas, as well as back of house facilities to the ground floor at the applicant's specification.





The demolition plans indicate that in the strip out all existing lining would be removed from the column at ground and first floor, reducing boxing 'to a minimum'. No account has been provided of what architectural features of the building constitute its remaining historic fabric, and it is unclear whether this column proposed to be exposed is of historic significance.

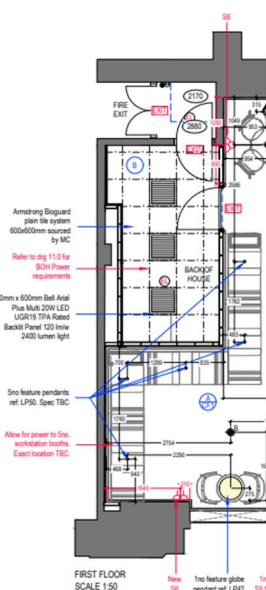
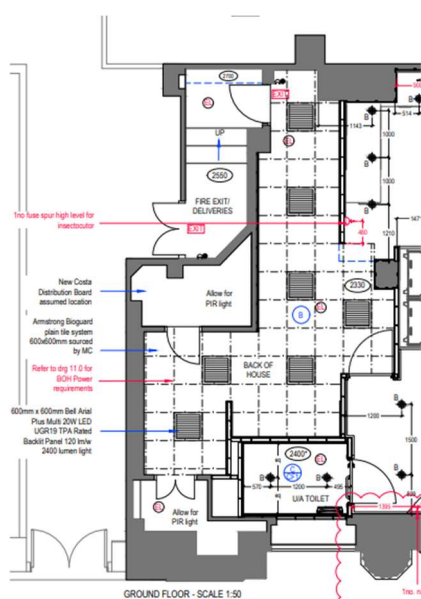
Mention is made of the removal of secondary glazing in the Planning, Heritage, Design and Access Statement, though it is not clear from the drawings where secondary glazing would be removed.

An existing ceiling plan has not been provided, and it is unclear to what extent the ceilings are impacted by the strip out works.

Internal Fitout

The fitout includes new partitioning to ground and first floors for back of house facilities, booth, fixed and freestanding seating to all levels, as well as new joinery and counters, new lighting, floor, elevational and ceiling finishes.

There would also be suspended ceilings to the back of house facilities at ground and first floor level.



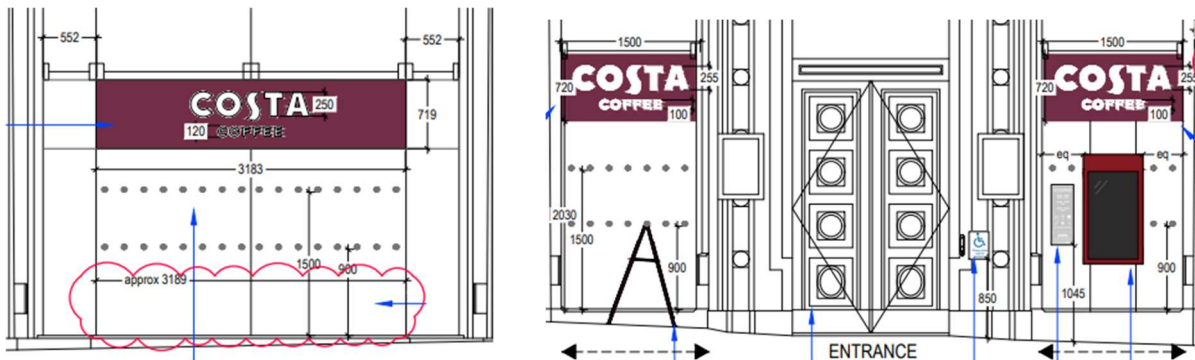
The cross sections provided in the plans do not include reference the dropped ceilings and their height from floor level is unclear.

Signage

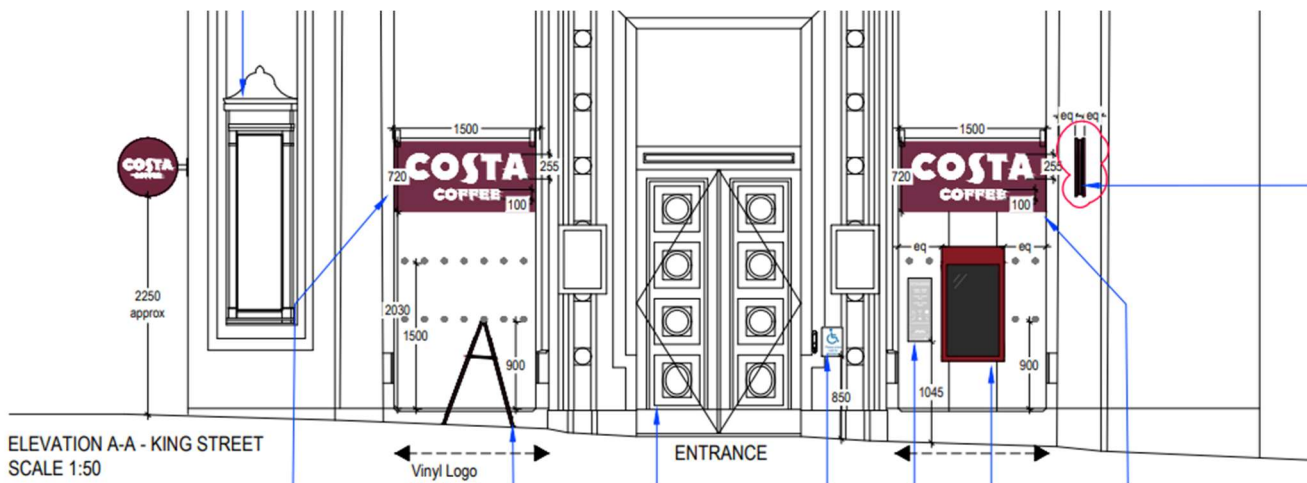
Internal signage would consist of 1no. aluminium sign tray to the Brown Street elevation measuring 719mm x 3183mm, as well as 2no. 1500mm x 720mm aluminium sign trays to the King Street elevation. Each would be sited within the mezzanine bulkhead and exhibit 'COSTA' in acrylic lettering with a 60mm depth, and 'COFFEE' in a flush laser cut opal acrylic. They would be internally illuminated with luminance levels of 600cd/m2.

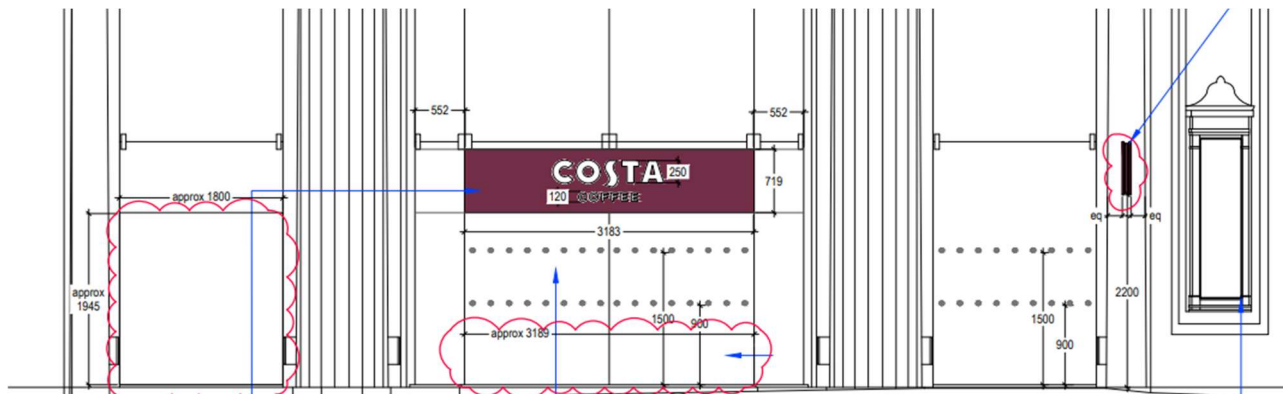
There would also be an internal double sided LED advertisement screen affixed to the rear side of the glazing adjacent to the bronze door.

It is noted that large sections of internal vinyl have been removed from the scheme as per the amended drawings submitted 11/02/2026.

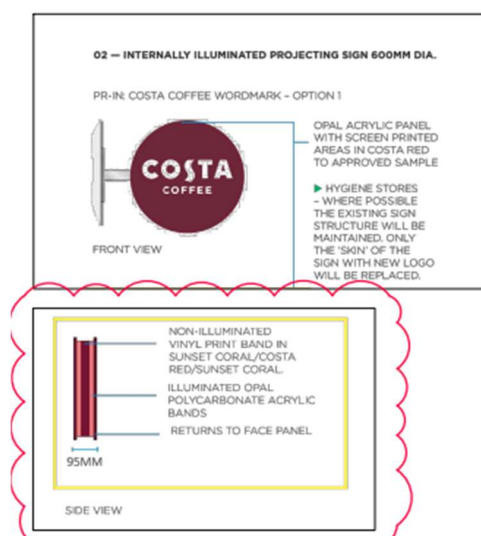


Details of the height of the King Street projecting sign to the right side of the brass door have not been included, however based on previous drawings it would be sited approximately 2500mm from external floor level. The Brown Street projecting sign would be sited approximately 2250mm from external floor level and in proximity to the bronze corner plaque.





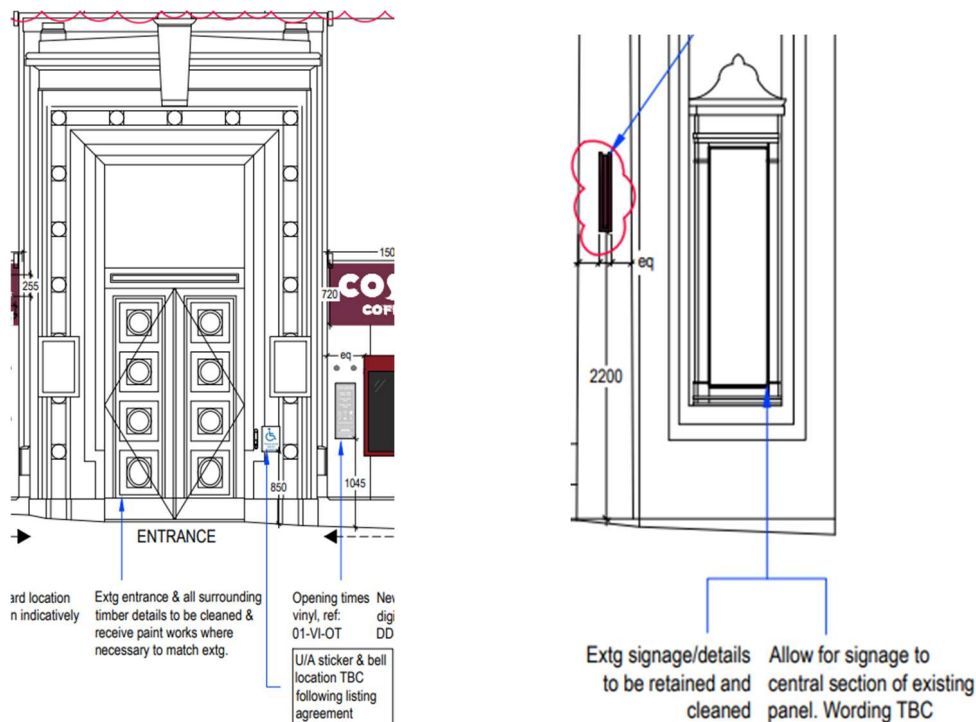
The projecting signs would be circular 'lollipop' signs with a diameter of 600mm and a depth of 95mm. They would have a support arm, and while the amended plans do not include this information, it is assumed based on the submission of earlier plans that the support arm would extend 150mm of the external face of the elevation, with an approximate total projection of 750mm. They would have acrylic faces and be internally illuminated with illuminance levels of 600cd/m² to exhibit the 'Costa Coffee' branding in white text with a 6500k cool white lighting through an opal acrylic face, and have a maroon background. Their sides would feature 2no. coral vinyl bands.



The amended drawings have omitted fixing details previously provided, and it is assumed that the signs would be fixed via RAWL bolts through a base plate with a stainless-steel shroud as previously indicated. No details have been provided regarding the size of the baseplate which would help affix the signage to the stonework.

The amended drawings make reference to a number of additional vinyl elements, including the placement of a sticker on the building's bronze door, an opening times sticker, and signage to the central section of the bronze plaque. Few details of these elements have been provided. A bell is also shown on the building's bronze door.

The proposed elevations show a bell to be affixed to the bronze door, and annotations indicating cleaning to the bronze panel and stone columns. No fixing or cleaning details have been provided.



It is noted that application 144060/FO/2025 has been approved 09/02/2026 granting permission for use as a café. This application is now being considered alongside 144061/AO/2025: Installation of 2no internally illuminated projecting signs.

Consultations & Notification Responses

Notification:

Occupiers of neighbouring buildings were notified via notification letters and the application was advertised via site notice and in the MEN as affecting a listed building and conservation area. No representations were received in response to the application.

Policy

Context

The following policies are considered relevant to this application:

Places for Everyone

- JP-Strat2 – City Centre
- JP-P1 – Sustainable Places
- JP-P2 – Heritage

The Adopted Core Strategy for the City of Manchester

- SP1 – Spatial Principles
- CC1 - Primary Economic Development Focus : City Centre and Fringe
- CC7 – Mixed Use Development
- CC9 – Design and Heritage
- EN1 – Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas
- EN3 – Heritage
- DM1 – Development Management

The Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester

- DC14 – Shop Fronts and Related Signs

- DC19 – Listed Buildings

NPPF

- Section 12 (Achieving Well Designed Places)
- Section 16 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment)

Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990

- Section 16

Shopfront and Signage Design Guide

Issues

Section 16(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that, in considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works, the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Amongst other things and in general terms, PfE Policies JP-Strat2 and JP-P1, as well as Core Strategy Policies SP1, EN1, and DM1 require that development has good design, improves the appearance and character of the area, is visually stimulating, and creates interesting environments, taking account of matters including siting, layout, form, massing, materials and detail. PfE Policy JP-P2, Core Strategy policies CC9, EN1 and EN3, saved UDP policy DC19, With specific regard to advertisements, Saved Unitary Development Plan Policies DC14.1 and DC14.5 further require that signage is in keeping with the character of the building and of the area in which it is located, and respect the architectural form of the building.

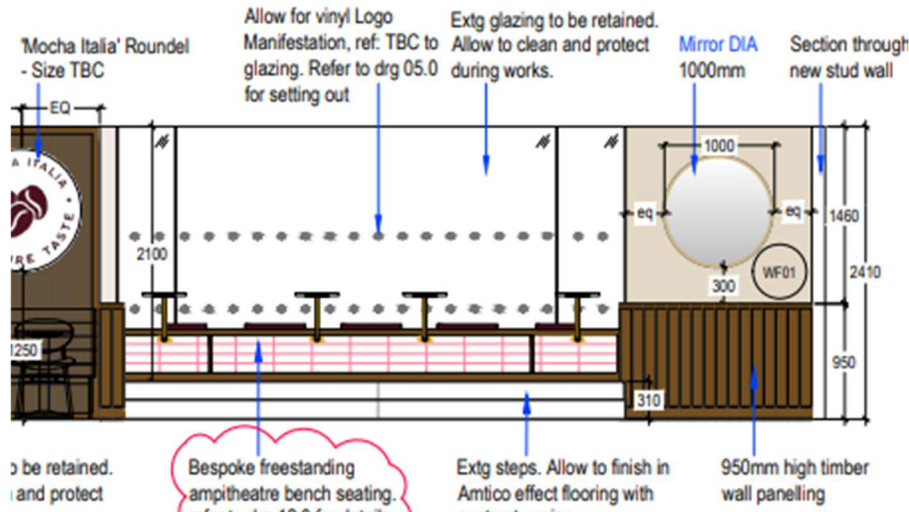
Lack of information

Based on the submission of the plans, there are a number of details missing from the scheme which prevent a full assessment of the impact the proposed works on the significance of the listed building via the proposed strip out and fitout of the interior.

The applicant has not provided drawings detailing any remaining historic fabric within the modern fitout of the unit. While it is acknowledged that the current fitout is modern, the Planning, Heritage, Design and Access Statement asserts that 'the proposed works will result in no heritage harm to the fabric of the building.... Any work carried out to the internal aspects of the unit is not considered to materially impact or result in the loss of original fabric', leaving unclear whether there is historic fabric to be aware of.

The demolition plans indicate that through the strip out all existing lining would be removed from the column at ground and first floor, reducing boxing 'to a minimum'. It is unclear whether this column proposed to be exposed is of historic significance and what measures would be taken to protect it if required.

Where 950mm timber wall panelling to the ground floor is shown, it is not clear if this feature would wrap around into the bay window reveals. If this were the case, this would be seen together with the external masonry and would not be considered sympathetic to the building's significance.



Similarly, no details for the rear side of the amphitheatre bench and banquet seating have been provided. It is unclear what the full impact of this seating arrangement would have, and it would be seen externally from King and Brown Street and together with the masonry and bronze features which comprise its most significant historic fabric.

Mention is also made of the removal of secondary glazing in the Planning, Heritage, Design and Access Statement, though it is not clear from the drawings where secondary glazing would be removed.

Additionally, an existing ceiling plan has not been provided, and it is unclear to what extent the ceilings are impacted by the strip out works. Where suspended ceilings are shown within the drawings, any change in height as a result of these ceilings is not indicated within the cross sections provided. This leaves unclear what proposed works would have on the spatial character of the space.

The amended plans do not include details of the projecting signage, including headroom clearances, materiality for the support arms and baseplate, fixing details, and size of the baseplate. A number of external vinyl elements are also referenced to the bronze plaque and door to the exterior.

It is ultimately considered that the applicant has not provided sufficient information to fully assess the impact of the strip out, fitout and signage works on historic fabric, or the internal and external character of the listed building. The applicant has therefore failed to demonstrate the level of harm to the significance of the listed building. Notwithstanding this, the impacts that can be assumed are discussed below.

Internal Works

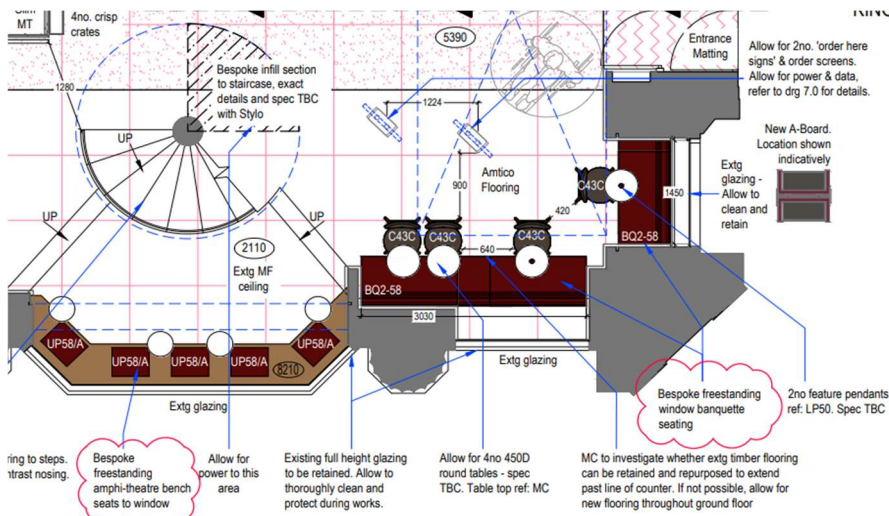
The impact of the internal fitout is viewed with respect to the modern but understated appearance of the interior, particularly where any works would be viewed through the large expanses of glazing to the unit and seen together with the external masonry which comprises its significant historic fabric.

From what can be ascertained in the plans, the new partitions to form back of house facilities are not considered to significantly alter the spatial character of the unit given a similar level of partitioning within the existing fitout.

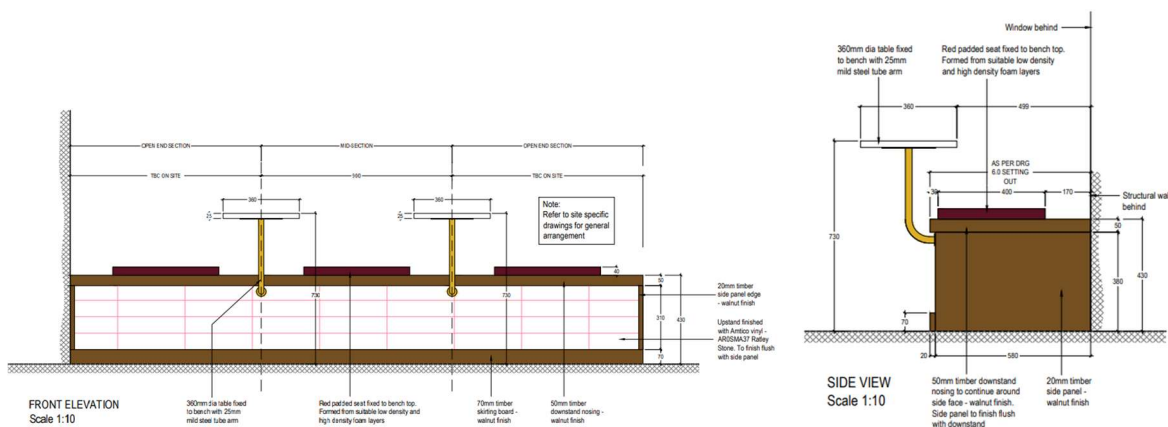
It is considered that there would be positive heritage benefits through the removal of joinery and shutters to the ground floor glazed windows, allowing for active frontages with views into the

unit and a greater appreciation of the space, though one elevation would be obscured by a set back partition to facilitate a ground floor WC.

However, it is noted that the amended plans have retained seating arrangements at ground floor within the glazed windows shown previously, but have now specified that they will be freestanding.



While it is acknowledged that the above would be reversible, these elements would impact the permeability of the glazing and be seen together with the building's masonry and bronze work which comprise its most significant historic fabric.



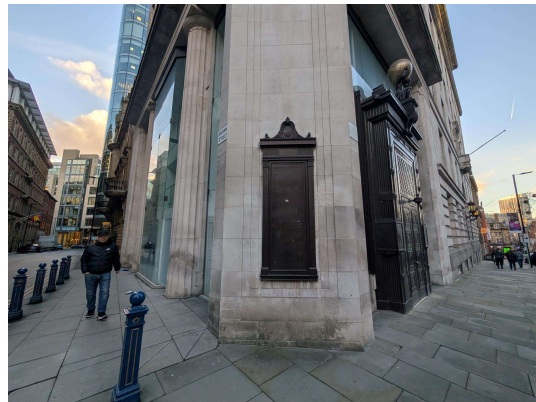
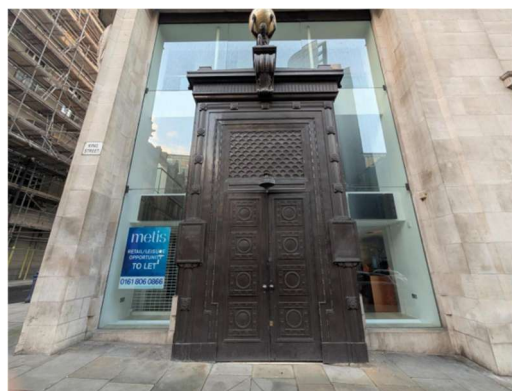
Cross sections provided indicate that the amphitheatre seating would be a solid bench construction immediately abutting the glazing to Brown Street. Particularly when viewed together with the numerous signage elements detailed below, and with it unclear whether timber panelling would wrap into the window reveals, it is considered that the seating would contribute to visual clutter to the detriment of the prominent glazing feature and the building's external appearance, moreover resulting in harm to its historic fabric and architectural design.

While the full details of finishes are unclear particularly within the glazed window reveals, from what has been detailed, the unit would feature 3 types of wooden wall panelling in various sizes and colours. There would be tiling, paint and wallpaper (albeit in fairly muted colours), as well as numerous vinyl and digital signage elements to the internal elevations. There would also be 2 types of Amtico flooring to the ground floor commercial floorspace (with an annotation discussing the potential retention of timber flooring in drawing 240350/4.0 Rev: D). Taken as a whole, and when considered alongside the signage elements discussed below, it is considered

that the proposed fitout would result have an overly cluttered feel internally where visible from outside the unit. This would result in harm as a result.

Signage

The exterior of the former banking hall building is constructed in a classic twentieth century style. Its historic significance is partially but substantially derived from its impressive architectural features. This consists of its grand proportions and rectilinear and orthogonal design, as well as its materiality, with Portland stone masonry, a distinct bronze doorway set in the centre of the Kings Street elevation, which is surmounted by an ornamental bronze Atlas with golden globe. Bronze as a material feature is replicated elsewhere on the building via a plaque to the unit's corner with a cartouche above. While the façades have been modified to some degree, with a plate-glass glazing either side and above the bronze door, as well as to the Brown Street bays, these modern elements replicate the grandiose proportions and vertical emphasis of the building and respect its original design language.



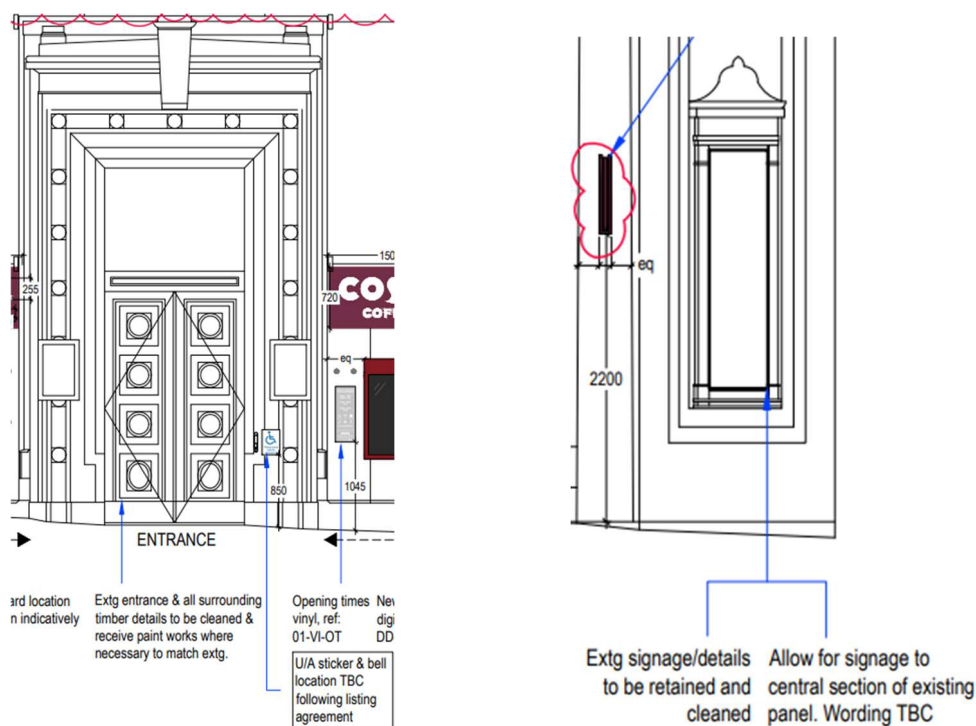
Principally, the proposed materiality of the projecting signage is not considered to be commensurate with the listed status of the building, nor its unique materiality. The proposed acrylic faces and vinyl side strips would appear as particularly low-quality materials detracting from the impressive material quality of the masonry and brass work of Atlas Chambers which comprise its remaining and most significant historic fabric. Similarly, the stainless-steel support arm and base plate shroud would appear as inferior material when seen together with the building's brass door and plaque. It is also viewed that the aluminium sign trays and acrylic lettering would be a similarly poor match in quality. The King Street signs would be seen directly in conjunction with the building's brass door where the Brown Street signs would be seen immediately adjacent to the bronze plaque.

While it is accepted that the external elevations feature modern material interventions through the double height glazing, it is considered that the proposed materiality reads as distinctly modern, while also being of low quality and failing to correspond to the existing material palette of the building which constitutes its most significant historic fabric. The inclusion of a digitally

illuminated double sided advertisement screen sited behind the glazing would add a further distinctly modern element to the building's exterior. This would result in an incongruous and harmful addition to the building's appearance.

With the above in mind, it is moreover considered that 95mm depth of the projecting signs would make them appear excessively bulky and overly prominent additions to the listed building's elevations. It is noted that the depth of the sign is significantly in excess of the 30mm depth outlined in the Council's Shopfront and Design Guide. Moreover the circular lollipop shape of the signage bears little resemblance to the rectilinear and orthogonal architectural design of the building. It is also noted that the projecting signs are shown not to line through with the 'fascia' created within the mezzanine, with the signage placement appearing incoherent and haphazard as a whole. These factors work to poorly integrate the signage into the building's elevations and add to the incongruity of the signage by a further additional degree.

The amended drawings make reference to a number of additional vinyl elements, including the placement of a sticker on the building's bronze door and signage to the central section of the bronze plaque. While few details of these elements have been provided, these elements are strongly resisted by the Council and would view them as incurring significant harm to the remaining historic fabric of the building.



Ultimately, it is considered that both individually and when taken together the proposed signage strategy for the unit would appear low-quality, fragmented and overly cluttered, creating a cluster of disparate and modern acrylic, aluminium and LED signage elements which pose a significant level of harm to the building's significance.

External Works

The proposed elevations include a bell to be affixed to the bronze door, and annotations indicating cleaning to the bronze panel and stone columns. Further details on the bell and how it would be fixed are required, with this intervention potentially resulting in a visual harm. Further details including a method statement would also be required for how the columns would be cleaned, as this could be harmful and would require a specialist cleaning method.

Assessment of Harm

For the above reasons, it is considered that insufficient information has been provided to allow a full assessment of the harms identified. For this reason alone, the applicant is considered to have failed to demonstrate the impacts of the works on the significance of the listed building.

Where some extent of the impact of these works can be assessed, they are considered to result in a less than substantial harm to the Grade II listed building, with some minor positive benefits in allowing greater views into the ground floor of the unit. The signage approach is considered to be particularly harmful, and the internal fitout would be harmful to a lesser but considerable degree.

In consideration of the proposal's public benefits as per the requirements of Paragraph 215 of the NPPF, it is acknowledged that an internal fitout and signage, of some kind, is ancillary to the use of the unit as a café as approved in application 144060/FO/2025 and would help facilitate its occupancy. This would be in line with PfE Policy JP-Strat 2 and Core Strategy Policies SP1, CC1 and CC7 in this respect.

However, it is viewed that the approach that has been taken has not been designed to minimise harm to the listed building and solutions more appropriate to the listed status of the building could have been adopted. In view of the above, the less than substantial harm resulting from the works are at a level where the ancillary public benefits provided by the fitout and signage in facilitating the occupancy of a vacant unit, which has already been approved, are not outweighed by the considerable harm they pose to the listed building.

On this basis, the proposal would fail the statutory test to preserve the building and its features of special architectural and historic interest. It would moreover not be in accordance with Places for Everyone Policies JP-Strat2, JP-P1 and JP-P2; Core Strategy Policies SP1, CC9, EN1, EN3, and DM1; saved UDP Policies DC14, and DC19; Sections 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework; as well as guidance contained within the Council's Shopfront and Signage Design Guide.

Other Legislative Requirements

Equality Act 2010

Section 149 (Public Sector Equality Duty) of the Equality Act 2010 requires due regard to the need to: Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act and; Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The Equality Duty does not impose a legal requirement to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment. Compliance with the Equality Duty involves consciously thinking about the aims of the Equality Duty as part of the process of decision-making.

Human Rights Act 1998 considerations

This application needs to be considered against the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998. Under Article 6, the applicants (and those third parties, including local residents, who have made representations) have a right to a fair hearing and to this end the local planning authority must give full consideration to their comments.

Protocol 1 Article 1, and Article 8 where appropriate, confer(s) a right of respect for a person's home, other land and business assets. In taking account of all material considerations, including Council policy as set out in the Core Strategy and saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan, the Director of Planning, Building Control & Licensing has concluded that some rights conferred by these articles on the applicant(s)/objector(s)/resident(s) and other occupiers and

owners of nearby land that might be affected may be interfered with but that that interference is in accordance with the law and justified by being in the public interest and on the basis of the planning merits of the development proposal. She believes that any restriction on these rights posed by the recommendation given is proportionate to the wider benefits of and that such a decision falls within the margin of discretion afforded to the Council under the Town and Country Planning Acts.

Recommendation:

Refuse

Reasons for recommendation to refuse

- 1) Insufficient information has been submitted to allow a full assessment of the impact of the proposed development, including strip out and fit of the interior, on the significance of the listed building. There has been limited identification of any remaining historic fabric. The applicant has therefore failed to demonstrate the level of harm to the significance of the listed building to allow a considered assessment of this harm in the planning balance. The proposal is therefore contrary to Section 16 of the Listed Building and Conservation Areas Act 1990; Places for Everyone Policies JP-Strat2, JP-P1 and JP-P2; Core Strategy Policies SP1, CC9, EN1, EN3, and DM1; saved UDP Policy DC19; Sections 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 2) The 3no. internally illuminated aluminium sign trays sited behind the glazing, 2no. internally illuminated projecting signs, 1no. LED advertisement screen, vinyl elements and undisclosed signage to the building's external bronze plaque would by virtue of their design, materiality, siting, scale, massing and form constitute low-quality forms signage with a fragmented and cluttered appearance that would not be commensurate in quality to the listed status of the Grade II Atlas Chambers, unacceptably detracting from the listed building and its historic significance. The signage would result in less than substantial harm to the listed building and the public benefits would not outweigh this harm. The proposed signage is therefore contrary to Section 16 of the Listed Building and Conservation Areas Act 1990; Places for Everyone Policies JP-Strat2, JP-P1 and JP-P2; Core Strategy Policies SP1, CC9, EN1, EN3, and DM1; saved UDP Policies DC14 and DC19; Sections 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework; as well as guidance contained within the Council's Shopfront and Signage Design Guide.
- 3) The proposed seating arrangement and finishes would by virtue of their siting, design and materiality add a further layer of clutter to the unit's glazing. When considered externally, in conjunction with the proposed signage, the cumulative impact on the appearance of the building's grandiose design, proportions and historic features would be considered to be unduly harmful to the visual amenity and significance of the listed building resulting in 'less than substantial harm'. The required public benefits do not exist to outweigh this harm. The proposal is therefore contrary to Section 16 of the Listed Building and Conservation Areas Act 1990; Places for Everyone Policies JP-Strat2, JP-P1 and JP-P2; Core Strategy Policies SP1, CC9, EN1, EN3, and DM1; saved UDP Policies DC14 and DC19; Sections 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified

Heritage & Urban Design
Historic England (North West)

Sixth Floor, Ship Canal House, 96 - 98 King Street, Manchester, M2 4WU
Fifth Floor, Ship Canal House, 96 - 98 King Street, Manchester, M2 4WU
Third Floor, 73 King Street, Manchester, M2 4NG
Second Floor, 73 King Street, Manchester, M2 4NG
Fourth Floor, 73 King Street, Manchester, M2 4NG
73 King Street, Manchester, M2 4NG
All Bar One Cafe Bar, 75 - 79 King Street, Manchester, M2 4NG
Seventh Floor, 73 King Street, Manchester, M2 4NG
Eighth Floor, 73 King Street, Manchester, M2 4NG
First To Fourth Floor, Ship Canal House, 96 - 98 King Street, Manchester, M2 4WU
LIVERPOOL VICTORIA FRIENDLY, Ninth Floor, Ship Canal House, 96 - 98 King Street, Manchester, M2 4WU
Fourth Floor, Ship Canal House, 96 - 98 King Street, Manchester, M2 4WU
Ninth Floor, 73 King Street, Manchester, M2 4NG
Hotel Gotham, 100 King Street, Manchester, M2 4WU
Tenth Floor, 73 King Street, Manchester, M2 4NG
ENTERPRISES VENTURES LIMITED, Sixth Floor, 73 King Street, Manchester, M2 4NG
Fifth Floor, 73 King Street, Manchester, M2 4NG
Basement And Ground Floor, 84 King Street, Manchester, M2 4WQ
Seventh Floor, Ship Canal House, 96 - 98 King Street, Manchester, M2 4WU
Flight Club, Ground Floor, Ship Canal House, 96 - 98 King Street, Manchester, M2 4WU
Eighth Floor, Ship Canal House, 96 - 98 King Street, Manchester, M2 4WU
86 King Street, Manchester, M2 4WQ
First Floor, 86 King Street, Manchester, M2 4WQ
SYMATRIX LTD, Second Floor, 86 King Street, Manchester, M2 4WQ
84 King Street, Manchester, M2 4WQ
JAMIE'S ITALIAN LIMITED, Ground Floor, 100 King Street, Manchester, M2 4WU

Appendix 2 – Planning constraints

Article 4 Direction - Removal Of PD Rights Change Of Use From Class C3 To Class C4
Article 4 Direction - City Centre PD Restriction - Class B1(a) To C3
Coal Authority - Development Low Risk - Name: DEVELOPMENT_LOW_RISK_AREA
Conservation Area - Upper King Street Conservation Area 1970
Area Team Boundary - Name: CENTRAL