CubicWorks

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

03/11/2025

Third Floor Fit-out
Freetrade Exchange

37 Peter Street, Manchester, Greater Manchester, M2 5GB



	Name	Title	Date	Signature
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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Introduction to the Design and Access Statement

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by CubicWorks to describe the design process accompanying the drawings submitted with this application.

The statement outlines how the proposed development has emerged from a comprehensive assessment of the site's circumstances and characteristics, as well as the needs of its end users. It should be read alongside the separate Heritage Addendum by Paul Butler Associates.

The proposals involve the installation of the third floor for workplace amenities for Amex Global Business Travel to facilitate office use within the existing building and ensure the continued use of this significant building in the heart of the City Centre.

1.2 Development Team

Client:	Amex Global Business Travel
Interior Designers:	CubicWorks
Quantity Surveyor:	Quartz
Planning Consultants:	Paul Butler Associates (PBA)
Contractor	CubicWorks

Relevant Experience:

Amex Global Business Travel operations is a B2B travel platform that provides software and services for companies to manage corporate travel, expenses, and meetings and events. It helps businesses streamline travel planning, booking, and expense reporting through a technology-driven platform and a global network of travel professionals. Services include a mobile app for travelers with features like flight disruption alerts, and a focus on managing travel logistics, expenses, and events in one place.

CubicWorks is a Manchester based construction and refurbishment company that has extensive experience working with listed buildings and is committed to producing projects of the highest quality. CubicWorks have most recently been working with Bruntwood on the refurbishment works at the Manchester Club, Tootal Building on Oxford Road and also 40-46 Princess Street in Manchester City Centre..

Paul Butler Associates was established by Paul Butler in 1992 to provide professional, independent, cost-effective and creative planning advice to its clients, and this remains the motivation of its committed and experienced team of qualified professionals today. They advise on all aspects of the statutory planning system, including development control, planning applications, negotiations, planning appeals, inquiries and enforcement matters. The practice has been instructed by a broad range of public and private sector clients across a variety of sectors, within the northwest of England and beyond.

2.0 Assessment

2.1 Site Description

Freetrade Exchange, also previously known as Harvester House, is a Grade II listed building, within the Deansgate-Peter Street Conservation Area. It is bounded by Peter Street, Southmill Street and Bootle Street. The building was originally a merchant's warehouse, constructed in 1868 and designed by Clegg and Knowles in the Italian Palazzo style in with ashlar facing stone to the external faces to Peter Street and Southmill Street, and in red brick to Bootle Street. The building has five storeys plus basement and is roughly square in plan to the site. Features noted by Historic England include a vermiculated plinth, rusticated detailing, moulded sill bands and balustraded parapet. All noted features are external to the building. For further information on the historical aspects please refer to the Heritage Addendum by PBA.

Recent modifications have been undertaken by the landlord including enabling shell works to the Lower Ground Floor for conversion into a restaurant unit as well as overall refurbishment of the building in its entirety to create 6 floors of office space. Minor external alterations have taken place to the Peter Street entrances and the Bootle Street elevation to improve its arrival and street frontage.

Within the proposed office floors new openings have been formed allowing access to the lift core and risers. Additionally, new M&E services and raised access decking has been installed throughout by the landlord.

3.0 Architectural Method Statement

3.1 Design Objectives

- To adapt the current space to meet the needs ofAmex Global Business Travel and enable the use of floor four as high-quality office space, we propose a design that respects both the building's character and heritage as well as the philosophy of Amex Global Business Travel

- Our design is informed by the existing building structure. We aim to minimise disruptions to the existing historical fabric by placing the majority of cellular spaces, such as meeting rooms, in the centre of the floor plan. This approach allows open spaces to occupy the external walls, increasing depth of daylight into the floor plate and reducing the need for partitions along these elevations.

- To further minimise disruption to the existing fabric, we propose running power services for the new workspaces through floor boxes. In instances where this may not be suitable, these power systems will run through proposed partitions to avoid impacting the existing external walls.

3.2 Design Proposals

3.2.1 Entrance and Level access from Peter Street.

The existing entrance door, which historically facilitated coach access, is entirely glazed, featuring dark mullions and transoms (Figure 1). This entrance, installed as part of the general works by the landlord, creates a welcoming and easily navigable entrance.

A new, larger, split-level reception area offers level access from Peter Street, leading to a lift, which services all six levels of office space and direct access to the level 00 office space.



3.3 Principles of the Design

3.3.1 Use:

The existing use class of the building is mixed between Class E (commercial, business and service) on the upper floors and Basement. Use to the Lower Ground Floor is a restaurant, where a restaurateur has taken over the lease of the space. This application is only relating to business floors at level 03.

Operational allowances (i.e. riser spaces) have therefore been previously allowed for within the landlords' prior application as enabling works to ensure feasibility to fit out this space.

3.3.2 Layout

The proposed design largely retains the building's existing configuration, with the addition of minor non- structural partition walls to better accommodate Amex GBT. The layout has been carefully developed to remain predominantly open plan, preserving much of the original warehouse character while meeting the client's spatial requirements. A key priority for the client is ensuring privacy in the meeting and board rooms and separating client facing activity's from internal day to day activities, where sensitive discussions with clients will take place. To balance this need for privacy with the desired openness, we have maximised the use of glazing in screens and doors, allowing the layout to feel seamless and transparent while still providing the necessary separation.



The proposed partition layout has considered features such as column finals to avoid clashes with these existing features. A minimum of 50mm spacing between the column capitals and partitions has been included to allow for the existing features to be celebrated and ease of decoration of the proposed partitions.

3.3.3 Scale

There is no change to the overall scale or footprint of the unit with selective internal non-structural modifications to form new rooms.

3.3.4 Materials

Internally, the new walls have been designed in harmony with the building's character, faced with plasterboard and fully decorated. At junctions with existing structural beams or walls, shadow gaps will be incorporated to ensure a refined, seamless transition. Exposed finishes on existing columns and beams will maintain the building's raw aesthetic, while new floor finishes will be installed over the existing raised access deck.

The glazed doors and screens within the new partitions will feature minimal timber frames, softening their appearance and allowing the expansive glass to take visual precedence. This design choice reflects the building's industrial heritage, creating long, open views through the office space where partitions are introduced.

Across the floor plates, accent walls and striking features bring energy to the space, complemented by warm upholstery and curated artwork to foster a welcoming, relaxed atmosphere.

The boardroom and meeting rooms will feature a bespoke panelled wall for the TV, incorporating integrated acoustic panels and a woven floor finish to soften the room's ambience. In the open workspace, flexible furniture arrangements allow the historical architectural elements to remain focal points. The furniture palette will be light and neutral, with warm off-whites accented by deep, soft tones and varied flooring finishes to subtly differentiate zones.

Meeting rooms are designed for optimal acoustic performance, with custom-panelled TV walls, textured carpets, and muted colour-block walls for a calming effect. Timber-framed, largely glazed partitions separate the meeting spaces, providing a light, unobtrusive enclosure.

For further details on finishes and specific construction elements, please refer to the relevant drawings for walls, ceilings, flooring, and partitions.

4.0 Access

4.1 Movement Through and To the Site

Employee and visitor access to the office floors are illustrated below. Inclusive access to the reception is available from Peter Street, which is secured by access-controlled doors and monitored by a staff member at the reception desk. From the reception, both employees and visitors can use the lift or stairs to reach the office spaces. Once through the reception, signage is implemented to guide visitors to the fourth floor, which serves as the arrival area for visitors of Amex GBT.



Access Key;

- Peter Street Entrance at Ground Floor to Third floor - Blue Arrows
- Arrival Lift access - RED Arrow

4.2 Fire Exit Routes

The existing fire strategy for the building denotes there are two main exits, the front entrance through reception see the red arrow and to the rear, through a secondary staircase with ends onto Bootle Street see the blue arrow;



For additional information on the existing strategies, please refer to the landlord's fire strategy for the building.

5.0 Building Services

5.1 Waste Management

Waste management for the office spaces has been accounted for in the current layouts provided by the landlord as part of the shell and core works/planning application. Bins will be emptied by the building operator and will be taken for collection via the rear lift and via the Bootle Street entrance, with main collection to be arranged by the operator.

Please refer to the approved waste management pro forma for further details.

5.2 Mechanical & Electrical Services

The proposed layout aims to cause minimal changes to the existing services layout. Partition setting out has been informed by the existing services and structural beam layout into consideration.

Risers have been provided as part of the existing shell unit inherited from the landlord which was upgraded as part of their recent works.

In terms of the roof plant, we have assessed the location of the plant and considered the visual impact. We have positioned the new equipment to ensure that any visual impact has been minimised, please see the roof proposed drawings.

6.0 Summary

In conclusion, the location and current use of the building and site have been summarised and proposed plans have been introduced. The scheme seeks to ensure the continued use of the building and provide a new home for Amex Global Business Travel. This will be achieved alongside the ability to reinvigorate original features of the building within the third-floor office suite.

Please see Appendix for proposed layout

Appendix A - Proposed Third Floor Layout

