



12 November 2025

Heritage Statement – 4th Floor, Ship Canal House, King Street, Manchester M2 4WU.

Introduction

This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Heritage Architecture Ltd on behalf of Savills Building & Project Consultancy to accompany the Listed Building Consent application for the proposed internal scheme of works to the fourth floor of the Grade II listed Ship Canal House, King Street, Manchester (List Entry Number: 1219203) (**Figure 1**).

Ship Canal House is a large commercial building situated on King Street, in Manchester City Centre. It is bounded to the north by King Street, to the east by Brown Street, and to the south by Chancery Lane. To the west, Ship Canal House abuts the corner building at 84 and 86 King Street, and 27 and 29 Pall Mall, a former banking office building now in commercial use.

Ship Canal House comprises three adjacent buildings: Ship Canal House; Lombard Chambers; and Atlas Chambers. All three elements are statutorily designated as Grade II. Lombard Chambers was listed on 3 October 1974; Ship Canal House on 9 March 1982; and Atlas Chambers on 6 June 1994. All three list descriptions are included at **Appendix 1 of this report**.

The Site is also located within the Upper King Street Conservation Area, which was designated on 4 November 1970 (**Figure 2**). It will be evident the focus of the proposals is on the internal spaces of the building only, and thus will not result in any material impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Subsequently, the Proposed Development is also not considered to affect the settings of any nearby heritage assets.

The purpose of the following Heritage Statement is, therefore, to assess the potential impacts of the Proposed Development on the significance of the Grade II listed buildings, and to discuss the acceptability of the proposals in accordance with statutory legislation, planning policy, and guidance.

The proposed works to the fourth floor include the internal reconfiguration of the office floorspace, and the refurbishment of the WCs and lift lobby area. This Heritage Statement should be read alongside the supporting information and detailed drawings prepared by Bluesky Design.



Figure 1 – Principal elevation of Ship Canal House (centre) and Atlas Chambers (left) fronting King Street. Source: Site Visit, October 2025.



Figure 2 - The adjoining buildings comprising the entire Site area is shaded green on the map. The three-listed buildings are numbered as:

1. Ship Canal House
2. Atlas Chambers
3. Lombard Chambers

The extent of the Upper King Street Conservation Area boundary is shaded red, and listed buildings are outlined in blue. Source: Map adapted from Upper King Street Conservation Area Map - Manchester City Council website.

Legislation, Planning Policy, and Guidance

Key considerations are the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (“the 1990 Act”); National Planning Policy Framework 2025 (NPPF); Manchester Core Strategy (2012); Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester (1995); and Places for Everyone (PfE) (2024).

With regards to the 1990 Act, **Section 66** is relevant to the current scheme as it requires the Local Planning Authority to “*have special regard to the desirability of preserving [a listed building] or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses*” when considering whether to grant planning permission and/or listed building consent.

The provisions of the NPPF constitute the Government’s policy of what sustainable development means in practice. Of particular relevance is **Paragraph 207 (NPPF 2025)**, which states that “*in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting.*”

Paragraphs 212-218 of the NPPF should be read together. In **Paragraph 212**, the NPPF stresses that “*great weight*” should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets in the planning balance, defining that the “*more important the asset, the greater the weight should be.*”

Paragraph 213 determines that “*any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.*”

Paragraph 214 establishes that “*where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm.*”

Paragraph 215 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.*”

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. With regard to local planning policy, the Manchester Core Strategy (CS), Saved Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and the Places for Everyone (PfE) contain the following policies that relate to the proposals for the Site:

CS

- Policy CC9 (Design and Heritage) states that development in Manchester City Centre should preserve or enhance the heritage assets that have been identified, including listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled ancient monuments. The policy also establishes that new development must support the range of uses the Council

expects in the City Centre and contribute to a coherent and integrated physical environment.

- Policy EN3 (Heritage) states that throughout the City, MCC will encourage development that complements and takes advantage of the distinct historic and heritage features of its districts and neighbourhoods. New developments must be designed to support MCC in preserving or, where possible, enhancing the historic environment, the character, setting and accessibility of areas and buildings of acknowledged importance.

Saved UDP Policies

- Development Control Policies 18.1 and 19.1 are saved from the UDP and address conservation areas and listed buildings respectively. The policies stipulate that careful consideration is to be given to development proposals which affect the respective heritage assets, providing a series of provisions to consider such as relationships between new and old buildings, and promote their preservation and enhancement.

PfE

- **Places for Everyone (PfE)** is the long-term plan of nine Greater Manchester districts for jobs, new homes, and sustainable growth. The plan sets out a strategic policy framework for the nine boroughs and helps these areas to meet their local housing and employment needs by identifying land and infrastructure to support growth.
- Policy JP-P2 addresses 'Heritage,' and states that:
 - Particular consideration will be given to ensure that the significance of key elements of the historic environment which contribute to Greater Manchester's distinctive identity and sense of place are protected from harm. These include historic town centres, places of worship, historic Places for Everyone transport routes including the canal network, industrial buildings and structures including textile mills, farmsteads and other sites, buildings, and areas of identified archaeological, architectural, artistic, and historic value.
 - Development proposals affecting a designated heritage asset (or an archaeological site of national importance) and a conservation area should conserve those elements which contribute to its significance including those identified in any conservation area appraisal as making a positive contribution to the area. Harm to such elements will only be permitted where this is clearly justified and outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal.
 - Proposals should be informed, as necessary, by the findings and recommendations of the appropriate heritage assessment(s) in the development plan evidence base and/or any updated heritage assessment submitted as part of the planning application process.

This statement has also been informed by the Upper King Street Conservation Area Character Appraisal, which is available on the Manchester City Council Website.

In 2015 Historic England released three Good Practice Advice notes supporting the implementation of national policy and the related guidance in the PPG. The advice notes do not constitute a statement of Government policy itself, nor do they seek to prescribe a single methodology or particular data sources. Good Practice Advice Note 2 (Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment) and Good Practice Advice Note 3 (The Setting of Heritage Assets – as amended December 2017) were both utilised as part of this assessment in order to gain a full understanding of the relevant issues, alongside the NPPF and the PPG.

This Heritage Statement accords with the guidance set out in Historic England’s Advice Note 12: *Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets* (October 2019). The guidance calls for a staged approach, which provides relevant and *proportionate* information sufficient to inform decision-making by the Council.

Historical development of the Site and surrounding context

Prior to the mid-18th century, the Site and its immediate environs comprised open fields to the south of the medieval core of Manchester, which was historically centered around the Cathedral Church of St Mary (Manchester Cathedral). By the 18th century, the settlement had begun to develop into a town, with planned streets and buildings of commerce. King Street was named in 1735 in support of the exiled Stuart King and was developed as a prestigious residential area.

Throughout the mid-to-late 19th century and into the early-20th century, residential buildings in the area were steadily demolished to make space for the prestigious office buildings of various banks and insurance companies. In 1845 the Bank of England opened a branch at No. 82 King Street soon to be followed by other large, grand buildings along the street and up to Spring Gardens and Fountain Street; many of which form the immediate setting of the present-day Site.

Historic maps show that the Site has been fully developed since at least the 1780s, and, by 1849, was occupied by The Manchester & Salford Savings Bank; Messrs Cunliffe, Brook & Co. Bank; and the offices of The Manchester Fire Assurance Company (**Figure 3**).

Ship Canal House

Following the opening of the Manchester Ship Canal in 1894, the Manchester Ship Canal Company had established their headquarters at No.41 Spring Gardens in a building designed by Alfred Waterhouse. However, as the canal company continued to flourish, and perhaps further encouraged by the trading success of 1923 (the most successful up to that time), the decision was taken in 1924 to commission a new headquarters on King Street.

Ship Canal House was designed by Harry Smith Fairhurst, a prolific local architect, and was completed in 1927 by J Gerrard & Sons Ltd, a Swinton-based construction company (**Figure 4**). The building transformed the character of the area, being built in Portland Stone and of unrivalled scale. The Former Midland Bank was established just two years later (c.1929), built to the design of Sir Edwin Lutyens in 1929. Together, these early-20th century buildings signalled the success and progression of Manchester’s financial core.

The building has eleven storeys (including basement and three attic floors) constructed with a steel frame and reinforced concrete floors and is clad in Portland stone. Its neo-Classical frontage on to King Street is symmetrical (arranged in seven bays), with a two-storey colonnaded screen to fifth and sixth floors. The attic floors are set back from the frontage, as originally designed. At the time of its construction, its height of 140 feet was greatly in excess of the Manchester average, and Ship Canal House was considered to be the City's first skyscraper. As such, it was regarded as highly significant (**Figures 5 and 6**).

Original plans from 1924 indicate the open-plan floorplates were quite similar on levels one to eight, with some greater variation to the ninth floor, part of which was used as accommodation for the building caretaker, and so featured a living room and parlour, bedrooms, dining, and kitchen spaces (**Figure 7 and 8**). The ninth floor also contained WCs which were accessible via the principal stair and lift core. The basement was also unique to the other floors, with a board room proposed (although it is unknown whether this was ever fully realised), strong rooms and numerous WC units.

A planning application submitted in 1949 formed a link between Atlas Chambers and Lombard Chambers, which had been constructed in c.1868. An earlier application in 1926 altered the rear staircase and infilled the open courtyard between Lombard Chambers and Ship Canal, but it is not clear if these two buildings were linked at that time.

Ship Canal House remained the HQ of the Manchester Ship Canal Company until 1969, when the Port of Manchester, along with many others, was nationalised. Ship Canal House was subsequently sold.

Whilst the building retains its general external appearance, it is evident from historic photographs that the fenestration has been altered. As originally built, Ship Canal House had multi-paned timber sliding-sash windows 6-over-6 with margin panes. Atlas Chambers, however, had Crittall metal-framed windows with central pivot casements, though the margin panes of Ship Canal House were replicated. The original windows appear to have been retained up to the late 1960s. It is not clear at what point they were replaced, but a comprehensive programme appears to have unified the fenestration in both buildings. Replacement metal-framed windows of the same design have been installed in both Ship Canal House and Atlas Chambers. However, the subtle horizontal mid-pane has been lost.

A major extension was added in the late 20th century to the rear side of Ship Canal House which infilled part of the return of the rear wing (**Figure 13**). Internally, the building has also been considerably altered; however, the main staircase survives which helps to provide some legibility of the original plan form. The most notable change is the addition of a third lift together with reconfiguration of the lift positions.

An early consent, granted in 1983, allowed for the *"Refurbishment of existing offices including partial demolition, alteration and extension to form new offices with associated showrooms/ office equipment sales"* (Planning Refs: 019057 & 019081). This significant phase of redevelopment was carried out by the Guardian Royal Exchange Assurance and through the demolition of remaining

party walls, created an open floor plan between Atlas Chambers and Ship Canal House intended to host more flexible office spaces. The 1980s works also included mechanical and electrical installations, including new heating and ventilation.

In 2004, Listed Building Consent was granted for the installation of an air conditioning system on the fourth floor (ref. 071985/LO/2004/C1). In 2006, the whole building received consent for a full refurbishment (Planning ref. 079179/LO/C1), including alterations to ground floor reception and toilets, refurbishment of the historic third floor boardrooms, and refurbishment of office areas on all floors. Subsequent consents have been for individual floor / unit revised fit outs (**Figure 14**).

Atlas Chambers

The Atlas Assurance Company, originally the Manchester Fire Office, was formed in 1904 following a succession of insurance firms acquired through numerous mergers. The firm originally purchased a residence, formerly no. 33 King Street for use as its headquarters in 1824, with successive managers acquiring the upper floors as residence. By 1904 the firm had purchased the building in its entirety, and the adjoining building at no. 98. The success of the firm generated the required profits to construct a new purpose-built office building, and so the two properties at nos. 33 and 98 King Street were demolished to make way for the new building.

Two years after Ship Canal House was constructed, Atlas Chambers was completed to the east, built to the design of Michael Waterhouse, grandson of Alfred Waterhouse, with Harry S. Fairhurst as the 'superintending architect.' It too has a steel-frame clad in Portland stone and a neo-Classical style, but its double-height ornate entrance; a response to its corner plot; and pedimented three-bay attic somewhat unbalance the symmetrical design of Ship Canal House, and it is almost experienced as an extension, rather than an independent building (**Figure 9, 10**).

Historic Plans from 1927 reveal that Atlas Chambers was split over six floors, including a sub-basement, basement, mezzanine level above the ground floor, and mezzanine level between the third and fourth floors. It appears that at fourth, fifth, and sixth floor, Atlas Chambers was internally connected into Ship Canal House when built, with no steps shown on the historic plans indicating the floors joined directly into each other (**Figure 11**). The fourth-floor plan of Atlas Chambers was completely open, less one small bulkhead for lift gearing to the rear (**Figure 12**).

Much like Ship Canal House, Atlas Chambers experienced distinct phases of alteration in the 1980s and early 2000s, as well as the introduction of retail premises at ground floor level in 1997, and further alterations at 2nd and 3rd floor in 2010. The 1980s internal work appears to have removed the remaining internal walls between Atlas Chambers and Ship Canal House to enlarge the existing opening and create a completely open floor plan.

Table 1: Map progression and Historic Images



Figure 3 – Extract from Manchester and Salford Sheet 28, Surveyed 1849, Published 1851. This mid-19th century map shows the occupation of the Site by The Manchester & Salford Savings Bank; Messrs. Cunliffe, Brook & Co. Bank; and the offices of The Manchester Fire Assurance Company, before the Site was redeveloped into the present configuration. Source: National Library of Scotland Town Plans of England and Wales, 1840s – 1890s (<https://maps.nls.uk/>).



Figure 4 - Extract from Lancashire CIV.10, Revised 1932, Published 1934. The map notes 'Ship Canal House' in the centre of the Site area, with Atlas Chambers occupying the corner unit, and Lombard Chambers to the south along Chancery Lane. Source: National Library of Scotland OS 25-inch England and Wales, 1841-1952 (<https://maps.nls.uk/>).



Figure 5 - Early photograph of main elevation (Atlas Chambers not yet constructed but the former buildings in its place can be seen to be propped up in the leftmost corner of the image). Date c.1927. Source: Manchester City Archives.

SHIP CANAL'S NEW OFFICES.

A "House-Warming."

HOW MANCHESTER BENEFITS.

The Manchester Ship Canal Company yesterday entertained a large gathering of business men at the Midland Hotel to celebrate their entry into their new offices—Ship Canal House, Captain W. C. Bacon (chairman of the company) presided.

The Lord Mayor (Alderman J. H. Swales), who proposed the toast of "Ship Canal House," said the building was one of which the city could justifiably be proud, and it was a sign that the city was progressing. Another reason for satisfaction was that the building was designed by a Manchester architect. The Manchester Corporation had a very special interest in the progress of the Canal, for it had £6,740,286 invested in the company. In 1960 that investment would mean a clear income to the Corporation of £197,000 a year, while even to-day the dividends received were larger than the payments that had to be made in respect of interest and sinking fund, and resulted in relief to the rates equal to 3d. in the pound.

Figure 6 – Report of the opening of Ship Canal House. Source: Manchester Guardian, 8th November 1927, British Newspaper Archive.

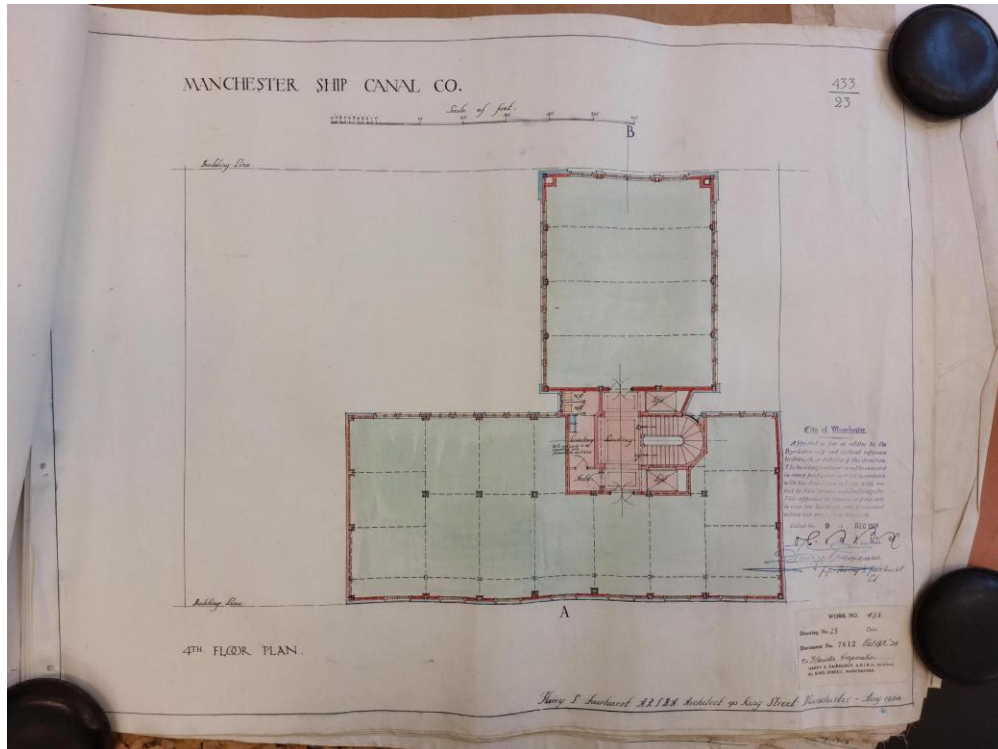


Figure 7 – Original Plan of the fourth floor to Ship Canal House by H. Fairhurst (1924). To the left of the central landing area were proposed to be the lavatories, and two lifts were positioned to either side of the central stair. Source: Manchester City Archives.

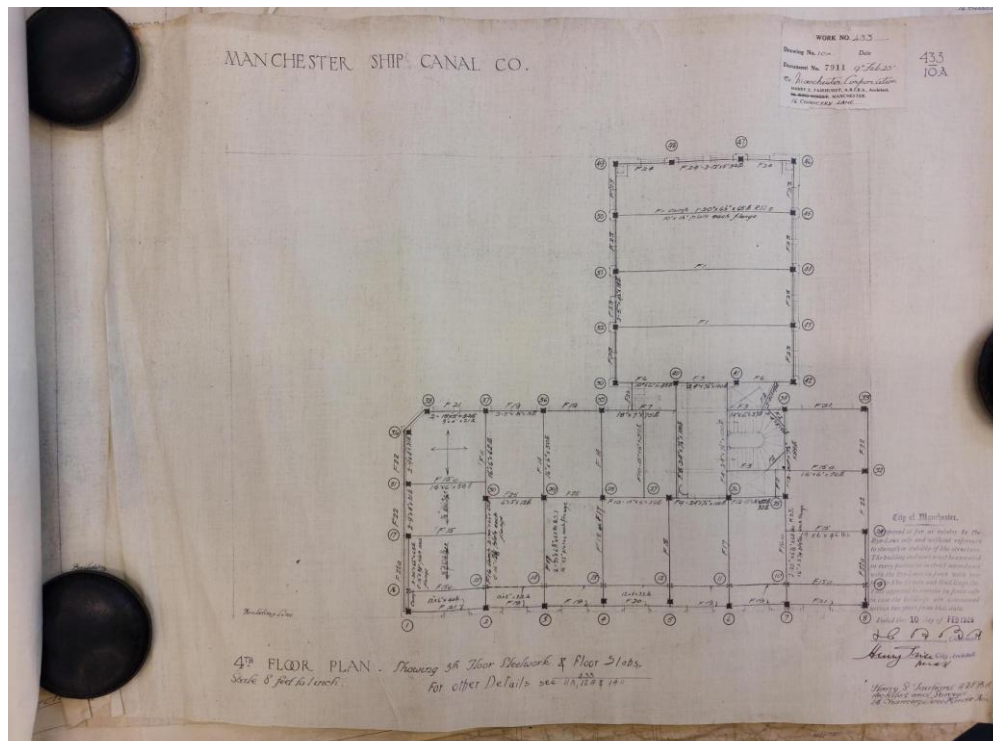


Figure 8 – Original Plan of the fourth floor showing the fifth-floor steelwork and the fourth-floor slabs by H. Fairhurst (1925). Source: Manchester City Archives.

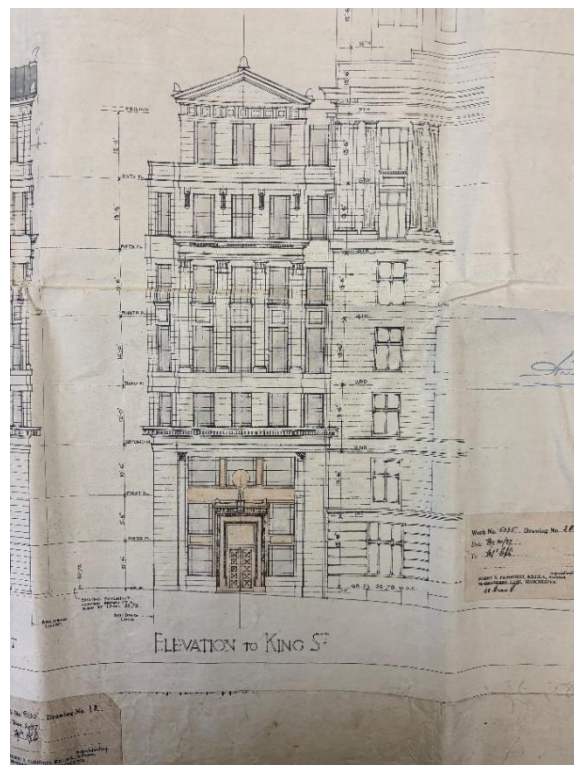


Figure 9 – Original Plan of the King Street elevation of Atlas Chambers by Michael Waterhouse, also showing the attached Ship Canal House (1927). Source: Manchester City Archives.



Figure 10 – Atlas Chambers and Ship Canal House drawing showing the King Street and Brown Street elevations, 1935. Source: Greater Manchester Lives, accessed October 22, 2025 [gmlives.org.uk/results.html?#imu\[r\]=ecatalogue.27436](https://gmlives.org.uk/results.html?#imu[r]=ecatalogue.27436).

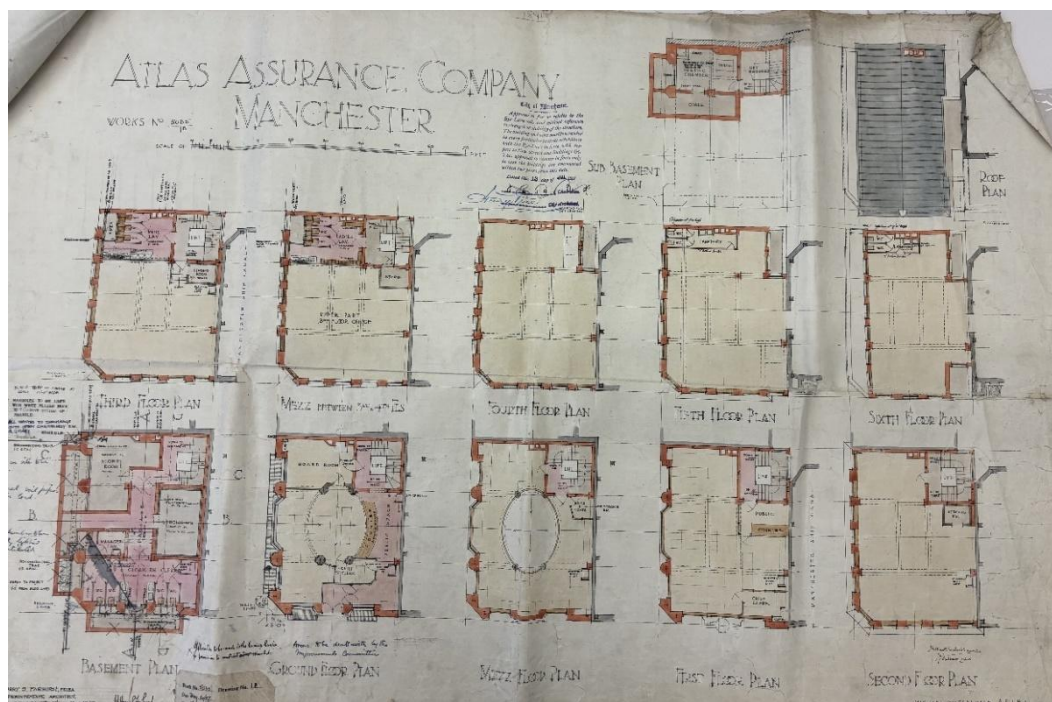


Figure 11 – Original floor plans for Atlas Chambers including details of all accommodations internally for staff. Source: Manchester City Archive.

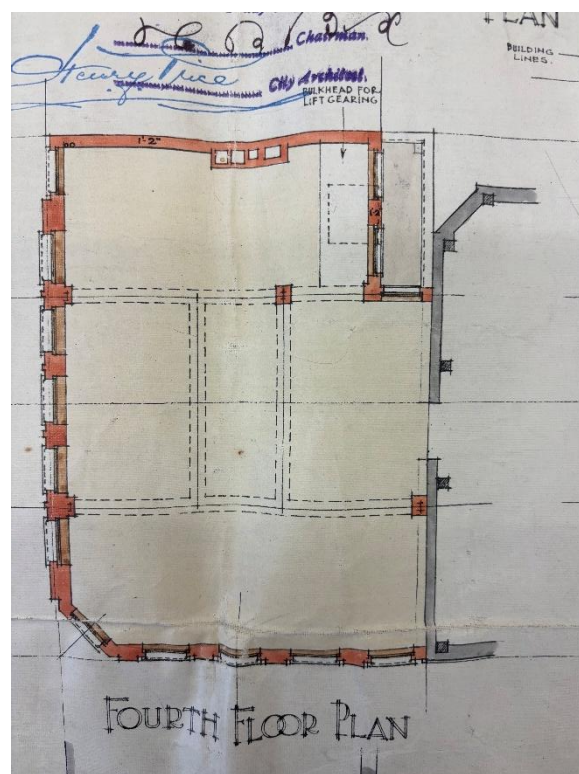


Figure 12 - Original plan of the fourth floor showing the internal connection between Atlas Chambers and Ship Canal House. The rear window does not appear on this plan, and so it is assumed this was added at a later date.

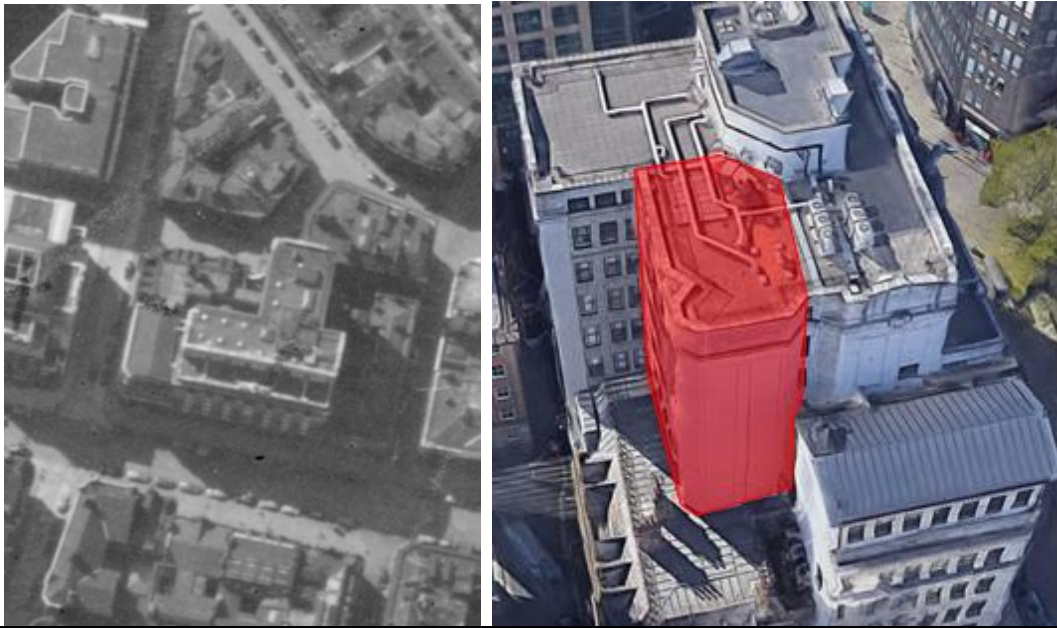


Figure 13 – (Left) Aerial image of Ship Canal House c. 1953 before the 20th century extension to the rear was added. **(Right)** Aerial image showing the rear wing of Ship Canal House reduced to three bays by the late-20th century extensions (coloured in red). Sources: Historic England Archive, ref. raf_58_1158_f21_0052, and Google Maps.

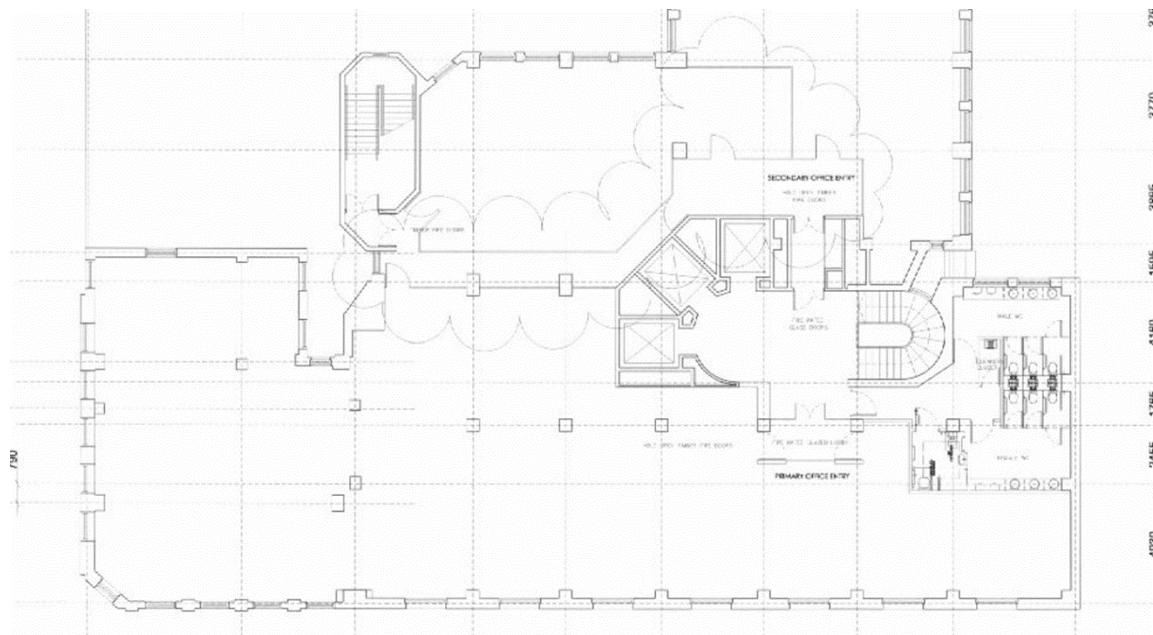


Figure 14 – Extract of the 2006 floor plan of the fourth floor showing the internal configuration of the lavatories, entrance space, connection into Atlas Chambers, and connection to the 20th century rear extension. In this plan, the internal walls between Ship Canal House and Atlas Chambers have been removed, and only the columns have been retained in-situ. Source: 079179/LO/2006/C1.

Site Description

The following section provides a brief photographic record and description of the relevant parts of the Site which have the potential to be affected by the proposals.

Table 2: Site description	
	
<p>Figure 15: Entrance doors to the fourth floor. Source: site visit, October 2025.</p>	<p>Figure 16: Gentlemen's lavatories with modern fit-out. Source: site visit, October 2025.</p>
	
<p>Figure 17: Ladies' lavatories with modern fit-out. Source: site visit, October 2025.</p>	<p>Figure 18: Existing accessible lavatory with modern fit-out. Source: site visit, October 2025.</p>



Figure 19: Corridor leading to lavatories. Source: site visit, October 2025.

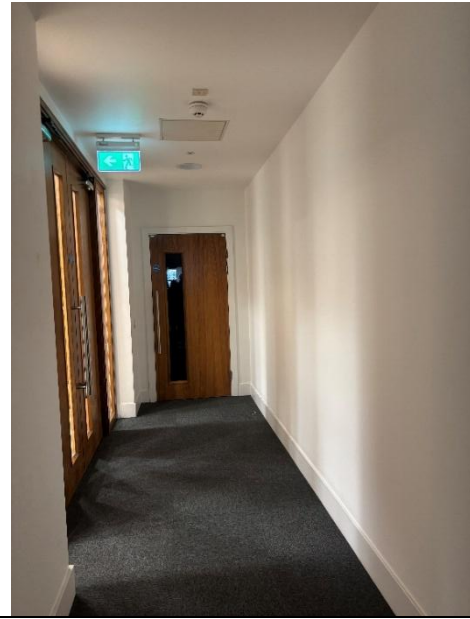


Figure 20: Existing entrance corridor with Figure 13 entrance doors to the left, and entrance to lavatory corridor to the centre. The Proposals will introduce a new set of double doors within the wall to the right. Source: site visit, October 2025.



Figure 21: View of the existing kitchen to the right of the floor plate. The existing double-dropped ceiling is shown in detail in this image. Source: site visit, October 2025.



Figure 22: View toward the existing kitchen area from the centre of the floor. New entrance doors will be installed between the columns of the wall on the right side of the photograph. Source: site visit, October 2025.



Figure 23: Existing M&E cupboard. Source: site visit, October 2025.



Figure 24: Existing tea-point adjacent to modern meeting rooms. Source: site visit, October 2025.



Figure 25: View from the left-most end of the floor looking into the interior. Modern meeting rooms have been installed to the left-hand side of the image, and the original columns have been boxed in. The dropped ceiling is most evident in this view. Source: site visit, October 2025.



Figure 26: View toward the Atlas Chambers external elevation showing the corner fenestration pattern. Source: site visit, October 2025.



Figure 27: One pane of secondary glazing has been installed along the Brown Street elevation of Atlas Chambers. Source: site visit, October 2025.



Figure 28: Existing non-original window detail. The fenestration detail is consistent across the floor. Source: site visit, October 2025.



Figure 29: View from the centre of the floor toward the Atlas Chambers building. Source: site visit, October 2025.



Figure 30: View of the rear of the floor facing toward the 20th century extension and Lombard Chambers. Source: site visit, October 2025.

Statement of Significance

The purpose of the significance assessment is to use recognised criteria to assess the heritage significance and interest of the Site itself, and of the settings of the identified heritage assets which could be affected by the Proposed Development.

The assessment of significance accords with the requirements of the NPPF and uses Historic England's methodology outlined in the 2019 document, "Statements of Heritage Significance." Historic England's "Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance," published in 2008, has also been acknowledged as part of the following assessment.

The special architectural and historic interest of Ship Canal House and Atlas Chambers is recognised by the respective Grade II listed designations; however, it is necessary to assess the building in order to determine the particular special interest which it yields in heritage terms.

High significance relates to those parts or elements of the Site deemed to be of particularly special interest. These components are *fundamental* to the understanding of the building and its architectural design concept and play a major role in reflecting its historic, artistic/architectural, or archaeological interest.

Medium heritage significance relates to those components of the Site deemed to be of some interest. They will make a modest contribution to the understanding of buildings design concept and play a minor role in reflecting their historic, artistic/architectural, or archaeological interest.

Low significance relates to those components of the Site deemed to be of more modest interest. They provide a relatively *minor contribution* to the understanding of the architectural design concept and a modest role in revealing its historic, artistic/architectural, or archaeological interest.

No significance/Detrimental features and elements that do not contain any special interest. These can *detract from the significance* of the building and maybe evidence of modern or ad-hoc refurbishments, or poor craftsmanship.

Significance of the fourth floor

The fourth-floor forms part of the original layout and construction of Ship Canal House and Atlas Chambers, and, based on plans from 1927, have been joined internally at fourth floor level since construction.

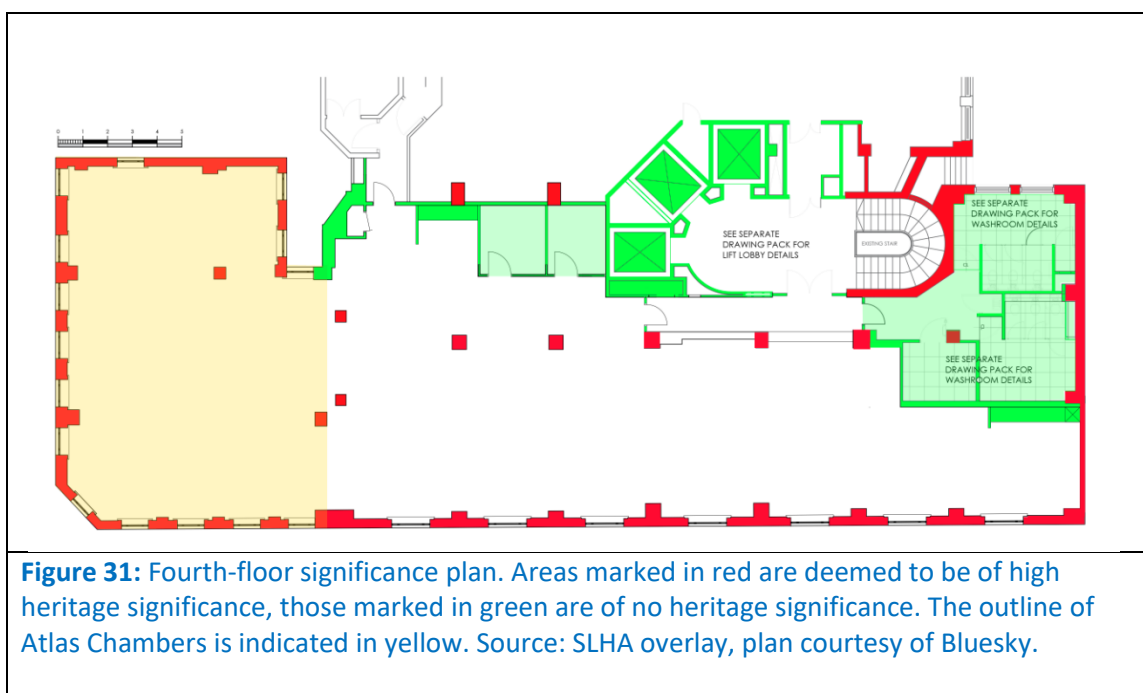
The floor generally consists of a ceiling of two levels of suspended plasterboard housing light and air extract fittings. The original ceiling level is largely concealed, however there is a recess around the outer edges where the window heads rise to the original level. The internal columns remain in-situ. The wall forming the corridor is assumed to be of concrete blockwork installed post-2006, as historic plans indicate there would have been a small lobby, followed by double-doors entering the office space in this area originally. The entire floor is raised, and all walls have simple modern skirtings. Two meeting rooms have been created incorporating glazed divisions and a metal frame. The windows

are modern interpretations of the original Atlas Chambers window design, and the fenestration pattern is consistent across both buildings. All doors are modern timber. The fourth-floor lavatories are a completely modern fit-out, with suspended ceilings, modern tiling, and modern cubicle partitions.

Elements of **no heritage significance** include the late 20th century rear extension; and all interventions completed as part of previously consented refurbishment works, including modern partitioned toilets suites; decorative schemes; modern flush doors; modern radiators; skirting trunking; all lighting and M&E.

Elements of **high heritage significance** include the original encased steel columns and structural ceiling beams and original stairwells, including balustrading and tiled dado (outside of this application).

Figure 31 and **Figure 32** below provides further detail on the significant component parts of the 4th floor.



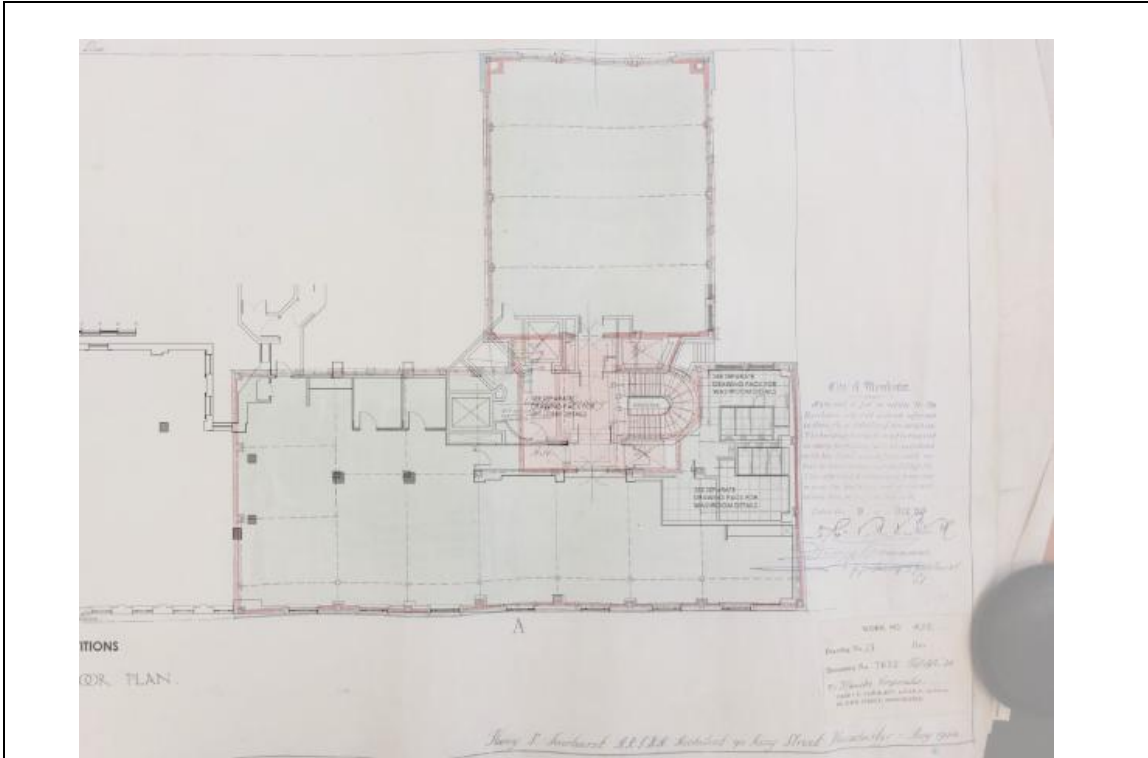


Figure 32: Floor plan overlay of the original plans from 1924 showing the lobby layout with the double doors between columns, and the existing lobby layout including the addition of the corridor wall leading into the fourth floor. The historic arrangement of double doors is proposed to be reinstated as part of this application.

The Site comprises two early 20th century purpose-built office buildings. Ship Canal House yields **medium/high historic interest** as a symbol of the importance and wealth of the Ship Canal Company, and in its purposeful placement within the commercial heart of the City Centre. In tandem, Atlas Chambers yields **medium historic interest** in its design for the Atlas Assurance Co. resembling that of Ship Canal House and emulates the commercial re-branding of King Street following the demolition of the remaining residential properties. The buildings also hold **high associative value** in the connections with both the Ship Canal Company and Atlas Assurance Co., and the buildings' architects, Harry Fairhurst, and Michael Waterhouse, whose work across Manchester is widely acclaimed.

Medium/high architectural and artistic interest is derived from Ship Canal House's construction as one of the first tall buildings in the city, which ultimately set a precedent for those to follow. The building is not overly ornate; however, the classical styling and overall scale communicate the importance of the original occupiers. The detailing is delicate, with each elevation articulated to achieve balanced proportions, and the rooftop sculpture of Neptune elevates the artistic significance of the principal frontage. Further to this, Atlas Chambers yields **medium architectural and artistic interest** through the retention of the original statue of Atlas over the entrance doors, and the bronze cartouche. The scale and design of Atlas Chambers positively turns the corner of Brown Street, and the complimentary design to Ship Canal House allows the two buildings to form a distinct, imposing group along King Street.

Archaeological interest is unknown at this time; however, there is no potential for the Proposed Development to disturb any archaeological features of interest.

Proposals

In brief, the Proposed Development of the fourth-floor includes:

- The removal of the previous tenant's modern fit-out including storage units, kitchenette, floor finishes, internal partitions and glazing, part raised floor, WCs, and the suspended ceiling and plasterboard margins.
- The removal of the internal modern dividing wall between the lobby area and demise to create a new entrance to the suite and reinstate the historic double door entrance.
- New finishes throughout including joinery specifications, ceiling finishes, floor finishes, and general cosmetic refurbishments.
- Refurbishment of the fourth-floor WCs including new ceiling finishes, painting, and tiling to the male, female, and accessible WCs.
- Cosmetic refurbishment of the lobby including new signage and repainting.
- New mechanical ventilation.

Please refer to the accompanying detailed drawings prepared by Bluesky for full details.

Heritage Impact Assessment

The assessment of the potential heritage impact principally concerns the impact upon the fabric and character of Ship Canal House and Atlas Chambers, the significance of which has been identified above in preparation for the following impact assessment.

The magnitude of impact is a product of the extent of change which is likely to result from the proposals. Where the proposed changes are considered to enhance the fabric, character or appreciation of a heritage asset, the impact on its significance will be deemed to be beneficial. Conversely, where the Proposed Development is considered to compromise or diminish its positive heritage values the impact on the significance will be deemed adverse. Where the proposals will result in no harm, nor benefit, the impact will be neutral.

Therefore, measuring the heritage impact of the Proposed Development is essentially an evaluation of change to the fabric, character, and appearance of the identified heritage asset, balanced against its relative significance. Please refer to **Table 4, Appendix II** for relative significance / impact values used in this Heritage Statement.

The proposed internal works to the fourth-floor level of the Grade II listed Ship Canal House and Grade II listed Atlas Chambers aim to refurbish and upgrade the accommodation to a style and quality appropriate to the building and its city centre location. Furthermore, the Proposed Development has ensured the scheme of works is appropriate within the building, while also providing suitable upgrades to the internal fit-out to facilitate the floor's continued sustainable use as an office space.

Fourth-floor office space

The removal of existing, glazed partitioning to the fourth-floor level is necessary in order to reconfigure the floor to predominantly open-plan office space in response to the current demands for office accommodation. The original walls will be 'made good' carefully where the existing partitions are removed, and this will not impact on the special quality or character of the space.

The general floor-wide removal of the previous tenant's modern fit-out is not considered to impact upon any features of historic interest and will incur a **neutral impact**. The areas of high heritage significance, such as the original columns and window surrounds / columns are to be suitably protected throughout the construction of the fit-out.

The removal of the modern suspended ceiling within the floor will incur some **minor beneficial impact** as it will open up views throughout the floorplate and expose more of the perimeter windows.

The expression of the original entrance layout with the proposed double doors will better reveal the historic structure, improving the legibility of the original structural regime and incurring some **minor beneficial impact**. The contractor has provided a Construction Method Statement for the removal of the area of walling, and all staff will be made aware of the heritage significance of the adjacent columns and ceiling beams prior to commencing work. If any items of heritage significance are revealed during the wall demolition, the contractor will make the Heritage Consultant aware.

The services are intended to be exposed and concealed within cable baskets, with acoustic rafts between the lighting. The proposed changes to the M&E installation will introduce some **negligible adverse impact** (both physical and visual) but are necessary to refurbish the fourth floor to accommodate contemporary standards.

Furthermore, the additional partitioning required to create the various meeting rooms and breakout areas will incur some **negligible adverse impact** as it will reduce the area of the floor which is realised as open-plan; however, this is considered necessary to meet the incoming tenant's requirements for quiet spaces, and staff kitchen areas. This impact is somewhat mitigated by the design of the partitions, which are detailed to reflect the mullion design of the original windows, and have a bronze powder coated finish intended to be sympathetic to the original scheme. The refurbishment and replacement of the existing kitchen fixtures and fittings will have no impact on the special character and appearance of the building.

The general redecoration of the fourth-floor with new joinery detailing; free-standing lockers, tables, and desks; improved reception features; and decorative feature walls is considered to have a **neutral impact** on the significance of the listed building. Fixings have been minimised where possible to ensure the integrity of the building fabric is preserved.

Overall, the proposed works will upgrade the floor to a standard found elsewhere within the building and will ensure its on-going attraction to potential tenants, securing the future viability and use of the building. All historic features and surfaces will be retained and enhanced.

Lift lobby / WC areas

The lift lobby areas have been heavily altered, with the original lifts by the stairwell having been removed in the c. late-20th century and three new lift cores being installed to the eastern aspect of the space. The proposals for the lobby areas seek to lightly refurbish the existing provision and enhance the visual appearance of the space. The WC areas are a modern addition. The proposals will remove all WC / sanitaryware and upgrade with new facilities. The WCs will be located in the same locations and so the degree of intervention to historic fabric will therefore be minimal, incurring a **neutral impact** overall.

The focus of the works to the lobby are very minimal, with the existing modern flooring and ceilings being retained and walnut lift reveals repainted in a charcoal grey colour to match the recent ninth-floor refurbishment. The areas of the space which are original and yield high heritage significance are limited to the decorative stairwell, which is to be retained and is unaffected as part of the proposals. Additionally, new signage is to be installed adjacent to the lift core and finished in brushed brass lettering to match the ninth-floor. The key changes derive from a new lighting scheme, which will seek to introduce a LED suspended track in an oval shape to reflect the layout of the lobby space. The new lighting is to be fixed into modern, suspended plaster ceilings, thus incurring no physical intervention to historic fabric, and an overall **neutral impact** on the lobby space.

The attention to finishings has been informed by an understanding of the buildings original character, with the use of brass detailing to new lighting and signage within the lobby, and the introduction of green tiling and brass fittings in the WCs, intended to reflect the existing original staircase.

Overall, the proposals to refurbish the lobby space are demonstrably well considered and appropriate for the principal space, thus incurring a **neutral impact**.

In sum, and in accounting for the widescale modern intervention previously introduced within all spaces of Ship Canal House and Atlas Chambers, it is considered that the current proposals will result in an **overall negligible beneficial impact** on the special interest of the identified listed buildings as a whole. As per the descriptions outlined within table 1, Appendix 2 a negligible beneficial impact would equate to: *“Development resulting in a negligible beneficial direct impact on a designated heritage asset which results in the removal of a minor non-original fabric component which detracts from the character and its special architectural or historic interest”*.

Conclusions

The proposals seek to lightly refurbish the fourth floor and upgrade the spaces to suit contemporary office uses. The proposals have been carefully considered with the focus of intervention centred around modern fabric only, replacing this with a more contemporary provision.

The Heritage Impact Assessment has demonstrated that the proposals will incur a **negligible beneficial impact** on the Grade II listed Ship Canal House, and the Grade II listed Atlas Chambers. The Proposed Development will be understood as a new and sensitive reuse of the fourth-floor and will not meaningfully detract from the ability to understand and appreciate the significance of the designated heritage assets to any appreciable degree. The significance and setting of the listed buildings are therefore preserved, as required by **Section 66** of the 1990 Act.

Furthermore, the Proposed Development is contained to internal alterations, and so the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, including the contribution of Ship Canal House and Atlas Chambers to its significance is preserved, as required by **Section 72** of the 1990 Act.

The proposals are thus considered to result in **‘no harm’** to the identified designated heritage assets as defined within the NPPF (2025) and comply with the relevant national and local planning policy.

Appendices

Appendix I: Listing Descriptions

1. SHIP CANAL HOUSE, 88-96, KING STREET

Heritage Category: Listed Building

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1219203

Date first listed: 09-Mar-1982

Statutory Address 1: SHIP CANAL HOUSE, 88-96, KING STREET

Details

MANCHESTER

SJ8398SE KING STREET 698-1/27/196 (South side) 09/03/82 Nos.88 TO 96 (Even) Ship Canal House

GV II

Office building. 1927, by Harry S. Fairhurst. Steel-framed structure with cladding of Portland stone (roof not visible). L-shaped plan (rectangular but for re-entrant round rear of 44-46 Brown Street). C20 classical style. Seven storeys with basement and attic, 7 bays, symmetrical; with channelled rustication to ground floor, unusual giant colonnaded screen to 5th and 6th floors consisting of paired fluted Tuscan columns in antis, plain frieze and prominent mutuled cornice, parapet surmounted by figure of Neptune flanked by Tritons, and set-back attic storey. The centre has a round-headed entrance arch breaking into the 1st floor, with rusticated voussoirs and triple keystone, and internal steps up to a recessed doorway; and above this a stone balcony and pedimented architrave the central 2nd floor window. Otherwise all the windows have plain surrounds and margin panes to centrally-hinged casement openings, those behind the colonnade being tiered; and the attic has lunettes. Right-hand side abutted by Nos 84-86 (q.v.), left side abutted by No.98 (q.v.). Interior not inspected

Listing NGR: SJ8396198244

2. ATLAS CHAMBERS

Heritage Category: Listed Building

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1197941

Date first listed: 06-June-1994

Statutory Address 1: ATLAS CHAMBERS, 98, KING STREET

SJ8398SE KING STREET 698-1/27/197 (South side) No.98 Atlas Chambers

GV II

Insurance company office, now banking hall and offices. 1929, by Michael Waterhouse (grandson of Alfred Waterhouse), for the Atlas Assurance Company. Steel-framed with cladding of Portland stone (roof not visible). Narrow rectangular plan on corner site, with chamfered corner. C20 classical style. A 6-storey 4-window facade plus 3-window attic, consisting of a 2-storey banking hall with a cornice, then 3 regular storeys (the upper 2 with shallow giant pilasters) with another cornice, and the top floor and attic treated as a 2-storey 3-window pedimented penthouse with flanking 1-storey wings. The banking hall has a plate-glass screen with a 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, and its left return side (to Brown Street) has a similar plate-glass screen with fluted Doric columns distyle in antis. The upper floors have very regular fenestration (matching that of Ship Canal House to the right) consisting of tilting casement windows with margin panes and plain surrounds, the one-window corner and 6-window return side matching the front (but the attic storey set back at this side). Forms group with Ship Canal House (with which it is easily confused at first sight; q.v.).

Listing NGR: SJ8398798247

3. LOMBARD CHAMBERS

Heritage Category: Listed Building

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1208211

Date first listed: 03-Oct-1974

Statutory Address 1: LOMBARD CHAMBERS, BROWN STREET

Details:

MANCHESTER

SJ8398SE BROWN STREET 698-1/27/31 (West side) 03/10/74 Nos.46 AND 48 Lombard Chambers

GV II

Bank, now offices. Dated 1868 over doorway, by George Truefitt. Sandstone ashlar, slate roof. Rectangular plan on corner site. Eclectic style, with Gothic details. Three storeys, with a 4-window facade to Brown Street and 4:3-window facade to Chancery Lane, hinged on a 3-window semi-cylindrical oriel above ground floor; with channelled rustication at ground floor, enriched frieze and cornice above 2nd floor, and steeply-pitched roof with gabled dormers. The principal feature of both facades is the corner, which has a round-headed doorway in each side with incised decoration to the heads and enriched linked imposts, the doorways protected by a very prominent underhang to the oriel balcony, which has arch-vaults over the doorways and concave pendentives all richly carved, including a shield and the date 1868 in the centre; a wrought-iron balustrade to the balcony, tall curved French windows at 1st floor with pilaster strips and elaborate consoles to an enriched cornice, curved casements at 2nd floor with enriched surrounds, and an attic turret with gables over windows which have foliated colonnettes and carved tympana, the whole finished with a wrought-iron corona. Otherwise, each facade has a 3-bay arcade of windows in style matching the doorways, plus a doorway to the right of that to Brown Street; tall casements at 1st floor with cornices on consoles and linked pseudo-balconies on brackets, a semi-circular balcony to the window over the right-hand doorway, and windows at 2nd floor and attic level like those of the oriel; and the further end of the Chancery Lane facade has a wide round-headed archway at ground floor, and windows like the others but without the balcony at 1st floor. Interior not inspected.

Listing NGR: SJ8398698224

Appendix II: Assessing the Magnitude of Change or Impact

The magnitude of change or impact is assessed based upon a detailed understanding of how and to what extent the proposed development might impact the heritage asset.

The contribution of the setting to the value of the heritage asset is an integral component which also contributes to the overall value or significance of the asset. Which in turn, allows for the magnitude of direct and / or indirect heritage impact to be determined.

Table 3: Criteria for defining the effect and degree of direct and indirect heritage impact

Definition of magnitude and nature of heritage impact.	Direct heritage impacts	Indirect heritage impact
Major adverse Impact. <i>Substantial harm of this nature, which results in total loss of significance or fundamentally affects the significance of defined heritage assets, should normally be avoided.</i>	Development resulting in demolition of a significant historic fabric component which results in total loss of significance, or fundamental compromises the setting of a designated heritage asset.	Substantially harmful change to the fabric and character of a designated heritage asset, or the setting of the identified designated heritage assets. Where the development severely erodes the heritage interest of the identified heritage assets in the view, or the ability to understand and appreciate its architectural and historic interest and thus results in total loss of significance.
Moderate Adverse Impact. <i>Less-than-substantial harm will need to be demonstrably mitigated and justified by clear public benefits.</i>	Development resulting in extensive harmful alterations (but not total demolition) of a designated heritage asset or its setting.	Less than substantial harm to the fabric and character of a heritage asset, or the setting of the identified designated heritage assets. Where the development erodes to a clearly discernible extent the heritage interest of the heritage assets in the view, or the ability to appreciate its heritage interest.
Minor Adverse Impact. <i>The negative impact on the setting or overall character will need to be clearly balanced by appropriate mitigation.</i>	Development resulting in alterations to a designated heritage asset which result in minor compromise of its fabric or erosion of its character.	Minor compromise to the fabric and character of an identified heritage asset, or the setting of the heritage assets. Where the development erodes to a minor extent the heritage interest of the heritage asset and its setting, such that it is noticeably changed.
Negligible adverse impact. <i>This does not mean that there will be no physical or visual change, rather that the resultant difference would not diminish the value of the heritage assets' significant physical fabric, their settings or significance to any appreciable degree.</i>	Development resulting in negligible direct impact on a designated heritage asset which results in the removal of a minor, original fabric component, but avoids diminishing its character and its special architectural or historic interest.	Negligible perceptible change to the character of an identified heritage asset, or the experience and understanding of its special interest. The degree of change would alter, but not diminish, the intrinsic heritage interest of the identified heritage assets, or the experience and appreciation of the buildings or the designated area to any appreciable degree.
Neutral Impact. <i>This does not necessarily mean that there will be no physical or visual change, rather that the</i>	Development which comprises an imperceptible physical impact resulting in no apparent change or achieved by removing a	Imperceptible change to the fabric and character of a designated heritage asset, or the setting of the identified designated heritage assets.

<i>resultant difference will be imperceptible or appropriately balanced.</i>	component of no heritage value which detracts from the special interest of the building fabric.	A neutral impact occurs when the development does not affect the architectural, aesthetic, and historic interest of the heritage assets in the view, or the ability to appreciate its significance to any measurable degree.
Negligible beneficial impact. <i>The resultant difference will be imperceptible but have a positive impact on the understanding or appreciation of the heritage asset.</i>	Development resulting in a negligible beneficial direct impact on a designated heritage asset which results in the removal of a minor non-original fabric component which detracts from the character and its special architectural or historic interest.	Negligible perceptible change to the character of a heritage asset, or the experience and understanding of its special interest. The degree of change would imperceptibly enhance the intrinsic architectural and historic of the identified heritage assets, or the experience and appreciation of the buildings or the designated area.
Minor Beneficial Impact. <i>The proposed change would result in a demonstrable improvement to the overall character or setting of a heritage asset.</i>	Development resulting in alterations to a built heritage asset which deliver a minor beneficial physical impact or enhancement of the site's special interest.	Minor enhancement to the fabric and character of a heritage asset, or the setting of the identified designated heritage assets. Where the development enhances to a minor extent the architectural and historic interest of the heritage assets in the view, or the ability to appreciate its significance.
Moderate Beneficial Impact. <i>The proposed change would result in a considerable improvement to the overall character and appreciation of a heritage asset with clear beneficial enhancement of its heritage interest.</i>	Development resulting in alterations to a built heritage asset resulting in moderate beneficial physical impact, or an enhancement of the site's character.	Evident improvement of the fabric and character of a designated heritage asset (or the setting of the identified designated heritage assets) resulting in an enhancement of its cultural heritage interest. Moderate enhancement to the setting of the built heritage asset. Where the development will enhance to a clearly discernible extent the heritage interest of the heritage assets in the view, or the ability to appreciate its significance.
Major beneficial Impact. <i>The proposed change would result in substantial improvement to the overall character and appreciation of a heritage asset, revealing and/or enhancing important characteristics of its heritage interest.</i>	Development resulting in restoration or alterations to a designated heritage asset which comprises substantial restoration of its fabric and historic character and an enhancement of its cultural heritage interest.	Substantial improvement of the fabric and character of a designated heritage asset (or the setting of the identified designated heritage assets) resulting in a significant enhancement of its cultural heritage interest. Substantial restoration or enhancement of the setting of the built heritage asset where the development will enhance to a fundamental extent the heritage interest of the heritage assets in the view, or the ability to appreciate its significance.

Appendix III: Assessing the Significance of Impact

The table below, Assessing the Significance of Impact, uses a matrix to combine the value of the heritage assets with the magnitude of impact. As stated within Historic England's Guidance, this is a general guide and is not intended to be prescriptive.

Scale or severity of impacts or changes can be judged taking into account their direct and indirect effects and whether they are temporary or permanent, reversible, or irreversible. The cumulative effect of separate impacts should also be considered. **The scale or severity of impact can be ranked without regard to the value of the asset.** This significance of impact can be either adverse or beneficial.

Table 4: Assessing the Significance of Impact

Value of Heritage Asset	Scale & Severity of Change/Impact				
	No Change	Negligible change	Minor change	Moderate change	Major change
For WH Properties Very High – Attributes which Convey OUV	Significance of Effect or Overall Impact (Either Adverse or Beneficial)				
	Neutral	Slight	Moderate/ Large	Large/Very Large	Very Large
For Other Heritage Assets or Attributes	Significance of Impact (Either Adverse or Beneficial)				
Very High	Neutral	Slight	Slight/ Moderate	Large/very Large	Very Large
High	Neutral	Slight	Slight/ Moderate	Moderate/ Large	Large/Very Large
Medium	Neutral	Neutral/Slight	Slight	Moderate	Moderate/ Large
Low	Neutral	Neutral/Slight	Neutral/Slight	Slight	Slight/ Moderate
Negligible	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral/Slight	Neutral/Slight	Slight