HERITAGE STATEMENT
122 WATER STREET, MANCHESTER, M3 4JJ

April 2026

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This Heritage Statement has been prepared in support of an application for planning and listed building consent for the change of use and external alteration of 122 Water Street, Manchester M3 4JJ which is a Grade II listed heritage asset.

Consent is sought for the change of use from Class B8 to Class E(b)(iii). The site will be a bakery selling baked goods, coffee and sandwiches primarily for takeaway with some limited on-site consumption.

1.2 LOCATION AND BUILDING DESCRIPTION

The application relates to Arch no 122 of the Manchester South Junction & Altrincham Railway Viaduct (NHLE: 1200837), referred to as the 'site'. Constructed in the 1830s, the viaduct links to the Liverpool and Manchester Railway Line over the arches at Water St.

The site is located in the Castlefield Conservation Area, whose buildings and viaducts were the first of their type and are therefore considered important artefacts in the history of Manchester and the railways. Recent revival of interest in Castlefield is having an impact on the refurbishment of buildings. Warehouses have been converted into flats, offices, galleries and studios.

1.3 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

The proposal is two-fold:

i. Change of use from it's current status as a warehouse, storage and light industrial unit to a bakery with on-site production.

ii. The installation of an extraction system to provide sufficient internal ventilation of the unit and to extract heat, vapour and odours resulting from the baking process. This will involve the fitting of a louvre in the rear brick infill of the arch.

The extract proposal is for a 3.3m oven canopy to be housed on the rear internal infill wall above the ovens with a short flue and motor above. A vent mounted internally against the infill at the southwest facing wall will remove the cooled air from the premises. Externally a 1m x 1m louvre will be inset in the arch brick infill and covered by a decorative metal screen whose design and powder coating colour have been discussed with Manchester City Council's planning authority.

This brick wall infill was installed in the last decade as part of the refurbishment of the arches on Water Street carried out by The Arch Co in preparation for their use as business premises and is a mixture of breeze block and brick.

The proposal will involve a minor alteration to the appearance of the rear wall and therefore consent is sought for this change.

1.4 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

This Heritage Statement has been prepared in the context of the national planning policy requirement for the impact of proposed works on the significance of heritage assets to be assessed. Specifically, Paragraph 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023 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. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposals on their significance.*'

1.5 REPORT STRUCTURE

The remainder of this Heritage Statement is structured as follows:

- Section 2 - the methodology used to prepare the Heritage Statement.
- Section 3 - statement of heritage significance.
- Section 4 - summary of relevant national and local planning policy.
- Section 5 - heritage impact assessment.
- Section 6 - conclusions

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The preparation of this document has been guided by the following documents:

- Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets, Historic England Advice Note 12 (Historic England, 2019).
- Planning Practice Guidance on Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment (DCLG, 2014).
- Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (Historic England, 2014).
- Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (Historic England, 2017).
- British Standard 7913: 2013: Guide to the conservation of historic buildings (BSI, 2013).

This report focuses on the built heritage assets above and adjacent to the application site (and their settings). It does not include an assessment of the archaeological

potential of the site. The assessment has been carried out in conjunction with policy, guidance and methodology.

2.2 SOURCES

This Heritage Statement takes into consideration the historical background of the site and the wider area. Sources consulted include:

- National Heritage List for England.
- Dixon, Frank (1994). The Manchester South Junction & Altrincham Railway. Oakwood Library of Railway History (2nd ed.).
- Manchester City Council (2026) Castlefield Conservation Area Prepared by Manchester City Council.
- Historical mapping from the National Library of Scotland.

Various site visits have been undertaken February – April 2026 to inspect the site and assess the heritage significance of 122 Water Street and its setting.

2.3 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Heritage values

The document *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment* (English Heritage, 2008) identifies four principal heritage values that should be considered when assessing significance. These are:

- *Evidential*: deriving from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past activity. Historical - deriving from the ways in which people, events and aspects of past life can be connected through a place to the present.

- *Historical:* how the building illustrates or is associated with past people, events or patterns of life.

- *Aesthetic*: deriving from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.

- *Communal*: deriving from the meaning of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience and memory.

Level of significance

There are four commonly accepted levels of significance, as well as a neutral and an intrusive grade. The following levels of significance are based on criteria from the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB 2 Volume 11, 2009) and from guidance provided by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS, 2011):

- Very High Level of Significance: World Heritage Sites (including nominated sites) and assets of acknowledged international importance.

- High Level of Significance: Scheduled Monuments (including proposed sites); Grade I and II* Listed Buildings; Grade I and II* Registered Parks & Gardens; non-designated heritage assets of schedulable or exceptional quality and importance; conservation areas containing very important buildings.

- Medium Level of Significance: Designated or non-designated assets that have exceptional qualities or contribute to regional research objectives; conservation areas; Grade II Listed Buildings; and Grade II Registered Parks & Gardens.

- Low Level of Significance: a non-designated asset important at a local level, including buildings which make a positive contribution to a conservation area. Some historic fabric but limited evidence and makes little contribution to significance. Buildings and parts of structures in this category should be retained where possible, although there is more scope for adaptation.

- No interest: the element is historically unimportant but does not have a negative visual impact on the surrounding buildings. May include insignificant late twentieth century interventions to listed buildings. The removal or adaptation of structures in this category is usually acceptable where the work will enhance a related heritage asset.

- Intrusive: the element is historically unimportant and has a negative visual impact on the surrounding buildings. Wherever practicable, removal of negative features should be considered, taking account of setting and opportunities for enhancement.

3. RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND PLANNING POLICY

3.1 THE PLANNING (LISTED BUILDING AND CONSERVATION AREAS) ACT 1990

The statutory test remains the starting point for consideration of proposals affecting heritage assets.

Section 66 (1) of the Act states that "*In considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority or the Secretary of State 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*."

Section 72 of the Act states that "*with respect to any buildings or other land in a Conservation Area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area*".

3.2 NATIONAL POLICY

The relevant policy is the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023)

Chapter 16 of the NPPF (2023) sets out a national planning policy on the historic environment.

Paragraph 189 states that heritage assets range from buildings of local historic value to those of international significance.

Paragraph 197 provides a framework for decision making on proposals that could have an impact on heritage assets stating that:

> *"In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:*
>
> *a) The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
>
> *b) The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
>
> *c) The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness."*

Paragraphs 199 to 202 set out how potential impacts should be considered in the determination of applications.

Paragraph 199 requires "*great weight to be given to the (heritage) asset's conservation*" with Paragraph 200 stating 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 201 sets out matters to be considered where proposed works would lead to substantial harm. Paragraph 202 states that where proposals would result in less than substantial harm, the harm "*should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use."*

3.3 LOCAL POLICY

Local planning policy sets out the criteria that will be used in the determination of planning applications and has been used to inform and guide the design and development of the proposals. The development plan for Manchester is laid out in Manchester City Council's Manchester Core Strategy 2012 to 2027.

Heritage policies are set out in both parts of the Core Strategy. The relevant policies are:

Policy EN 1 - City Centre Character Area

The City Centre contains a rich legacy which reflects its urban evolution to the present and includes listed buildings, conservation areas, archaeological remains and a historic street pattern. Its core area presents a particularly dense environment that accommodates a wide and closely integrated range of uses including commercial, civic and residential activities. Relative to the amount of development there is limited open space and this includes a range of civic and less formal green spaces and waterways.

Outside the core and associated with the Inner Relief Route, there are less active and densely developed areas with significant elements of cleared land.

The city centre is the focus of the city's transport routes. Developers will be expected to consider the city's heritage and respect the pattern of activity in the core area. While there will be opportunities to create landmark buildings, developments should also contribute positively to the experience of all at street level. Wherever possible, the opportunity should be realised to enhance existing spaces and provide new areas of meaningful open space. The maintenance and improvement of the city's permeability should be considered in all proposals.

Policy CC 9 - Design and Heritage

Design of new buildings will need to be of the highest standard in terms of appearance and function. The standards and guidance explained in other LDF policies should be the basis for the approach to design, with particular attention to be paid to the city centre context and character. 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.

Policy EN 3 – Heritage

Throughout the city, the council is to encourage development that complements and takes advantage of the distinct historic and heritage features of its districts and neighbourhoods, including the city centre. New developments are to be designed to support the preservation or, where possible, to enhance the historic environment, the character, setting and accessibility of areas and buildings of acknowledged importance. Proposals which enable the re-use of heritage assets will be encouraged where they are consistent with the significance of the asset.

Policy SP 1 - Spatial Principles

There are a number of regeneration areas across Manchester, including the City Centre. Development should have regard to the character, issues and strategy for each regeneration area

4. STATEMENT OF HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This section describes the significance and setting of 122 Water Street. It should be read in conjunction with the historical mapping and site photographs contained in Appendix B.

4.2 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

The Liverpool and Manchester Railway was opened in 1830 to link the factories of Manchester with the port of Liverpool. The railway also provided a passenger service and was the first public railway to rely exclusively on steam power. The bridge which carried the Liverpool and Manchester Railway over the River Irwell is now commonly referred to as Stephenson's Bridge, after the railway's chief engineer, and was connected to Liverpool Rd Station by the Approach Viaduct.

Liverpool Rd station was closed to passengers in 1844 when the new Victoria Station was opened but continued to function as a goods and livestock depot. It now forms part of the Museum of Science and Industry and is the oldest surviving passenger station in the world.

The Manchester South Junction and Altrincham Railway opened in 1849 to connect the terminal at London Road to the other railway lines serving Manchester and was Manchester's first suburban railway.

4.3 DESCRIPTION OF 122 WATER STREET

122 Water Street is a viaduct arch beneath the Manchester South Junction and Altrincham Railway measuring 152.22 m2. It's opening to the northeast was sealed in the early 21st century with a bare red brick infill containing a metal roller shutter and fire door and a large window consisting of semi-translucent plastic panels. Its south-westerly opening has been filled in with breeze block and bare engineering brick. The infill contains a fire exit door and a small vent.

A toilet and basin have been installed in the south corner of the arch and a storage cubicle in the east corner. The vent installed in the rear brick infill provides mechanical airflow and ventilation for the toilet. Small brick vents line both the rear and front infills.

The application for listed building consent relates to alterations to the modern brick infill at the rear of the site (south-westerly facing). External works are limited to the installation of a single 1m x 1m louvre inset concealed by a discreet decorative metal screen in a powder coat finish to match the colour of the modern brickwork. The louvre will be located high up the arch structure and concealed to a degree by the concrete overhang along the rim of the arch.

The area directly adjacent to the south-west infill is a currently unused stretch of land belonging to Network Rail. Behind this is a large building purposed for storage. The decorative screen will be barely visible from any road or public walkway and not in view of any residential building.

Exterior

The frontage of the site at street level dates from the 21st century. It is characterised by a modern brick façade with modern grey roller shutter, PVC panelled window and grey fire exit. Either side of the site and above it, the original redbrick of the viaduct, dating from the 19th century, is still visible.

Interior

The interior ceiling and walls to the East and West side are clad in White Bi-orientated Corrugated Greca Sheet. The north and south sides are breeze block infills. The floor is painted concrete. None of these elements constitute part of the historic viaduct structure.

Alteration to the interior is limited to cutting the brickwork to fit the extraction vent.

4.4 SETTING

The site is in the Castlefield Conservation Area (boundary shown below). Castlefield, Britain's first Urban Heritage Park, has historically been the site of industrial innovation, particularly in transport.

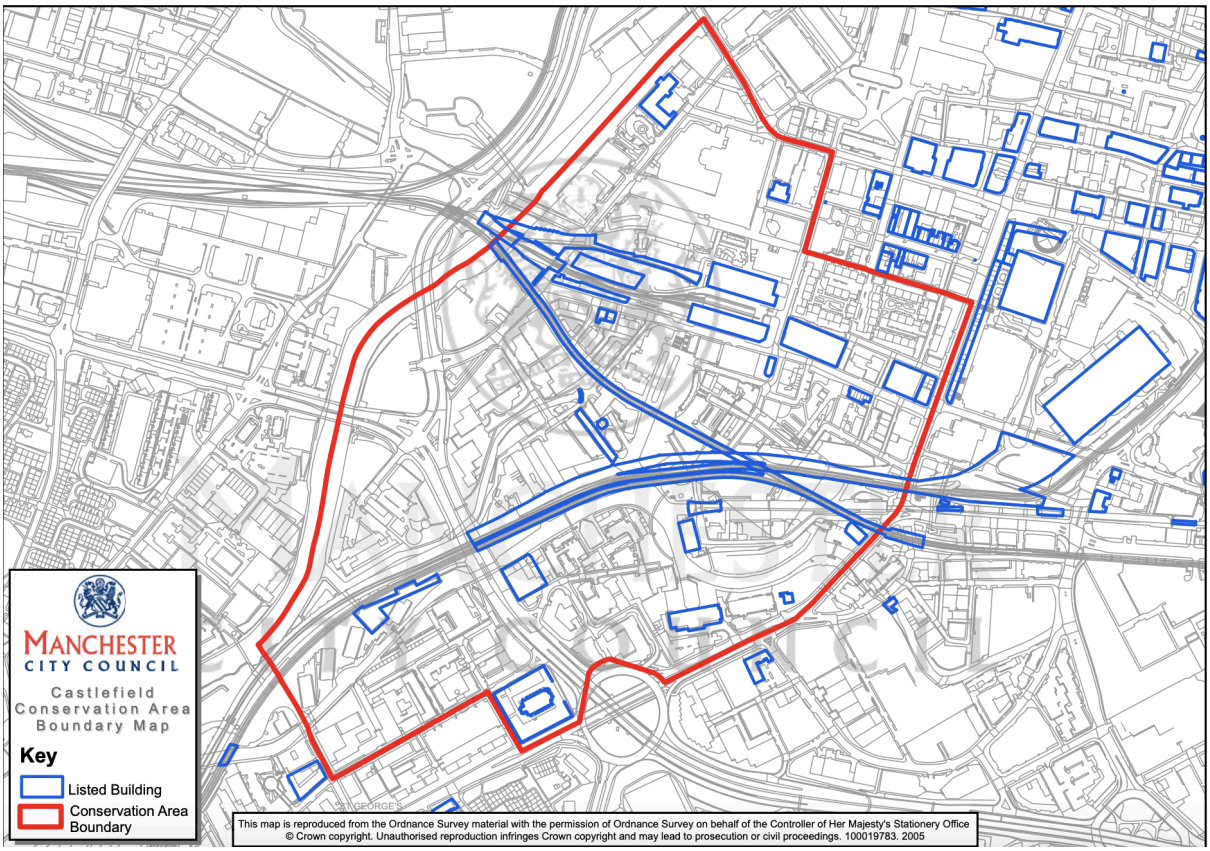


Figure 1: Castlefield Conservation Area Boundary Map (Source:https://www.manchester.gov.uk/__data/assets/file/0022/123286/castlefield_conservation_area_map.pdf)

The setting consists of four arches beneath the Manchester South Junction and Altrincham Railway, numbering 121, 122, 123 and 124 Water St. Access to this row of arches is gained from Liverpool Street via Woollam Place. Woolam Place is a closed road at the end bordering Water St. Water St is gated with no general access to the public.

At the turning of Liverpool Road are two grade II listed buildings: the Former Commercial Hotel (NHLE: 1219418) and 123 Liverpool Road (NHLE: 1200804). The site is close to a number of other listed heritage assets located around the Water Street junction, namely, the railway viaduct over the River Irwell leading to Lower Byrom Street warehouse (NHLE: 1254829); the railway bridge over the River Irwell to the former Liverpool Road station (NHLE: 1270603); the railway viaduct linking the bridge over the River Irwell to Liverpool Road station (NHLE: 1254726); the former Liverpool Road Railway Station Master's House (NHLE: 1291477) and the Power Hall of the Museum of Science and Industry (NHLE: 1291458).

4.5 DESIGNATION

37 Manchester South Junction and Altrincham Railway Viaduct is Grade II listed (NHLE: 1200837). The official list description states that this building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (amended) for its special

architectural or historic interest. It was first listed on the 6th of June 1994. As indicated, 122 Water Street is within this Castlefield Conservation Area.

4.6 HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The heritage significance of the listed structure derives from:

- Design interest: It is a 1.75 mile long urban viaduct incorporating a series of well-detailed bridges with decorative Gothic-style ironwork.

- Date: It is an example of an early railway viaduct dating from the second phase of railway development - the period 1841-50 - in which commercial speculation and competition for routes led to the rapid construction of lines and expansion of the railway network.

- Historic interest: The viaduct forms an important component of the Manchester South Junction & Altrincham Railway, one of the country's earliest suburban railways, and Manchester's first.

- Group value: The viaduct forms part of a larger group of neighbouring railway structures (both contemporary and later), including two other railway bridges crossing the River Irwell (the 1830 Grade I listed stone bridge and the 1869 Grade II listed girder bridge) and their associated viaducts, the Grade II listed Castlefield Viaduct (c1880), the Grade II listed stations of Manchester Oxford Road (1958-60) and Deansgate (1896), as well as the Grade II listed former goods offices (c1850-60) and train shed (c1881) at Manchester Piccadilly Station.

5. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

This section assesses the impact of the development proposal on the listed structure above 122 Water Street and the Castlefield Conservation Area.

5.1 General Approach

The change of use application is to allow a previously empty warehouse and storage unit to be used as a bakery production and retail space.

No changes are sought to be made to the original historic fabric of the structure. Features of significance remain in place and unaffected. The proposed use is in keeping with the character of the arches and local community

The proposal works with the existing layout and changes would be removable and reversible. In addition, the proposals would ensure that the site is well maintained and protected against degradation through use and maintenance.

Full details of the proposed scheme are provided on the drawings accompanying the planning and listed building application.

5.2 External change

The external proposal to the rear of the site (see photograph 2 in Appendix B) is of a limited nature:

- Reversible alteration to the brickwork of recent rear infill to make space for an inset louvre of 1m x 1m. The louvre will be located above and adjacent to the existing 150mm x 150mm louvre from the internal toilet.

- A decorative metal screen to be fitted to the recent brick infill to hide the louvre of a colour to match the existing external brickwork.

The proposed external change would have no detrimental impact on the condition and appearance of the listed structure and would have limited visibility from the road or public footpath and would not be visible from residential buildings nearby.

There would be no change to the parts of the listed structure dating from the 19th century.

5.3 Internal

The site is proposed to be used as a bakery and retail unit. The only internal change is for the removal of breeze blocks in order to house the louvre.

A small run of ductwork will be attached to the breeze block infill to connect the extraction canopy to the louvre (details submitted separately).

The proposal does not alter the overall layout of the site and would not result in the loss of any key features. The remainder of the premises will be populated with free-standing baking equipment and retail shelving.

The introduction of the new element (extraction system) is to make the unit viable for use as food production and retail space and of a reversible nature. No future use of the premises will be affected.

A mechanical ventilation system is required to ensure baking by-products (steam and heat) are removed from the unit in a safe and comfortable way for staff and members of the public without impacting local amenity. Noise and Odour Impact assessments are attached to the application.

The limited ductwork and motor are to be contained internally to avoid obtrusive impact on the building or area. The proposal will therefore result in no protrusion and nothing not in keeping with Manchester City Council's Control of Development guidelines for

Castlefield Conservation Area to “ensure that a vertical rhythm in the 'street wall' is maintained when viewed obliquely”.

5.4 CASTLEFIELD CONSERVATION AREA

The proposed external change would have no adverse impact on the appearance or amenity of the broader conservation area.

The proposal would help bring an active use to the unit and allow it to play a positive role in bringing life and footfall to Water Street. It is in keeping with the broader movement of historic buildings being repurposed for modern commercial use. The bakery would form a positive addition to the local area and bring real benefits to the community, including employment opportunities. The change of use will contribute to local character and economic vitality.

The proposed use is in line with Manchester City Council’s guidelines for the Conservation Area which state that new development in the area should make Castlefield “a generator of prosperity for the City. It is submitted that the proposed change of use for the premises will be consistent with this aim.

6. CONCLUSION

In accordance with Paragraph 194 of the NPPF (2023), this report has described the significance of the listed viaduct structure housing 122 Water Street and the Castlefield Conservation Area. It has also considered the impact of the development on the significance of these two designated heritage assets.

6.1 KEY FINDINGS

- The proposed change of use would ensure that an existing, vacant unit is brought back into use, contribute to the character and amenity of the area and local community. Members of the public will be able to view the viaduct from close proximity when visiting the premises.

- The alteration to the exterior of 122 Water Street is relatively minimal and limited to the installation of a discreet 1m x 1m louvre in the modern brick infill at the rear of the site. A decorative covering in keeping with the visual aesthetic of the structure is to be used

- The proposed external change would have no irreversible effect on the modern brick infill that attaches to the listed building above. Due to the size and nature of the alteration, it would not adversely affect the aesthetic of the building nor the perception of adjacent listed structures. The conservation area would

benefit from having a new, active, ground floor use and from the increase in footfall that this would generate.

- The limited proposal for the interior of 122 Water Street involves the conversion of the site into a bakery and retail site. Beyond the removal of breeze blocks to house the louvre and the affixing of the extraction system flue to the breeze block interior, no change is planned. This use allows the overall layout to be maintained and for key features of significance to be retained. The proposed change of use would result in enhancements to the Castlefield area, local community and the significance of the listed building would be preserved.

6.2 CONCLUSION

It is submitted that the proposed development is in accordance with guidance on conserving and enhancing the historic environment within the NPPF and the requirements set out at Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the Manchester Core Strategy 2012 to 2027. The proposals would sustain and enhance the significance of the listed building and its surroundings and ensure it has a new use consistent with its conservation.

APPENDIX A: LISTING DESCRIPTION

Manchester South Junction and Altrincham Railway Viaduct
List Entry Number: 1200837
Grade: II
Date first listed: 06-Jun-1994

Details

The viaduct is approximately 1 ¾ mile (2 ¾ km) long and consists of 224 brick arches with an average span and height of approximately 30ft and a width of 28ft. Many of the arches, particularly those near to Manchester Oxford Road Station and Deansgate Station, have been in-filled and converted into commercial premises. The tallest arches can be found in the section between Manchester Piccadilly and Oxford Road stations where the ground level is lower. A brick parapet has been altered and rebuilt in places and later repairs have been carried out to some of the arches.

The viaduct incorporates a series of predominantly arched, cast-iron bridges by Edward Taylor Bellhouse, William Baker and William Cubitt that cross various streets, the Rochdale Canal, and the Bridgewater Canal. The bridges have an average span of 70ft, although one of Baker's bridges, spanning the Rochdale Canal, has a span of 105ft.

Several of the bridges incorporate highly decorative Gothic-style ironwork and detailing and castellated towers (referencing the location of a Roman fort at Castlefield), whilst others, such as the bridge over Gloucester Street, are more classically detailed. A bridge over Egerton Street by William Baker was replaced in steel in 1976. Some of the viaduct's brick arches and bridges are skewed. The Irwell Bridge at the north-west end of the viaduct is of brick with two segmental arches, each of approximately 65ft span, with a central pier and cut-water. Rusticated stone voussoirs and pilaster strips exist to the central pier and abutments, and the parapet above the western arch incorporates cast-iron panelling.

Following electrification of the line in the 20th Century, the viaduct now incorporates a series of 20th Century gantries along its course. Along the course of the viaduct, several attached or abutting buildings, most of which are later in date and un-related to the viaduct's use, are found. All are excluded from the listing, which relates solely to the viaduct. Manchester Piccadilly Station, Deansgate Station and Manchester Oxford Road Station (the two latter stations being constructed on top of and to the side of the viaduct) are all separately listed at Grade II.

Listing NGR: SJ8382597704

APPENDIX B: HISTORICAL MAPPING AND SITE PHOTOGRAPHS

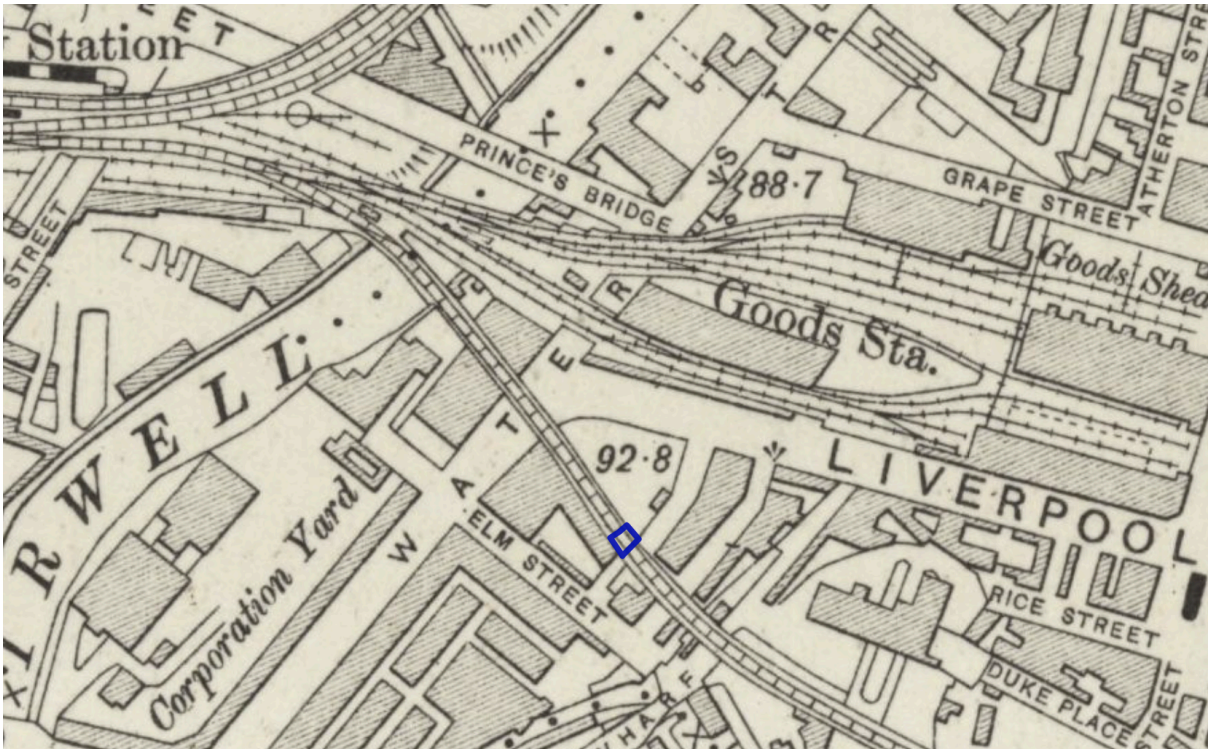
HISTORICAL MAPS



Historical Map, Ordnance Survey, Published in 1848 (Source: National Library of Scotland). Site boundary (approximate only) shown in square.



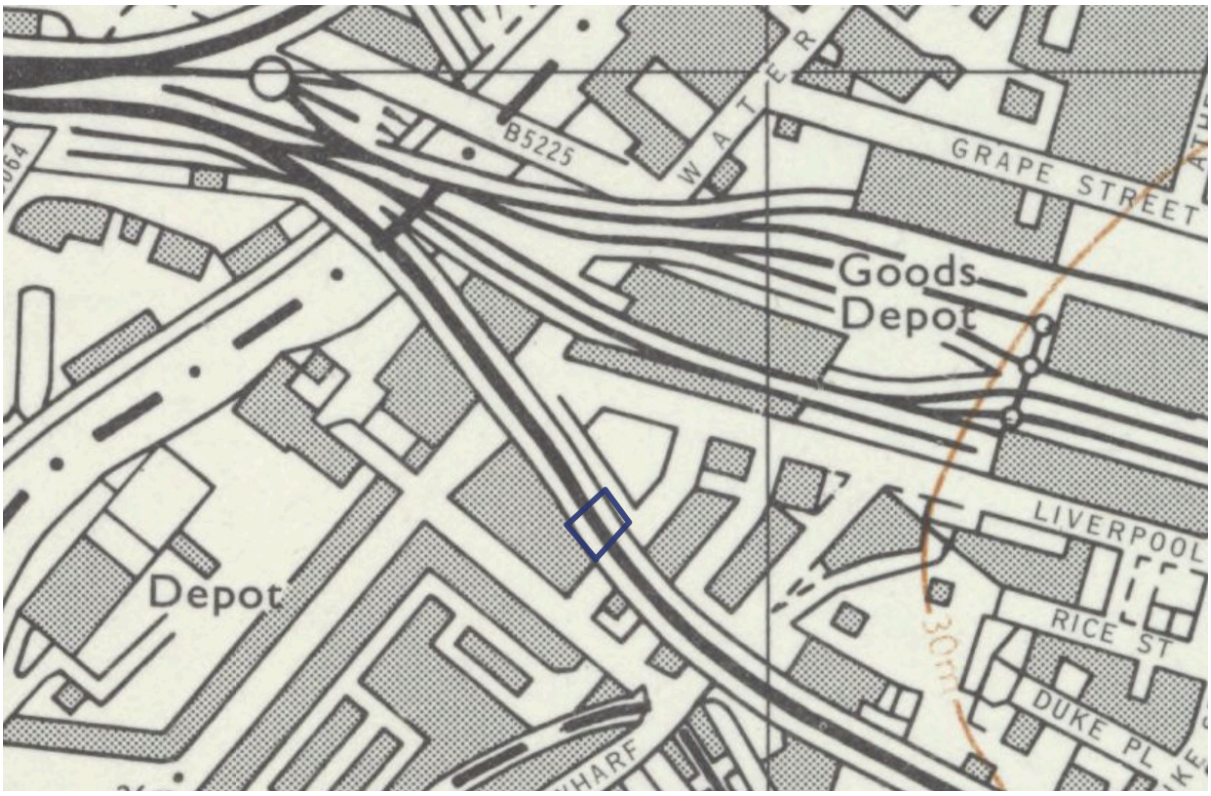
Historical Map, Ordnance Survey, Published in 1891 (Source: National Library of Scotland). Site boundary (approximate only) shown in square.



Historical Map, Ordnance Survey, Published in 1909 (Source: National Library of Scotland). Site boundary (approximate only) shown in BLUE. OS Six-inch England and Wales, 1842-1952



Historical Map, Ordnance Survey, Published in 1956 (Source: National Library of Scotland). Site boundary (approximate only) shown in BLUE.



Historical Map, Ordnance Survey, Published in 1972 (Source: National Library of Scotland). Site boundary (approximate only) shown in BLUE

SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



Railway Viaduct and entrance to Water St. via Woollam Place.



Front brick infill with roller shutter entrance



Rear infill of 122 Water Street.



Rear infill, concrete support and existing vent



Rear fire door and unused rear area



Site interior showing breeze block rear infill wall and toilet cubicle on left.



Site interior front showing fire door, roller shutter entrance and storage cubicle on right.

APPENDIX C: REFERENCES

British Standards Institute (BSI) (2013) Guide to the Conservation of Historic Buildings (BS 7913: 2013)

Core Strategy Development Plan Document (July 2012). Published by Manchester City Council;

Manchester City Council (2026) Castlefield Conservation Area Prepared by Manchester City Council;

English Heritage (2008) Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment

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