DESIGN, ACCESS AND HERITAGE STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF PROPOSED INSTALLATION OF PAINTED ARTWORK TO RAILWAY ARCHES NO. 59,60 &61 WHITWORTH STREET, MANCHESTER

April 2026



INTRODUCTION

This statement has been prepared in order to support a Listed Building Consent (LBC) application in relation to the proposed installation of painted artwork to the frontage of three arches (no's 59, 60 & 61) on Whitworth Street, Manchester.

The proposals section below explains the works in further detail, setting out the rationale and narrative for the artwork. The statement will include analysis of the proposals heritage implications to satisfy the National Planning Policy Framework and relevant Local Planning Policy.

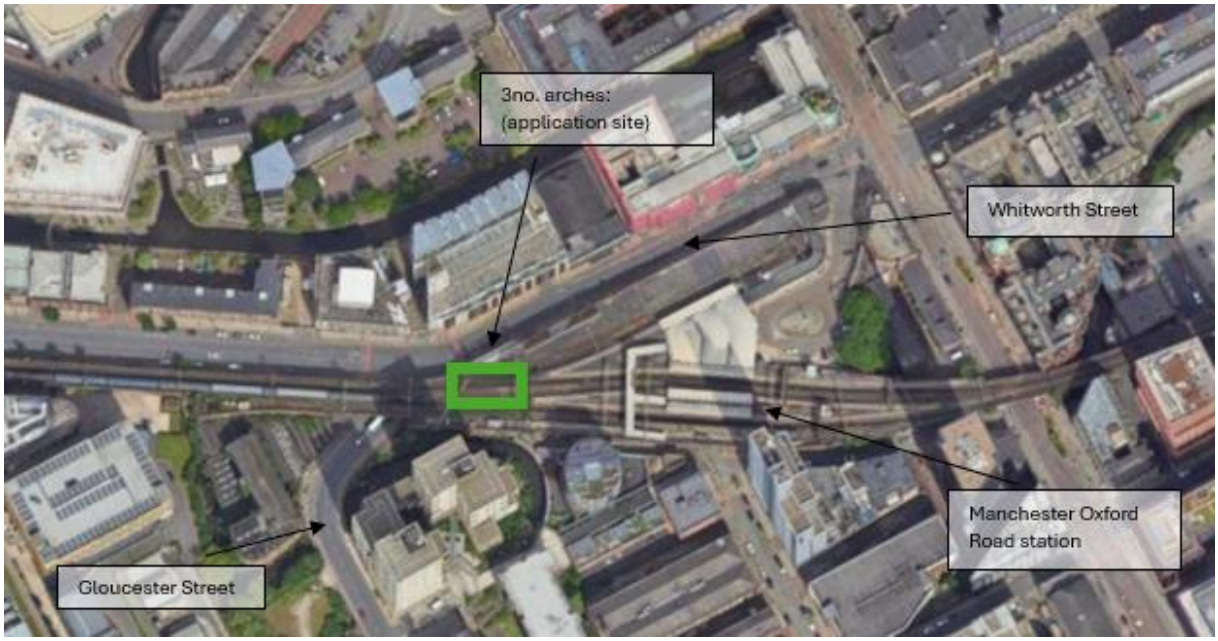
SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The site consists of three railway arches, which front onto Whitworth Street; the arches are adjacent to each other, within close proximity to the road junction between Whitworth Street and Gloucester Street.

Whitworth Street runs between London Road (A6) and Oxford Street (A34); largely parallel with the railway viaduct. It is lined with many large and historic buildings, including India House, Lancaster House and Refuge Assurance Building, fermenting its historic importance in the development of Manchester.

The arches form part of Manchester South Junction and Altrincham Railway viaduct, which carries the original Manchester South Junction and Altrincham Railway line (MSJ&AR); one of the country's earliest suburban railways and the first in Manchester.

The viaduct is Grade II listed; constructed by the MSJ&AR in 1846-49. This impressive structure comprises two hundred and twenty-four brick arches and a series of decorative Gothic-style ironwork bridges, which extends for one and three quarter miles from Manchester Piccadilly Station via Deansgate Station to Castlefield, where the viaduct bifurcates to provide both north-south and east-west trans-Pennine rail routes. A new stretch of line at Castlefield, the 'Ordsall Chord' introduced in 2017, provides a direct route through Manchester Oxford Road Station for trains to run from Manchester Piccadilly to Manchester Victoria.



The application site consists of 3 arches (59, 60 & 61 Whitworth Street); which lie towards to the end of a row of tenanted arches with a range of varying uses comprising retail, estate agents and restaurants. These three arches are currently vacant, but have previously been used for a taxi firm, metal fabricators and an interior design firm. Following the cease in trading of all 3 businesses the frontages have become tired and are falling into disrepair.



Existing street scene



Arch 59: Radio Cars



Arch 60: JE Gorden



Arch 61: Ferrious

The opposite side of Whitworth Street is flanked by taller, mature buildings with active ground-floor frontages and a range of office and residential accommodation above. The ground floor uses consist of a snooker hall, night club and professional services (A2).

HISTORIC CONTEXT

The Manchester South Junction & Altrincham Railway viaduct was constructed in 1846-9 by David Bellhouse Junior for the Manchester South Junction & Altrincham Railway (MSJ&AR) Company. The viaduct carried the MSJ&AR railway line through the city of Manchester.

The MSJ&AR line is one of the country's earliest suburban railways and was the first in Manchester. It was started as a joint venture between the Manchester & Birmingham Railway (later the London & North Western Railway, LNWR) and the Sheffield, Ashton-under-Lyne & Manchester Railway (later the Manchester, Sheffield & Lincolnshire Railway, MS&LR) which operated London Road Station (known as Manchester Piccadilly Station since 1960). The aim was to create an extension of their lines, known as the South Junction line, that would be carried along the southern boundary of the city centre on a viaduct and then join the Liverpool and Manchester Railway at Ordsall Lane in Salford, providing access to the lucrative port and city of Liverpool. A branch line, leaving the South Junction line at Castlefield, would also follow the Bridgewater Canal to Altrincham. The Manchester South Junction & Altrincham Railway Act received Royal Assent on 21 July 1845.

The viaduct is approximately 1 ¾ mile (2 ¾ km) long and incorporates 224 brick arches that average a 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 arches on Whitworth Street, created by the MSJ viaduct, have a rich history that dates back to the city's transport and architectural heritage. The railways and its viaducts have had a major part to play in shaping the changing form and character of Manchester city centre.

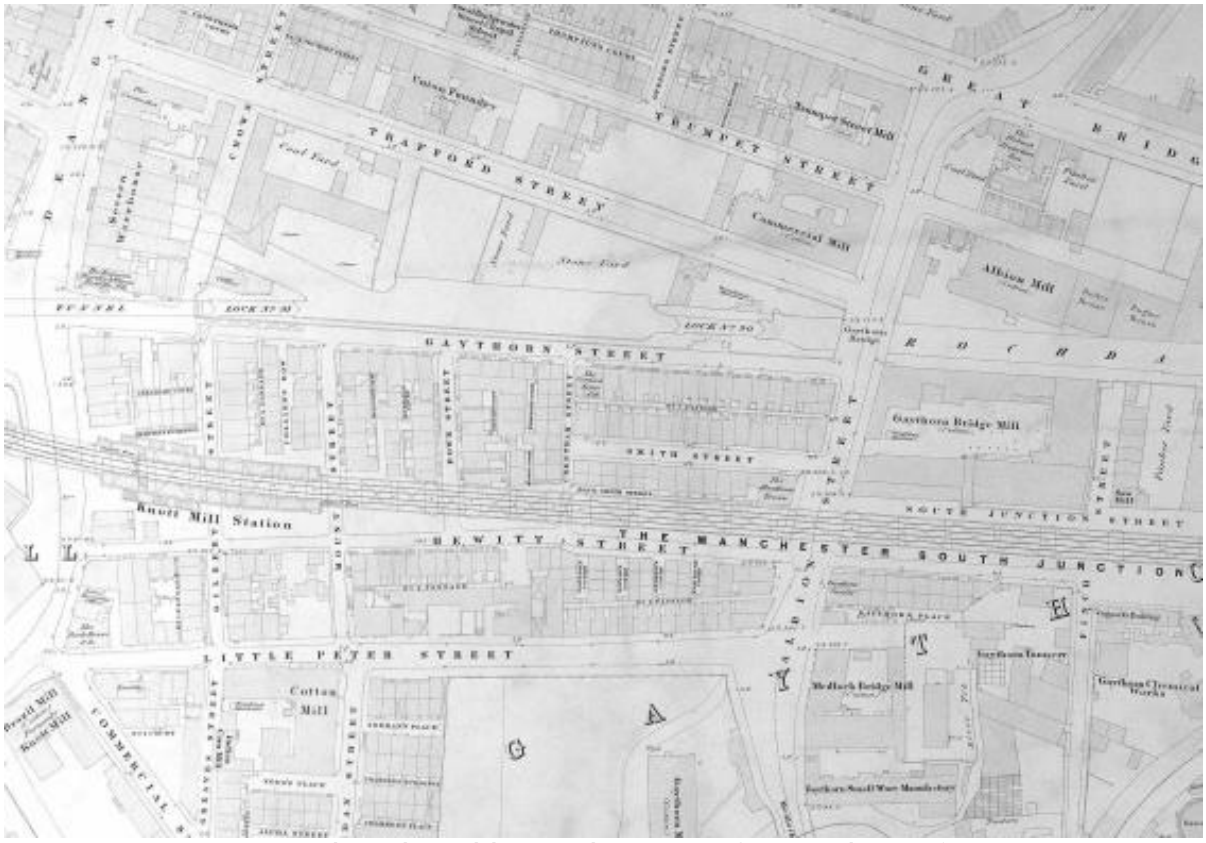
Many of the railways historically created unsanitary, squalled areas, becoming places for shelter for homeless people, or often referred to as being receptacles for 'thieves and vagabonds', which 'ought to be fenced off' Manchester Courier 1844).

Not all railway arches were left open, early railway arches, particularly those accessible to stations and with road frontages were leased out by the railway company. By 1848, arches along the MSJ viaduct were rented primarily for industrial uses; property registers from 1848 indicate a range of tenants including engineers, machinists, blacksmiths, marine stores dealer, an iron dealer and a window blind maker.

Attitudes of civic elites towards railway viaducts and their arches in Manchester, and particularly the MSJ, turned sour by the 1850s. The Manchester Corporation had an increasingly negative view of the effects that railway viaducts had on the city centre. It was apparent that, for one reason or another, viaducts seemed to produce dereliction by their very presence, and throughout Britain, the blighted environment.

In order to improve conditions within the city centre, the Manchester Corporation pushed for environment 'improvements', such as street widening, increased lighting, station renovation and continued demolition of 'twilight zones'. These zones were areas between two parts of an urban area left behind from another era, characteristically squeezed between established infrastructure like a railway viaduct and residential communities of the Victorian inner suburbs.

One approach to reducing the perceived detrimental effects of railway infrastructure on its surrounding environment was through visual screening. For Manchester, this was where the MSJ viaduct was blocked from view by the construction of some of the city's largest and most opulent Georgian buildings, e.g. Lancaster House (1905), India House (1912) and the Refuge Assurance (1891-95). Alternatively, the Corporation made 'improvements' by reconfiguring short, narrow roads to create wider open thoroughfares – namely Whitworth Street in 1898. Whitworth Street was a wide thoroughfare connecting Oxford Street to the west and Deansgate to the east, occupying a strip of land between the MSJ viaduct and the Rochdale canal. The area can be seen on the plan below, between Whitworth Street and Gaythorn Street.



Housing clustered around the MSJ viaduct two years after its completion, 1851.

By the turn of the twentieth century the arches on Whitworth Street contained a carriage builder, wine merchant, coal and timber merchants, joiners and builders. The predominate use of industrial activities of the MSJ arches continued until the 1930's, when there as a shift towards uses associated with the motor trade, manufacturers of tyres, motor lamps and seats, as well as garages.

Railway arches in the city have figured strongly in the cultural imagery of Manchester. The area pioneered a regeneration focused on the arts, nightlife, theatre and other forms of cultural activities.

The influence of the Hacienda, the Factory and other such venues reinvigorated the arts scene in a largely 'dead zone of Manchester, in which the railway arches played a central role.

Over the years both the railway and the arches have had turbulent history. More recently many have tried to regenerate such areas thorough large redevelopments and regeneration strategies, e.g. Castlefield. Network Rail also had an influential push in the regeneration of a number of railway arches across Manchester. More frequently developments within the city are incorporating arches within their development briefs, making them architectural features within the schemes. For example, the redevelopment of the Gaytorn site incorporated 5 out of the 6 arches which bordered the site. Artwork and sculptures were also incorporated to connect the site with its history.

More recently. developments like First Street and HOME have largely reinvigorated a revival in the activities along the Whitworth Street Arches. Network Rail have already transformed a number of

which along Whitworth Street into restaurants, bars social spaces e.g. bowling. And other creational activities.

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The requirement for applicants proposing to undertake works to heritage assets to describe the significance of the heritage asset affected is set out in the NPPF. Guidance to assist with assessing the asset's significance is provided in the Historic England document 'Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment'.

Paragraph 7 of this document states 'Being able to properly assess the nature, extent and importance of the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting early in the process is very important to an applicant in order to conceive of and design a successful development and to the local planning authority in order to make decisions in line with legal requirements and the objectives of the development plan and the policy requirements of the NPPF'. When evaluating the existing significance of an asset, the Guide recommends assessing the nature of significance, extent of fabric and level of importance. These are all considered below.

Following electrification of the line in the C20 the viaduct now incorporates a series of C20 and early-C21 gantries along its course. Also along the viaduct's course are a number of attached or abutting buildings, most of which are later in date and are un-related to the viaduct's use; 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.

Nature of Significance

The Historic England document 'Designation Listing Selection Guide: Transport Buildings' (2011) is of particular importance when assessing the historic value associated with railway infrastructure. This sets out four 'ages' of railway construction which, in descending importance, is as below:

- The pioneering first phase, 1825–41;
- The heroic age, 1841–50;
- The third phase 1850s–1870s, the consolidation of the network; and
- The fourth period, up to 1914, the completion of the network.

Given the original construction date of circa 1846-49, it is apparent that Manchester South Junction and Altrincham Railway viaduct stems from the heroic era of railway construction, often referred to as 'railway mania' - in which commercial speculation and competition for routes led to the rapid construction of lines and expansion of the railway network.

It is apparent that the viaduct possesses significance due to its architectural and historical value, and also as a consequence of its grouping with, and relationship with, other heritage assets in proximity to it.

The Manchester South Junction & Altrincham Railway viaduct was constructed in 1846-9 by David Bellhouse junior for the Manchester South Junction & Altrincham Railway (MSJ&AR) Company. The viaduct carried the MSJ&AR railway line through the city of Manchester to allow for greater connectivity beyond Manchester. The entire MSJ&AR line ran for 8 1/2 miles from London Road Station via Oxford Road and Deansgate Stations to Altrincham, with the viaduct forming a 1 ¾ mile (2 ¾ km) long stretch. The viaduct forms an important and integral component of the Manchester South Junction & Altrincham Railway, which was one of the country's earliest suburban railways, and Manchester's first; helping to bring this form of transport to the hinterlands

The viaduct is a feat of architectural engineering with an urban environment, it incorporates 224 brick arches that average a 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 viaduct has strong group value with 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), and the Grade II listed former goods offices (c1850-60) and train shed (c1881) at Manchester Piccadilly Station.

PROPOSAL

Network Rail propose to commission and install a mural which will be orientated across the facades of the three arches. The artwork will be applied to boarding which will be directly attached to the arch façade, and not the brick arch piers. There will be intermittent gaps to the artwork, due to the brick piers of the viaduct; otherwise the mural is designed as a solid piece of art presented in three adjacent arches.

The height will be consistent across all three arches and will not protrude into the ‘arched’ section of the façade.

Minimal repair/remedial works will be undertaken to the higher ‘arched’ section of the façade. Network Rail and the LPA have agreed that the remedial works require no additional consents. Arch 59 (Radio Cars) will include: the removal of all Club Radio Car signage, removal of unsafe external items and painting the window frame matt black.



Remedial works to Arch 60 (J. E. Gorden) will include: signage removal, replacement of broken glazing panels, timbers prepped and painted black, drain pipe painted black, access to doorway and roller shutter doors to be retained.



Remedial works to Arch 61 (Ferrious) will include: signage removal, installation of infills to make a flush surface, render painted black and door access maintained.



The proposed artwork is intended to operate like a visual journey which joyously celebrates children's visions of the future of transport.

The design is driven by concepts of energy, movement and imagination. A vibrant urban collage, it combines striking patterns and pulsating colours with surreal motifs depicting invented modes of transport.

A central facet of the mural is the thoughtful collaboration between the artists and the children participating in the Our City and Beyond project. Through a series of artist led sessions, the children engaged in imaginative explorations of the future of transport, with the key theme for the mural being movement and transformation. For many, navigating the city by train (sometimes for the very first time) became an experience of expanded perspective and newfound possibility.

Lead artist Venessa Scott used their responses as the foundation for the mural, weaving their concepts into her signature pattern- and colour-driven style.

As a co-created artwork, the mural continues to evolve. New images, drawings, words and emotional expressions are woven into its surface as additional creative sessions unfold, enriching its narrative and visual depth.

A luminous flying train sweeps across the composition, guiding the viewer toward a hopeful horizon illuminated by shafts of light. Elsewhere, a hot air balloon skateboard and a hover craft horse appear suspended mid motion, forming a dynamic tableau that speaks to energy, transformation, and the many personal journeys connected not only to the nearby railway stations but to the wider life of the city - one defined by movement, resilience and an unmistakable creative spirit.

Hand-written text embedded throughout the mural introduces an intimate and grounded counterpoint to the fantastical imagery. These poetic reflections authored by Manchester children acknowledge the complexities and challenges of life while offering messages imbued with optimism and perseverance.

The backdrop is composed of fluid forms created using neurographic art, a mindful technique designed to channel stress into calming, affirmative shapes. Combined with layered sweeps of colour, jagged forms and expressive mark making, this background mirrors the momentum of a city always in motion.

Extending beneath the train tracks above the arches, the design encourages an interplay between the real and the imagined, inviting viewers to inhabit a space where present experience and future possibility converge.

More than an invitation to immerse passersby in a surreal world of movement and possibility, the mural becomes a symbol of collective pride: an artwork that amplifies children's voices, celebrates their vision and affirms their place within the fabric of the community.

This mural forms part of a wider programme of creative engagement and art led placemaking across the city (namely Our City and Beyond). The proposal intends to bring 'new life' into a largely overlooked area of Manchester, which was once prominent in the creative character of the city.

LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY CONTEXT

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) governs the designation and works to listed buildings in England. The Act states in **s.1 (5)**:

> *'In this Act "listed building" means a building which is for the time being included in a list compiled or approved by the Secretary of State under this section; and for the purposes of this Act—*
>
> *a) any object or structure fixed to the building;*
> *b) any object or structure within the curtilage of the building which, although not fixed to the building, forms part of the land and has done so since before 1st July 1948, shall be treated as part of the building.'*

Under the Act, no one is permitted to undertake or cause to be undertaken any works that would affect the character of a listed building unless the works are authorised. Section 16 of the Act identifies that whether such works can be carried out is determined by the local planning authority or the Secretary of State:

1. *Subject to the previous provisions of this Part, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State may grant or refuse an application for listed building consent and, if they grant consent, may grant it subject to conditions.*
2. *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.*
3. *Any listed building consent shall (except in so far as it otherwise provides) ensure for*

the benefit of the building and of all persons for the time being interested in it.'

In relation to the granting of Listed Building Consent, Section 17 of the Act stipulates that conditions attached to Listed Building Consent may include those with respect to:

a. *the preservation of particular features of the building, either as part of it or after severance from it;*
b. *the making good, after the works are completed, of any damage caused to the building by the works; [and]*
c. *the reconstruction of the building or any part of it following the execution of any works, with the use of original materials so far as practicable and with such alterations of the interior of the building as may be specified in the conditions*'.

It is also defined in s.17 (2) that a condition '*may also be imposed requiring specified details of the works (whether or not set out in the application) to be approved subsequently by the local planning authority or, in the case of consent granted by the Secretary of State, specifying whether such details are to be approved by the local planning authority or by him*'.

The Act also states in s.66 (1):

'In considering whether to grant planning permission or permission in principle for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, 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'.

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) also governs duties of the local planning authority relating to conservation areas, particularly Sections 69, 72 and 74.

• Section 69 requires local planning authorities to define as conservation areas any *'areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*'.

• Section 72 confers a general duty '*with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area… special attention shall be paid to the desirability or preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area*'.

• Section 74 defines that demolition of a building in a conservation area is not permitted '*without the consent of the appropriate authority*'.

The key statutory test in the determination of an application for Listed Building Consent is set out in Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Act 1990), this states:

'In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.'

Relevant National and Local planning policy is set out below.

National Planning Policy Framework

The NPPF was published in March 2012 and established the Government's vision for planning to help achieve sustainable development. Central to this is that economic, social and environmental gains should be sought through the planning system. The NPPF's approach to Heritage is fundamentally unchanged from that of PPS5, in that there is still a focus on the identification of 'heritage assets', outlining their 'significance' and considering any impact upon that significance as a consequence of any proposed works.

NPPF paragraph 128 establishes the information requirements for an application for consent affecting a heritage asset. Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) 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 proposal on their significance.

Paragraph 129 details the policy principles that should guide LPAs in determining applications in relation to heritage assets. It states that in considering the impact of a proposal on any heritage asset, Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

When determining applications, LPAs should take account of (paragraph 131):

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality;
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Paragraph 132 states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.

Paragraph 134 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 securing its optimum viable use.

Local Planning Policy

The relevant planning policy document is the Manchester Core Strategy. The following core policies contained within the Manchester Core Strategy are relevant:

> *Policy EN 3 - Heritage*
>
> *Throughout the City, the Council will encourage development that complements and takes advantage of the distinct historic and heritage features of its districts and neighbourhoods, including those of the City Centre.*
>
> *Policy EC 1 - Employment and Economic Growth in Manchester (supporting text)*
>
> *Ensuring access to job opportunities via sustainable transport such as walking and cycling, and public transport, such as bus routes, Metrolink and heavy rail is vital to improving the quality of life of residents through job opportunities, raising residents' wages and thereby increasing wealth.*
>
> *Policy T 1 -Sustainable Transport*
>
> *To deliver a sustainable, high quality, integrated transport system…the Council will support proposals that: -Contribute to improvements to the extent and reliability of the public transport network.*
>
> *Policy EN 1 -Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas*
>
> *Developers will be expected to consider the City's heritage and continue the rich pattern of activity in the core area.*

These policies should be read in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) with reference to section 16 'Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment'.

ASSESSMENT AGAINST PLANNING POLICY

The Whitworth Steet arches mural is part of the Early Deliverables Portfolio developed as part of the Greater Manchester 7 stations (GM7) programme. The scheme forms part of the 'Our City and Beyond' programme, which is a creative collaboration between artists, schools and communities that is to be delivered in partnership with HOME and Network Rail.

The project proposed to install a mural which will stretch across three railway arches (No. 59, 60 & 61 Whitworth Street). The design if driven by the concepts of energy, movement and imaginative explorations of the future of transport.

The annual Culture Report (2025) outlined the importance of Manchester's cultural offering as a key driver for economic growth – as well as the ongoing happiness and wellbeing of the city's residents. Cllr Garry Bridges (Deputy Leader of Manchester City Council, 2025) stated: 'Big or small, culture is the beating heart of Manchester. But we need to do more. We want to celebrate culture in our communities, we want to make sure that as many people as possible can take part and we want to changes lives. This is what culture can do.'

Public art has played a significant role in the cultural and historical landscape of Manchester for centuries. From the iconic sculptures and murals that adorn the city's streets to the grand architectural landmarks, public artwork has been a reflection of the city's rich history and heritage.

Public art plays a vital role in shaping and defining the identity of a community. It has the power to bring communities together and create a sense of identity and belonging.

The mural is the result of a series of artist led sessions with local children participating in the Our City and Beyond project; allowing the children to engage with their imaginations through art following the concepts of energy, movement and the future of transport. Lead artist Venessa Scott then used the children's creations and responses as the foundations for the mural.

A luminous flying train sweeps across the composition, guiding the viewer toward a hopeful horizon illuminated by bold shafts of light. Elsewhere, a hot air balloon skateboard and a hover craft horse appear suspended mid motion, forming a dynamic tableau that speaks to energy, transformation, and the many personal journeys connected not only to this station but to the wider life of the city - one defined by movement, resilience and an unmistakable creative spirit.

Hand -written text embedded throughout the mural introduces an intimate and grounded counterpoint to the fantastical imagery. These poetic reflections authored by Manchester children acknowledge the complexities and challenges of life while offering messages imbued with optimism and perseverance.

The backdrop is composed of fluid forms created using neurographic art, a mindful technique designed to channel stress into calming, affirmative shapes. Combined with layered sweeps of colour, jagged forms and expressive mark making, this background mirrors the momentum of a city always in motion.

The site lies within an area that has witnessed, and to a certain extent, pioneered cultural regeneration over the years. The area has been home to breakthrough music revolutions, and through art, theatre and music played a vital role in the vivid, colourful and cultural activities of its time. It seems appropriate that this area is now home to pieces of public art, which aim to

invigorate a sense of place and inject some colour into an area which appears to have been ‘left behind’.

The artwork will involve a combination of being painted onto large hoardings/ boards, which will then be directly attached to the original arch frontage; where this is not possible the artwork will be directly applied to the arch frontages (namely the roller shutter doors). The hoardings/boards would not be attached to the brick piers of the viaduct. This light-touch, non-intrusive initiative is designed to be fully reversible and will not alter the historic fabric or structure of the building.

The proposal mural would be a temporary installation for a period up to three years. The site forms part of a wider property strategy for Whitworth Street to encourage the reuse of the arches; rather than canvases for artwork on the frontages. It is hoped that the area will become a vibrant, dynamic area for the local community, bring life back to this area of Manchester.

The arches are currently vacant, and in poor visual condition, which detracts from the wider environment along Whitworth Street and its historic significance, as well as the wider environment within this area of Manchester. A series of repairs will also be undertaken to the building as discussed with the Councils conservation officer. Alongside these repairs it is considered that the mural will enhance the appearance of the area. The mural will significantly improve perceptions of safety, cultural identity, and provide a sense of place; whilst connecting with the local communities through artwork that has been designed by them. It is considered that the proposed mural will contribute to the social culture and help create a more vibrant and engaging public realm for passengers, pedestrians and the city.

This project represents a sensitive, creative and collaborative response to a visibly deteriorating building. Providing a new purpose into a vacant arches with a listed building, within the conservation area. By using art as a tool for transformation, the Whitworth Street arches Artwork delivers immediate improvement, fosters community connection, and lays the foundation for a more inclusive and cared-for station environment. It aims to demonstrate what is possible when heritage, culture and partnership come together to reimagine public space, with minimal intervention and maximum public benefit.

The public benefits of this project are significant:

- **Enhanced Station Environment**: Improves the visual condition of a prominent but neglected site, contributing to a safer, more welcoming, and vibrant gateway to the city.
- **Sensitive initiative on Buildings in Disrepair**: Provides a proactive, meanwhile solution for arches in poor condition, offering an uplift in appearance while longer-term plans are developed.
- **Graffiti Deterrent**: Acts as a positive and managed intervention that discourages tagging and vandalism, to which the building is currently highly susceptible.

- **Creative Placemaking**: Demonstrates how low-cost, high-impact interventions can positively transform public space and uplift daily experiences for passengers and pedestrians.
- **Cultural Identity & Storytelling**: Reflects and celebrates the imaginations of children within Manchester. Exploring the concepts of energy, movement and transport.
- **Community Ownership**: Lays the foundation for meaningful, longer-term engagement by inviting local voices to shape future creative outcomes.
- **Partnership in Action**: Embodies cross-sector collaboration between transport, arts and civic partners, showcasing collective ambition and shared care for the public realm.
- **Reversible & Non-Intrusive**: A sensitive, paint-only intervention that preserves the historic structure and respects the character of the listed building.
- **Civic Pride & Visibility**: Contributes to a high-profile cultural moment that will bring national attention, footfall, and a sense of celebration to the area.



Existing street scene



Proposed street scene

The proposal does not involve any attachments to the listed viaduct; all hoardings/boards will be directly attached to the existing arch infill frontages, which are not considered to be of historic significance. Any harm that could be contributed to the brightness of the artwork in relation to the setting of the listed building is assessed to be outweighed by the public benefits by visually improving the aesthetics of this heritage asset and a prominent part of the street scene within a designated Conservation Area. The proposal will help to create a sense of place and cultural identity within this area of Manchester by reflecting upon its rich and diverse history.

The proposals are therefore in accordance with the thrust of MCC Core Strategy policies Policy EN 3 – Heritage, Policy EC 1 - Employment and Economic Growth in Manchester, Policy T 1 - Sustainable Transport and Policy EN 1 - Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas. It is thus concluded that the proposal would result in less than substantial harm in line with the NPPF (para 215) and meet the test of achieving public benefits which outweigh the harm to the significance of the station.

CONCLUSION

It is considered that the works are respectful to the character and appearance of the listed structure and there is a sound justification and strong public benefits associated with the scheme. This will be done in a manner that is respectful to the heritage significance of the station.

In light of the above, the proposals are considered to be in accordance with relevant policy stipulated by the NPPF and the Manchester Core Strategy. The proposals therefore satisfy both national and local planning policy regarding the balance test of the impact of development on significance of heritage assets and their setting, and the public benefits to be realised. Consequently, it is requested that Listed Building Consent be granted for the development.

