



Design and Access Statement

Manchester Central – Undercroft Storage area Rev 2
Prepared by Taylor Design Architects Ltd – March 2026

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Manchester Central North-East (front) gable view



Manchester Central South-West (rear) gable view

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Preface

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Taylor Design Architects Ltd on behalf of Manchester Central to support an application for Listed Building Planning consent. It is proposed to carry out alteration works to 2nos vaulted areas located within the existing Basement undercroft to the Grade II* listed Manchester Central Convention Centre to form a new storage facility.

The undercroft comprises a 19th Century vaulted brick arch structure which is currently used as an NCP car parking area to serve the Convention Centre and the nearby Bridgewater Hall. It is proposed to enclose two arches adjacent to the public access to the upper floors and provide a level floor finish for storage purposes.

The Manchester Central Convention Centre is subject to ongoing refurbishment and maintenance works to uphold the success of the high volume of events and conferences, etc. throughout the year.

This Design Statement seeks to demonstrate that the proposed alterations are considerate and respectful of the existing finishes and character of the Basement area.

1.2 Project Directory

Client

Manchester Central
Windmill Street
Manchester
M2 3GX

Architects

Taylor Design Architects Ltd
30 Manchester Road
Wilmslow
SK9 1BG

2.0 The Site

2.1 Site Context

The Manchester Central Conference and exhibition Complex is situated on the south side of Manchester City centre. The site is bounded by Windmill Street, Lower Mosley Street, Watson Street and Great Bridgewater Street.

The Convention Centre is grade II* Listed and is situated outwith the Peter Square and Deansgate Conservation area.

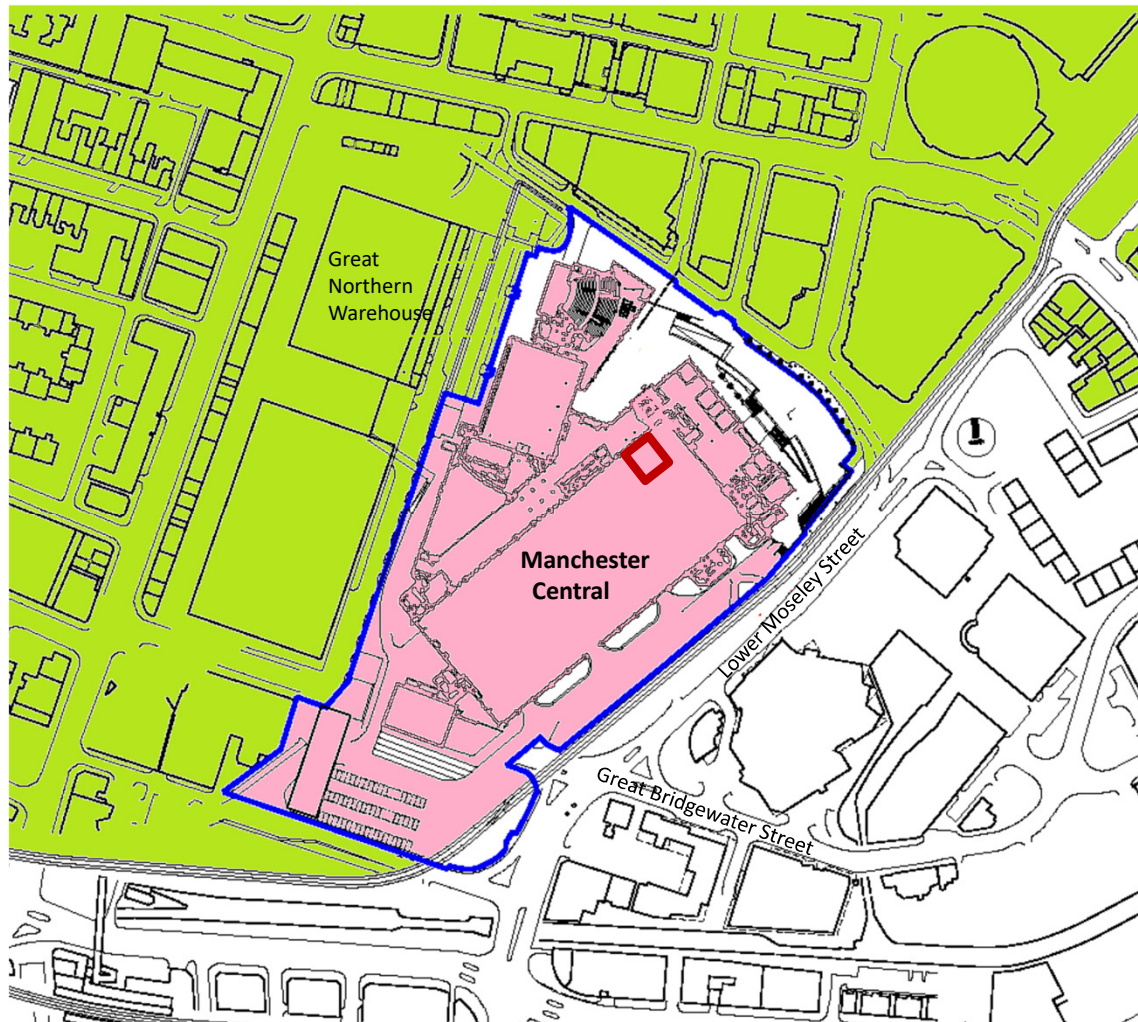
The Manchester Central buildings are distinguished by 2 main sections; the more contemporary Exchange building and the main convention hall which was historically built as a train station.

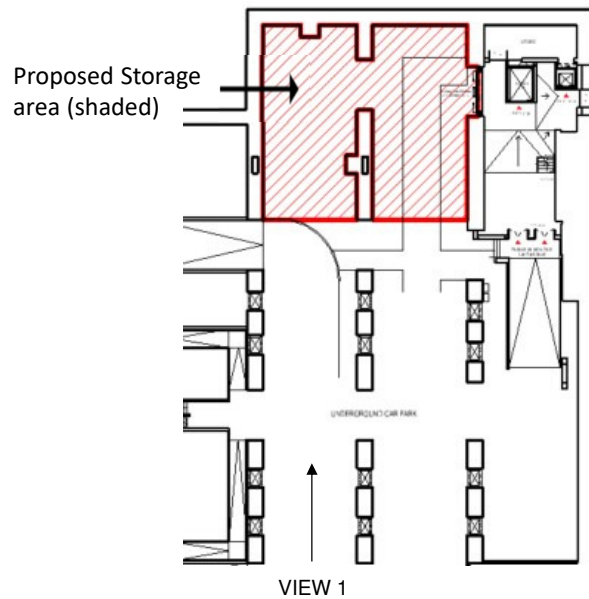
The train hall is set above two levels of Basement undercroft, constructed in 19th Century vaulted brick arches, and which are currently used for NCP car parking. This sets the main pedestrian entrance level of the building above the surrounding street level. There are stairs from the Windmill Street public plaza to an upper podium and this provides pedestrian circulation around the main entrance foyer. The Watson Street elevation is approximately 10m above street level.

The Metrolink also provides an urban boundary condition to the rear of the Manchester site.

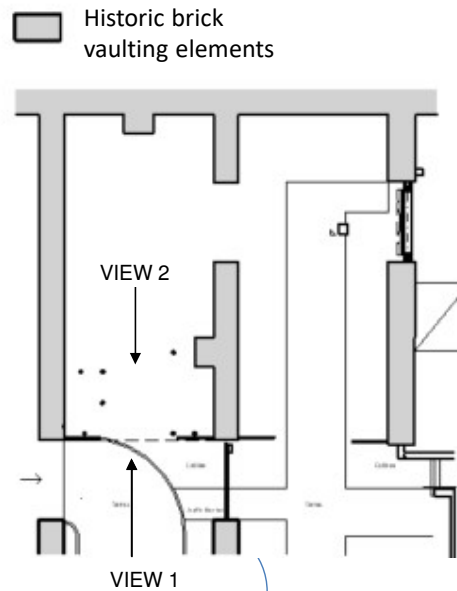
KEY

-  Extent of Conservation Areas
-  Manchester Central Convention Complex
-  Location of proposed storage facility





Manchester Central – Part overall Basement Plan



Manchester Central – Existing Plan to proposed Storage area

2.2 Site Analysis

The proposed storage area is located in a corner of the Basement undercroft adjacent to an existing staircase and lift for pedestrian access to the upper floors.

The location has been specifically selected by the Convention Centre management team so as to be readily accessible by vehicle from one of the through routes in the car park. This will facilitate the loading / unloading of large items for storage such as temporary seating for specific events throughout the year.

Vehicular and staff access to be via a new steel roller shutter door and steel personnel door accessed from the car park only. Existing bollards and temporary style screens will be removed as part of the works, improving the overall aesthetic of the undercroft area.



Manchester Central – VIEW 1 Basement undercroft



Manchester Central – View 2



Manchester Central – View of proposed storage area



3.0 Design Influence

3.1 Requirements

Manchester Central is a successful business located within a central city location that hosts numerous types of social, business, and political events. The proposed works are a necessary part of the building's ongoing improvements and services.

It is recognised that the main train hall building is the predominant historical asset of the convention centre and it is intended that the proposed works to be undertaken will not alter its appearance. As such, the proposed installation will be completely reversible and will not alter the form of the undercroft area.



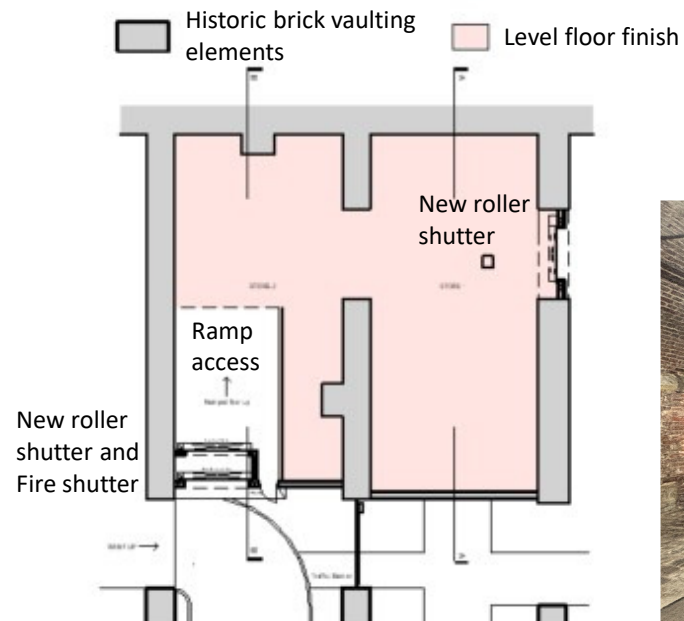
Manchester Central Convention Centre – Previously infilled arches in brickwork



3.2 Existing Fabric

The existing undercroft consists of a series of interlinked semi-circular brick vaults and arches which are constructed in the original 19th Century brickwork. The enclosing infill walls to the proposed storage area will be constructed in brickwork to maintain the overall character and appearance of the area.

It should be noted that other arches in the Basement undercroft have previously been infilled in brickwork (in both the 1980's and 2000's alteration works). The proposed works will follow that precedent (Refer to adjacent photographs).



Manchester Central – Proposed Floor Plan to Storage area



Manchester Central – View of Basement undercroft



Manchester Central – General Views of Basement undercroft

3.3 Extent of works

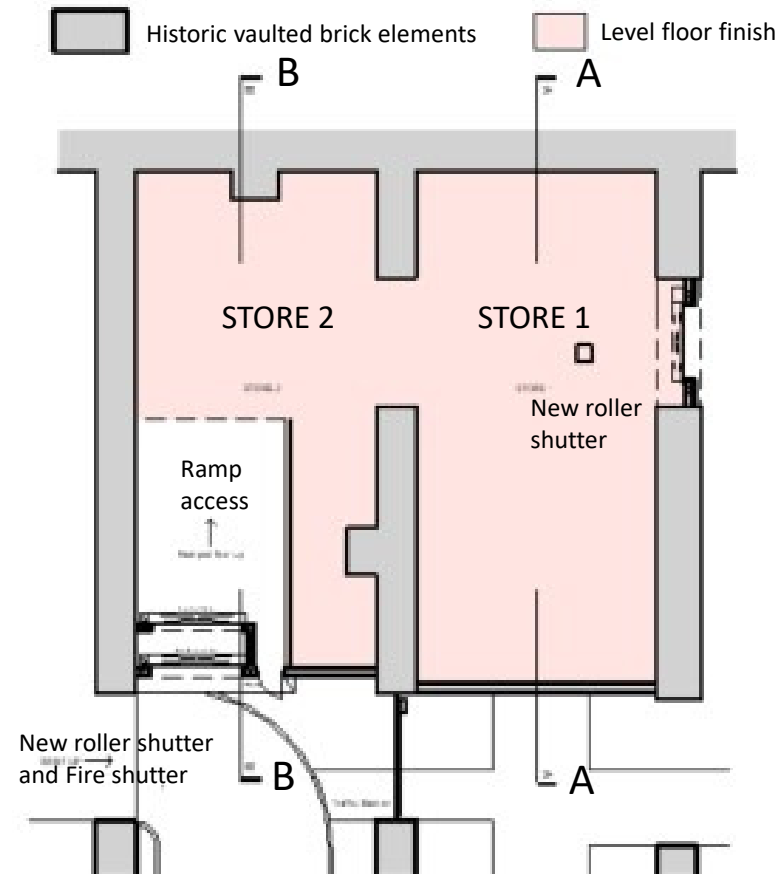
The existing floor comprises Victorian cobblestones. It is proposed to protect this floor finish with a damp-proof membrane and then build up the new floor in Lytag topped with a sand/cement screed finish. This means that the new floor construction will be fully reversible, with the original finish having been predominately preserved below.

The proposed storage facility will provide vehicle access from the car park by means of a new steel roller shutter door fitted with perforated slats to maintain natural airflow through the building (Colour: Dark Grey).

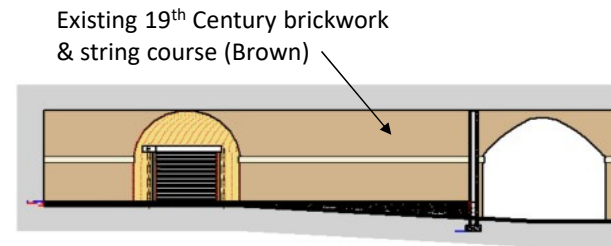
The existing louvred grille to the stairs & lift area will also be replaced with a matching roller shutter door with perforated slats.

A new Lobby area will be formed next to the roller shutter door to the car park and will support a new 60minute fire resistant shutter which will engage only in a fire event.

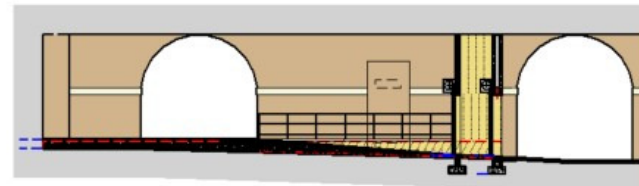
An existing fire shutter to the stairs & lift area will be removed as the new fire shutter will serve to provide the required 60 minute fire protection and compartmentation to the storage area, stairs and lift areas.



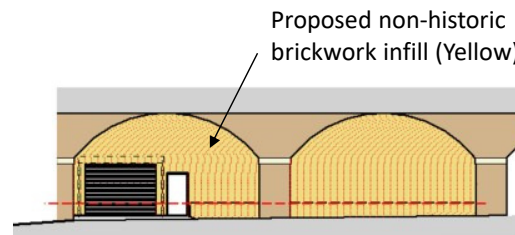
Manchester Central - Proposed Storage area floor plan



Section A-A



Section B-B



Front Elevation

Proposed Storage area – Cross sections

3.3 Existing Fabric (Continued)

The adjacent floor plan and sections indicate the locations of the existing 19th Century vaulted brickwork walls within the undercroft and the siting of proposed non-historic brickwork walls to the new storage facility.

The existing lighting, emergency lighting, CCTV system, electrical and fire precaution installations will all be retained.

4. Access

The proposed storage area is intended for Manchester Central staff only. Manchester Central is committed to a policy of inclusion and accessibility in the delivery of its services to members of the public, and in the employment opportunities afforded to both existing and future employees. Manchester Central fully recognises the diversity of its customers and employees, and is active in ensuring that any potential sources of discrimination are addressed in both the physical attributes of the buildings it uses and in the management practices and procedures it adopts.

The proposed works will not detract from the current accessibility of the building. Directional information to the stairs and lifts are already provided to the visitor upon arrival within the car park, adding to the ease of independent use of the facility.

Manchester Central is committed to ensuring that the facilities it provides for its customers and employees, with the opportunity to maximise their individual abilities and enjoy safe and (where possible) independent participation.

5.0 Conclusion

Manchester City Council, through its District Development plan, describes the area in terms of regeneration as “Building on the success of the Bridgewater Hall” and the G-Mex Centre. An International Convention Centre, together with these and other visitor facilities, will effectively create a “convention quarter” to the city centre.

New activity in the local area has been maximised with new leisure and retail development within the Great Northern Warehouse complex. High quality environmental improvements will also further consolidate the whole area and re-integrate it back into the City Centre.

The management team at the Manchester Central Complex view the provision of the new storage facility as being a vital asset to the operation of the Convention Centre, thereby ensuring the running of a competitive venue. The building has already hosted concerts and other large scale conferences (including the Conservative and Labour Party annual conferences).

Manchester Central submits this application in recognition of the need for additional storage facilities – essential for the continued efficiency of the Convention Centre - whilst also balancing the important heritage considerations associated with the site.