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HERITAGE STATEMENT

ST MARGARET'S CHAMBERS

REVISION	B
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PROJECT REF.	2093

ARCHITECTURE + HERITAGE

AMAZON HOUSE • BRAZIL STREET

MANCHESTER • M1 3PW

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Image: St Margaret's Chambers, Newton Street elevation.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Heritage Statement accompanies a Listed Building Consent and Planning Application for St Margaret's Chambers, 5 Newton Street, Manchester. It has been produced by Atelier MB in June 2026 and the author is Laura Jessup, MA History and Theory of Architecture, PGCert. Conservation of the Historic Environment.



Image: St Margaret's Chambers Newton Street, 1889 drawing.

2.0 LOCATION + DESCRIPTION

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Image: St Margaret's Chambers, location plan (site in red).

St Margaret's Chambers is a commercial premises, built as ground floor shops with offices above. Dating from the last decade of the 19th century, the property is four storeys of red/pink brick, plus an attic and a basement. It is elaborate in architectural style with a decorative frieze to eternal elevations, and ornate gables.

The premises have their main frontage along Newton Street and a small frontage to Piccadilly. Newton Street sits on the edge of Manchester's Northern Quarter, an area of diverse architectural character, housing a significant number of former warehouses and commercial properties which illustrate the city's development architecturally and economically. Its location on a prominent city junction elevates the building's status.

St Margaret's Chambers is within the Stevenson Square Conservation Area and is Grade II listed. The Historic England description is included here.

SJ8498SE NEWTON STREET 698-1/29/246 (North West side) Nos.1 TO 11 (Odd) St Margaret's Chambers GV II
Includes: No.63 St Margaret's Chambers PICCADILLY. Shops with numerous offices over (in 1905 mostly manufacturers' agents) c.1890; altered. Pink brick in Flemish bond, with sandstone dressings and some terracotta matching this (probably cladding iron frame), 4-span slate roof. Shallow trapezoidal plan parallel to street. Elizabethan style. Four storeys and attic; 8 bays plus a narrow chamfered corner to the right, the bays divided by semi-octagonal shafts and linked in pairs under 4 large elaborate shaped gables; with a cornice over the ground floor, a deep decorated frieze and cornice over the 1st floor, and a cornice over the 3rd floor. The ground floor has a wide doorway in the 5th bay under a keyed elliptical arch with decorated spandrels, but is otherwise altered by C20 shop-fronts; the 1st floor has recessed canted 3-light windows with altered glazing, the 2nd and 3rd floors have mullioned windows of 3 lights except in the 7th and 8th bays which have 2-light windows; the attic has smaller mullioned windows with 1 and 2 lights in each bay, the division caused by the outer shafts of the shaped gables (which are also pierced). The left end presents one bay to Piccadilly, and the right- hand end is canted, both in matching style. Interior not inspected.
Listing NGR: SJ8454398278



Image: External side elevation with fire escape stairs

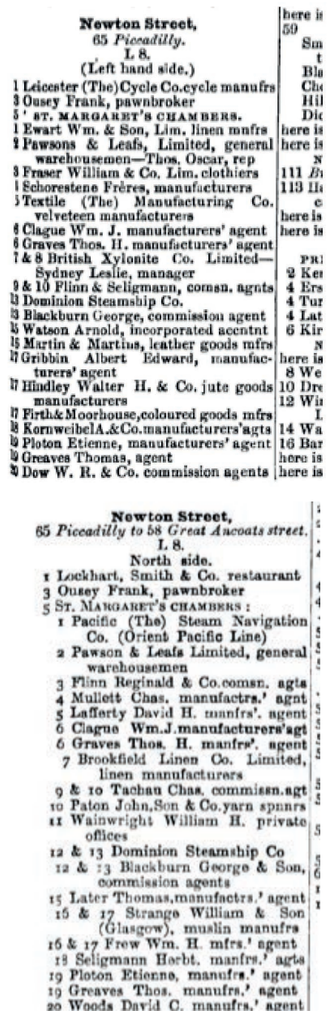


Image: Typical internal room with timber door, fireplace and example of timber and glazed partitioning.

Internally, floors 1-4 follow a similar layout: circulation core and lift to the rear of the building; external lightwell; various rooms to either side; a large open room to the Piccadilly-facing end and a series of smaller rooms to the Newton Street-facing elevation, linked by corridors. The ground floor houses the main entrance hall and has individual self-contained units accessed through their own doors. Fire escape doors exit to Back Piccadilly via an external metal stair.
Floors 1-4 are currently vacant, having most recently been used as a language school (vacated Spring 2020). The ground floor is in a mixture of uses, with some vacant units.

3.0 HISTORY

3.0 HISTORY



Newton Street,
65 *Piccadilly.*
L 8.
(Left hand side.)

1 Leicester (The) Cycle Co. cycle manufrs
3 Ousey Frank, pawnbroker
5 ' ST. MARGARET'S CHAMBERS.
1 Ewart Wm. & Son, Lim. linen mnfrs
2 Pawsons & Leafs, Limited, general warehousemen—Thos. Oscar, rep
3 Fraser William & Co. Lim. clothiers
4 Schorestene Frères, manufacturers
5 Textile (The) Manufacturing Co. velveteen manufacturers
6 Clague Wm. J. manufacturers' agent
6 Graves Thos. H. manufacturers' agent
7 & 8 British Xylonite Co. Limited—Sydney Leslie, manager
9 & 10 Flinn & Seligmann, comsn. agnts
13 Dominion Steamship Co.
13 Blackburn George, commission agent
15 Watson Arnold, incorporated accntnt
15 Martin & Martius, leather goods mfrs
17 Gribbin Albert Edward, manufacturers' agent
17 Hindley Walter H. & Co. jute goods manufacturers
17 Firth & Moorhouse, coloured goods mfrs
18 Kornweibel A. & Co. manufacturers' agts
19 Ploton Etienne, manufacturers' agent
19 Greaves Thomas, agent
20 Dow W. R. & Co. commission agents

Newton Street,
65 *Piccadilly to 58 Great Ancoats street.*
L 8.
North side.

1 Lockhart, Smith & Co. restaurant
3 Ousey Frank, pawnbroker
5 ST. MARGARET'S CHAMBERS:
1 Pacific (The) Steam Navigation Co. (Orient Pacific Line)
2 Pawson & Leafs Limited, general warehousemen
3 Flinn Reginald & Co. comsn. agts
4 Mullett Chas. manufactrs.' agnt
5 Lafferty David H. manfrs'. agent
6 Clague Wm. J. manufacturers' agt
6 Graves Thos. H. manfrs'. agent
7 Brookfield Linen Co. Limited, linen manufacturers
9 & 10 Tachau Chas. commissn. agt
10 Paton John, Son & Co. yarn spnnrs
11 Wainwright William H. private offices
12 & 13 Dominion Steamship Co
12 & 13 Blackburn George & Son, commission agents
15 Later Thomas, manufactrs.' agent
16 & 17 Strange William & Son (Glasgow), muslin manufrs
16 & 17 Frew Wm. H. mfrs.' agent
18 Seligmann Herbt. manfrs.' agts
19 Ploton Etienne, manufrs.' agent
19 Greaves Thos. manufrs.' agent
20 Woods David C. manufrs.' agent

Images: Extract from Trade Directories, 1895 and 1903 (National Archives).

St Margaret's Chambers dates from the end of the 19th Century. Published sources attribute the building to Charles Henry Heathcote and date it between 1885 and 1889. Photographic and mapping evidence from 1885/6 show an empty site, but it is likely the building was constructed soon after.

Heathcote was a prolific Manchester architect whose commissions included the Commercial Union Offices in Spring Gardens; Northern Rock Building Society, Cross Street; 107 Piccadilly; Henshaw's Blind Asylum in Stretford and, it was estimated at one point, half of the factories in Trafford Park.

The earliest found reference to the building is in the trade directory from 1895, listing various manufacturer's agents.

Research in newspaper archives shows St Margaret's Chambers named as the Manchester offices of the West India and Pacific Company in 1891. In 1896 an advertisement in the Manchester Guardian describes 'single and double' offices within the building with 'perfect light' and a 'passenger elevator'.

Further references from Lloyd's List, show that between 1903 and 1910 St Margaret's Chambers was occupied by The Pacific Steam Navigation Company and other agents.

As industry and commerce changed, so the uses within the building were replaced with a mixture of general businesses. An advertisement from 1918 describes St Margaret's Chambers as being suitable for manufacturers agents, having a 'general packing room' which was likely in the basement or part of the ground floor. The building also offered shared stockroom facilities on the ground floor.



Image: Render of the building from 1889.

3.0 HISTORY



Image: Archive photograph of the site, prior to construction of St Margaret's Chambers, 19th century, (Manchester Archive).



Image: Street level shopfront in St Margaret's Chambers, 1986, (Manchester Archives).



Image: Corner view, Piccadilly and Newton Street, 1966, (Manchester Archive).



Image: Exterior Newton Street, 1966, (Manchester Archive).



Image: Piccadilly/Newton Street, 1979, (Manchester Archives).

5.0 SIGNIFICANCE

4.0 SIGNIFICANCE





Images: (Above) Existing historic staircase and modern lift.
(Below) Historic decorative glazed tiles to staircase walls.

Assessment using categories set out in Conservation Principles (Historic England).

St Margaret's Chambers has architectural and historical significance, as recognised by its Grade II designation. The building has been assessed under the categories used by Historic England in their Conservation Principles document (2008).
Evidential value: the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity.

As a multi-tenanted office space, it is not possible to date all the piecemeal changes made to the space by successive owners and tenants, which frequently went undocumented. However, even with its alterations, the listed asset is a fair example of 19th century commercial architecture, typical of the period and characteristic of those examples found in this area of Manchester.

The external elevations retain high significance. The internal plan form, in particular the separate ground floor shop units, the wide staircase, the layout of rooms and the existence of the lightwell give some insight into the way a building of this period functioned, though the loss of some internal detail has compromised this to some extent.
Level of evidential value: medium

Historical value: the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present - it tends to be illustrative or associative. St Margaret's Chambers displays the character of industrial Manchester in the 19th century. It offers the ability to interpret a particular time in the past and retains a level of intactness externally and in plan, despite its various alterations. Its city centre setting and relationship to other historic commercial premises contributes to its significance.
Level of historical value: medium

Aesthetic value: the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.
The building is attractive in elevations, with ornate detailing and gabled forms. The use of red brick is typical of the city and the architectural composition has a good aesthetic value; the elevations are characterful and enjoyable to look at from the exterior. Internally, there are some modern interventions which have little or no aesthetic value, but the tiling, fireplaces, and smaller details such as skirtings and original doors are of a higher aesthetic value.
Level of aesthetic value: high externally, high to decorative parts internally and lower to standard features and later interventions.

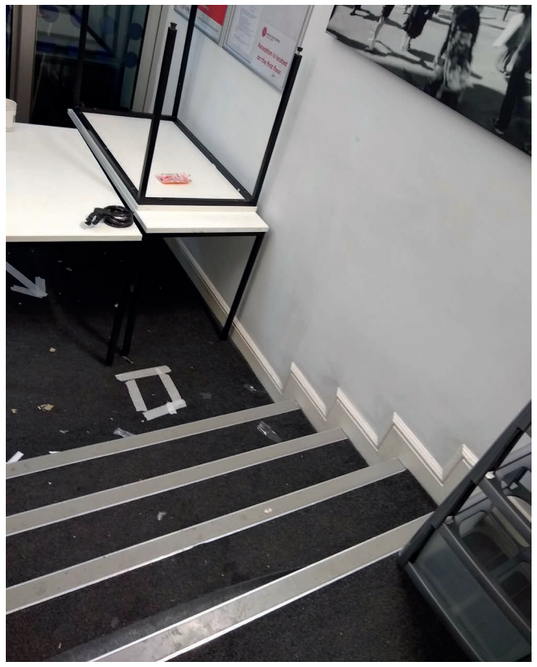


Image: Entrance steps as existing, with modern finish.

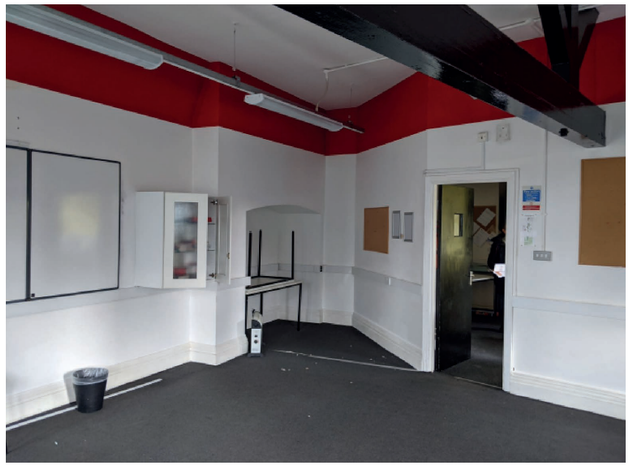


Image: Office space with exposed roof timbers



Image: Office space to upper floor, showing metal structure to ceiling.



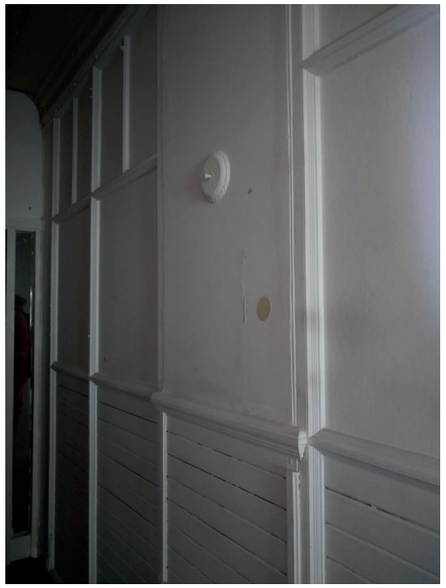
Image: Interior, showing timber parquet flooring.

Communal value: the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory. The area around Piccadilly Gardens and the Northern Quarter retains a unique sense of character which is important to 'place-making' within this part of Manchester. The architecture reflects the period of growth fuelled by the Industrial Revolution and the decades following it, which saw the city prosper as a commercial centre. St Margaret's Chambers contributes to this character and, whilst most 'experience' the building as part of the street-scape, it is nonetheless an important contributor to its locality and has a role within the larger group of warehouses nearby.
Level of communal value: medium/high.



Image: Internal ceiling and partitions over door.





Images (above and below): Internal corridor with walls of timber and glazing.

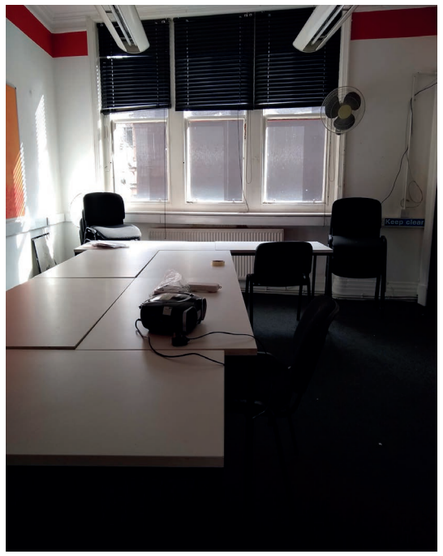




Image (above): Timber framed sash windows and ceiling cornicing.
Image (below): Internal office space with glazed timber frame between office and corridor.





Image (above): Metal framed windows to first floor.
Image (below): Timber panelled door to floor 4.





Image, above: Timber panelled door to floor 4, with added timber elements (non-original).
Image, below: Example of decorative skirting.





Image, above: Entrance area with non-original framed and glazed partition and decorative ceiling.
Image, below: Historic fireplace with decorative surround.





Image, below: External facade at street level, with numerous alterations



Image, above: Terrazzo floor under modern finish.

5.0 PROPOSALS + IMPACT

5.0 PROPOSALS + IMPACT



Image: Showing the existing staircase and steps in entrance area.

A previous application was approved in 2023, Application number 136417/FO/2023 AND 136418/LO/2023. Clarifications and necessary changes to planning proposals at the detail design stage has led to this submission. At the request of Manchester City Council, current proposals have been submitted as a new application.

Reference numbers relate to drawings submitted and the list of proposals which are part of this application.

BASEMENT PARTITIONS: B02
DESCRIPTION: Revised partition locations to add WC
IMPACT UPON SIGNIFICANCE: Neutral, requires partition walls to form WC and wall to add store. Proposed walls adjoin new (approved) walls and do not interact with historic fabric other than minimal fixings to ceilings and floor. Changes are reversible.

BASEMENT NEW OPENING: B03
DESCRIPTION: New opening to access existing store blocked up by new lift.
IMPACT UPON SIGNIFICANCE: Neutral, the opening previously existed and the proposal is to omit the blocking up.

GROUND FLOOR LIFT: G01
DESCRIPTION: Change from lift which replaced steps, to hidden lift.
IMPACT UPON SIGNIFICANCE: Minor, adverse. Requires a limited amount of terrazzo to be removed. The lift has been repositioned to avoid stair clash and this is considered to be significantly less harmful to fabric. On balance this option is preferred to the alternative option to removal the stairs to provide level access to a new lift (discounted). The proposal includes revealing existing, historic, terrazzo which is an enhancement and is justified on the basis of providing level access. This approach follows discussion with the Conservation Officer.

GROUND FLOOR SCREEN: G02
DESCRIPTION: New glass door in glass screen to suit platform lift in entrance area.
IMPACT UPON SIGNIFICANCE: Neutral. Change within new screen only (screen already been approved).

G03
DESCRIPTION: Existing door to be removed.
IMPACT: Non-original timber door to be removed. No impact upon existing opening.

G04
DESCRIPTION: Existing blocked door to be reinstated.
IMPACT UPON SIGNIFICANCE: Minor positive. The re-opening of the doorway will re-establish the original plan-form of the L-shaped space.

G05
DESCRIPTION: New cycle store with raised timber floor to match height of adjacent.
IMPACT UPON SIGNIFICANCE: Neutral. There is a section which is already raised, and the proposal is to extend this to accommodate bicycles. The existing floor will remain beneath.



Image: Existing low-quality shop front to be replaced, referencing openings to left hand side.

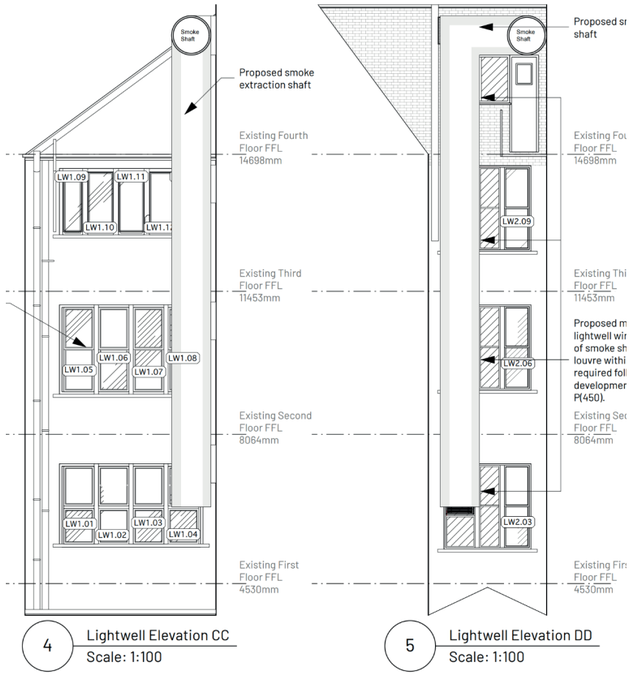


Image: Proposed lightwell duct and alterations to lightwell windows.

G06

DESCRIPTION: Existing stair fitted with cycle ramp.
IMPACT UPON SIGNIFICANCE: Neutral.
There is limited change resulting from the addition of a cycle ramp. There will be no harm to heritage significance as a result of this change.

G07

DESCRIPTION: New partitions and doors to form new landlords store, bin store and new unit within existing take away unit.
IMPACT UPON SIGNIFICANCE: Neutral. New partitions are positioned away from any significant historic features and are reversible.

G08

DESCRIPTION: Removal of existing non-original shopfront and replacement with new shopfront window and solid access door (serving cleaner's store, unit, ancillary space and WC).
IMPACT UPON SIGNIFICANCE: Minor Positive. Existing is of no heritage significance and detracts from facade. New infill references existing to left hand side - through use of brick, sash window frame shape and proportion, stone cill/lintel, deeply recessed opening and metal railings to match adjacent historic. New door is plain utilitarian to match that to the left hand side. The proposal will create a more ordered frontage with a quality of design and material deemed to be appropriate to the significance of the asset.

WINDOWS: 101

DESCRIPTION: To the first floor, metal framed windows are in place. An historic image indicates this arrangement is original and there is insufficient depth to add timber framed alternatives. Retain and repair existing and add secondary glazing internally.
IMPACT UPON SIGNIFICANCE: Negligible. The change is reversible and will follow the lines of the existing glazing with very minimal visual impact. Justified as necessary for acoustic and thermal requirements.

EXISTING DOORS RELOCATED: 102

DESCRIPTION: In 2 locations, moving existing historic doors from existing wall to new wall which runs parallel (fire protection measure).
IMPACT UPON SIGNIFICANCE: Neutral.
The door will be retained in similar position, though fitted within the inner (new) partition wall, for fire safety reasons. Slight movement of doors will have no real impact upon significance of the listed building.

BATHROOMS: 103, 202, 304, 403

DESCRIPTION: Room re-located, and store created to address reconfiguration of M+E kit. Alterations to suit this amended layout and bathroom location flipped with store location.
IMPACT UPON SIGNIFICANCE: Neutral.
This is considered to exert no harm upon significance.

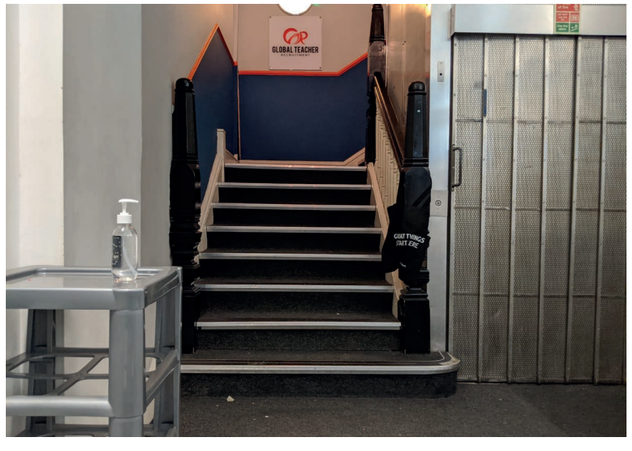


Image: Ground floor with staircase and lift (right hand side).



Image: Showing roof level.

SMOKE SHAFT: 108, 207, 307, 406
DESCRIPTION: Smoke shaft added, to run up lightwell.
IMPACT UPON SIGNIFICANCE: Minor adverse externally. The intervention alters the open spatial properties and is a visual intrusion.
MITIGATION: Alternative options were considered, included running a shaft vertically through the interior and placing duct to rear. All alternatives resulted in greater visual disturbance. The position is to the edge of the space, ensuring minimal length of ducts and existing characteristics are retained as far as possible.
JUSTIFICATION: The shaft is required as part of the fire strategy. Alternative locations are more harmful. The level of resulting harm is outweighed by lowering the risk of damage or loss of fabric as a result of fire.
DESCRIPTION: Removal of two timber framed windows per floor within the corridor (section DD). One window to be replaced with metal louvre above and blocked up below (rendered internally and externally) and one to be blocked and rendered internally and externally.
IMPACT UPON SIGNIFICANCE: Moderate adverse to windows. Removal of historic fabric and alteration of aesthetic character.
JUSTIFICATION: Due to height of neighbouring building, ducting is a requirement for fire safety. This option avoids additional openings and is justified on the basis of fire safety requirements to protect the historic asset from risk of loss as a result of fire.

SMOKE VENT: 104, 203, 303, 408
DESCRIPTION: Smoke ventilation riser with connecting louvred grille in existing timber panelled partition.
IMPACT UPON SIGNIFICANCE: Minor adverse - loss of limited section of historic partition and alteration to aesthetic character. The timber partitioning is widespread through the corridors and the section to be removed is relatively limited. Louvres are required for the fire strategy and this location is considered to be the least harmful alternative, avoiding the need for new penetrations through structural walls.
JUSTIFICATION: The harm is outweighed by limiting the potential risk of fire spread within the listed asset.

REVISED BATHROOM DESIGN: 105, 204, 304, 401, 402
DESCRIPTION: Alter plans to allow for different bathroom/WC layout.
IMPACT UPON SIGNIFICANCE: Neutral. Alterations are minor adjustments to modern partitions and room layouts.

FIRE SEPARATION/ACOUSTIC WALLS: 106, 205, 305
DESCRIPTION: Revised design to timber panelled corridor walls. Insertion of parallel walls.
IMPACT UPON SIGNIFICANCE: Neutral. Walls will provide protection from fire risk.



Image: Balustrade and moulding to be moved to edge of newly extended landing.



Image: Aerial photograph of site.

SECONDARY GLAZING: 107, 206, 306
DESCRIPTION: Lightwell secondary glazing added in order to provide adequate fire separation.
IMPACT UPON SIGNIFICANCE: Negligible – the glazing will follow the pattern of the existing and will be a reversible change. The glazing is set away from the existing and will avoid interface with the historic windows, preserving their significance.

MINOR ROOM RECONFIGURATIONS: 109, 208, 302, 308, 309, 404
DESCRIPTION: Limited alteration to designs to accommodate M + E and allow for entrance changes.
IMPACT UPON SIGNIFICANCE: Neutral.

EXISTING DOOR TO BE FASTENED SHUT: 405
IMPACT UPON SIGNIFICANCE: Neutral

FIRE SEPARATION: 201, 209, 301
DESCRIPTION: Existing doors to be retained and relocated within fire-rated partitions (new and existing).
IMPACT UPON SIGNIFICANCE: Negligible. Existing doors are of historic value and will be retained and relocated to fit within later partitions. New partitions are proposed in locations where they do not exist. The impact (to match those already approved). These measures are required to provide fire compliance.

COMMUNAL CORRIDOR: 409, 410
DESCRIPTION: Proposed extended landing and relocated balustrade to provide safe access to lift shaft.
IMPACT UPON SIGNIFICANCE: Neutral. The balustrade and decorative moulding will be carefully removed and refitted to the newly extended landing. The extension of landing size is necessary for safe access and is considered to exert no discernible harm to the significance of the building.

LIGHTWELL: 412
DESCRIPTION: Removal of existing platform and ladder.
IMPACT UPON SIGNIFICANCE: Neutral. The removed items are non-original and have no particular heritage value.

ROOF
St Margaret's is a series of four gables with corresponding pitched roofs. At roof level, to the rear of the plan and sitting behind the pitched elements is a rectangular-plan flat-roofed structure. The trapezoid shape of the building means the roof has some complexity in terms of forms and shapes. The tight knit street pattern and tall gables to the front also mean that there are very limited views of the roof from surrounding streets.

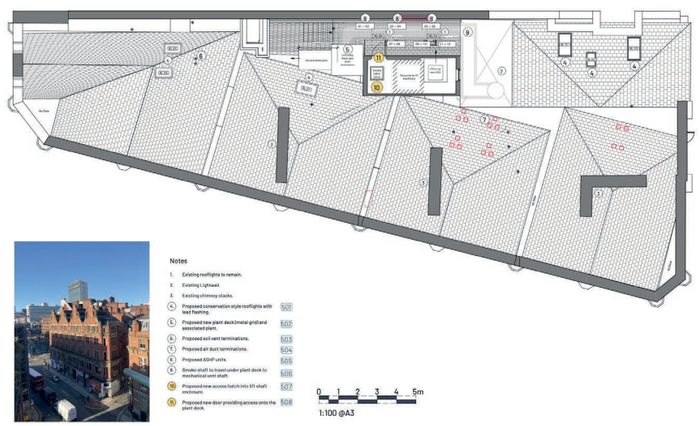


Image: Proposed roof alterations.

ROOFLIGHTS: 501

DESCRIPTION: Proposed conservation rooflights with lead flashing.

IMPACT UPON SIGNIFICANCE: Minor, adverse.

JUSTIFICATION: In order to provide natural light, 3 no. rooflights are proposed. They are to be low profile and will not cause adverse visual harm. There is a degree of fabric loss, but this is limited and is of material which makes a low contribution to significance. The changes are considered justified on the basis that they will not be visible, relate to fabric of limited architectural and historic importance and allow for a long term re-use of the building, ensuring it is protected from risk of vacancy and dereliction.

SMOKE EXTRACTION: 502, 506

DESCRIPTION: There is a requirement for a smoke extraction system for the building. A smoke shaft with automatic vent will be added to the rear of the front gables, next to the existing lift housing. Altered plant deck.

IMPACT UPON SIGNIFICANCE: Minor adverse. There is an adverse visual impact in additional kit to the roof.

MITIGATION AND JUSTIFICATION: The proposal is designed to keep the smoke shaft run to roof level, running under the plant deck to meet the mechanical vent shaft. Views to the roof are very limited from street level and the changes will not be visible from the ground, with the possible exception of a view from Back Piccadilly, which is a side route with limited pedestrian use. The proposed location is considered the least harmful alternative- running the shaft vertically internally would cause more harm. The route sits as low and discretely as possible. The duct could be removed in the future should it no longer be needed and there would be little remaining harm to fabric. The protection of the building (and its occupants) from the risk of fire damage and loss is considered to be crucial and on the basis of mitigating that risk, the level of limited visual harm caused by this change to the roofscape is considered to be justified on this basis.

DUCTS: 503 and 504

DESCRIPTION: Soil vent and air duct terminations.

IMPACT UPON SIGNIFICANCE: Negligible

These are small in size and limited in number to the minimum required. Justification is on the basis of providing a new and long term viable use for the building.

ASHP: 505

DESCRIPTION: ASHP units (indicatively shown).

IMPACT UPON SIGNIFICANCE: Negligible

These are limited in number and located to the rear of the roof, to minimise visual impact. Justification is on the basis that air source heat pumps will provide a low carbon alternative for heating, creating a sustainable benefit in the building's long term re-use.

ROOF ACCESS: 507, 508

DESCRIPTION: Lift shaft enclosure. Access hatch into lift shaft and new door to access plant deck.

IMPACT UPON SIGNIFICANCE: Neutral. There is a low level of fabric loss to create openings, but that fabric is of low heritage value.

5.0 PLANNING CONTEXT

5.0 PLANNING CONTEXT



Image: View of site from Piccadilly/Newton Street corner.

National Policy

The site is within a Conservation Area and in close proximity to a number of listed assets, which are offered a degree of statutory protection.

National policy regarding built heritage is contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Paragraph 207 states,
'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 proposal on their significance.'
This Heritage Statement meets that requirement.

Part 'a' of paragraph 210 states,
'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.

The proposals are considered to sustain the significance of the Conservation Area and the nearby listed buildings, exerting no degree of harm and enhancing the existing listed building.

Local Policy

Local policy reflects principles established in the NPPF and is contained within the Local Development Framework Core Strategy, 2012. Of particular relevance are CC9, which states that development should preserve or enhance listed assets; and EN3 which states the Council will encourage development that complements and takes advantage of historic and heritage features of neighbourhoods.

Places for Everyone is Greater Manchester's joint development plan. Policy JP-P2 relates to heritage and states that particular consideration will be given to ensuring 'the significance of key elements of the historic environment which contribute to Greater Manchester's distinct identity and sense of place are protected from harm' and that positive management and integration of heritage should be informed by 'delivering positive benefits that sustain and enhance the historic environment as well as contributing to the economic vitality, accessibility and environmental quality of a place.'

The proposals are considered to accord with local and national policy.

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.0 CONCLUSION

The proposals contained within this application have been assessed for their impact upon the architectural and historical significance of the listed asset and within the context of the Conservation Area.

The majority of the alterations are negligible or neutral in their impact, being minor changes to layouts. Those with a minor-moderate level of impact relate to the addition of shafts and vents to address requirements of fire protection.

In the scale of harm to significance of a listed asset, the bar of 'substantial harm' is very high. The proposed smoke vent changes are not considered to meet that threshold and are classed as 'less than substantial'.

The addition of the shaft to the lightwell, the associated louvred terminations within the lightwell windows and the insertion of louvred panels within the corridor partitions and the loss of a section of entrance hall stairs are considered to exert a level of less than substantial harm to heritage significance through the loss of historic fabric and altered visual appearance.

In mitigation, alternative solutions have been explored and the proposals identified as the least harmful option (see Design and Access Statement). There is a clear identified need to meet fire requirements, not only to safeguard occupants, but to mitigate the risk of substantial damage and loss of the asset in the event of a fire.

Mitigation measures to minimise the impact of changes have been demonstrated, and proposals should be balanced against the wider public benefits of the scheme. Widespread refurbishment will bring a vacant listed building, in a prominent area of Manchester city centre, back into long-term viable end use. The wider proposals will carefully repair and enhance the historic asset, retaining historic fabric and plan form across the building and provide high quality residential accommodation, offering wider sustainable benefits in line with NPPF and Places For Everyone policy. The building and Stevenson Square Conservation Area will both see significant enhancement as a direct result of the scheme. On balance, and taking into account Grade II listed status of the building, the proposals are considered to be justified.

OLD PLACES • NEW STORIES

ATELIER.MB

ARCHITECTURE + HERITAGE

AMAZON HOUSE • BRAZIL STREET
MANCHESTER • M1 3PW