LEVRANT

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325 Deansgate, Manchester – Heritage Statement: Temporary lining of Grade II Listed Castlefield Viaduct Arches.

1. Introduction & Background

This Heritage Statement has been written by Levrant, a practice of conservation architects, surveyors, planners, and heritage consultants which specialises in the historic environment, to assess the heritage impact of proposals to attach a lining system to two of the Grade II Listed Castlefield Viaduct arch structures for a temporary period of ten years in order following the completion of the consented hotel development.

The Site is located on the former site of the Poggen Pohl Kitchen Design Centre at the southern end of Deansgate, and is bound by Trafford Street to the north, Century Street to the east, Whitworth Street West and the Deansgate-Castlefield Metrolink stair and lift core to the south, and Deansgate to the west.

The Castlefield Viaduct was built in c1877 to carry twin railway tracks from ground level at Cornbrook Junction (to the south-west of the city centre) into the area of the new Central Station on Lower Mosley Street (now Manchester Central exhibition centre), and was Grade II Listed in 1988.

2. Significance Assessment

This Significance Assessment uses recognised criteria to assess the heritage significance and interest of the Site. The assessment of significance accords with the requirements of the NPPF (2025) and uses Historic England's methodology outlined in its 2019 document, 'Statements of Heritage Significance'. Historic England's 'Conservation Principles. Policies and Guidance' 2018, has also been utilised as part of the following assessment.

The key criteria for listing are special historic or architectural interest. Consequently, in order to determine the significance of a certain component of a heritage asset; the sum of its architectural, historic, artistic or archaeological interest needs to be disaggregated and determined. Consequently, the significance of a heritage asset is determined by an analysis of the relevant aspects of the following:

Archaeological interest

There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.

Architectural and artistic interest

These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skills, like sculpture.

Historic Interest

An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.

The below analysis of the significance of the Grade II Listed Castlefield Viaduct allows for an assessment of the current integrity, authenticity and sensitivity of the building and its components, which has been used to understand the building's capacity for change and thus has informed the potential impact of the current proposals. The focus is on providing a necessary and proportional amount of information in order to justify any proposed alterations, based on the perceived level of heritage significance.

The below hierarchy of significance (Table 1) is tailored to the Site to outline individual features and building elements and is not intended to be directly transferable to other listed buildings as the purpose is to disaggregate the relative value of its particular physical fabric and more intangible elements of its special interest.

Table 1: Definition of significance terms used in this report

High heritage significance relates to those components of the site deemed to be of special interest. They are important to the understanding of the site's design concept and play a considerable role in reflecting its archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic interest.

Medium heritage significance relates to those components of the site deemed to be of some interest. They will make a modest contribution to the understanding of subject site's design concept and play a minor role in reflecting its archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic interest.

Low heritage significance relates to those components of the site deemed to be of more modest interest. They make a relatively insignificant contribution to the understanding of the architectural design concept and retain a slight role in revealing the site's archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic interest.

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

3. Statement of Significance

- The special architectural and historic interest of the Castlefield Viaduct has been recognised by its Grade II listed status.
- The intrinsic architectural merit and group value of the viaduct within the multi-layered environment of the railway lines is fundamental to the significance of the structure as a whole.
- Despite the alterations to the structure, this does not adversely impact the special interest of the viaduct, and the continued use of the structure as a Metrolink Station enables the heritage values to continue to be appreciated and understood.
- The architectural form and robust expression of the viaduct yields high architectural and artistic interest due to the townscape qualities of the structure which is a dominant feature of Deansgate and Whitworth Street West. The large number of arches and span of the structure alongside the additional components, such as the Deansgate bridge, enhance the composition.
- The considerable historic interest of the viaduct is yielded by its association with the development of the railways within Manchester, which, although the original relationship with the former Central Station has been altered, the ability to appreciate and understand the structure's historical associations is still evident.
- The group value of the viaduct is of high significance. The viaduct is an integral part of the multi-layered environment of viaducts that run across Castlefield reflecting the former rail network in the area. Regarding the subject site, the adjacent listed structures associated with the Rochdale Canal are also of group value.
- Despite the standardisation of railway structures by the 1870s, the scale of the viaduct and group value, alongside the other active and redundant lines, yield considerable evidential and historical values. The viaduct illustrates the expansion of the railways in Manchester and the impact this had on technological innovation as well as economic and social spheres.

4. Assessing Heritage Impact

The fundamental Planning requirement outlined in Section 66 of the 1990 Act and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2025) states that development affecting listed buildings should result in demonstrably positive 'heritage benefits', by avoiding or minimising 'harm' to the: fabric, character, appearance and experience of the designated heritage asset.

The required tests as outlined in NPPF require that the level of "harm" is identified and weighted against the relative significance of the heritage asset in question. The significance appraisal above has identified those aspects of architectural and historic interest within the Grade II Listed building and is intended to provide a clear evidence base on which the heritage impact can be understood.

Therefore, measuring the heritage impact of the proposals is essentially an evaluation of change to the: fabric, character, and appearance of the identified heritage asset, balanced against its relative significance. Please refer to Appendix i for the criteria used in this Heritage Statement for assessing heritage impact.

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5. Heritage Impact Assessment

The Site forms two brick-built with stone dressings viaduct arches of the Grade II Listed Castlefield Viaduct, located on Deansgate, Manchester.

The Significance Assessment above has established a baseline from which the potential impact of the Proposals has been assessed.

The proposed temporary alterations to the viaduct structure have arisen from the inherent water ingress issues of a railway viaduct, which is still in active use. Issues with long standing, historic, water ingress from the track beds above the arches continue till today, which causes an ongoing, fundamental issue for their successful conversion to form part of front of house guest spaces of the hotel development of the site.

As noted above, the proposed lining system will form a temporary solution for a period of ten years, at which time adequate repair and water proofing will be enabled to halt the ingress of water from the track bed into the hotel spaces below.

Although the necessary lining system will see the original brick and stone detailing of the arch structures being concealed from view, this is mitigated by the fact the structures are still appreciable as being railway arches by their design, form and spatial qualities, which is further enhanced by the current interior design scheme.

The proposals will strive to fix the lining system to the viaduct structure using minimal fixings into mortar joints, however, in instances where fixings into existing brickwork is necessary, upon removal of the lining system these fixing locations will be repaired by isolated lime mortar repairs.

In summary, the Proposals are considered to have a temporary minor adverse impact on the special interest of the two arches of the Castlefield Viaduct, **resulting in a temporary negligible adverse impact on the special interest of the wider Grade II Listed Castlefield Viaduct as a whole. The level of harm will be 'less than substantial' and to the lowest end of the scale, and will last for a temporary period of ten years.**

As per the definition outlined in Appendix i below, a negligible adverse impact would not diminish the value of the heritage assets' significant physical fabric or significance to any appreciable degree.

This statement addresses the relevant policies within the NPPF concerned with the historic environment.

6. Appendix i - Criteria for defining the degree of physical and visual heritage impact

Table 2: Criteria for defining the degree of physical and visual heritage impact

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

Neutral Impact. *This does **not necessarily mean that there will be no physical or visual change**, rather that the resultant difference will be imperceptible or appropriately balanced.*	Development which comprises an imperceptible physical impact resulting in no apparent change or achieved by removing a component of no heritage value which detracts from the special interest of the building fabric.	Imperceptible change to the fabric and character of a designated heritage asset, or the setting of the identified designated heritage assets. A neutral impact occurs when the development does not affect the values of the heritage assets in the view, the townscape as a whole, or the ability to appreciate its significance.
Negligible beneficial impact. *The resultant difference will be imperceptible but have a positive impact on the understanding or appreciation of the heritage asset.*	Development resulting in a negligible beneficial direct impact on a designated heritage asset which results in the removal of a minor non-original fabric component which is detracts from the character and its special architectural or historic interest.	Negligible perceptible change to the character of a designated heritage asset, or the experience and understanding of its special interest. The degree of change would imperceptibly enhance the intrinsic values of the identified heritage assets, or the experience and appreciation of the buildings or the designated area.
Minor Beneficial Impact. *The proposed change would result in a demonstrable improvement to the overall character or setting of a heritage asset.*	Development resulting in alterations to a built heritage asset which deliver a minor beneficial physical impact or enhancement of the site's special interest.	Minor enhancement to the fabric and character of a designated heritage asset, or the setting of the identified designated heritage assets. Where the development enhances to a minor extent the values of the heritage assets in the view, the view as a whole, or the ability to appreciate its significance.
Moderate Beneficial Impact. The proposed change would result in a considerable improvement to the overall character and appreciation of a heritage asset with clear beneficial enhancement of its heritage values.	Development resulting in alterations to a built heritage asset resulting in moderate beneficial physical impact, or an enhancement of the site's character.	Evident improvement of the fabric and character of a designated heritage asset (or the setting of the identified designated heritage assets) resulting in an enhancement of its cultural heritage values. Moderate enhancement to the setting of the built heritage asset. Where the development will enhance to a clearly discernible extent the heritage values of the heritage assets in the view, or the view as a whole, or the ability to appreciate its significance.