JANUS
Historic Building Surveyors
& Heritage Consultants

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Tier 1: Heritage Statement

Peter House
Oxford Street
Manchester
M1 5AN

Written by:

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Constructionline
Silver Member

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1. Introduction

This report has been commissioned by CEP Telecoms Ltd to set out the significance of Peter House, Manchester and the St Peter's Square Conservation Area. It considers their significance in accordance with the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), August 2026, particularly Policies HE4, HE5 and HE6, and Policy HE9 where a Conservation Area is affected, together with relevant local planning policies contained within Manchester Core Strategy (2012).

The statement has been informed by the Historic England advice note on statements of heritage significance published 2019 and Manchester City Council's St Peter's Square: Control of Development guidance.

The Author

Hannah Beatson is a conservation surveyor at Janus Conservation with an RICS- and IHBC-accredited MSc in Historic Conservation from Oxford Brookes University, where she graduated with distinction and was awarded the Levrant Prize for Design in Conservation. She supports heritage consultancy, building surveying and conservation-led repair projects, bringing both academic expertise and practical experience of traditional materials and repair techniques.

2. Context of 'Significance'

Significance is a term used in "*Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment*" published by English Heritage in April 2008. Significance is the sum of an asset's cultural and natural heritage values and only through understanding the significance of a place is it possible to assess how the qualities that people value are vulnerable to harm and loss. *Conservation Principles* were produced primarily to help ensure consistency of approach by English Heritage (now Historic England) in carrying out their role as the Government's statutory advisor and leading expert body on the historic environment in England.

The heritage values that provide the framework for understanding of the heritage importance of a place in *Conservation Principles* are currently being updated and revised so that when describing significance, the language is more closely aligned with the terms used in the NPPF and those used in designation and planning legislation. These proposed terms are *archaeological*; *architectural*; *artistic* and *historic* and it is intended that they will be described as 'interests' rather than values going forwards.

"Significance" is not just about a building's age or its architectural grandeur. It's the sum of various heritage values - from the archaeological evidence it might contain, to its aesthetic merits, to the stories and histories it encapsulates.

Historic England's guidance on the interests laid out in Advice Note 12: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets is as follows:

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 & 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 four outlined interests (architectural, historical, archaeological and artistic) can and often do overlap. Any building, monument, site, place, area, or landscape has the potential to be a heritage asset and as sites and society evolves over time, their value and interest will also evolve. All heritage assets have significance, but this is on a sliding scale.

Designation

Where the identified heritage or cultural interest of a site meets defined criteria, it will then be eligible for designation.

Peter House is neither a designated nor non-designated heritage asset but it lies within the St Peter's Square Conservation Area and within the setting of several nationally designated assets, including the Grade II* listed Midland Hotel and Central Public Library. See Appendix A.

3. Executive Summary

Peter House is a 1958 International Modern office building by Ansell and Bailey, located within the St Peter's Square Conservation Area. It is neither a designated nor non-designated heritage asset but is considered to be of limited heritage significance, derived principally from its architectural and historic interest.

Peter House occupies a prominent position on the south-east side of St Peter's Square and forms part of the setting of several listed buildings, including the Grade II* Midland Hotel, Central Public Library and Town Hall Extension. The open form of the Square creates clear visual relationships between these buildings and allows their scale, architectural character and relationships with one another to be appreciated. Peter House also makes a limited positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

4. Conservation Area and Brief History of Development

St Peter's Square Conservation Area encompasses St Peter's Square and the surrounding streets. Its boundary extends beyond the principal civic space to include a wider group of buildings of architectural and historic interest.

The area remained largely undeveloped until the construction of St Peter's Church in 1788. It subsequently became associated with one of Manchester's most significant historic events, the Peterloo Massacre of 1819, when a large meeting calling for parliamentary reform was dispersed by troops.

During the 19th century, the area became increasingly commercial in character, accompanied by a decline in the resident population. St Peter's Church was demolished in 1907, after which St Peter's Square was established as a formal civic space.

The Square developed as a major civic and commercial space during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The Midland Hotel was constructed between 1898 and 1903, followed by the YMCA in 1909, Central Library in 1934 and the Town Hall Extension in 1938. The Cenotaph and associated memorial garden were laid out to designs by Sir Edwin Lutyens in 1924.

Peter House forms part of the later post-war development of the south-east side of the Square and was constructed in 1958. Further development occurred around the Square during the 1960s and 1970s, and the Metrolink was introduced through St Peter's Square in 1992.

The Conservation Area is characterised principally by civic buildings of substantial scale, alongside commercial development representing several periods and architectural styles.

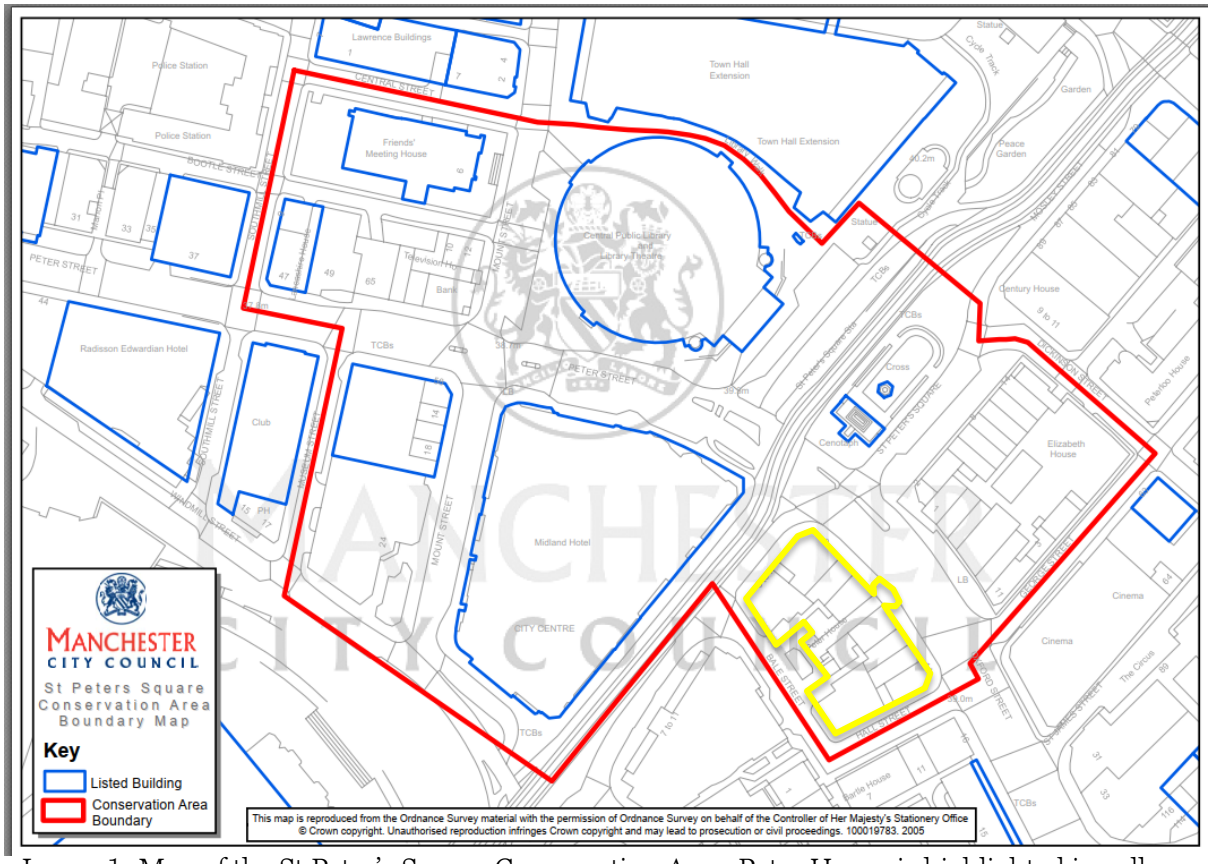


Image 1: Map of the St Peter's Square Conservation Area. Peter House is highlighted in yellow.

5. Description

Peter House

Peter House was built in 1958, replacing buildings damaged during the Second World War. It was designed by Ansell and Bailey in the International Modern style and occupies a prominent island site bounded by Oxford Street, Lower Mosley Street, Hall Street and Bale Street.

The building is a large office block with stepped massing of varying heights, rising to an 11-storey central section. Its principal elevation curves around the corner of Oxford Street and Lower Mosley Street, giving the building a distinctive street presence.

The elevations are faced in Portland stone and arranged with a regular grid of large windows. The architectural treatment is restrained, with limited applied decoration. Lower projecting ranges flank a recessed central entrance, while flat roofs are arranged at varying levels. The ground floor has modern glazed commercial frontages.





Images 2 & 3: Front & side elevations of Peter House

Midland Hotel – Grade II*

The Midland Hotel was built between 1898 and 1903 to designs by Charles Trubshaw for the Midland Railway Company. It is a large steel-framed hotel occupying an island site immediately west of Peter House.

The building is designed in an elaborate eclectic Baroque style and is faced in polished brown granite, red brick and buff and brown glazed terracotta. It has five principal storeys with attics and cellars and is arranged around an irregular pentagonal plan.

The principal Peter Street elevation is characterised by large round-headed arches, turrets, attic gables, balconies and extensive terracotta detailing. The Lower Mosley Street elevation includes curved and bow-shaped balconies.

The Midland Hotel is an early example of steel-framed construction and has historic interest as a prominent expression of the wealth and cosmopolitan character of late 19th-century Manchester.



Image 4: The Grade II* Midland Hotel, located immediately to the west of Peter House, on the opposite side of Lower Mosley Street.

Central Public Library – Grade II*

Central Public Library was built between 1930 and 1934 to designs by Vincent Harris as Manchester's central public library. It is a monumental Classical building of Portland stone, with a distinctive circular plan and concealed slate roof.

The building has four storeys, with a basement and attic, and is arranged around a central domed reading room. Its principal elevation to St Peter's Square is defined by a projecting portico with giant Corinthian columns.

External detailing includes rusticated lower storeys, a continuous Tuscan colonnade, cornices and parapet. Internally, the building is centred on the domed circular reading room, surrounded by a giant Tuscan colonnade.

Central Public Library forms a major element of the civic architecture and character of St Peter's Square.



Image 5: East elevation of the Grade II* Central Public Library which lies to the northwest of Peter House across St Peter's Square.

Princes Buildings – Grade II

Princes Buildings was built in 1903 to designs by I. R. E. Birkett as shops and offices. It has an Art Nouveau façade of pale buff brick with matching terracotta dressings.

The building is four storeys high with an attic and is arranged across eight bays. The façade is characterised by canted oriel windows, large segmental arches and extensive decorative terracotta detailing. A distinctive undulating attic parapet is punctuated by tall chimneys and open balustrades.

The building was substantially rebuilt in the late 20th century, with only the historic façade retained.



Image 6: The Grade II Princes Building, southeast of Peter House on Oxford Street with one building separating them.

Memorial Cross – Grade II

The Memorial Cross was erected around 1907 to mark the site of the former Church of St Peter, which was demolished in that year. It is a Gothic-style memorial constructed in Portland stone.

The memorial has a hexagonal stepped base and pedestal, supporting a slender clustered-column shaft and large Gothic cross. Its decorative detailing includes quatrefoils, brattishing and angels bearing shields.

Its historic interest derives principally from its association with the former church and the development of St Peter's Square. It also forms a group with the Cenotaph War Memorial.



Image 7: The Grade II Memorial Cross immediately to the northwest of Peter House

Town Hall Extension – Grade II*

The Town Hall Extension was built in 1938 to designs by Vincent Harris. It is a steel-framed civic building clad in sandstone ashlar, with steeply pitched slate roofs.

The building has eight storeys and an attic, with a large irregular plan and long concave southern elevation. Its architectural style is eclectic, incorporating Gothic detailing.

The St Peter's Square elevation is characterised by a round-arched ground-floor arcade, regular upper-floor fenestration and set-back upper storeys. Prominent stair turrets incorporate large traceried windows and statuary.

The Town Hall Extension was designed by the same architect as Central Library, with the two buildings forming a related civic composition.



Image 8: The Grade II* Town Hall extension, located to the northwest of Peter House, across St Peter's Square and adjacent to the Central Public Library.

6. Historic Map Regression

Historic maps are helpful in identifying contextual changes to heritage assets, from the wider landscape scale down to the streetscape level and even to changes in the footprint of the asset. This contributes to the understanding of character and significance.



Image 9: Extract from Ordnance Survey, Town Plan; Manchester and Salford, Sheet 33; Surveyed: 1849, Published: 1851. The site comprises a number of smaller plots; St Peter's Church lies immediately to the north.



Image 10: Extract from Ordnance Survey, 25 inches to the mile; Lancashire CIV.10; Revised: 1915 to 1916, Published: 1922. St Peter's Church has been demolished and St Peter's Square established. The Midland Hotel occupies a large site to the north-west, while the Peter House site remains divided into smaller plots.

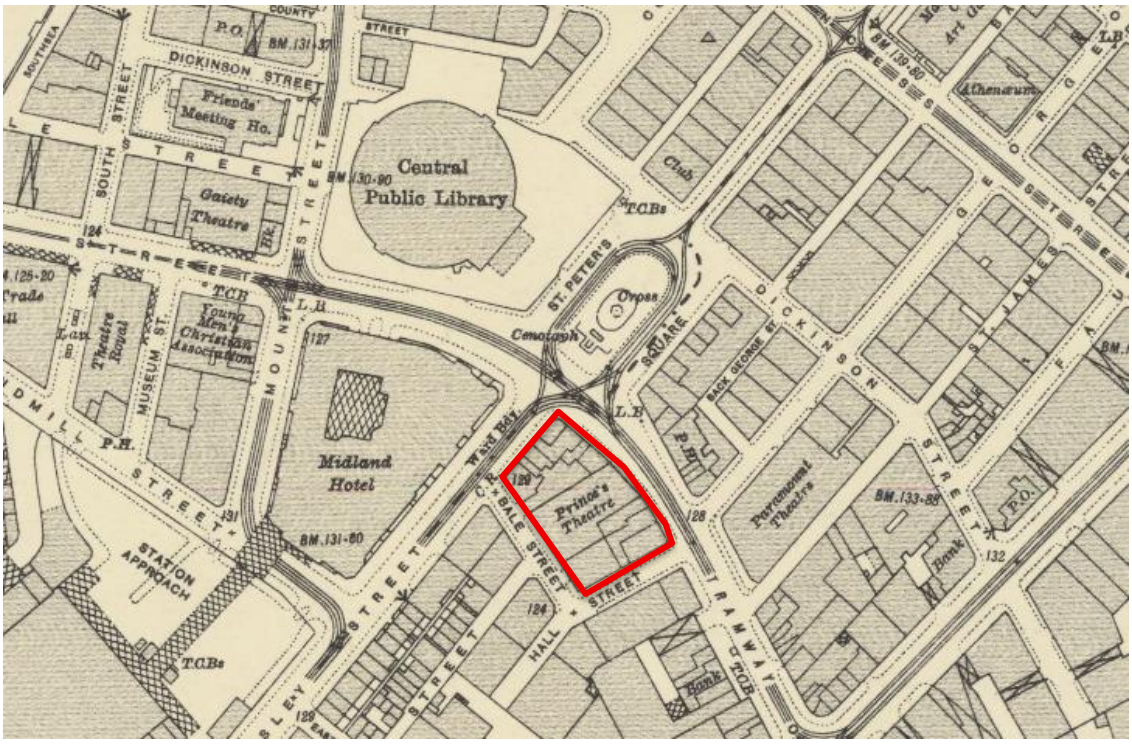


Image 11: Extract from Ordnance Survey, 25 inches to the mile; Lancashire CIV.10; Revised: 1932, Published: 1934. Central Library has been constructed to the north-west of St Peter's Square; the Peter House site remains occupied by earlier buildings.

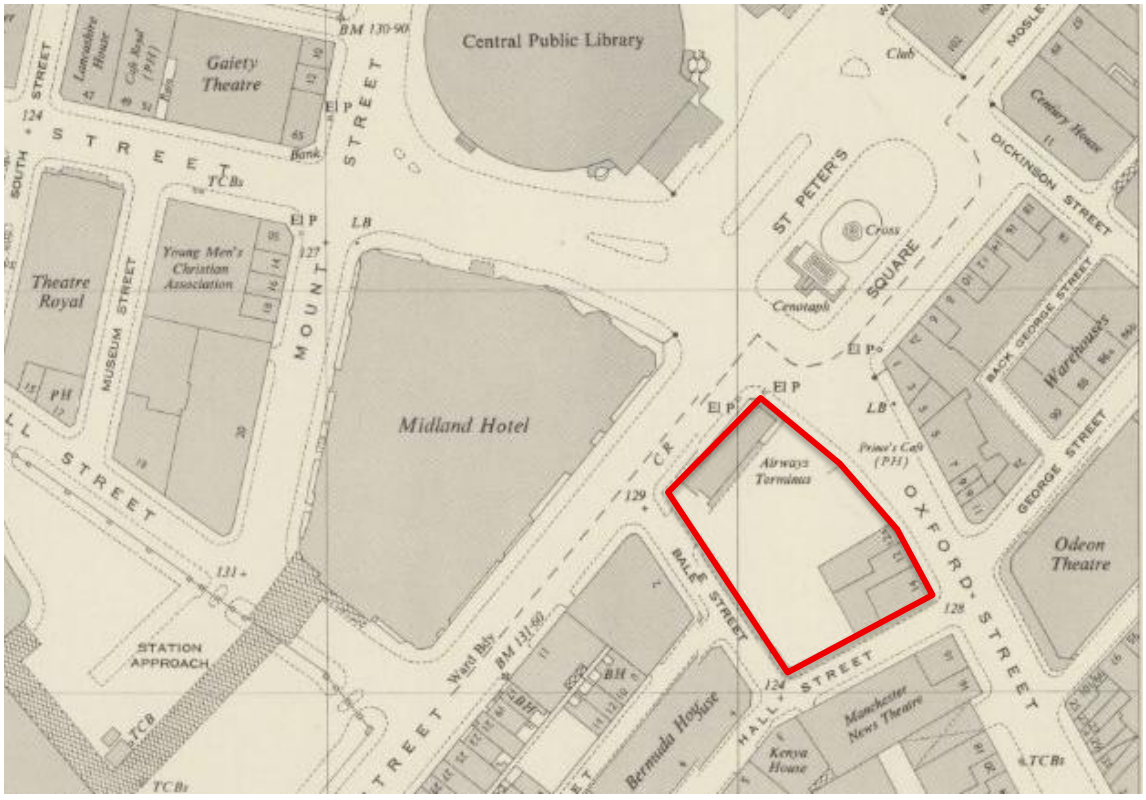


Image 12: Extract from Ordnance Survey, 50 inches to the mile; Map reference SJ8397NE – A; Surveyed: 1948, Published: ca.1949. The Peter House site has been largely cleared following wartime damage.



Image 13: Extract from Ordnance Survey, 1:1250; Map reference SJ8397NE - C
Revised: 1972, Published: 1973. Peter House now occupies the site.



Image 14: Aerial view of the site, Google Earth (2023): Peter House occupies a consolidated plot within the established urban block.

Historic mapping shows the site occupied by a number of smaller buildings and plots during the 19th and early 20th centuries. The surrounding area was progressively redeveloped with major

civic and commercial buildings, while the site itself was largely cleared following wartime damage. Peter House was constructed in 1958, consolidating the former plots into the present large building footprint.

7. Summary of Significance

Peter House

Peter House is neither a designated nor non-designated heritage asset. Its significance is limited and derives principally from its architectural and historic interest.

The building's architectural interest derives from its 1958 International Modern office design by Ansell and Bailey. Its curved form, stepped massing, regular fenestration and Portland stone facing are the principal architectural features that contribute to this interest.

Its historic interest derives from its association with the post-war redevelopment of St Peter's Square. The building reflects the later phase of development around the Square and illustrates the consolidation of earlier smaller plots into a large post-war office block.

Peter House has negligible archaeological and artistic interest. Overall, it is of limited heritage significance, derived principally from its architectural and historic interest and its contribution to the St Peter's Square Conservation Area.

St Peter's Square Conservation Area

St Peter's Square Conservation Area is of architectural interest principally because of its concentration of major civic and commercial buildings dating from the late 19th century onwards. These buildings vary in period and architectural style, but together contribute to the formal civic character of the area.

The Conservation Area also has historic interest through its association with St Peter's Church, the Peterloo Massacre and the subsequent development of the Square as a civic space.

Its character is defined by substantial buildings arranged around the open civic space of St Peter's Square. This arrangement allows the scale, architectural quality and relationships between the surrounding buildings to be appreciated.

8. Identification of Special Character and Appearance

Peter House makes a limited positive contribution to the St Peter's Square Conservation Area. Its curved form and scale help define the south-east side of St Peter's Square and contribute to the enclosure of the civic space.

The building represents the post-war phase of the area's development. Its Portland stone facing also relates visually to the established civic character of the Square, particularly the use of pale stone on several surrounding civic buildings.

Although Peter House is not of the same architectural or historic significance as the principal listed buildings around St Peter's Square, it forms part of the wider architectural and historic development of the area and contributes to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

9. Setting

Peter House occupies a prominent island site on the south-east side of St Peter's Square. Its immediate setting includes the Grade II* Midland Hotel to the west and major civic buildings around the Square, including the Grade II* Central Library and the Town Hall Extension.

The surrounding listed buildings derive significance principally from their architectural and historic interest as major late 19th- and early 20th-century civic and commercial buildings. St Peter's Square provides an important setting to these buildings, allowing their scale, architectural form and relationships with one another to be appreciated.

Peter House forms part of their wider urban setting and defines part of the south-eastern edge of the Square. The open form of St Peter's Square creates clear visual relationships between Peter House and the surrounding listed buildings, forming an important part of their wider urban setting.

10. Relevant Planning History

Unit 5 2-14 Peter House Oxford Street Manchester M1 5AN
Works: Installation of a suspended internally illuminated individual letter sign, with an internally illuminated suspended sub fascia panel, and a double sided internally illuminated projecting sign.
Ref. No: 137759/AO/2023
Valid date: 03/8/2023
Decision notice sent date: 03/10/2023
Decision: Approve

Unit 6 Peter House Ground Floor Oxford Street Manchester M1 5AN
Works: Three no. fascia signs, and 1 x external projecting box sign.
Ref. No: 124020/AO/2019
Valid date: 05/7/2019
Decision notice sent date: 30/8/2019
Decision: Approve

Peter House Oxford Street Manchester M1 5AN
Works: Installation of 4no. non illuminated high level individual letter signs.
Ref. No: 120686/AO/2018
Valid date: 14/08/2018
Decision notice sent date: 12/10/2018
Decision: Approve

Peter House Oxford Street Manchester M1 5AN
Works: Use of conference room for education use (Class D1), in addition to existing office use (Class B1), for a temporary two-year period.
Ref. No: 103723/FO/2013/C1
Valid date: 25/09/2013
Decision notice sent date: 14/11/2013
Decision: Approve

Papa Johns (GB) Ltd Unit 5 Peter House Oxford Street Manchester M1 5AN
Works: Variation of condition 3 on application reference 100044/FO/2012/C1 under section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to extend the approved opening hours of the takeaway from 10:00 to 23:00 to 10:00 to 03:00.
Ref. No: 101460/JO/2013/C1
Valid date: 09/05/2013
Decision notice sent date: 04/07/2013
Decision: Approve

Part 2nd Floor And Part 4th Floor Peter House Oxford Street Manchester M1 5AN
Works: Change of use from B1 (office) to B1 (Offices) and / or D1 (education and training facility) at part of 2nd and 4th floor level
Ref. No: 093719/FU/2010/C1
Valid date: 17/08/2010

Decision notice sent date: 12/10/2010
Decision: **Approve**

The above planning history was found through the Manchester City Council Built Environment Public Register Search: https://arcusbe.manchester.gov.uk/pr/s/register-view?c__r=Arcus_BE_Public_Register

11. Historic Environment Legislation & Policy

The legislative framework includes the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which plays a crucial role in safeguarding the historic environment and its heritage assets. Specifically, Section 16 of the Act mandates local planning authorities to give special consideration to preserving listed buildings, their surroundings, and any distinctive architectural or historical features when evaluating applications for listed building consent. Section 66 of the Act extends the same responsibility to the local planning authority when exercising their planning functions.

This statutory duty forms the foundation for the approach to the Historic Environment outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and supported by the National Planning Policy Guidance. The NPPF recognizes that protecting and enhancing the built and historical environment is vital for sustainable development's environmental aspect. The government's objective is to conserve heritage assets appropriately so that they can continue to enrich the quality of life for present and future generations.

The principles and policies outlined in Chapter 20 of the NPPF are directly tied to the responsibilities of Local Planning Authorities under the heritage-related consent regulations of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. It emphasizes that heritage assets are irreplaceable resources, and therefore, their significance must be sustained and enhanced. To achieve this, a comprehensive understanding of an asset's significance is crucial, and this understanding should guide efforts to avoid or minimize conflicts between conserving the heritage assets and proposed developments.

In cases where harm to a heritage asset cannot be avoided, it must be thoroughly and convincingly justified. The more extensive the harm, the stronger the justification required. Additionally, substantial weight should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets, with greater weight given to assets of greater importance.

12. Appendix A: Conservation Area Map

MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

St Peters Square Conservation Area Boundary Map

Key

- Listed Building
- Conservation Area Boundary

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13. Appendix B: Sources

- Historic Environment Record - https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/information-management/hers/
- The Heritage Gateway - https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/
- Historic England List Entry - https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/map-search/
- National Library of Scotland (Maps) - https://maps.nls.uk/
- Manchester City Council, St Peter's Square Conservation Area - https://www.manchester.gov.uk/parks-leisure-and-the-arts/parks-playgrounds-allotments-and-open-spaces/conservation-areas/introduction9/st-peters-square-and-its-buildings-today
- Manchester City Council Core Strategy – 2012 – 2027 - https://www.manchester.gov.uk/planning-and-regeneration/planning/core-strategy-2012-2027
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