evoke

Methodology Statement · Condition 4

Exploratory Lifting Of Raised Access Flooring And Investigation For Parquet Flooring.

Seventh & Eighth Floors, Sunlight House
Quay Street, Manchester M3 3LF
Manchester City Council · Listed Building Consent 145027/LO/2026

Issue

August 2026 · Rev V2

Submitted in support of

Application for the discharge of Condition 4 attached to the above listed building consent. Prepared by Evoke Architecture on behalf of the applicant and issued to the Council for written approval prior to any works commencing on site.

01 Introduction & Purpose.

1.1 This methodology statement has been prepared by Evoke Architecture on behalf of the client in support of an application to discharge Condition 4 of Listed Building Consent 145027/LO/2026, granted 19 March 2026 by Manchester City Council ("the Council").

1.2 It describes the method by which the existing raised access flooring on the Seventh and Eighth Floors of Sunlight House will be lifted, in controlled and limited stages, in order to establish whether historic parquet flooring survives beneath and, if so, to record its extent and condition. Sunlight House is included in the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, and the consent was granted for internal alterations to the Seventh and Eighth Floors.

1.3 The works covered by this statement are **exploratory and investigative only**. No removal, alteration, cleaning, refinishing or making good of any historic floor finish is proposed or authorised under this statement.

1.4 The statement is written generically and applies to whichever contractor is appointed to carry out the works. The appointed contractor will confirm in writing, before starting on site, that it has read, understood and will work strictly in accordance with this statement.

1.5 It is to be read in conjunction with the contractor's risk assessment and method statement (RAMS), the site asbestos register and the drawings listed at Condition 2 of the consent (received 23 January and 13 March 2026). Where the two documents describe the same operation, the more onerous requirement applies.

02 The Condition.

> Condition 4 · as worded on the decision notice
>
> *Notwithstanding the details as set out in condition 2 above, prior to any works to expose the parquet flooring on floors 7 and 8, a detailed methodology statement for the protection and restoration of the historic fabric shall be submitted and approved by the City Council as Local Planning Authority. For the avoidance of doubt, this shall include: details of methods and equipment used for careful removal of raised access floor; details of methods and equipment used for restoration and protection of historic parquet flooring. The approved details shall be implemented as part of the development.*

2.1 This document is submitted as the written methodology required by the condition. No lifting of the raised access floor will take place until the Council has confirmed its approval of this statement in writing.

2.2 Any variation to the approved methodology will be agreed in writing with the Council before it is implemented, and this statement re-issued at the next revision.

03 Guiding Principles.

Minimum intervention	Only the smallest area necessary to answer the question will be opened up. Works proceed progressively, in small controlled sections, and stop as soon as sufficient information has been obtained.
Hand methods only	No mechanical breakers, impact tools, abrasive grinding equipment, heat or chemical strippers will be used at any stage. Removal is by hand tools alone.
Reversibility	Nothing is done that cannot be undone. Any material lifted is retained, labelled and stored for reinstatement; no historic fabric leaves site.
Presumption to retain	Any historic fabric encountered is presumed to be of significance and is retained in situ unless and until the Council agrees otherwise in writing.
Recorded throughout	A dated photographic record is taken before, during and on completion of every stage, as set out at Section 8.
Supervised	Works are carried out by operatives experienced in works to historic buildings, under the direct supervision of the site manager, who holds a copy of this statement on site at all times.

04 Preparation, Access & Protection.

4.1 Attend site induction and receive a briefing on site rules, access arrangements, emergency procedures, conservation sensitivities and listed building requirements before any works commence.

4.2 Consult the site asbestos register before any opening up. Where the register is silent on the floor construction, or the finish is of a type or age that could contain asbestos, works do not begin until the material has been sampled and cleared by a competent person.

4.3 Establish and segregate the work area with barriers and signage to prevent unauthorised access and to protect surrounding finishes and occupied areas from disturbance.

4.4 Protect adjoining historic fabric — skirtings, door thresholds, joinery, plasterwork and adjacent floor finishes — with breathable protective sheeting and boarding, fixed without adhesives or mechanical fixings into historic surfaces.

4.5 Carry out an initial visual inspection of the raised access flooring, perimeter details and surrounding finishes to record any existing defects, movement, instability or damage before uplift begins.

4.6 Confirm and agree the specific exploratory areas to be opened up, marked on a floor plan, with the client and the architect. The agreed plan forms the limit of the works; no area outside it is opened up.

05 Lifting The Floor & Exposing The Substrate.

Each step is completed and recorded before the next begins. Section 6 applies from the moment any parquet, or evidence of parquet, is seen.

5.1 Inspect perimeter details, movement joints and exposed edges to identify safe starting points that reduce the risk of damaging any flooring beneath. Start at an edge or an existing opening in preference to breaking into the middle of a bay.

5.2 Lift raised access floor panels individually by hand, using suction lifters or panel lifting tools, and set them aside in numbered order for reinstatement. Do not lever panels against the substrate below.

5.3 Where pedestals are bonded to the floor below, cut the pedestal above the base plate and leave the base plate in place for the time being. Base plates are removed only once the material beneath has been identified and, where that material is parquet, only in accordance with Section 6.

5.4 Lift floor coverings and finishes above the suspected parquet using controlled hand methods only — floor scrapers, broad-bladed hand tools and pry tools — separating finishes gently, without excessive force or sudden impact.

5.5 Loosen and remove adhesives, screeds, boarding and other intermediary materials gradually and by hand, to minimise the risk of gouging, splitting, chipping or disturbing anything beneath.

5.6 Do not use mechanical breakers, impact tools, abrasive grinding equipment or any aggressive removal method. The purpose is to reveal what is present while preserving the integrity and condition of any historic material found.

5.7 Work incrementally. Reveal further area only in small stages using fine hand tools and controlled techniques; large-scale removal in a single operation is not permitted.

5.8 Do not lever directly against the edges of any timber blocks, or apply concentrated force to individual blocks, so as to minimise the risk of cracking, lifting, delamination or edge damage.

5.9 Remove loose debris, dust and residue with soft hand tools and vacuum extraction. No water, solvents or chemical cleaners are to be applied to exposed historic flooring at any stage.

5.10 Record each opened area on the floor plan as work proceeds, noting the build-up found, its depth and condition.

06 In The Event Parquet Flooring Is Discovered.

Key provision · stop and agree

In the event that parquet flooring, or evidence of parquet flooring, is discovered beneath the raised access floor or its substrate, **works in that area will pause immediately at the point of discovery**. No further lifting, cleaning, exposure or removal will be carried out until the extent of exposure and any repair or making good has been submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the Council.

6.1 On discovery, operatives down tools in that area and notify the site manager, who informs the client and the architect the same day. Adjacent areas already opened may be made safe, but no further exposure takes place.

6.2 The discovery is protected in place: loose debris carefully removed by soft brush or vacuum, the area covered with breathable protective sheeting and boarding, and barriers set to keep foot traffic, plant and materials off the flooring.

6.3 A photographic record of the discovery is taken in accordance with Section 8 and issued to the Council within [5] working days, together with a short written note describing the location, apparent extent, block pattern, species where identifiable, construction and condition of the flooring found, and its position marked on the floor plan.

6.4 A proposal is then submitted to the Council setting out (i) the extent of further exposure considered necessary and why, (ii) the method to be used, (iii) any repair, consolidation or making good proposed, and (iv) how the flooring will be protected for the remainder of the works.

6.5 Works recommence in that area only on written confirmation from the Council, and then strictly within the agreed extent. Where the Council requires any variation, this statement is revised, re-issued and briefed to all operatives by toolbox talk before works restart.

6.6 Where an officer of the Council wishes to inspect the discovery on site, reasonable access will be given and works in that area will remain paused until the inspection has taken place.

6.7 The same procedure applies to any other previously unrecorded historic fabric or finish encountered — for example mosaic, tile, boarded floors, joists or vaults of interest — whether or not it is parquet.

07 Handling & Temporary Storage.

7.1 Blocks are lifted only where they are already loose or detached, or where temporary uplift has been agreed with the Council under Section 6. Uplift is by fine hand tools and controlled manual technique, block by block.

7.2 Uplifted blocks are numbered and their position recorded on a setting-out plan or by keyed photograph so that they can be returned to their original location.

7.3 Material is handled carefully at all times and is never thrown, dropped or stacked loosely. It is placed gently into designated protected storage away from active work zones and access routes.

7.4 Blocks are stacked in small stable quantities on protective sheeting or boards, kept dry, ventilated and out of direct heat, and are not to be exposed to wetting, frost or rapid drying.

7.5 No historic material is disposed of, cut down, cleaned back or removed from site. All salvaged material remains the property of the client and is retained for reinstatement.

08 Photographic Record.

8.1 A photographic record is taken at every stage: general views of each area before any disturbance; the floor build-up as it is opened; each stage of exposure; anything found; any damage or defect; the protection measures installed; and the area on completion.

8.2 Photographs are digital, date-stamped, taken in adequate task lighting, and include both a general view establishing location and close-ups. A scale rule or ranging rod is included wherever extent, dimension or block size is being shown.

8.3 Each photograph is numbered and cross-referenced to a marked-up floor plan showing the camera position and the area recorded.

8.4 The record is compiled into a written photographic report and issued to the Council on completion of the investigation, in support of the discharge of Condition 4. Where parquet is discovered, an interim record is issued at the point of discovery under clause 6.3 rather than held to the end.

8.5 Original unedited files are retained by the client and made available to the Council on request. Images are not cropped, retouched or colour-adjusted beyond exposure correction.

09 Restoration & Protection Of Exposed Parquet.

Submitted in response to the second limb of Condition 4. The methods below are the intended approach; the extent to which each is applied, and the extent of any repair, will be agreed with the Council under Section 6 before it is carried out.

9.1 Cleaning is dry and minimal in the first instance: soft brush and vacuum extraction to remove dust and loose debris. Residual adhesive, bitumen or screed is eased off by hand with fine scrapers and hand tools, working with the grain and never below the wearing surface.

9.2 No water washing, steam, solvents, chemical strippers, heat or abrasive machinery is used. Sanding, planing or mechanical levelling of the parquet is not proposed and will not be carried out without the Council's prior written agreement.

9.3 Loose or lifted blocks are re-bedded in their recorded positions using a reversible adhesive compatible with the timber and the substrate. Sound blocks that are firmly bedded are left undisturbed.

9.4 Losses and gaps are made good with salvaged blocks recovered from the same floor wherever possible. Where new timber is unavoidable it will match the existing in species, grain, block size, pattern and finish, and a sample will be submitted to the Council for approval before use. Patch repairs are set out to read as part of the original pattern.

9.5 Where the substrate is uneven, deteriorated or damp, the cause is investigated and reported before any re-laying; blocks are not re-bedded onto a defective base.

9.6 Any surface finish — wax, oil or comparable breathable treatment — is applied only if agreed with the Council, and only after a trial panel in an inconspicuous area has been inspected and accepted.

9.7 Exposed parquet is protected for the remainder of the construction works by breathable sheeting overlaid with hardboard or similar impact-resistant boarding, taped only to itself and never to the timber, with joints lapped and edges dressed up at skirtings.

9.8 No plant, wheeled access equipment, scaffold, material storage, cutting, wet trades or hot works are permitted over protected parquet. Protection is inspected weekly and after any incident, and repaired immediately where displaced.

9.9 Protection remains in place until practical completion and is removed only in the presence of the site manager, with the floor inspected and photographed immediately afterwards.

10 Stop Work.

Works cease immediately, and the area is made safe and secured, on any of the following:

Discovery	Parquet flooring, or any other previously unrecorded historic fabric or finish, is encountered — see Section 6.
Damage	Damage occurs, or is at risk of occurring, to historic fabric — including cracking, splitting, delamination or edge loss.
Suspect material	Material that may contain asbestos, or any other hazardous substance not identified in the register, is exposed.
Instability	Structural movement, deflection, decay or instability is observed in the floor structure or supporting fabric.
Deviation	The works cannot be carried out as described, or the method proves inadequate to protect the fabric or the operatives.

10.1 The site manager notifies the client and the architect on the day, and the Council where the matter affects listed fabric or the approved methodology.

10.2 Works do not restart until the cause has been resolved, this statement has been amended and re-approved where necessary, and the change has been communicated to every operative involved by toolbox talk.

11 Protection, Reinstatement & Reporting.

11.1 On completion of each day's work the opened area is left covered, protected and secured; no area is left open and unprotected overnight.

11.2 Where nothing of interest is found, the raised access floor is reinstated using the panels lifted, in their original positions, and the area handed back clean.

11.3 A short investigation report — findings, marked-up plan, photographic record and any recommendations — is issued to the Council on completion in support of the discharge of Condition 4.