Manchester Art Gallery - Athenaeum

Heritage Impact Assessment

Buttress

September 2026



Version history

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01	Sept 26	Drafting	Hannah Bellerby | Senior Architect	Drafting
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1 Introduction



1.0 Introduction

This Heritage Assessment has been prepared to support the application for Planning and Listed Building Consent for proposed works to the Grade II* listed Athenaeum (i.e. the 'Site'). The following report provides an understanding of the heritage significance of the asset and assess the potential impacts of the proposed development on this significance.

This Assessment has been prepared as acknowledgement of the Site's Grade II* listed status and location within the George Street Conservation Area. The application for listed building consent addresses the Grade II* listed Athenaeum exclusively.

1.1 Project Context

The objective of this security enhancement work package is to deliver essential internal and external infrastructure upgrades that ensure the continued safe, secure, and efficient operation of the gallery. This phase of work is part of a broader multi-year capital improvement programme and focuses on critical systems and internal elements that directly impact the gallery's ability to function as a public cultural institution.

The works include the installation of a new IP-based CCTV system across all levels of the gallery, from basement to third floor and associated works including external lighting, public address, panic alarms and disabled refuges.

NOTE: The proximity of the Athenaeum to the adjoining Grade I listed Art Gallery is also acknowledged. The impact of the proposals on the Art Gallery building is included within a separate heritage assessment report.

1.2 Wider Refurbishment Works

The proposed works pertaining to this application follow on from an initial wider programme of refurbishment works undertaken at the gallery in 2024-2025. These works addressed significant problems with water ingress, and improved several of the gallery's facilities. The following planning and listed building consent applications were submitted as part of these works:

- Ref: 144501/VO/2025

Installation of replacement loading bay doors to George Street elevation

- Ref: 140131/VO/2024 & 141639/JO/2024

Internal and external alterations to create secure art store.

- Ref: 138717/LO/2023

Listed Building Consent for the installation of waterproofing system to perimeter walls within basement store areas, removal of coating to external walls, replacement of existing timber floor with concrete slab, drainage improvement works to adjacent lightwells

Status: Approved, Not Yet Implemented

- Ref. 137015/LO/2023

Listed building consent for the replacement of the glazed roof lantern to central entrance foyer.

Status: Approved, implemented

- Ref: 136235/LO/2023

Listed Building Consent for internal and external works comprising repair and renewal of waterproofing system to floor by Atrium entrance and exit doors, refurbishment of staff room, toilets and gallery ceiling and installation/ reprogramming of internal phone/ communication lines.

Status: Approved, implemented

1.3 Methodology

1.3.1 Guidance + Policy

The following assessment has been written in accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2026 and Planning Practice Guidance.

As required by Policy HE5 of the NPPF, the following report describes the significance of the heritage assets relevant to this application, accompanied by an assessment of the potential effects of the proposals on their significance. The detail of this assessment is required to be 'proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.' Where impacts are considered, all assessments are carried out in line with the requirements of Policies HE4 – HE10.

The report also follows best practice guidance, including Historic England's Statements of Heritage Significance (2019), Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 - The Setting of Heritage Assets (2017), Conservation Principles, Policies & Management for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment (2008), and where relevant, CIfA's Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-based Assessment (2014) and BS7913 - British Standards Guide to the Conservation of Historic Buildings.

1.3.2 Research + Approach

This report has been written in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (2024), Historic England's Statements of Heritage Significance (2019), and Conservation Principles, Policies & Management for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment (2008), and BS7913 - British Standards Guide to the Conservation of Historic Buildings.

The Historic Environment Record (HER) has been consulted as standard and the results of the HER search have been used to inform the contents of the report.

1.3.3 Scope + Limitations

The physical boundary of the project is outlined in 1.4 Location and Description

1.4 Authorship & Ownership

This document has been prepared by Hannah Bellerby, Senior Architect and Freya Needham MA, Senior Heritage Consultant at Buttress, and reviewed by Jenna Johnston MA (Hons) MSc IHBC, Associate Director, Heritage Consultanty at Buttress.

1.5 Location and Description

Manchester Art Gallery is situated in the heart of the city centre. It is bounded by Mosley Street, which is the site's principal entrance, Princess Street, George Street, and Nicholas Street. It occupies a whole city block, without direct neighbours. The Art Gallery is composed of 3 connected buildings, with the City Art Gallery facing onto Mosley Street, The Athenaeum along Princess Street and the later extension, connecting the two.

1.6 Use & Management

Manchester Art Gallery is the city art gallery, with the Athenaeum serving as an annex following a previous remodelling. Both buildings are owned by Manchester City Council, and are currently in use and open to the public.

Figure 1 Location Plan

Site Boundary



Athenaeum

2 Understanding the Heritage

2.0 Understanding the Heritage

2.1 Designations

2.1.1 Listed Buildings + Structures

The Athenaeum is Grade II* Listed Building, designated in 1974 - list Entry number is 1270889.

The Athenaeum also adjoins the Manchester Art Gallery building which is Grade I Listed, designated in 1952 - list Entry number is 1282980.

2.2 Conservation Area

The Site is located within the George Street Conservation Area. It also sits within close proximity to the Whitworth Street and Princess Street Conservation Area, St Peter's Square Conservation Area, Albert Square Conservation Area, and Upper King Street Conservation Area.

The George Street Conservation Area connects several central areas of Manchester city centre. Dating back to the Georgian period when its grid street patterns were formed, its growth centred on cultural and scientific progress throughout the 19th century, with the Manchester Institute of Fine Arts and Athenaeum built in the 1830s.

The area saw residential decline to clear the path for industrial growth throughout the Industrial Age, before encountering a lull with the decline of the cotton industry by the mid-20th century.

Throughout the latter half of the 20th century growth picked up again with the development of 'Chinatown', still popular today as the area continues to attract residential growth.

2.3 History + Development

2.3.1 Construction + Early History

The main gallery building was constructed between 1824 and 1835, designed by Sir Barry Charles, for the Royal Manchester Institution learned society.

The Manchester Art Gallery provides the following summary of it's history:

Following the rapid development of Manchester as an industrial city... '*...a small group of reformers pushed for the creation of a free public art gallery. Inspired by Ruskin, it was intended to provide a refuge from the toxic effects of life and work in an industrial city, to provide respite and moral education for the city's working classes through exposure to beauty.The members of the Royal Manchester Institution for the Promotion of Literature, Science and the Arts offered its building to house the new gallery, and its own collection of 150 artworks – mostly paintings, works on paper and sculpture – to start it off. The RMI had been established in 1823 to counteract Manchester's widely held reputation as a place of commercial philistinism.*

Its Mosley Street building, designed by Charles Barry in the Greek Revival style, opened in 1835, housing concerts, lectures, a growing art collection and the newly founded School of Design, later to become the Manchester School of Art. Visitors to the RMI were welcome, on payment of a 6d entrance fee. By 1882, however, the Institution's finances were in decline and this essentially private enterprise was given over to the city, on condition that the Manchester Corporation spend a minimum of £2000 per year for the next 20 years purchasing new work for the collection. Manchester City Art Gallery duly opened in January 1883, offering free entry for all.[i]

The Athenaeum building was constructed between 1836 and 1837 as a cultural club, and was later added to the gallery complex in 1838 to provide additional exhibition space.

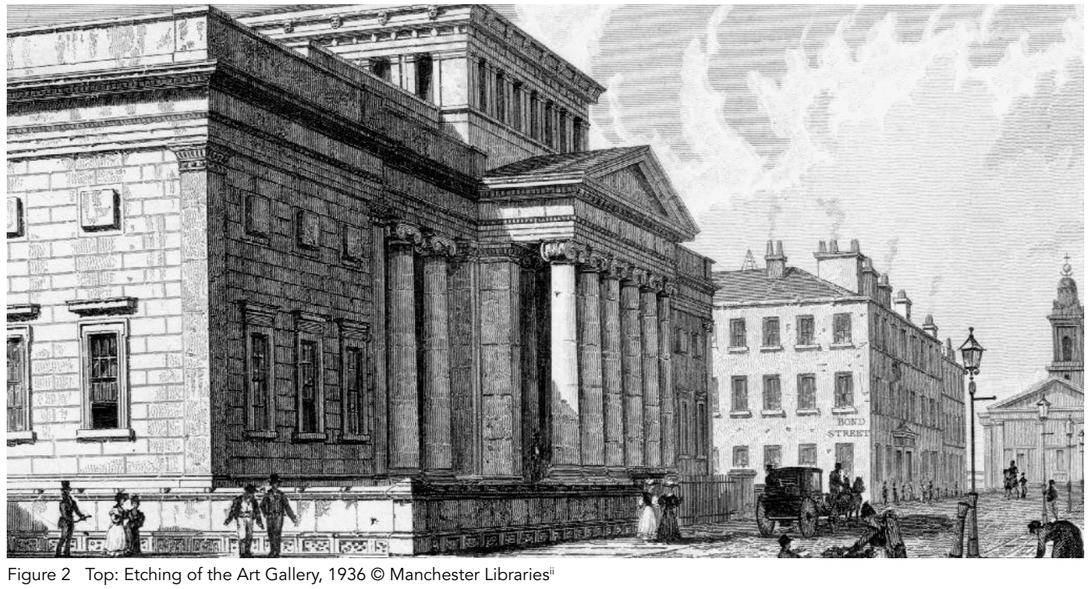


Figure 2 Top: Etching of the Art Gallery, 1936 © Manchester Libraries[ii]



Figure 3 Bottom: Athenaeum Building, 1895 © Manchester Libraries[iii]

Athenaeum

2.3.2 20th Century

During the 20th Century the Art Gallery grew in popularity as the collection continued to expand.

In 1913, the Manchester Art Gallery was the subject of an attack by the Suffragettes. This was the first attack on artwork by the group.

On 3 April 1913 Lillian Forrester and Evelyn Manesta were discovered smashing the glass of paintings in Room 2. Thirteen pictures by artists such as Millais, Burne-Jones and Rossetti received damage estimated at over £100 in total.

Forrester (who had a previous arrest) and Manesta were both associated with the militant suffrage organisation the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), formed in Manchester by Emmeline Pankhurst in 1903. In court they explained that they were acting in protest at a recent prison sentence given to Mrs Pankhurst for her own suffragette militancy. While in prison, Forrester and Manesta were covertly photographed using new surveillance cameras and the pictures were circulated to art galleries across Britain to prevent further attacks. Despite this, other women followed their example and there were a spate of similar suffragette strikes on art galleries and museums the following year.[iv]



Figure 4 Group of Suffragettes: Annie Briggs, Evelyn Manestra, Lillian Forrester, 1913 © Manchester Libraries[v]

2.3.3 Later History + The Gallery Today

In 1994 RIBA Competitions launched a design competition to refurbish the existing buildings and join the main gallery with the Athenaeum building with a new link block, on the site of the existing car park.

The competition was won by Michael Hopkins and Partners, and the gallery was closed in 1998 for construction. Following the £35 million development, the gallery reopened in 2002.

The Gallery collection continues to expand, currently holding over 46,000 objects, including:

- 13,000 items of fine art
- 13,000 design and craft objects
- 21,000 items of clothing[vi]

The museum is open to the public Tuesday - Sunday, and offers free entry to all visitors.

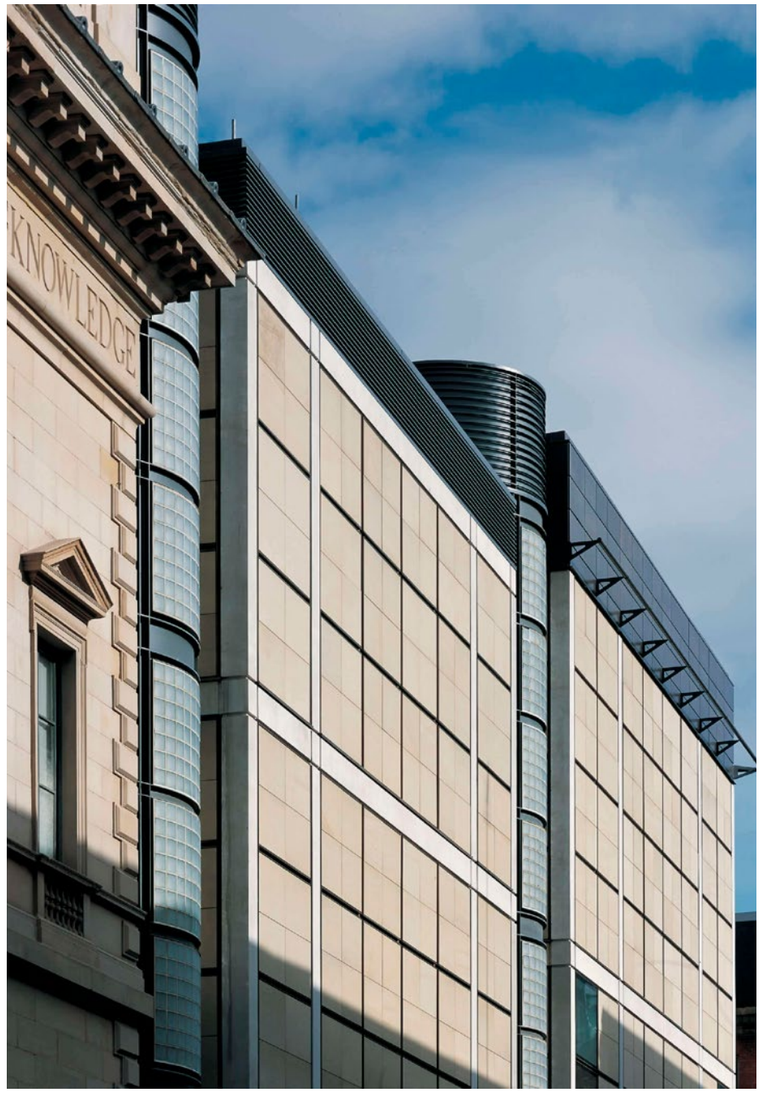


Figure 5 2002 Extension, Exterior © Hopkins Architects[vii]



Figure 6 2002 Extension, Interior © Hopkins Architects[viii]

3 Assessment of Significance



3.0 Assessment of Significance

Following guidance outlined in Historic England's Conservation Principals, Policies and Guidance (2008), along with the more recent Historic England Advice Note 12 Statements of Historic Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets.

The level of significance will be assessed based on the scale below:

Levels of Significance

Exceptional	Heritage interests having national or international importance, usually found where assets are designated at Grade II*, Grade I, Scheduled Monuments.
High	Heritage interests having national importance, usually found where assets are designated at Grade II*.
Medium	Heritage interests having regional importance, usually found where assets are designated Grade II. Also, generally applies to Conservation Areas.
Low	Heritage interests that make a positive contribution to their area, group or setting. Usually, Non-Designated Heritage Assets and historic townscapes.
Neutral	Historically unimportant.

Understanding of significance is broken down into the following categories:

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.

Significance of Manchester Art Gallery

3.1 Archaeological Interest

There are no significant archaeological finds or excavation sites associated with the Manchester Art Gallery site or Athenaeum building itself. The building was originally constructed in the early 19th century, and while it has undergone several renovations and extensions, there are no indications that any significant archaeological remains were encountered during these works.

Nonetheless, the city centre has a rich archaeological resource, with evidence of human activity dating back to prehistory, and the potential for archaeological activity should be considered more closely when it is deemed necessary.

The archaeological interest of the site is **low.**

3.2 Architectural and Artistic Interest

Architecturally, the Athenaeum is a exceptionally high-quality example of Victorian Neo-Renaissance design. Constructed in the 1830s, the building hosts a striking facade featuring moulded cornice and inscribed frieze. Over the years, the building has undergone several extensions and renovations, most notably following the fire in 1874, with the most recent being completed in 2002.

3.2.1 Sir Charles Barry

The Gallery building and the Athenaeum both hold architectural interest due to their association with architect Sir Charles Barry. Barry was, and still is, nationally renowned for his work including major projects such as the rebuilding of the Houses of Parliament, including the design of the Elizabeth Tower (Big Ben), the remodelling of Trafalgar Square, and the remodelling of numerous significant stately homes such as Highclere Castle, Cliveden House, and Trentham Hall. The Athenaeum is a fine example of his work.

3.2.2 Style and Form

The Athenaeum, constructed in the Italian Palazzo style, was the first of its kind in the city and paved the way for the design of many of the city's industrial and civic buildings in this style[ix]. The building is of exceptional material quality and makes a positive contribution to its setting.



Figure 7 Sir Charles Barry, photographed by John Watkins[x]

3.2.3 Collections

In addition to its impressive architecture, the Manchester Art Gallery is known for its diverse collection of art and artefacts, ranging from pre-Raphaelite paintings to contemporary installations. The collections stored in the Athenaeum includes works by many renowned artists, including LS Lowry and Adolphe Valette. The second floor is home to the design gallery containing various significant furniture, ceramics and fashion designs.

Overall, the architectural and artistic interest of the site is **exceptional.**



Figure 8 Design gallery Interior © Manchester Art Gallery[xi]

3.3 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.

3.3.1 Communal Value

The building was used first as a cultural club formed by the Manchester Athenaeum (a society for the "advancement and diffusion of knowledge") at a time when Manchester was a thriving industrial city, with the intention of promoting education in the city for the benefit of it's people.

Since it's opening, the Athenaeum has acted as a place of social and cultural interaction and reflection. The building will hold memories and meaning for many of its visitors, not only due to associations with the building itself but also in association with the collections the galleries hold.

3.3.2 Cultural Value

Incorporated into the gallery complex in 1938 the Athenaeum shares much of the historic and cultural interest as the Grade I Art Gallery building to which it is connected. Throughout its later history, it housed offices, conservation studios, meeting rooms, and spaces for various cultural and intellectual events. The Athenaeum played a significant role in the intellectual and cultural life of Manchester during the 19th century and beyond with it's aim to promote and enable learning amongst the general public.

Since becoming part of the art gallery it has hosted numerous exhibitions and events, showcasing the work of both local and international artists. The gallery as a whole has been instrumental in promoting the city's artistic heritage, particularly in the fields of painting and sculpture.

3.3.3 Political History

The Athenaeum has been involved in many social and political movements throughout its history, both national and international. In September 1859, for example, African American abolitionist campaigner Sarah Parker Remond spoke at the Athenaeum to appeal to mill owners and cotton workers to garner support for the US anti-slavery movement.

Overall, the Manchester Art Gallery has played an essential role in the cultural, social, and political life of Manchester and the UK. Its history is closely linked with the city's development, and it continues to be an important cultural institution.

The historic interest of the site is **high.**

3.3.4 Summary

The Athenaeum's significance is considered to be **high** as evidenced by its designation at Grade II*.

Together, the buildings demonstrate historical and evidential value through their physical form, architectural detailing and aesthetic style. The buildings also possess cultural and communal value through their long-standing relationship with the city and as a publicly accessible art gallery



Figure 9 Former dining room located in the Athenaeum basement, 1901 © Manchester Libraries[xii]



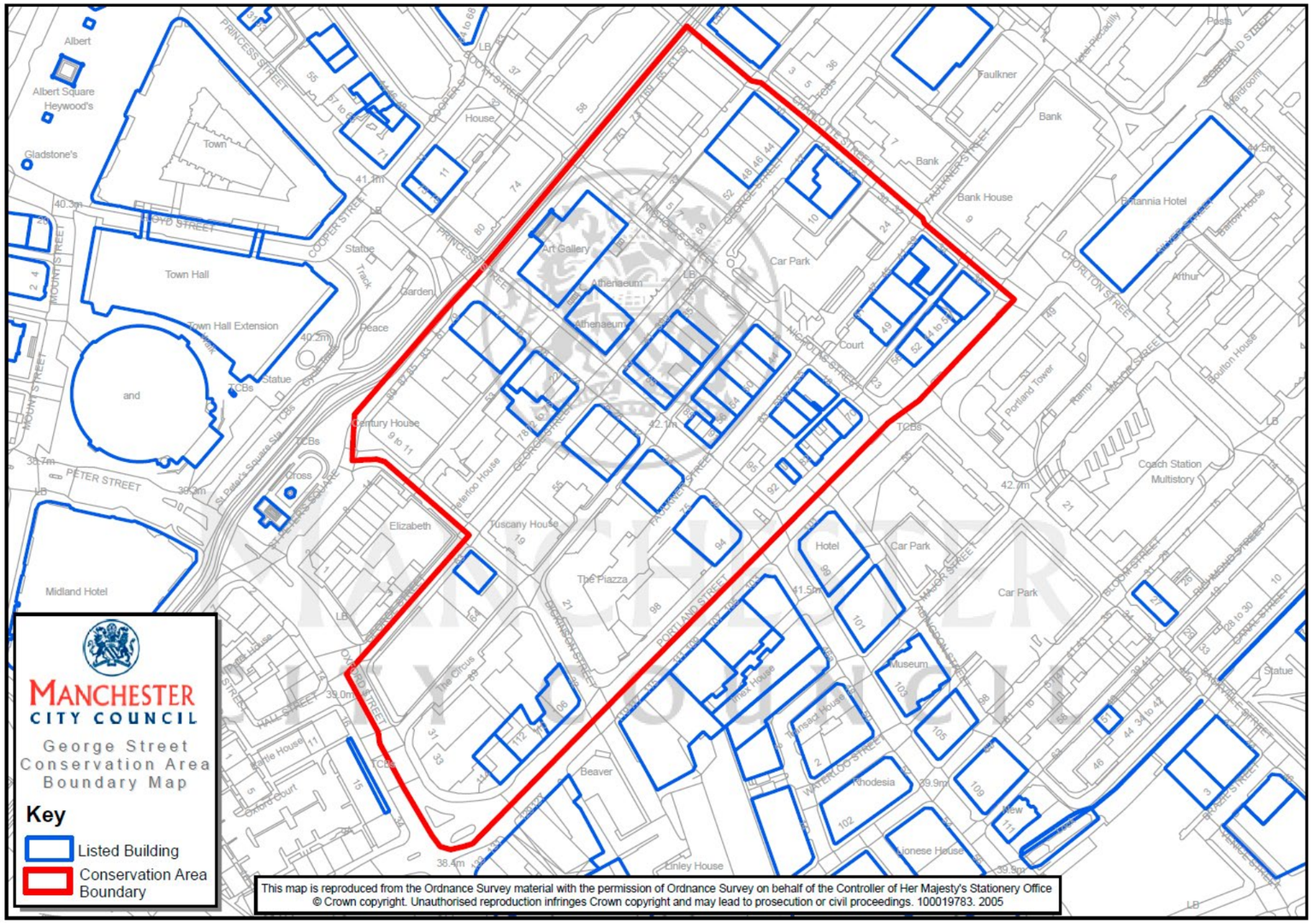
Figure 10 View from the corner of Princess and George Street, 1866 © Manchester Libraries[xiii]

3.4 George Street Conservation Area

The George Street Conservation Area is considered to be of high significance as a prominent central area within Manchester area city centre, retaining strong evidential and historical value of its Georgian formation and subsequent economic development.

George Street is a busy commercial district with a range of building uses including retail, food and beverage, banking and residential. The conservation area also incorporates China Town. Associated with the cultural and scientific successes of the time, the area is defined by its grid pattern streets and larger commercial and civic buildings.

The Art Gallery makes a positive contribution to the conservation area as a high-quality, landmark building, associated with the cultural rise of Manchester.



4 Summary of Proposed Works

4.0 Summary of Proposed Work

4.1 Aims

The proposals for the alterations to the Athenaeum aim to:

- Improve CCTV coverage and associated public address and panic alarm systems to monitor, record and secure the gallery and it's collections, and provide a deterrent for anti-social behaviour
- Provide improved external lighting (new fittings) to ensure CCTV cameras can be operational during non-daylight hours.

4.2 Summary of Proposals

The proposed changes are detailed in the following paragraphs.

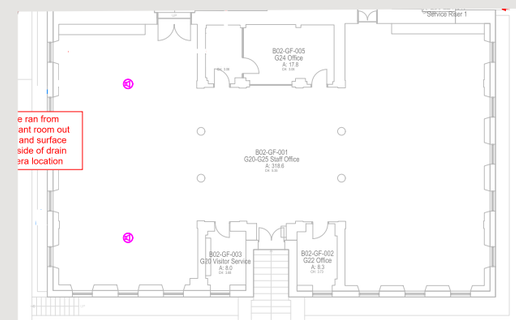
External works (CCTV, Public Address and external lighting). Location: Athenaeum

- New CCTV cameras and public address speakers within the Athenaeum lightwell
- New wall mounted lighting within lightwells associated with the above

New Internal CCTV and public address systems Location: Grade I City Art Gallery building and 2002 extension

- New Internal CCTV and public address systems within the Athenaeum, to all floors.

Proposals to the Grade I listed City Art Gallery are submitted under a separate application



Example ground floor installation plan submitted as part of the application

4.3 External Works

External CCTV camera locations have been chosen to best capture an overview of activity outside of the gallery whilst minimising harm to historic fabric where possible. Where required, public address speakers will be positioned beside cameras to group equipment and reduce clutter on the museum's facades. To work effectively the proposed CCTV system requires supplementary lighting to ensure the minimum illumination levels for colour mode.

The identified external entrances experience high levels of public footfall and represent key areas where effective surveillance is required to support incident management, deter anti-social behaviour, and assist with evidential investigations following security incidents.

The system will utilise intelligent video analytics to provide out-of-hours monitoring of the site by a remote monitoring centre. The analytics platform will be configured to detect defined events including unauthorised access, loitering, intrusion into protected areas and other suspicious behaviours. Upon detection of a qualifying event, alerts will be transmitted to monitoring operatives who can assess the situation in real time and initiate an appropriate response.

As the cameras will be relied upon for automated event detection, camera positioning is critical. Each camera location has therefore been selected to provide clear, unobstructed views of the monitored areas and to maintain the image quality required for accurate analytics performance. Locations affected by vegetation, excessive viewing angles, pedestrian obstructions or environmental interference have been discounted where these factors could reduce detection accuracy.

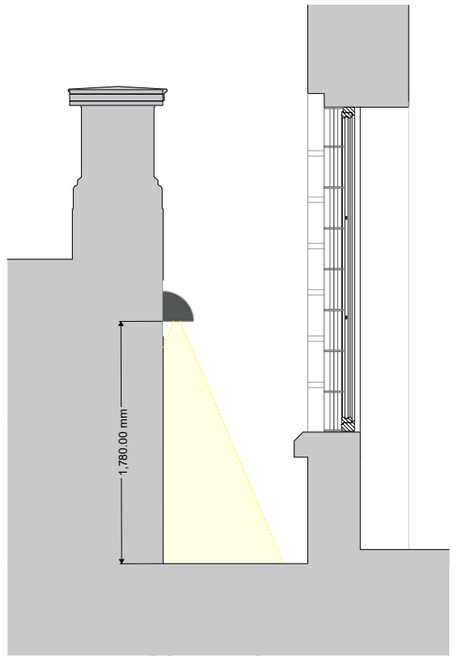
The associated speakers must be located in close operational proximity to the cameras to allow monitoring operatives to deliver targeted live or pre-recorded audio warnings to individuals identified by the CCTV system. This capability provides an opportunity to deter criminal activity before escalation and may reduce the requirement for physical intervention by on-site security personnel.

4.3.1 Princess Street / George Street

CCTV: Cameras in the Athenaeum lightwells along Princess Street and George Street will be positioned along the retaining wall rather than the building façade, to obscure from view. Associated cabling will run along the building façade and traverse the lightwell via the soffit of the lightwell 'bridges'.

Public Address Speakers: The three cameras will be partnered with public address speakers, which will be installed adjacent to the cameras on the lightwell retaining wall.

Lighting: 10no. new marine grade die-cast aluminium alloy down lighters with associated cabling to be installed on the retaining wall adajcent to the new CCTV fittings (see section and elevation to the right, and 'P4' lighting datasheets). The old redundant floodlights in these lightwells were removed during the Athenaeum basement refurbishment works in 2025.



Proposed section and elevation through Athenaeum lightwell showing position of new light fittings

4.4 Existing Internal CCTV Installation

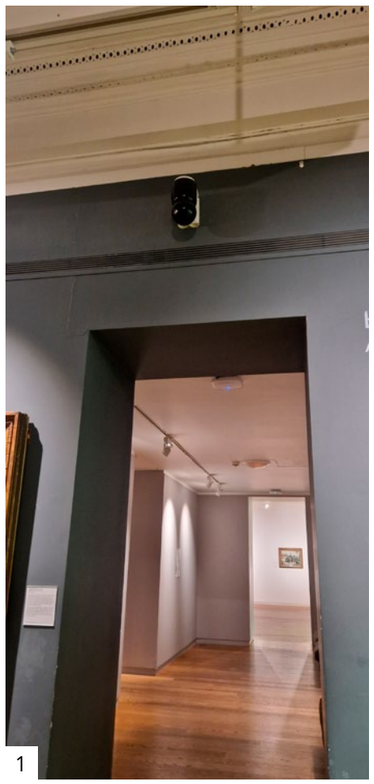
1. First Floor Gallery on C19th lath and plaster
2. First Floor Gallery on C21st board front of C19th lath and plaster
3. First Floor Gallery on C21st board front of C19th lath and plaster
4. First Floor Gallery on C19th lath and plaster
5. First Floor Gallery on C19th lath and plaster

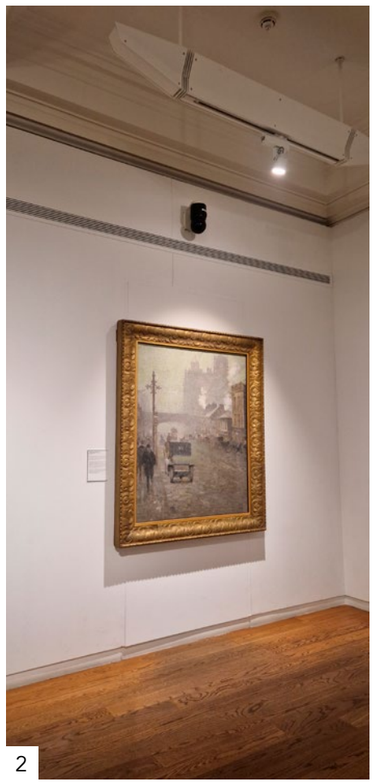
4.5 Internal Works

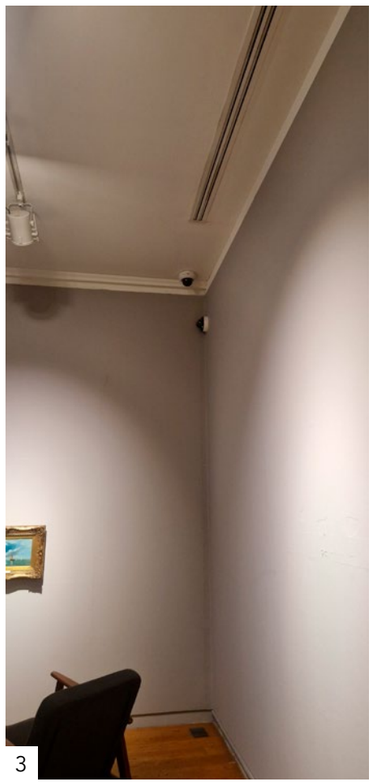
4.5.1 CCTV

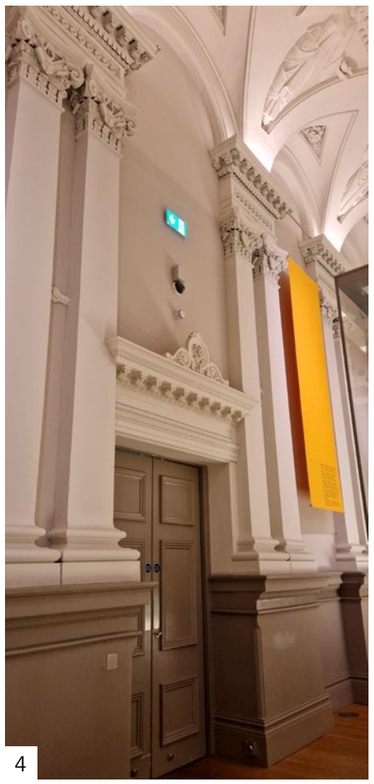
New IP-based CCTV cameras are to be installed to all floor levels in the Athenaeum building. In some instances these will replace old redundant cameras, in which case existing cable routes will be utilised - these are located on the submitted drawings with a green circle.

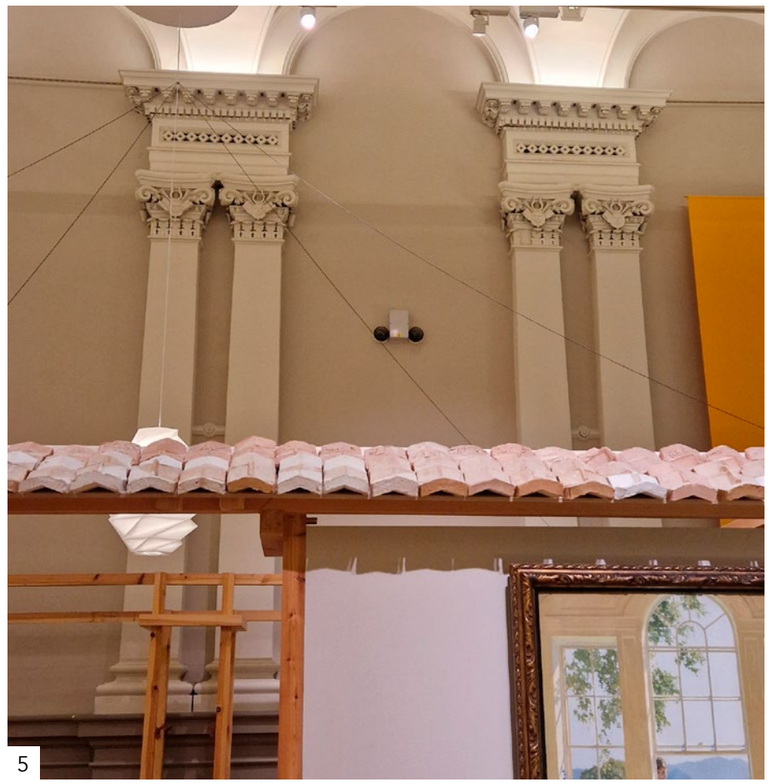
Cables will be run through existing risers, floor and ceiling voids, builders work openings and cable trays where possible to avoid disruption to the historic fabric. New cable routes are limited, but where required are clearly labeled on the submitted drawings and separate installation methodology document.


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5 Heritage Impact Assessment

5.0 Heritage Impact Assessment

The following section will present a summary of the proposed works, followed by an assessment of the potential impacts on the heritage.

Impacts will be assessed and scaled per British Standards BS7913 guidance for the scale of impacts, which correlates with the ICOMOS Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments.

VALUE OF HERITAGE ASSET	SCALE & SEVERITY OF CHANGE/IMPACT (EITHER ADVERSE OR BENEFICIAL)				
	No Change	**Negligible Change**	**Minor Change**	**Moderate Change**	**Major Change**
Exceptional	Neutral	Slight	Moderate/ Large	Large/Very Large	Very Large
High	Neutral	Slight	Moderate/ Slight	Moderate/ Large	Large/Very Large
Medium	Neutral	Neutral/Slight	Slight	Moderate	Moderate/ Large
Low	Neutral	Neutral/Slight	Neutral/Slight	Slight	Slight/ Moderate
Negligible	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral/Slight	Neutral/Slight	Slight

Figure 11 Significance/Scale of Impacts Table

Scale of Change

No Change	No material change to the heritage asset or its setting.
Negligible Change	A small change or alteration, but unimportant. Having no visual or indirect impacts on the asset or its setting. Slight changes to use or access.
Minor Change	A small change to an element of fabric or setting that results in a noticeable difference. Limited indirect impacts or changes to character.
Moderate Change	Changes to an element, including replacement, or insertion of a new element, where the asset or its setting has clearly been modified. Noticeable indirect impacts.
Major Change	A change of great extent, including the complete removal of an element. Changes to most or all of the asset or its setting. Total alteration of the asset. Extreme indirect impacts.

Scale of Impact

Major beneficial	The proposal will have an exceptionally positive impact on the significance of the heritage.
Moderate beneficial	The proposal will have a substantial positive impact on the significance of the heritage.
Minor beneficial	The proposal will have some limited positive impact on the significance of heritage.
Neutral	The proposal does not affect the significance of the significance of heritage.
Minor adverse	The proposal will have some limited negative impact on the significance of the heritage.
Moderate adverse	The proposal will have a substantial negative impact on the significance of the heritage.
Major adverse	The proposal will have a serious and irreversible impact on the significance of the heritage.

5.1 Impact on Manchester Art Gallery

5.1.1 CCTV Installation (Internal and External)

The CCTV installation is proposed to bring the gallery up to date with contemporary security equipment, consummate to the collections and visiting artwork within; the current system has 'blind spots' and is formed of now outdated equipment. New cameras include Artificial Intelligence, with face recognition.

The preferred locations have been selected following consideration of operational effectiveness, technical feasibility, maintenance requirements and conservation impact. The proposed installations minimise intervention to historic fabric, reduce the extent of visible cabling, and are considered to represent the least intrusive means of achieving the required security objectives.

Overall, the CCTV installation would result in Negligible change to a heritage asset of High significance, resulting in a Slight impact. The proposals would not materially alter the architectural composition, character or ability to appreciate the special architectural and historic interest of the Athenaeum.

5.1.2 Public Address Speakers (Internal and External)

New Public Address Speakers align the Gallery's operations with recommendations made in the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025, Martyn's Law.

Internally, equipment would comprise small-scale additions within the existing building and would generally be read as functional infrastructure within an actively used public gallery. Fixings and associated cabling would be kept to the minimum necessary and located to avoid significant decorative features wherever practicable.

Externally, public address speakers have been positioned alongside or in close proximity to CCTV cameras wherever possible. This grouping reduces the proliferation of individual fixtures across the lightwell elevations and limits additional cabling and physical intervention.

The works would introduce minor modern fixtures but would not materially alter significant spaces, architectural features or the overall character and appearance of the listed building. The proposed installations would therefore represent Negligible change to an asset of High significance, resulting in a Slight impact.

5.1.3 Lighting (External only)

Lighting is proposed to enhance the effectiveness of CCTV surveillance. The proposed cameras have integral lighting, allowing them to operate in black and white at distances of up to 30 metres. Supplementary lighting will enable the cameras to operate in full colour and provide effective surveillance over greater distances. Lighting is proposed to enhance areas already lit to some extents by public streetlamps. The new lights are proposed to replace redundant fittings only and no new lighting locations are proposed. The existing floodlights in the lightwells previously provided a façade lighting function, these have however been redundant for a number of years. The new lightwell light fittings are proposed to light the areas for CCTV capture only.

Given the use of existing locations, limited physical intervention and subordinate appearance of the replacement fittings, the lighting proposals would result in Negligible change to a heritage asset of High significance, resulting in a Slight impact. The works would not materially affect the architectural character or appreciation of the listed building.

5.1.4 Associated Hardwear (Internal Only)

Monitors and recorders are positioned within the adjoining City Art Gallery building and 2002 extension, which are detailed in a separate application.

5.1.5 Summary of Impact

The Athenaeum is a heritage asset of High significance, reflecting its Grade II* designation and its high architectural, historic and artistic interest. The proposals have therefore been developed to respond to the particular sensitivity of the building and to minimise intervention to significant fabric and elevations.

As documented in Mitie's [Fire & Security Consultant] drawings, much of the proposed equipment is to be located in places which already have mechanically fixed cameras and speakers. New equipment will utilise existing mechanical fixing points where possible and additional drilling both internally and externally is minor and would be for the most part reversible should the time arise. A methodology is in place to ensure installation is carried out carefully and that any damage to historic fabric, which will only be made to enable the proposed installation, will be made good to recognised conservation standards, as dictated by the conservation architect. The works therefore will result in less than significant harm to the gallery, or to the collections held within it.

Collectively, the proposals are assessed as resulting in Negligible change to a heritage asset of High significance, equating to a Slight impact under the adopted assessment methodology. The works would preserve the architectural composition, character and legibility of the Grade II* listed building and would not materially diminish the ability to understand or appreciate its special architectural and historic interest.

5.2 Impact on the George Street Conservation Area

The proposed works will have no impact on the significance or special character of the conservation area. The scale and form of the building will remain unchanged, meaning there will be no visual impact in the context of key views within the conservation area.

Overall, the proposed works will result in no harm to the significance of the George Street Conservation Area

6 Justification

6.0 Justification Statement

6.1 Public Benefit and Safety

Installing an updated CCTV system both externally and internally at Manchester Art Gallery delivers substantial public benefit by helping to safeguard culturally significant collections and high-value loan artworks for the enjoyment of present and future generations.

Upgrading from outdated equipment eliminates critical visual ‘blind spots’ and brings the gallery’s infrastructure inline with contemporary museum security standards, ensuring the building remains a viable, trusted host for internationally renowned visiting exhibitions.

Crucially, the upgraded surveillance acts as an effective visible deterrent against crime and antisocial behaviour, helping to maintain a safe, welcoming public realm around this heritage asset while securing its long-term physical integrity and public accessibility.

6.2 Materials

Fittings and colours have been carefully chosen to be of high quality and to suit the existing materials.

No loss of historic fabric is proposed.

6.3 Design

Thorough investigation has taken place to balance comprehensive coverage of the CCTV system with minimal impact to historic fabric. Any enabling works conducted during the installation will be made good in a “like-for-like” manner and mechanical fixings are devised to minimise impact (please refer to the submitted methodology for details). All interventions will remain reversible in accordance with recognised conservation principles; a requirement to fill holes in masonry in the event of future removal is considered to be of minor impact.

7 Bibliography + Sources

7.0 Bibliography + Sources

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Manchester Libraries, Information and Archives. Accessed via Greater Manchester Lives 13th April 2023 https://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/448/archives_and_local_history/7377/search_the_archives_catalogue.

Royal Academy of Arts, “Sir Charles Barry RA,” accessed April 27, 2023, https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/work-of-art/sir-charles-barry-r-a.

8 Appendices

7.1 Appendix 1: Listing Descriptions

7.1.1 The Athenaeum

Official list entry

Heritage Category: Listed Building

Grade: II*

List Entry Number: 1270889

Date first listed: 03-Oct-1974

List Entry Name: The Athenaeum

Statutory Address 1: The Athenaeum, 81, Princess Street

Location

Statutory Address: The Athenaeum, 81, Princess Street

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

District: Manchester (Metropolitan Authority)

Parish: Non Civil Parish

National Grid Reference: SJ 84077 97991

7.1.2 Details

MANCHESTER

SJ8497NW PRINCESS STREET 698-1/32/335
(North East side) 03/10/74 No.81 The Athenaeum

GV II*

Cultural club, now annex to City Art Gallery.
1837, by Sir Charles Barry; damaged by fire 1874 and then remodelled internally, and attic added. Sandstone ashlar, slate roof. Rectangular plan plus rear extension. Italian palazzo style. Two storeys and basement, plus added attic, a symmetrical 9-window facade, with basement treated as a plinth, raised rusticated quoins, sill-bands, string-course, lettered frieze (see below), very prominent mutuled cornice, and high balustraded parapet with 4 tall chimneys. The entrance, up a flight of stone steps, has a shallow rectangular porch with Roman Doric columns, triglyph frieze, moulded cornice and balustraded parapet, and a round-headed arch to a recessed porch with coffered barrel-vaulted ceiling. Both floors have tall 2-light casement windows with moulded architraves, those at ground floor with cornices and apron sills and those at 1st floor with balustrades and floating pediments. Frieze lettered: "INSTUTVTED MDCCCXXXV ATHENAEUM ERECTED MDCCCXXXVIII". Slated mansard attic roof (added) with wrought-iron cresting. Five-bay side walls in matching style, also with lettered friezes, that on the right side: "FOR THE ADVANCEMENT AND DIFFVSION OF KNOWLEDGE". History; precursor of Italian palazzo style in Manchester architecture.

Listing NGR: SJ8407797991

7.2 Appendix 2: Endnotes

i Manchester Art Gallery, "History of the Gallery," Manchester Art Gallery, accessed May 2, 2026, https://manchesterartgallery.org/about/history-of-the-gallery/

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iv Historic England, "Manchester Central Library," The National Heritage List for England, updated November 25, 1998, accessed May 2, 2026, https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1282980?section=official-list-entry.

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vi Manchester Art Gallery, "Explore," accessed May 2, 2023, https://manchesterartgallery.org/explore/.

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viii Hopkins Architects, "Manchester Art Gallery," last modified 2023, accessed May 2, 2026, https://www.hopkins.co.uk/projects/civic-and-culture/manchester-art-gallery/.

ix Clare Hartwell, Manchester, Pevsner Architectural Guides. (London: Yale University Press, 2001), 182

x Royal Academy of Arts, "Sir Charles Barry RA," accessed April 27, 2026, https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/art-artists/work-of-art/sir-charles-barry-r-a.

xi Manchester Art Gallery, "Exhibitions," Manchester Art Gallery, accessed May 2, 2026, https://manchesterartgallery.org/event/trading-station/

xii Manchester Libraries, Information and Archives, "The Athenaeum Dining Room, Manchester" (GB127.m64337)

xiii Manchester Libraries, Information and Archives, "The Athenaeum, Princess Street, Manchester" (GB127.m84084

Thank you

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