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HERITAGE STATEMENT

77-79 MOSLEY STREET
BASEMENT CAT B

REVISION	
DATE ISSUED	OCTOBER 2026
PROJECT REF.	2161

ARCHITECTURE + HERITAGE

SECOND FLOOR • COTTONOPOLIS BUILDING

14 NEWTON STREET • MANCHESTER • M1 2AF

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Image: 77-79 Mosley Street, as seen from Princess Street, prior to recent works.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Heritage Statement has been produced in October 2026 by Atelier MB. Its author is Laura Jessup, MA History and Theory of Architecture, PGCert. Conservation of the Historic Environment.

This application relates to the CAT B fit out of the basement at 77-79 Mosley Street, Manchester.



Image: 77-79 Mosley Street, with the former building society premises to the rounded corner, and elevation stretching down Princess Street, prior to recent works.

2.0 LOCATION + DESCRIPTION

The subject of the application is located on the corner of Mosley Street (to the north-west) and Princess Street (to the north-east), within Manchester city centre. To the south-east, at the rear of the property, is Back George Street, a narrow side road. The building occupies 14 and 16 Princess Street and 77, 77a & 79 Mosley Street. For ease it is herein referred to as '79 Mosley Street'.

The property is a Grade II listed former home trade warehouse, offices and shops, in three distinct internal areas which are inter-linked, yet with different characteristics. It sits on the edge of St Peter's Square, in a prominent position within a wider area of civic and commercial buildings, the most notable of which are: Manchester Town Hall (Grade I listed), Town Hall Extension (Grade II* listed), Manchester Art Gallery (composed of two former buildings of Grade II* and Grade I listed status).

New development to the Mosley Street side includes 2 St Peter's Square, an 11-storey modern office block. To the Princess Street side are several 19th century former warehouses, mostly in a similar red brick and stone detailed form, forming a distinct group.

The site sits within George Street Conservation Area.

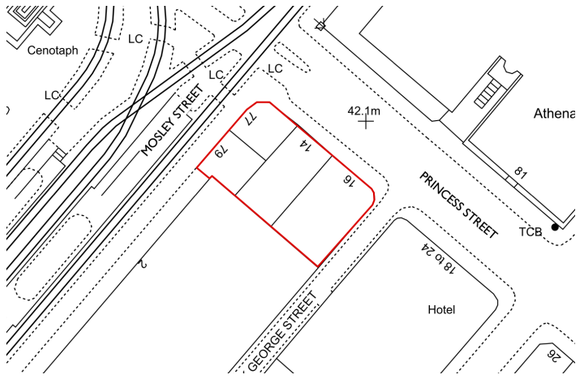


Image: Map showing location of site.

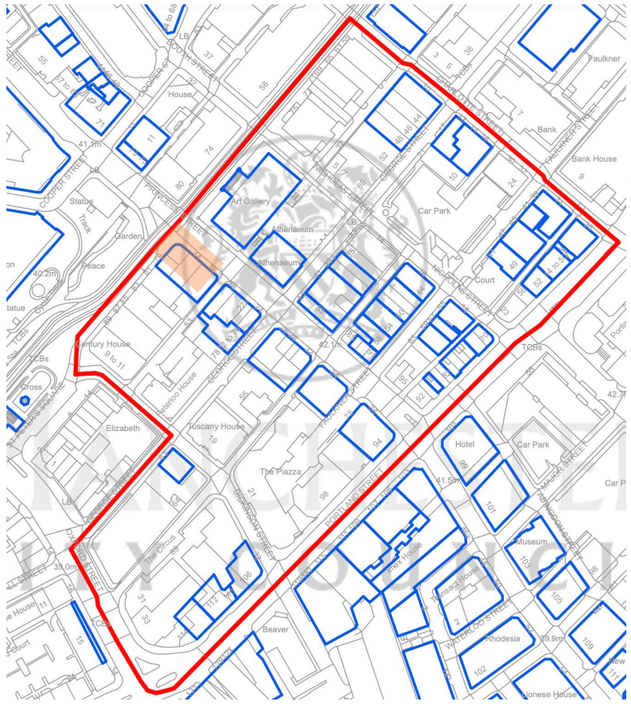


Image: George St. Conservation Area in red with listed buildings in blue. Site highlighted in orange.



Image: View of building from Mosley Street/Princess Street, 2025.

Elevations are high-quality in design and execution and characteristic of the period, location, and use of the site.

Walls are red brick and sandstone, with a parapet to the roof, and stone balconies to primary elevations of Princess and Mosley Streets. The building sits within the George St. Conservation Area.

An extract from the listing description is included here:

MANCHESTER, SJ8497NW PRINCESS STREET 698-1/32/322 (Southwest side)
03/10/74

Nos.14 AND 16, GV II, Includes: Nos.77 AND 77A MOSLEY STREET.

Offices and home trade warehouse, now bank and offices. c.1860-70, altered. Red brick with sandstone dressings (roof concealed). Rectangular plan parallel to street, on end of block site, with curved corners. Four storeys over basements, 4:2:4 windows, plus 3-window corners; stone plinth, pilaster strips framing the centre, sill-bands to all floors with saw- tooth courses below the windows, bracketed cornice and balustraded parapet. Arcaded ground floor with panelled pilasters moulded imposts and stilted segmental arches with keystones, square-headed doorway to 4th bay and sashed windows to the other bays (but 2 bays at right-hand end, and the corner, now have C20 bank front).

All upper floors have windows with moulded architraves, those at 1st floor with cornices, those at 2nd floor segmental-headed with keystones and cornices, and those at 3rd floor with keystones; but windows at 1st and 2nd floors of centre and corners have more elaborate treatment, those at 1st floor with swagged cartouches and masks on the heads, and those at 2nd floor with balustraded balconies. Most windows sashed without glazing bars. Five-bay returned ends similar.

Listing NGR: SJ8401797998

3.0 HISTORY

Constructed as combined use home trade warehousing, offices, and retail premises, the building dates from the mid- 1860s, and was built as speculative multi-tenanted space.

Warehousing was accessed by double doors off 16 Princess Street, accessed via an internal decorative cast-iron staircase and polished timber handrail. The front (Mosley Street-facing) side contained offices at upper levels, accessed via a plainer timber stair at 79 Mosley Street. Retail premises were situated on the ground floor at 77 and adjoining 77a, later to include partial use of the basement. The shops were accessed directly from Mosley Street, taking advantage of the valuable frontage.

Home trade warehouses enabled visitors to examine goods in sale rooms, and, as such, they were designed with attractive external faces, in contrast to the functional aesthetic of shipping or packing warehouses. The formal decorative elevations of red brick and stone at 79 Mosley Street are characteristic



Image: Goads plan, 1886



Image: Archive photograph showing former bank to far left hand side, 1957

of both this area of the city, and the specific office/ warehouse form.

Typically, warehousing was created free of internal walls, to facilitate circulation and storage. This is evident in the open- plan nature of the spaces at 79 Mosley Street, which feature three rows of structural cast iron columns but no dividing walls. A hoist (situated to the rear wall, facing Back George St) enabled vertical movement of goods and direct access to the narrow street below, and would have been served by taking-in doors. To enable better viewing conditions, trade warehouses maximised the provision of natural light through their design, with large windows set between reduced width piers, and a central lightwell puncturing the floors, in this instance also separating the office and warehouse functions. Windows were 8 1995-79 Mosley Street openable, with sashes, to allow for air circulation throughout the building.

Basements were typically used for packing, storage, and dispatch and the ground floor usually contained offices and counting houses. Occasionally, as at Mosley Street, part of the ground floor was partitioned off to be sub-let as retail space.

By the 1860s, Mosley Street had evolved from a residential area to an important commercial centre. Macbeth Brothers Tailors operated their shop from the unit at number 77 from the 1880s onwards, later expanding to the adjoining shop, before condensing back into a single unit and utilising part of the basement under 77 and 77a. Original shop front detail exists behind later over-cladding and have been partially exposed.

Archives show the building has been tenanted by a number of occupiers:
• Manchester Guardian Society for Protection of Trade: Offices, accessed via 79 Mosley St. Taking all three office floors from 1880-1901.
• Cowlishaw, Nicol & Co, importers of upholstery/wool goods: Warehousing, accessed via 16 Princess St.
• A variety of warehouse tenants from the mid 1890s onwards, including pattern card makers and textile printers.
• Macbeth Brothers Tailors: 1880s, Retail, 77 Mosley Street with direct street access. The tenant later extended the shop into 77a via internal opening, later the shop reverted back to 77a and took additional space in the basement under 77 and 77a.
• Huddersfield Building Society: Mid-1930s with existing refurbishment dating from 1955 (by Clifford Hickson, architect) 77 Mosley Street and extending to room along Princess Street at ground floor level. These spaces were later joined to office entrance and warehouse.

The 1955 alterations by Huddersfield Building Society added an Art Deco influenced external cladding and decorative internal features reflecting the more formal design characteristics of a bank interior, including over-cladding of columns and internal beams.

As commercial activities evolved in the city, warehousing was no longer required, and the main floors of the building were re-purposed as standard office space. Later evolutions in use include a restaurant and a barber, both situated within part of the basement in the late 20th century. More recently the building has been vacant for several years after tenants moved to newer office space.
Previous owners obtained planning permission and listed building consent for internal and external works in 2018.

The scheme (118399/LO/2017) essentially involved the total demolition of the interior of the Grade II listed building with façade retention, new internal structure, roof extension and refurbishment of the exterior including the restoration of the historic shop front to 77a Mosley Street.

Historic England raised objection to the proposed scheme, stating that the applicant had not demonstrated sufficient public benefit in the balance against substantial harm. As part of their response, Historic England further stated that they would rather consider options, including the use of the lightwell, than see the interior demolished. Permission was granted, based on the demolition option, and works commenced, being paused after a short time. The building was subsequently sold to the current owner, who is now seeking to implement a new, alternative scheme, which retains a high percentage of the interior and does not add further storeys.



Image: Archive photograph showing Mosley Street elevation, 1973

4.0 SIGNIFICANCE



Image: Photograph of site showing Mosley Street and Princess Street corner, 2026.

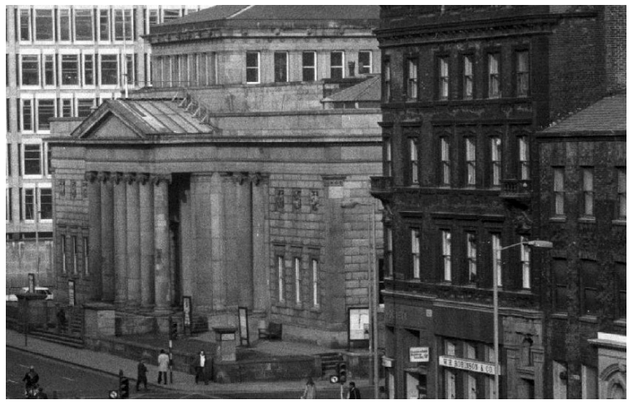


Image: Archive photograph showing site, 1974

The building has heritage significance, evidenced by its Grade II listing. It has previously undergone a series of changes over time, including significant loss to internal areas. This has had a negative impact upon its heritage values, though these values have been substantially improved by the ongoing restoration and refurbishment of the building. This assessment reflects the current situation in 2026. The categories provided by Historic England's 'Conservation Principles, 2008' have been used to assess the significance in general terms.

Evidential: the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity. The building is an example of multi- purpose commercial premises, from 1860-1870. The interior has evidential value in its plan form, with three distinct uses (shop, office and warehouse) reflected in the different spaces and features, including changes in levels across the building.
The presence of the hoist, separate entrances serving different areas and the lightwell are evidence of past uses.

The external elevations are typical of commercial architectural design from the mid-late 19th century, sharing a typology with surrounding properties. The changes made to the facilitate the building society are a good example of mid 20th century design and, along with the historic shop front, are of high evidential value. Alterations to taking-in doors to Back George Street have had a negative impact on evidential value, though the internal hoist remains (altered), and it is still possible to discern former use. Loss of interior features has had a detrimental impact upon evidential value. Overall, there is a high level of evidential value to the exterior and a lower level to the interior, with specific elements of interest.

Aesthetic: the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.
The principal elevations have good design value, built in an Italianate style with decorative features in red brick and stone detailing on well-proportioned façades. The property is an attractive building, making a positive contribution to St Peter's Square and the George Street Conservation Area.

The 1955 bank dates from a later phase, with a green granite frontage and feature square columns. It is broadly built in a typical 1930s art deco influenced style. The exterior has a high evidential value, and, there are remaining areas of aesthetic interest internally including the columns, windows, lightwell, detailing to the bank, and the volumes of spaces.

Historical: As an example of characteristic 1860/70s architectural style using typical materials, the building has historical value. It is evidence of mixed use premises, giving an insight into the nature of commercial property of the era.



Image: Mosley Street frontage, 2026.



Image: Mosley Street shopfront during recent works to reveal historic frontage, 2026.

Whilst the loss of elements of the interior has compromised the understanding of the historical aspects of the building to an extent, value remains in the layout and retained features, including the relationship with the main frontages to Princess and Mosley Streets and the rear, more function elevation to Back George Street. The recent refurbishment scheme has enhanced the significance of the building, revealing and restoring a number of features.

Communal: The building makes a positive contribution to the street scape and the wider area, particularly in the context of surrounding properties from a similar period which form a group. The important location on a busy corner, close to the Metrolink stops, and opposite Manchester Art Gallery and the Town Hall extension, also lends the building communal interest as it is experienced by large groups of people.

Basement Space

This specific section of the building was previously in use as a barbers. It comprises basement space accessed via a stepped entrance off Princess Street, and a linked lower basement area to the rear of the unit.

Whilst the space has significance as a component part of the listed building, individual features are limited.

Walls are a mixture of exposed brick and plastered finishes and timber beams are exposed. There are two existing staircases linking street level and basement, and basement and lower basement.

Windows and external railings do not form part of this application.

5.0 PROPOSALS + IMPACT



Image: Existing basement space.

The aim of proposals is to create upgraded workspace for a barber shop within the basement. Where relevant, references from plan P(100) have been used.

Ground floor

Proposal: Removal of existing non-original door and replacement with new glazed door to basement unit, as per approval ref. 144973/JO/2026

Proposal: Where existing plaster has failed and brickwork is revealed, this is to be retained. Where plaster remains, this is to be re-skimmed and painted.
Impact: Positive effect.

Ref 1 Proposal: New glass balustrade and steel handrail added to staircase.
Impact on significance: No effect. The new addition is considered to be of an appropriate style and size.

Ref 4 Proposal: Wall mounted AC unit fixed through mortar joints, positioned at high level. Assigned servicing route to roof plant deck.
Impact on significance: No effect. Fixings are very limited in number and the minimum required. Fixing through mortar joints ensures minor repair can be undertaken should they be removed at a future date.

Ref 6 Proposal: Existing staircase to lower basement. New glass balustrade with steel handrail to be added.
Impact on significance: No effect. The new addition is considered to be appropriate in style and scale.

Ref 7: Proposal: New kitchen to be fitted, with units and sink. Positioned below window opening.
Impact on significance: No effect.

Ref 8: Proposal: New partitions to lower basement to form WC/store. Timber stud with insulation, plaster board and skim finish. Skirting to be fitted to bottom and shadow gap detail to top and side.
Impact on significance: No effect. Partitions have been added and removed throughout the life of the building. These are reversible changes, clearly identifiable as alterations by the use of shadow gaps, and are limited in scale. Their positioning avoids windows and surrounds.

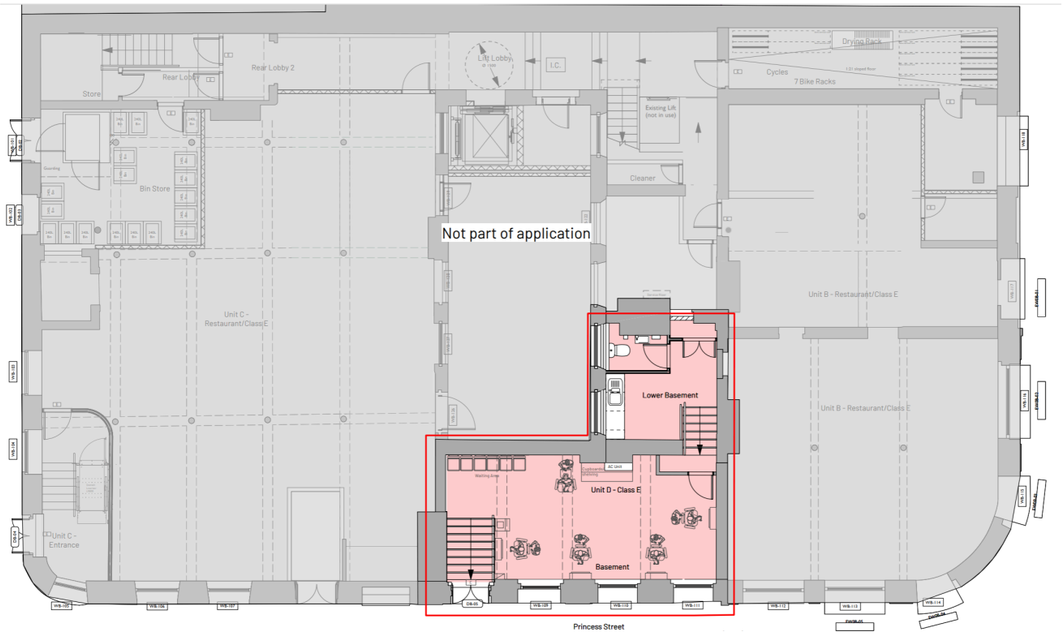


Image: Proposed plan of basement and lower basement space.

Ref 9 Proposal: Existing door opening to be infilled with set-back brickwork to enclose proposed unit.
Impact on significance: No effect. The original form will still be readable as the brick is set back within the existing opening. The use of brick is considered appropriate. The building has been subjected to ad hoc. sub-division over its lifetime and this partitioning is necessary to create a new use for the vacant building.

Ref 10 Proposal: Low level tiled boxing in to WC.
Impact on significance: No effect

Ref 11 Proposal: Cable tray suspended from ceiling to support pipework between high level service riser and AC unit. Opening to be cut through brickwork to run pipes at high level over basement to lower basement stair.
Impact on significance: Harm, low Cable trays will be suspended with the minimum number of fixings required and clearly identifiable as a contemporary addition. Where brick is to be removed to allow for the cable tray, this will be at the minimum amount required. The harm caused by removal of a limited amount of brick is considered to be less that caused by providing an alternative route. The servicing is necessary in order to re-use the basement space.

6.0 PLANNING CONTEXT

The main heritage factors affecting this site are its Grade II listed status and position within the George Street Conservation Area. The legislation concerning built heritage is contained within Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Government Policy is set out within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, updated 2026). Local planning policy is set by Manchester City Council.

National Policy

Statutory legislation states that special regard should be given to 'the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any feature of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.' Clause 66. Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) includes policy related to heritage (Chapter 20). Of particular relevance are:

HE5:

2 Assessments of the potential effects of development proposals on the significance of heritage assets (including through effects on their setting) should identify whether proposals would be likely to:

a Have a positive effect, which is where the significance of a heritage asset wold be enhanced or better revealed; or

b Have no effect on the significance of a heritage asset; or

c Result in harm to the significance of a heritage asset, either form work affecting the asset itself or from development within its setting. The degree of harm should be identified: substantial harm would occur where the development proposal would seriously affect a key element of the asset's significance; or

d Cause the total loss of significance of a heritage asset.

HE6:

1. When considering the potential effect of a development proposal on the significance of a designated heritage asset, substantial weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential effect amounts to a positive effect, harm, substantial harm, or total loss of significance.

Local Policy

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

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

The proposals are considered to accord with local and national policy

7.0 CONCLUSION

77-79 Mosley Street is a Grade II listed building within the George Street Conservation Area. It has historic and architectural significance as a good example of its type and a typical commercial building from the mid-1860s.

Following a long period of vacancy, the recent works have significantly enhanced the building with features exposed and restored.

The proposals seek to secure long-term purpose for the basement space, ensuring the asset is in use and maintained. Changes address modern requirements whilst preserving the significance of the listed building.

The proposals are considered to be appropriate, to respond to the significance of the listed building and to accord with local and national heritage policy.

OLD PLACES • NEW STORIES

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