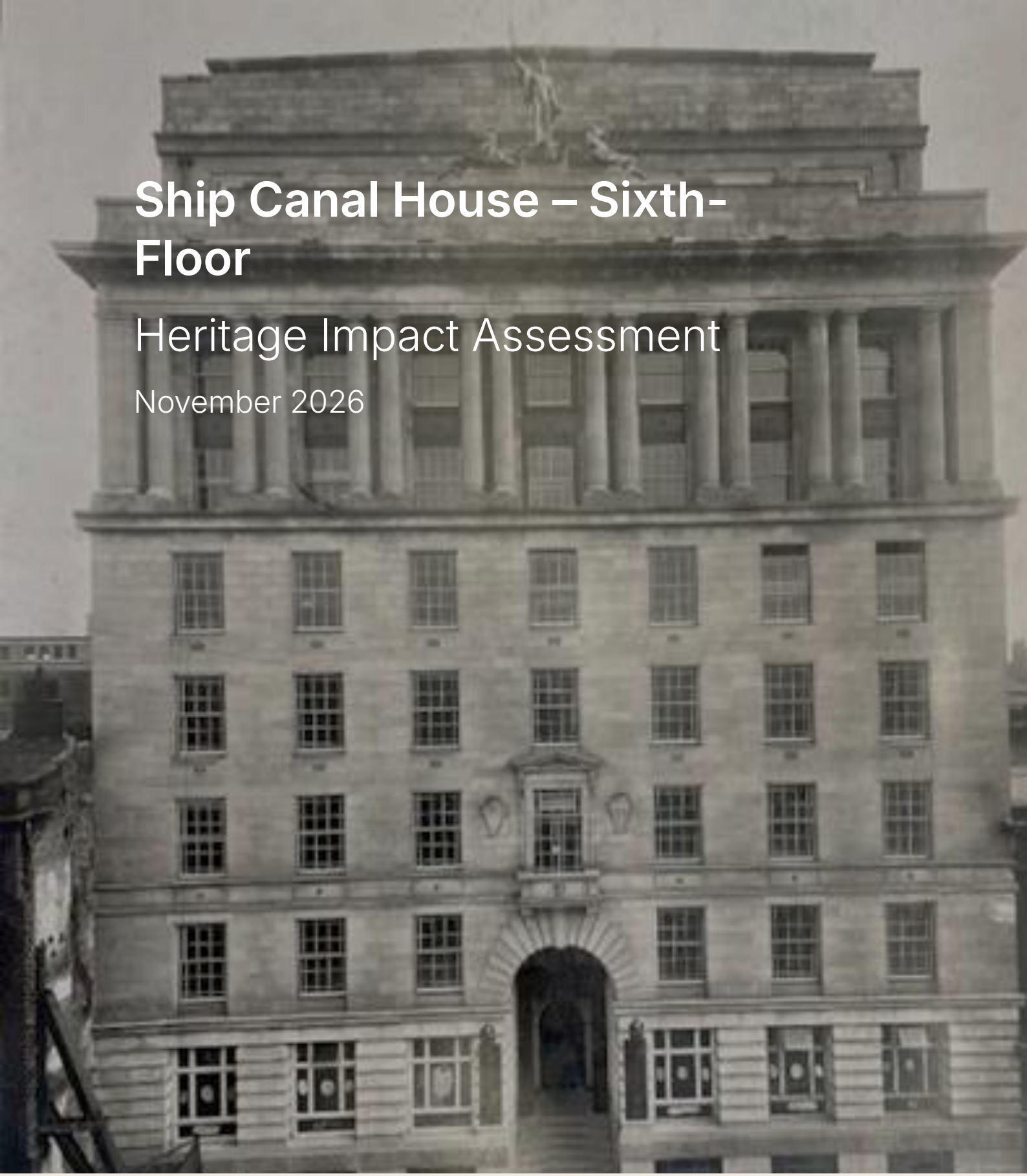


Ship Canal House – Sixth-Floor

Heritage Impact Assessment

November 2026

Prepared for: Savills and Grosvenor

LEVRANT

Ship Canal House Sixth-Floor – Heritage Impact Assessment

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Heritage Architecture Limited is registered in England and Wales 3053944.
VAT Registration No. GB656883581
Correspondence Address: 62 British Grove, London, W4 2NL
Suite 2.3a, Canada House, Chepstow Street, Manchester, M1 5FW

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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Heritage Impact Assessment and Authorship

This Heritage Impact Assessment has been prepared on behalf of Savills, and Grosvenor OEI Ltd. by Levrant, a practice of conservation architects, surveyors, planners and heritage consultants specialising in the built historic environment.

In line with the requirements of the NPPF (2026) (HE5), the purpose of this report is to first set out the significance of heritage assets which are likely to be affected by the proposals (Section 4) and subsequently assess the degree of change and relative effect of the proposals upon their significance (Section 5).

Ship Canal House (hereafter referred to as the 'Site') is a Grade II listed building, designated on 9 March 1982, and is the former offices of the Manchester Ship Canal Company (LEN: 1219203).

The building is located within Manchester City Centre and lies within the Upper King Street Conservation Area which was designated on 4 November 1970.

The proposals are focused within the sixth-floor of the building and comprise internal reconfiguration works to the Chancery Lane 6th floor office suite floorspace, installation of new mechanical ventilation, and refurbishment of WCs and lift lobby.

This Statement should be read in conjunction with the detailed plans and Design and Access Statement prepared by BlueSky Design.

This Statement was prepared by:

- Holly Gerrard BA, MA – Heritage Consultant

1.2 Location and Designations

Ship Canal House is a large commercial building situated on King Street, in Manchester City Centre. It is bounded to the north by King Street, to the east by Brown Street, and to the south by Chancery Lane. To the west, Ship Canal House abuts the corner building at 84 and 86 King Street, and 27 and 29 Pall Mall, a former banking office building now in commercial use (Figure 1). To the east, and south Ship Canal House abuts Atlas Chambers and Lombard Chambers respectively, and the three Grade II listed buildings are connected internally (Figure 2).

All three elements are statutorily designated as Grade II. Lombard Chambers was listed on 3 October 1974; Ship Canal House on 9 March 1982; and Atlas Chambers on 6 June 1994. All three list descriptions are included at Appendix I of this report.

The Site is located within the Upper King Street Conservation Area, which was designated by Manchester City Council in 1970 (Figure 2).

Consideration has also been given to the relevant part of Manchester City Centre that surrounds the Site. Within the immediate setting of the Site there are several Grade II and Grade II* listed buildings including Pall Mall Court and the Former Reform Club to the north; the Former Midland Bank and Chancery Chambers to the east; 1 Booth Street to the south; and Nos.84-86 King Street and 27-29 Pall Mall to the west (Figure 3).

It will be evident the focus of the proposals is on the internal spaces of the building only, and thus will not result in any material impact on the character and appearance of the Upper King Street Conservation Area. Subsequently, the Proposed Development is also not considered to affect the settings of any proximate designated heritage assets.

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The purpose of the following Heritage Impact Assessment is, therefore, to assess the potential direct impacts of the Proposed Development on the significance of the Grade II listed building, and to discuss the acceptability of the proposals in accordance with statutory legislation, planning policy, and guidance. The sixth-floor of the building is joined internally with the adjacent Grade II listed Atlas Chambers building within the King Street Suite; however, this application refers only to the Chancery Lane Suite, and thus there is considered to be no direct, or indirect visual impact of the proposals upon the significance of Atlas Chambers.



Figure 1: Principal elevation of Ship Canal House (centre) and Atlas Chambers (left) fronting King Street (Source: Levrant Site Visit, October 2025).



Figure 2: The adjoining buildings comprising the entire Site area are shaded green on the map. The three Grade II listed buildings are numbered as:

1. Ship Canal House
2. Atlas Chambers
3. Lombard Chambers

The extent of the Upper King Street Conservation Area boundary is shaded red, and listed buildings are outlined in blue (Source: Manchester City Council, overlay by Levrant).

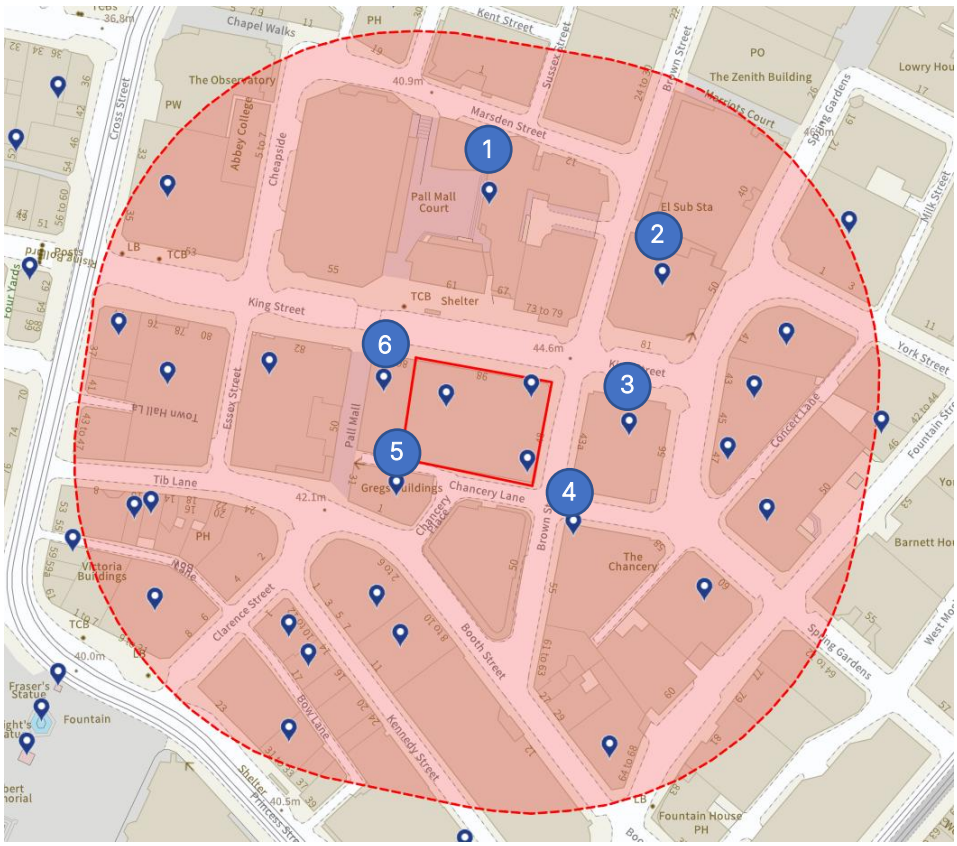


Figure 3: Heritage Asset map showing the location of designated heritage assets within 100m of the Site.

1. Pall Mall Court (Grade II)
2. Former Reform Club (Grade II*)
3. Former Midland Bank (Grade II*)
4. Chancery Chambers (Grade II)
5. 1 Booth Street (Grade II)
6. Nos.84-86 King Street and 27-29 Pall Mall (Grade II)

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1.3 Overview of Relevant Legislation, Policy and Guidance

This assessment has been prepared with regard to the following legislation, planning policy and guidance. Full details are provided in Appendix IV.

National Legislation and Policy

- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
    - Section 16, Section 66(1), Section 72(1)
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2026)
    - The relevant policies are: HE4, HE5, HE6, HE9

National Guidance

- National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (Historic Environment - 2019)
- Conservation principles, policies and guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment, English Heritage, April 2008
- Good Practice Advice in Planning, Historic England (GPAs):
    - Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (March 2015)
    - Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (December 2017)
- Advice Notes, Historic England (HEANs)
    - Note 2: Making Changes to Heritage Assets (December 2025)
    - Note 12: Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets (October 2019)

Relevant Regional and Local Policy and Guidance

- Greater Manchester Combined Authority Places for Everyone (PfE) (2024)
    - Policy JP-P2 addresses 'Heritage'
- Manchester's Core Strategy (2012)
    - Policy CC9 (Design and Heritage), Policy EN3 (Heritage)
- Unitary Development Plan
    - Development Control Policy 18.1 (conservation areas), and 19.1 (listed buildings)
- Manchester Draft Local Plan (September 2025)
    - Policy D 4 (Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, and Registered Parks and Gardens), and Policy D 5 (Heritage)

This statement has also been informed by the Upper King Street Conservation Area Character Appraisal, which is available on the Manchester City Council Website.

2. History and Development

2.1 Brief Historical Development of the Immediate Area

Prior to the mid-18th century, the Site and its immediate environs comprised open fields to the south of the medieval core of Manchester, which was historically centred around the Cathedral Church of St Mary (Manchester Cathedral). By the 18th century, the settlement had begun to develop into a town, with planned streets and buildings of commerce. King Street was named in 1735 in support of the exiled Stuart King and was developed as a prestigious residential area.

King Street was once described by an American visitor in 1777 as the *"best-built street in Manchester",* though only two buildings from this period survive today. By 1825, many of the houses on King Street had transitioned into business premises or professional offices, marking the beginning of its development as a commercial centre within Manchester. In 1845, the Bank of England established its new branch at 82 King Street, setting a precedent that led to the concentration of the city's financial institutions in this area.

Over the following decades, from the mid-19th century until 1920s, many of the remaining domestic premises on King Street were demolished to make room for prestigious office buildings which housed various banks and insurance companies.

The Upper King Street Conservation Area, first designated in 1970, was extended in 1985 to include commercial properties up to the west side of Mosley Street and the shops on the south side of Market Street. Mosley Street, which was laid out nearly a century after King Street, serves as a natural extension of the central financial district, with its modern office buildings continuing the area's commercial legacy. In contrast, Market Street is one of Manchester's oldest streets, which is possibly medieval in origin. Although it was originally lined with houses, Market Street has been dominated by shops for centuries, contributing to the area's lively and historic character.

2.2 Historical Development of the Site

Historic maps show that the Site has been fully developed since at least the 1780s, and, by 1849, was occupied by The Manchester & Salford Savings Bank; Messrs Cunliffe, Brook & Co. Bank; and the offices of The Manchester Fire Assurance Company (Figure 4).

Following the opening of the Manchester Ship Canal in 1894, the Manchester Ship Canal Company had established their headquarters at No.41 Spring Gardens in a building designed by Alfred Waterhouse. However, as the canal company continued to flourish, and perhaps further encouraged by the trading success of 1923 (the most successful up to that time), the decision was taken in 1924 to commission a new headquarters on King Street.

Ship Canal House was designed by Harry Smith Fairhurst, a prolific local architect, and was completed in 1927 by J Gerrard & Sons Ltd, a Swinton-based construction company (Figure 5). The building transformed the character of the area, being built in Portland Stone and of unrivalled scale. The Former Midland Bank was established just two years later (c.1929), built to the design of Sir Edwin Lutyens in 1929. Together, these early-20th century buildings signalled the success and progression of Manchester's financial core.

The building has eleven storeys (including basement and three attic floors) constructed with a steel frame and reinforced concrete floors and is clad in Portland stone. Its neo-Classical frontage to King Street is symmetrical (arranged in seven bays), with a two-storey colonnaded screen to the fifth and sixth floors. The attic floors are set back from the frontage, as originally designed. At the time of its construction, its height of 140 feet was greatly in excess of the Manchester average, and Ship Canal House was considered to be the City's first skyscraper. As such, it was regarded as highly significant (Figures 6 and 7).



Figure 4: Extract from Manchester and Salford Sheet 28, surveyed 1849, published 1851 showing the approximate location of the Site outlined in red, prior to the redevelopment of the Messrs Cunliffe Brook and Co. Bank and offices with the present buildings (Source: National Library of Scotland, Town Plans of England and Wales, 1840s-1890s, https://maps.nls.uk/view/231273888).

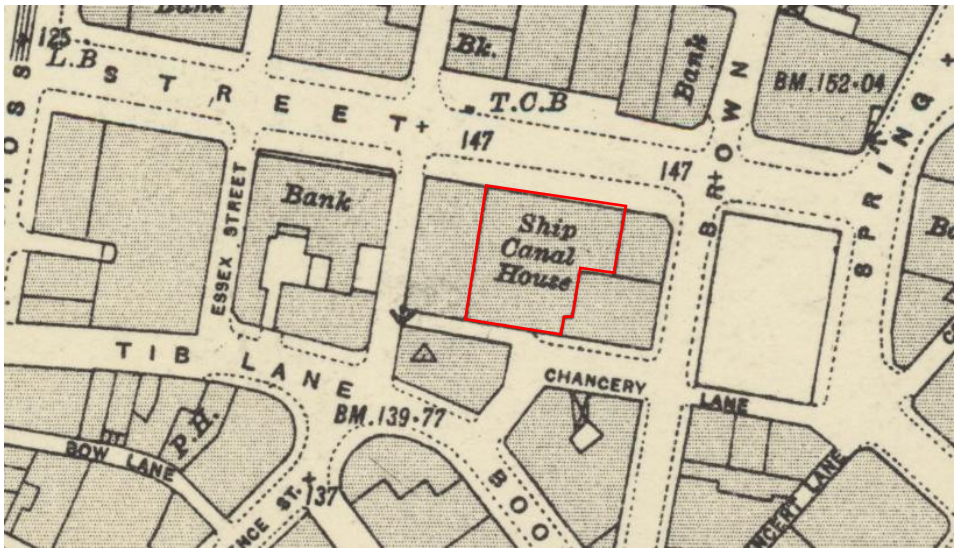
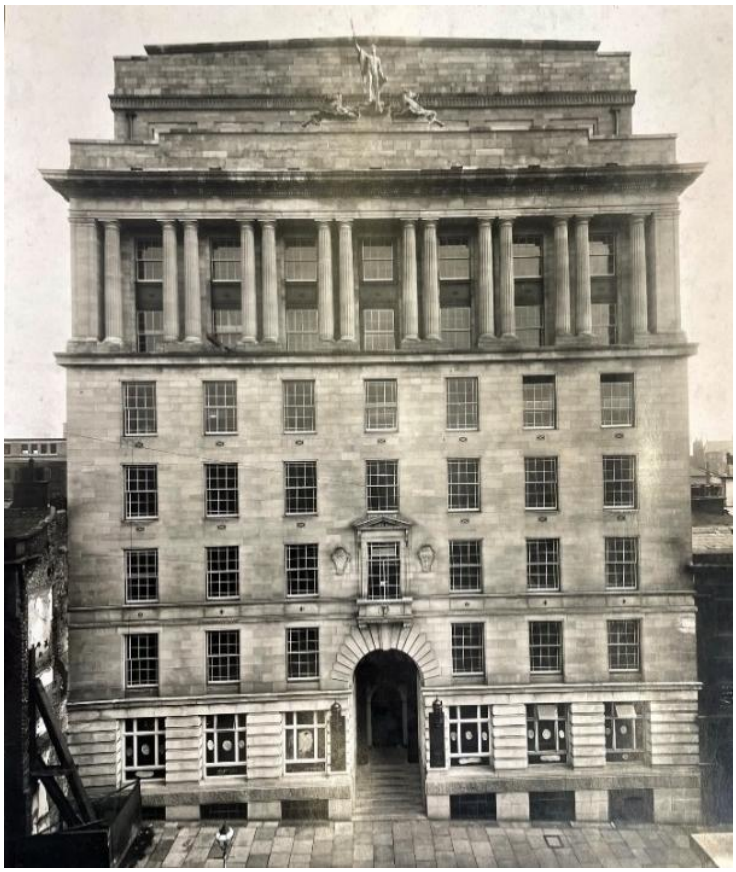


Figure 5: Extract from Lancashire CIV.10, revised 1932, published 1934. The map notes 'Ship Canal House' in the centre of the Site area, with Atlas Chambers occupying the corner unit, and Lombard Chambers to the south along Chancery Lane (Source: National Library of Scotland OS 25-inch England and Wales, 1841-1952 https://maps.nls.uk/view/126522839).



SHIP CANAL'S NEW OFFICES.

A "House-Warming."

HOW MANCHESTER BENEFITS.

The Manchester Ship Canal Company yesterday entertained a large gathering of business men at the Midland Hotel to celebrate their entry into their new offices—Ship Canal House, Captain W. C. Bacon (chairman of the company) presided.

The Lord Mayor (Alderman J. H. Swales), who proposed the toast of "Ship Canal House," said the building was one of which the city could justifiably be proud, and it was a sign that the city was progressing. Another reason for satisfaction was that the building was designed by a Manchester architect. The Manchester Corporation had a very special interest in the progress of the Canal, for it had £6,740,296 invested in the company. In 1960 that investment would mean a clear income to the Corporation of £197,000 a year, while even to-day the dividends received were larger than the payments that had to be made in respect of interest and sinking fund, and resulted in relief to the rates equal to ¾d. in the pound.

Left Figure 6: Early photograph c. 1927 of the principal elevation of Ship Canal House on King Street. Atlas Chambers to the east had not yet been constructed, but the former buildings in its place can be seen to be propped up in the leftmost corner of the image (Source: Manchester City Archives).

Right Figure 7: Report of the opening of Ship Canal House (Source: Manchester Guardian, 8th November 1927, British Newspaper Archive).

Original plans from 1924 and 1925 indicate the open-plan floorplates were quite similar on levels one to eight, with some greater variation to the ninth floor, part of which was used as accommodation for the building caretaker, and so featured a living room and parlour, bedrooms, dining, and kitchen spaces. The basement was also unique to the other floors, with a board room proposed (although it is unknown whether this was ever fully realised), strong rooms and numerous WC units. The sixth-floor of Ship Canal House was completely open-plan, with a central lift and stair core separating the north and south portions of the office space. The north internal elevation of the sixth-floor looks onto the capitals of the giant colonnaded screen of Tuscan columns spanning the King Street elevation of the 5th and 6th floors (Figures 8 and 9).

Two years after Ship Canal House was constructed, Atlas Chambers was completed to the east, built to the design of Michael Waterhouse, grandson of Alfred Waterhouse, with Harry S. Fairhurst as the 'superintending architect' (Figure 10).

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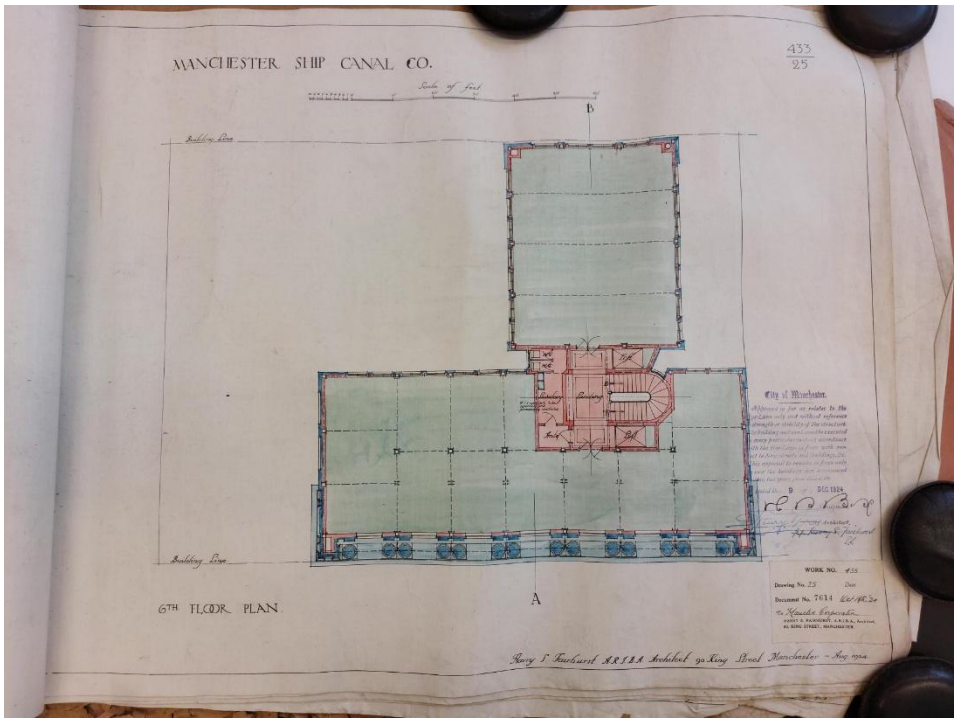


Figure 8: Original Plan of the sixth-floor to Ship Canal House by H. Fairhurst (1924). To the left of the central landing area were proposed to be the lavatories, and two lifts were positioned to either side of the central stair. The giant colonnaded screen is shown to the north of the floor in blue. The Chancery Lane Suite lies within the vertically positioned floorspace to the top of the floorplan (Source: Manchester City Archives).

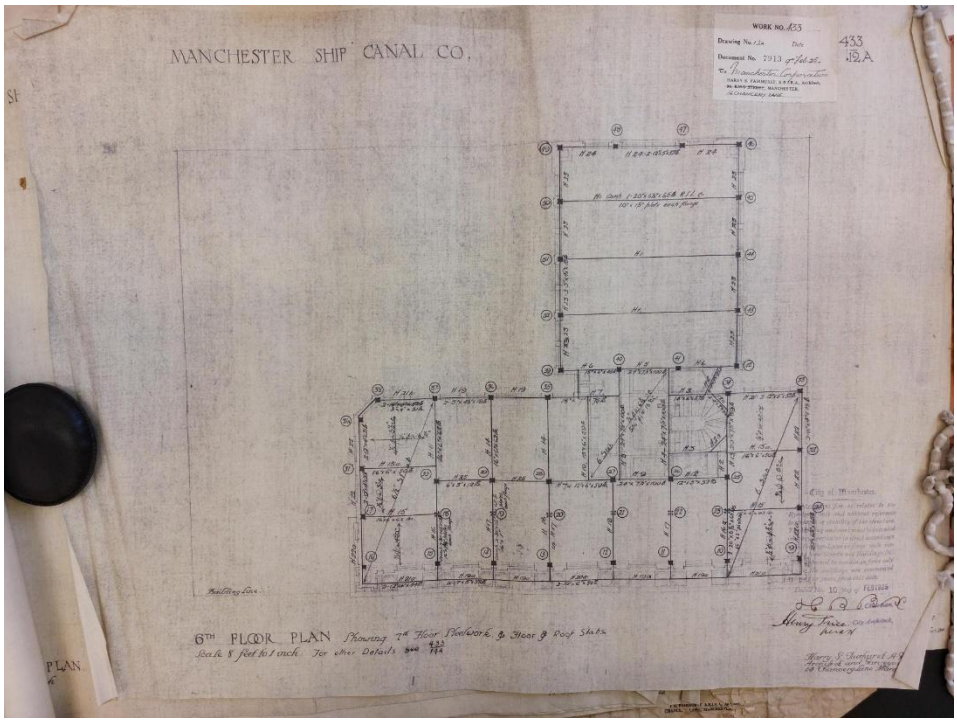


Figure 9: Original Plan of the sixth-floor showing the seventh-floor steelwork and the sixth-floor slabs by H. Fairhurst (1925) (Source: Manchester City Archives).



Figure 10: Drawing of Atlas Chambers and Ship Canal House showing the King Street and Brown Street elevations in c. 1935 (Source: Manchester Libraries, m02429 https://images.manchester.gov.uk/collections/3a0961cb-fbab-3085-8297-f5b0a26a48b8/?s%3Dking%2Bstreet%26match%3Dor%26page%3D4&pos=31).

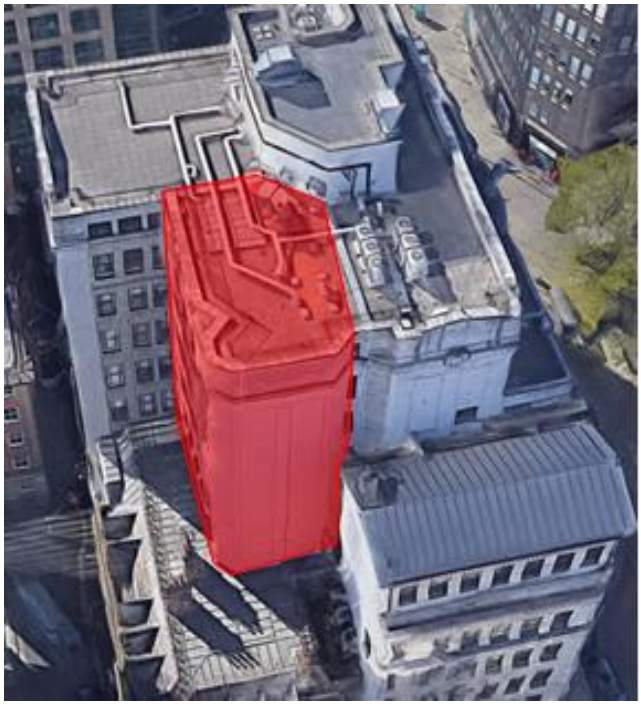
A planning application submitted in 1949 formed a link between Atlas Chambers and Lombard Chambers, which had been constructed in c.1868. An earlier application in 1926 altered the rear staircase and infilled the open courtyard between Lombard Chambers and Ship Canal, but it is not clear if these two buildings were linked at that time.

Ship Canal House remained the headquarters of the Manchester Ship Canal Company until 1969, when the Port of Manchester, along with many others, was nationalised. Ship Canal House was subsequently sold.

Whilst the building retains its general external appearance, it is evident from historic photographs that the fenestration has been altered. As originally built, Ship Canal House had multi-paned timber sliding-sash windows 6-over-6 with margin panes. Atlas Chambers, however, had Crittall metal-framed windows with central pivot casements, though the margin panes of Ship Canal House were replicated. The original windows appear to have been retained up to the late 1960s. It is not clear at what point they were replaced, but a comprehensive programme appears to have unified the fenestration in both buildings, and replacement metal-framed windows of the same design have been installed in both Ship Canal House and Atlas Chambers. However, the subtle horizontal mid-pane has been lost.

A major extension was added in the late 20th century to the rear side of Ship Canal House which infilled part of the return of the rear wing (**Figures 11 and 12**). Internally, the building has also been considerably altered; however, the main staircase survives which helps to provide some legibility of the original plan form. The most notable change is the addition of a third lift together with reconfiguration of the lift positions.





Left **Figure 11:** Aerial image of Ship Canal House, Atlas Chambers, and Lombard Chambers in c. 1953 before the 20th century extension to the rear of Ship Canal House was added (Source: Historic England Aerial Image Archive, ref. raf_58_1158_f21_0052).

Right **Figure 12:** Aerial image showing the rear wing of Ship Canal House reduced to three bays by the late-20th century extension shaded in red (Source: Google Maps).

An early consent, granted in 1983, allowed for the "Refurbishment of existing offices including partial demolition, alteration and extension to form new offices with associated showrooms/ office equipment sales" (Planning refs. 019057 & 019081). This significant phase of redevelopment was carried out by the Guardian Royal Exchange Assurance and through the demolition of remaining party walls, created a completely open floor plan between Atlas Chambers and Ship Canal House intended to host more flexible office spaces. The 1980s works also included mechanical and electrical installations, including new heating and ventilation.

In 2006, the whole building received consent for a full refurbishment (Planning ref. 079179/LO/C1), including alterations to ground floor reception and toilets, refurbishment of the historic third floor boardrooms, and refurbishment of office areas on all floors. Subsequent consents have been granted for individual floor/unit revised fit outs (**Figure 13**).

Further demountable stud partitioning to the sixth-floor was granted in 2010 to create meeting rooms and private offices (Planning ref. 092016/LO/2009/CC1) (**Figure 14**). An additional consent was granted in 2017 for the subdivision of the offices, and the provision of a new kitchen space (Planning ref. 114461/LO/2016).

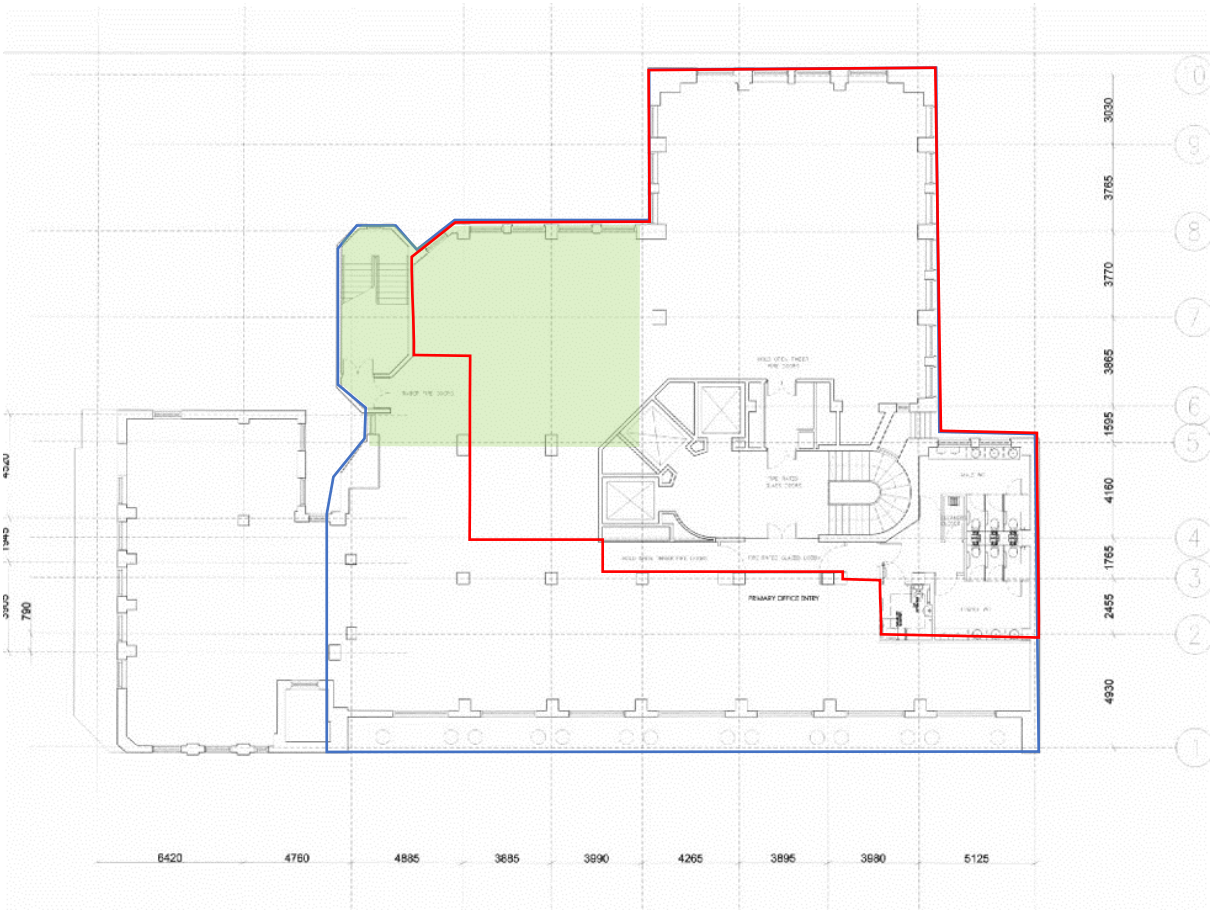


Figure 13: Extract of the 2006 sixth-floor plan showing the internal configuration of the lavatories, entrance space, connection into Atlas Chambers, and connection to the 20th century rear extension. In this plan, the internal walls between Ship Canal House and Atlas Chambers have been removed, and only the columns have been retained in-situ. The extent of Ship Canal House is outlined in blue, the approximate floorplate of the modern extension shaded green, and the Chancery Lane Suite to which this application pertains is outlined in red (Source: 079179/LO/2006/C1).



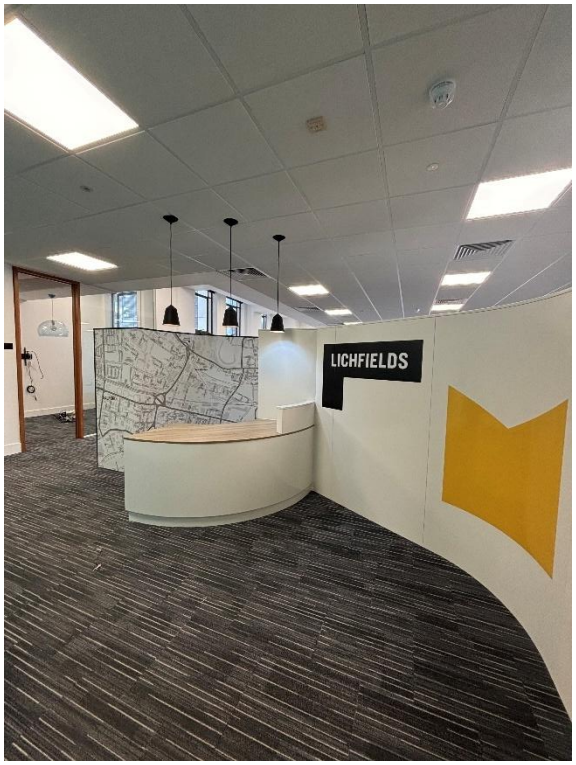
Figure 14: Extract of the 2009 sixth-floor plan showing the proposed additional partitioning. The suites to King Street and Chancery Lane were subdivided into the current configuration in 2017 (Source: 092016/LO/2009/CC1).

3. Site Survey

The following section provides a visual and descriptive account of the Site as experienced during site surveys undertaken by Levrant in October 2026.

3.1 Interior – Sixth-Floor





Left Figure 15: Image of the modern entrance doors to the sixth floor Chancery Lane suite from the lift lobby looking south.

Right Figure 16: Entrance into the main floorspace with the former tenant's fit out and reception desk. The floor throughout the office space is carpeted, with modern suspended ceiling, partitions, and lighting.

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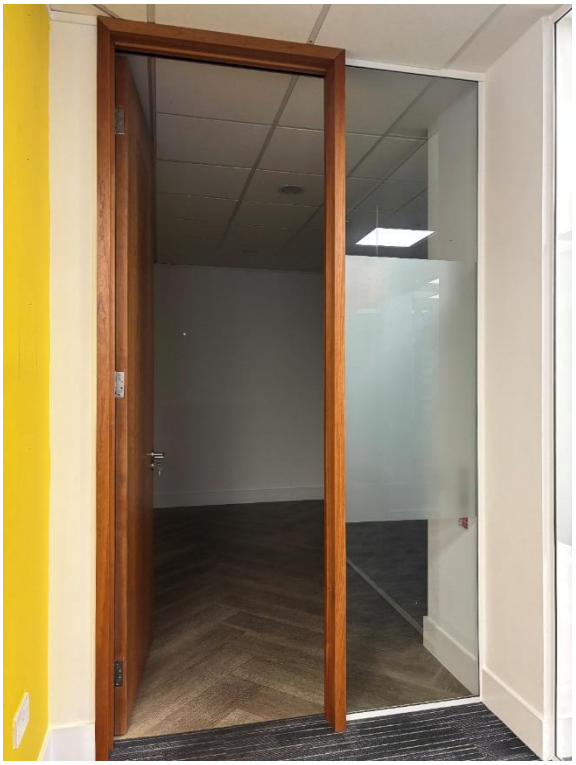




Left Figure 17: Small office/meeting space with modern glazed partitions to the southeast of the main entrance into the suite.

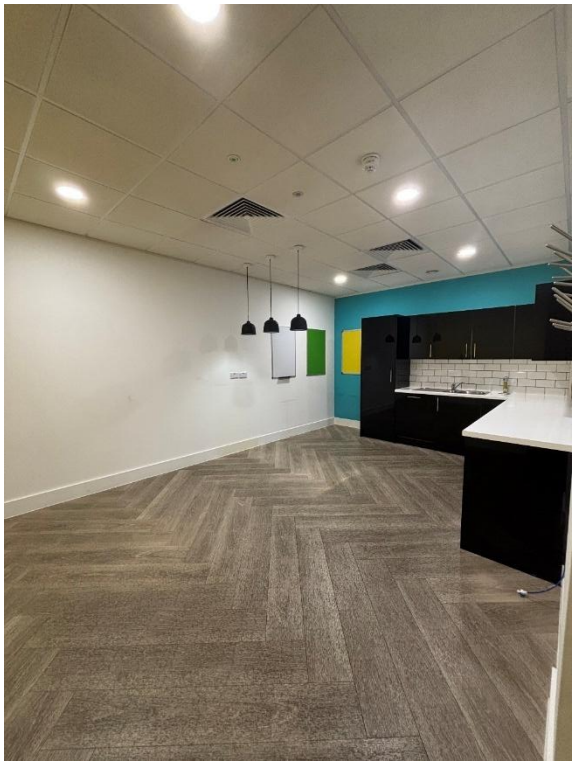
Right Figure 18: Looking east within the suite to the small meeting room (left), and large meeting room (right).

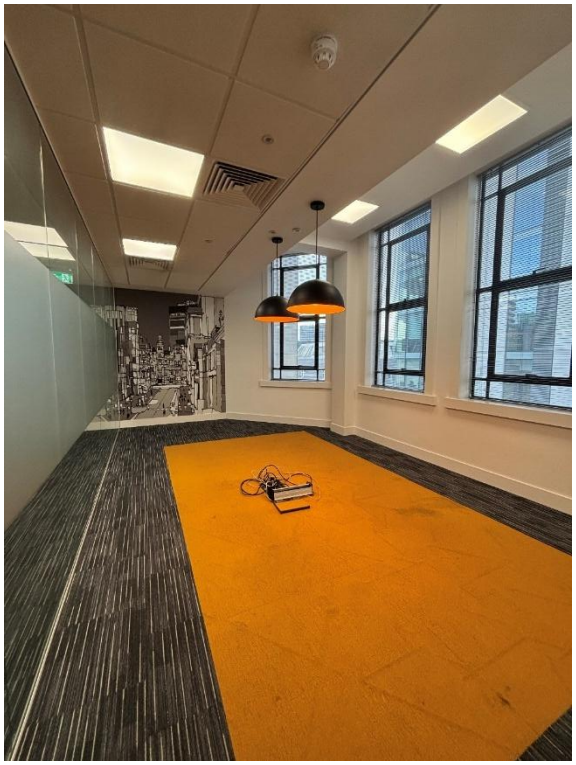




Left Figure 19: Looking north-east within the suite to the small meeting room (right), and kitchen (left).

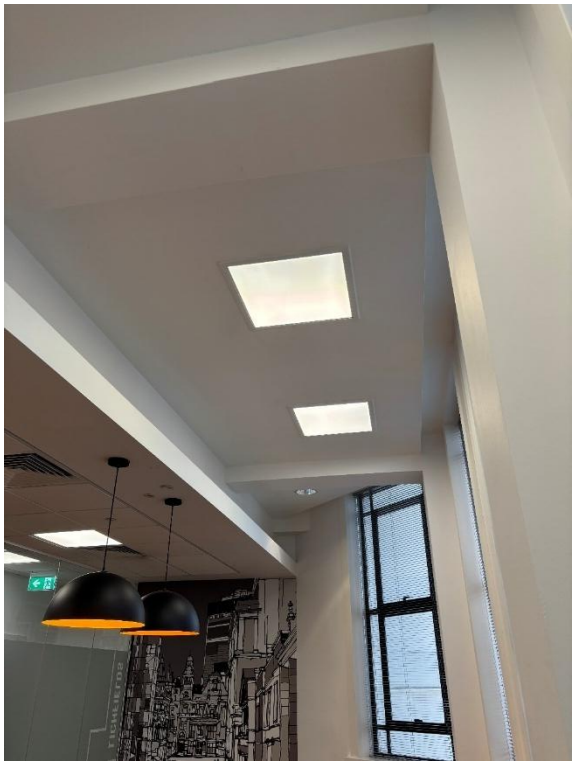
Right Figure 20: Modern entrance to the kitchen. The floor within this space changes from carpet to vinyl.

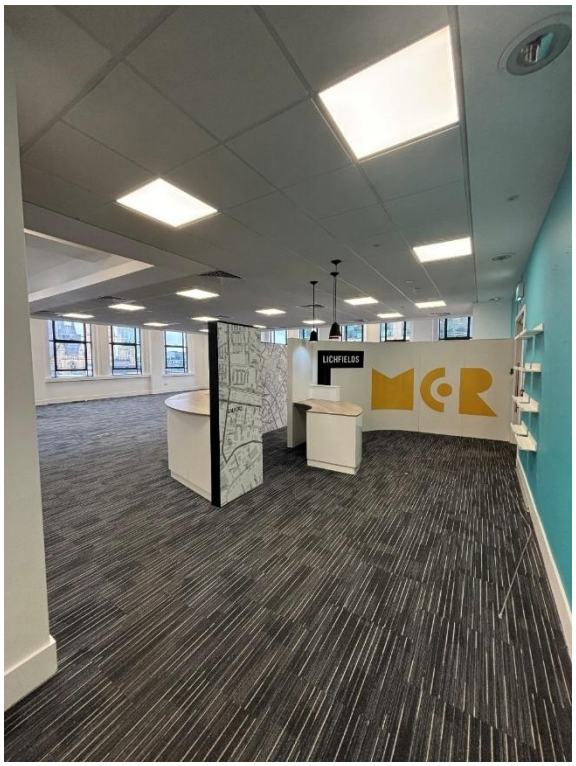




Left Figure 21: Image of the existing modern kitchen fit-out.

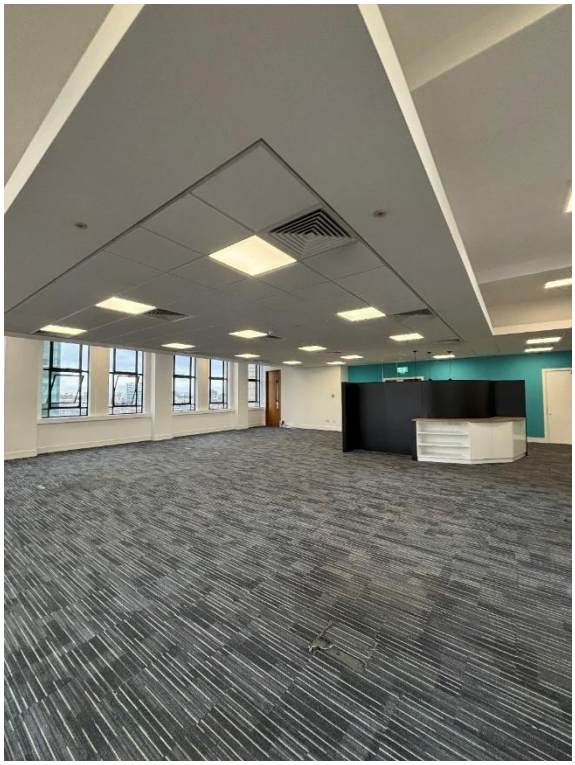
Right Figure 22: Image of the large meeting room to the southeast of the office floorplate. This image details the modern raised floors present throughout the suite.





Left Figure 23: Detail of the modern double-height suspended ceiling within the large meeting room.

Right Figure 24: Image looking south-west into the open-plan office space.





Left Figure 25: Image of the open-plan office space looking north-west. The modern central suspended ceiling and lighting is detailed in this image.

Right Figure 26: Image of the open-plan office space looking north-east. The door to the left of the image leads into the storeroom.





Left Figure 27: Storeroom to the north-west corner of the office.

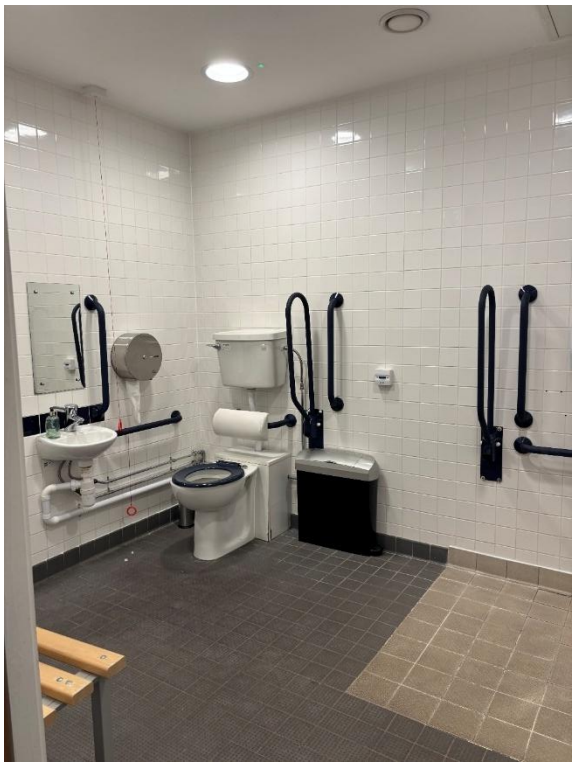
Right Figure 28: Image of the open-plan office space looking south to Chancery Lane.

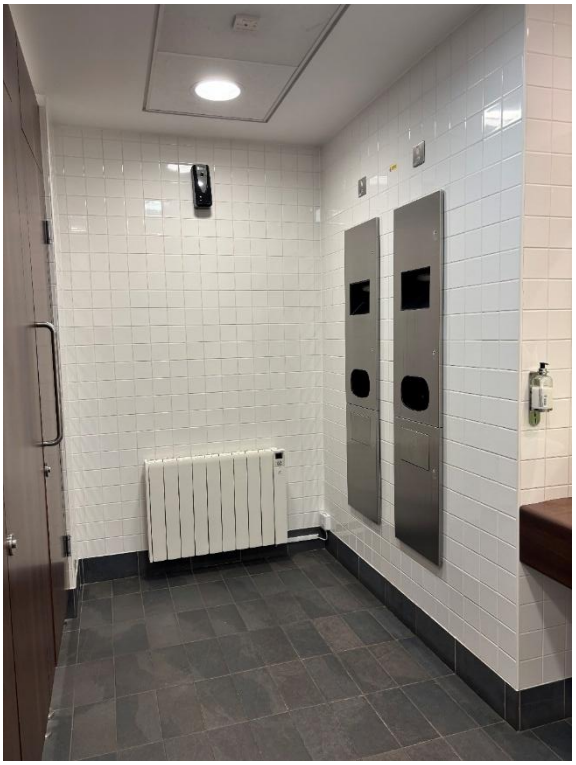




Left Figure 29: Image of the existing modern lobby fit-out looking east to the three modern lifts.

Right Figure 30: The existing modern WC corridor with accessible WC to the right, female WC to the centre-right, and male WC to the left.





Left Figure 31: Image of the modern accessible WC fit-out.

Right Figure 32: Image of the modern WC fit-out.

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4. Significance Appraisal

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of the significance appraisal is to use recognised criteria to assess the heritage interest of the Site, and its contribution to the settings of the identified heritage assets which could be affected by the Proposed Development.

The significance of the identified heritage assets has been assessed against the criteria set out in Appendix III, drawing upon the definitions and principles contained within the NPPF (2026), and relevant Historic England guidance. The assessment considers architectural, historic, and archaeological interest, with the resulting heritage values graded in accordance with ICOMOS guidance on a scale of Very High, High, Medium, Low, Negligible, and None.

Archaeological interest is considered only where relevant to the Site. Archaeological interest is unknown at this time; however, there is no potential for the Proposed Development to disturb any archaeological features of interest.

The significance appraisal will inform the subsequent Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) which considers the effects of the proposals in heritage terms upon the significance of the physical fabric of the Site. This in turn allows, in a planning policy context, the extent of effects upon the heritage asset incurred by the proposals to be established within the terms defined by the NPPF (2026), with particular focus on the policies contained in HE5 and HE6.

4.2 The Site

The special architectural and historic interest of Ship Canal House is recognised by its Grade II designation; however, the focus of the following section is to disaggregate key aspects of significance and equally, identify aspects of limited/no heritage interest. This will inform the Site's capacity for change, and further inform the subsequent impact assessment.

Architectural, Artistic, and Historic Interest

The sixth-floor forms part of the original layout and construction of Ship Canal House, and, based on plans from 1927, the building has been internally joined with the adjacent Atlas Chambers at sixth-floor level since construction. The building has been somewhat altered internally, with the principal alterations occurring within the lobby space ground floor level, and the insertion of a central core and additional lifts opposite the historic central staircase. The upper office floors largely retain their open office plan; however, each floor has been altered with several iterations of partitioning and internal decoration schemes.

The building yields medium/high architectural and artistic interest as one of the first tall buildings in the city, which ultimately set a precedent for those to follow. The building is not overly ornate; however, the classical styling and overall scale communicate the importance of the original occupiers.

The building yields artistic interest in the adaptation of Classical Greek architectural language and devices, including the articulation of each elevation to achieve balanced proportions, and the incorporation of the unusual giant colonnaded screen to the 5th and 6th floor which assert's the building's architectural prominence. The rooftop sculpture of Neptune elevates the artistic significance of the principal frontage. In addition, the survival of the internal original staircase and tiled dado yields high architectural and artistic interest.

The late-20th century extension to the rear of the building is evidently of its time in terms of architectural style, form and materiality and considered to be of a middling architectural quality

which conceals the original south and east elevation of the building. This extension is not considered to yield any architectural or artistic interest.

Ship Canal House yields **medium/high historic interest** as a purpose-built office building, and a symbol of the importance and wealth of the Ship Canal Company. This historic interest of the building is enhanced through its purposeful placement within the growing commercial heart of the City Centre during the 1920s and 1930s.The building also holds high associative value in the connections with both the Ship Canal Company, and the building's architect, Harry Fairhurst, whose work across Manchester is widely acclaimed. The late-20th century extension to the south is not considered to yield any historic interest.

Overall, the building is considered to be of **medium-high significance**.

Contribution of the Site to the Upper King Street Conservation Area

The Upper King Street Conservation Area is a historically significant district in Manchester, known for its collection of retail and commercial architecture. The area was home to several important financial institutions, including the former District Bank, The Midland Bank, and the Bank of England. These buildings represent attractive examples of retail and commercial architecture and have been central to defining the character of the area. The Conservation Area is judged to be of **high architectural** and **historic interest.**

Ship Canal House is a central component of the Conservation Area and maintains both its contribution to the area's legible architectural and historical character and identity, and its physical presence in the street and within the townscape, notwithstanding the development of the surrounding area and the extension of the building.

The Conservation Area forms the immediate setting for the listed building at Ship Canal House, placing it within its historic context and a townscape that is of a high architectural quality and historical interest. Ship Canal House is therefore considered to provide a **positive contribution** to the appreciation and understanding of the character and appearance of the Upper King Street Conservation Area.

4.3 Significance Plans

Figure 33 comprises a significance plan that visually identifies the relative heritage significance of key features and spaces throughout the Chancery Lane suite of the sixth-floor. High-significance elements are indicated in red, medium-significance elements in purple, low-significance elements in blue, and features of no heritage significance, including detrimental alterations, in green.

The sixth-floor generally consists of a suspended grid ceiling housing light and air extract fittings. The original ceiling level is largely concealed, however there is a recess around the outer edges where the window heads rise to the original level. The entire floor is raised and carpeted, and all walls have simple modern skirtings. The windows are modern interpretations of the original Atlas Chambers window design, and the fenestration pattern is consistent across both buildings. All doors and partitions are modern glazing and timber. The sixth-floor lavatories are a completely modern fit-out, with suspended ceilings, modern tiling, and modern cubicle partitions.

Key individual elements of high heritage significance on the sixth-floor include the original external fabric; encased steel columns and structural ceiling beams; and original stairwells, including balustrading and tiled dado (outside of this application).

Key individual elements of no heritage significance on the sixth-floor include the late 20th century rear extension; and all interventions completed as part of previously consented refurbishment works, including modern partitioned toilets suites; decorative schemes; modern flush doors; modern radiators; skirting; and all lighting and M&E.

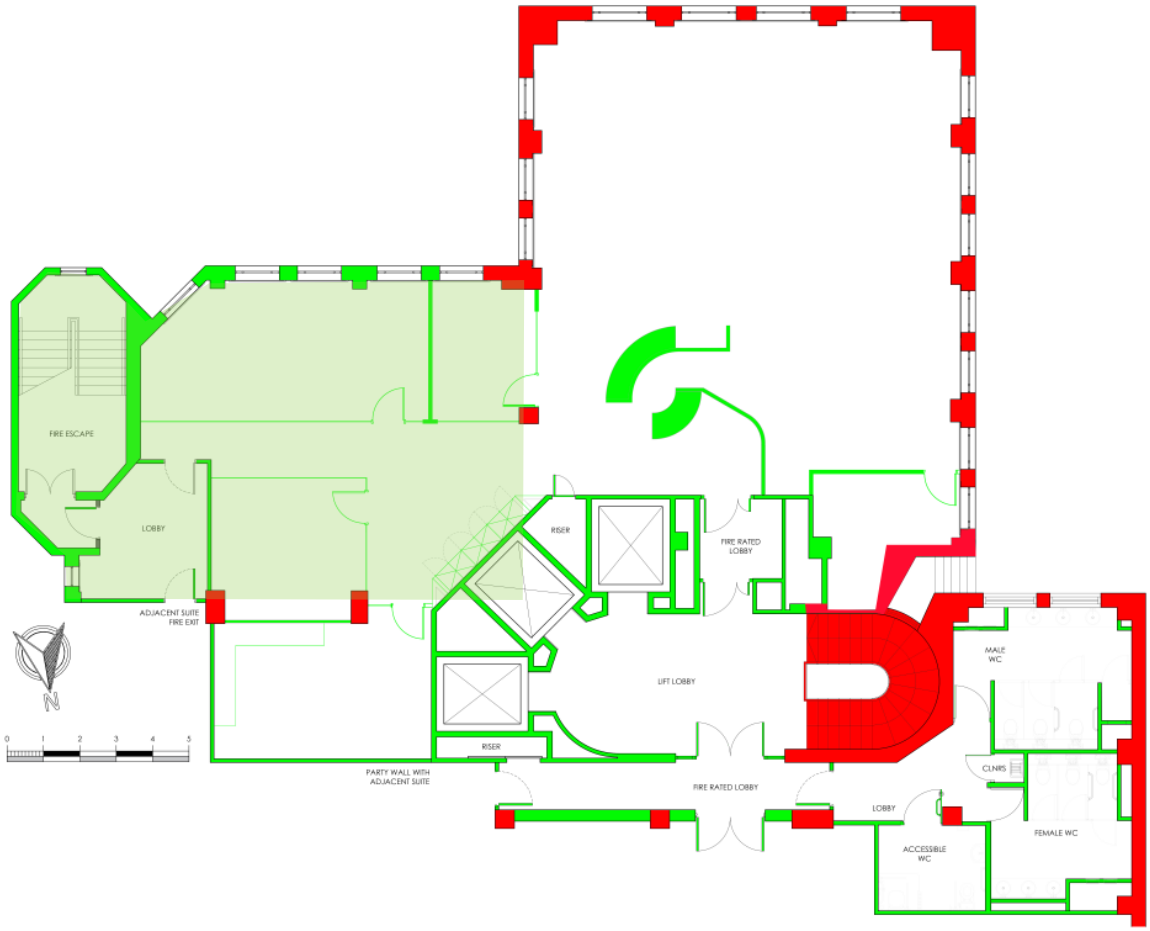


Figure 33: Significance plan of the Chancery Lane suite of the sixth-floor of Ship Canal House. The extent of the approximate floorplate of the modern extension to the rear of Ship Canal House is shaded green (Source: BlueSky Design, overlay by Levrant).

5. Heritage Impact Assessment

5.1 The Proposals

The Applicant is seeking permission for the:

- Adaption of the existing tenant's installations, including the removal of internal partitions & glazing;
- Retention of part of the suspended ceiling and plasterboard margins, with individual damaged tiles to be replaced on a like for like basis;
- New mechanical ventilation;
- Refurbishment and redecoration of the office fit-out including new joinery details; and
- Cosmetic refurbishment of the sixth-floor WCs and lobby.

Full details of the Proposed Development are provided within the detailed drawings prepared by BlueSky Design.

5.2 Methodology

The analysis of heritage impact in this Heritage Impact Assessment accords with the requirements of Policy HE5 within the NPPF (2026) which states "development proposals affecting heritage assets should be accompanied by an assessment of the significance of the assets affected (including any contribution made by their setting) and of the potential effect of the proposal on their significance. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is necessary to understand the potential effect of the proposal on their significance".

This Heritage Impact Assessment comprises an evaluation of both the direct and indirect heritage impacts, defined as follows by ICOMOS in its 2011 guidance:

- Direct heritage impacts are physical alterations to the fabric or character of the Site arising as a primary consequence of the proposed development. They result in a degree of change to the Site, or alterations to the surroundings in which the heritage asset is experienced (i.e., its setting).

- Indirect heritage impacts are changes to the experience of the Site, or the setting of other heritage assets. Indirect heritage impacts on setting refer to perceptible visual effects on the experience and/or character of heritage assets beyond the development footprint.

There is no standard methodology for the appraisal of impacts on heritage assets. Therefore, the method used below is a synthesis of Historic England's guidance, the policy requirements of the NPPF, and the ICOMOS methodology for evaluating impact. The ICOMOS guidance makes specific reference to designated (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas), and non-designated and historic (unlisted) buildings, and is therefore an objective and widely recognised method to assess heritage impact, even where sites have no formally identified heritage status.

This report assesses the magnitude of change and impact, and the resulting effect on heritage significance using the methodology in Appendix III. Where the proposed changes are considered to enhance the fabric, character or appreciation of a heritage asset, the impact on its significance will be deemed to be beneficial, either to a negligible, minor, moderate, or major degree.

Conversely, where the Proposed Development is considered to compromise or diminish its positive heritage values, the impact on its significance will be deemed adverse, either to a negligible, minor,

moderate, or major degree. Where the proposals will result in no harm, nor benefit, the impact will be neutral.

The resulting impact is then considered against the applicable statutory and policy terminology, including whether it would result in a positive effect, no effect, harm, substantial harm or total loss. As required by Policy HE5 (2c), where an effect is deemed to be harmful, the resulting degree of 'harm' will be assessed as either low, medium, or high. Substantial harm would occur where "the development proposal would seriously affect a key element of the asset's significance".

Please refer to Appendix III for full details of the relative significance values, and the criteria for assessing the magnitude of impact used in this Heritage Impact Assessment.

5.3 Impact Assessment

The assessment of the potential heritage impact principally concerns the impact upon the fabric and character of Ship Canal House, the significance of which has been identified above in preparation for the following impact assessment.

The Proposed Development is focused within the sixth-floor of the building and comprises the internal refurbishment of the office floorspace, installation of new mechanical ventilation, and the refurbishment of the sixth-floor lift lobby and lavatories. The proposed interior alterations are principally concerned with the replacement and upgrade of the existing interior scheme introduced in 2017.

The general floor-wide removal of the previous tenant's modern fit-out, and redecoration with new joinery detailing; kitchen fit-out; free-standing planters, tables, and desks; improved reception features; and decorative feature walls is not considered to impact upon any features of historic interest and will incur an overall neutral impact, equating to 'no effect' on the significance of the listed building. Fixings have been minimised where possible to ensure the integrity of the building fabric is preserved. The fixed banquette seating and new kitchen joinery will adjoin the partition walls separating the King Street and Chancery Lane suites of the sixth-floor, and internal modern partitioning. The areas of high heritage significance, such as the original columns and window surrounds / columns are to be suitably protected throughout the construction of the fit-out.

The removal of the existing partitioning is necessary in order to reconfigure the floor to a space which responds to the incoming tenant's requests. Many of the partitions which are proposed to be removed are fixed to the modern suspended ceiling; however, any fixings of the removed elements which interface with historic fabric will be made good in an appropriate manner, limiting any impact on the historic fabric of the listed building. That being said, the majority of the existing partitions are contained within the modern extension to the building, and their alteration will not interfere with an historic fabric. The proposed internal glazed partitions are to be detailed to complement the existing window mullion details, with offset transoms and mullions. The proposed finish is Bronze powder coated to complement the original building finishes.

The removal of the existing partitions, and replacement with an altered design to meet the incoming tenant's requirements is considered to result in a neutral impact, equating to 'no effect' on the significance of the listed building, as the configuration of the office floorplate will remain largely unaltered, and the majority of these partitions are contained within the modern extension of the building. The areas of high heritage significance, such as the original columns and window surrounds/columns are to be suitably protected throughout the removal and refurbishment of the existing partitions.

The replacement of the existing mechanical ventilation with a new system, is not considered to materially affect the character of the existing interior space within the sixth-floor or change the ability to appreciate its architectural and historic interest. The existing suspended ceiling within the existing plasterboard margins is to be removed, with some areas replaced with flush MF and plasterboard ceilings to accommodate new mechanical and lighting services. The remaining area is to be treated as an exposed ceiling within the existing plasterboard margin, with the exposed soffit

made good as necessary to accommodate the new services proposed as part of the scheme. The existing beams within this area will be retained and expressed, and the new mechanical and lighting services will be exposed within this area and sprayed out to provide a cohesive finish and minimise visual intrusion.

The proposed layout of the mechanical installation differs slightly from the existing layout, and so there may be a small number of new fixings into the existing ceiling soffit. The existing plasterboard margins will remain unchanged, and the fixing method of the new fixings will be as per the existing location. The works to the ceiling are considered to result in a largely **neutral impact**, with some **negligible adverse impact (direct and indirect)** arising from the additional fixings into the existing ceiling, and the visual exposure of the modern services against the historic beams.

The lift lobby areas have been heavily altered, with the original lifts by the stairwell having been removed in the c. late-20th century and three new lift cores being installed to the eastern aspect of the space. The proposals for the lobby areas seek to lightly refurbish the existing provision and enhance the visual appearance of the space. The focus of the works to the lobby are very minimal, with the existing modern flooring and ceilings being retained and walnut lift reveals repainted in a charcoal grey colour to match the recent ninth-floor refurbishment.

The areas of the space which are original and yield high heritage significance are limited to the decorative stairwell, which is to be retained and is unaffected as part of the proposals. The lighting scheme will be replaced on a like-for-like basis and will require no physical intervention to historic fabric. The proposed redecoration of the lobby space is considered to incur an overall **neutral impact,** equating to 'no effect' on the significance of the listed building.

The lavatory areas are a modern addition. The proposals will remove all sanitaryware and upgrade with new facilities. The location of the new accommodation will be in the same position as existing, and so the degree of intervention to historic fabric will be minimal, incurring a **neutral impact** overall. The attention to finishings has been informed by an understanding of the buildings original character, with the use of brass detailing to new lighting and signage within the lobby, and the introduction of green tiling and brass fittings in the WCs, intended to reflect the existing original staircase. The proposed redecoration of the lavatories is considered to incur an **overall neutral impact**, equating to 'no effect' on the significance of the listed building.

Overall, the proposed works will upgrade the floor to a standard found elsewhere within the building and it is considered that the current proposals will result in a **neutral impact**, equating to **'no effect'** on the special interest of the identified listed building as a whole.

6. Conclusions

6.1 Overview of Significance and Impact

The aim of this report has been to identify the significance of the Site, and its contribution to the settings of nearby heritage assets and assess the potential effects of the Proposed Development on that significance as required by **Policy HE5(1)** of the NPPF.

The Proposed Development is contained to internal alterations, and so the character and appearance of the Upper King Street Conservation Area, including the contribution of Ship Canal House to its significance is preserved, as required by Section 72 of the 1990 Act. Additionally, there are considered to be no indirect impact to the settings of identified proximate designated heritage assets, including any internal indirect visual impacts on Atlas Chambers, and thus their significance is preserved, as required by Section 66 of the 1990 Act.

The proposals seek to lightly refurbish the sixth-floor and have been carefully considered with the focus of intervention centred around modern fabric only, replacing this with a more contemporary provision.

Ship Canal House yields **medium/high architectural and artistic interest** and **medium/high historic interest** as a purpose-built office building, constructed in 1927, and a symbol of the importance and wealth of the Ship Canal Company.

6.2 Statutory and Policy Requirements

The NPPF identifies the protection and enhancement of the built and historic environment as a key component of one of three overarching objectives (an environmental objective) of the planning system required to achieve sustainable development (Paragraph 17, point c).

The Heritage Impact Assessment has demonstrated that the proposals will incur a **neutral impact** on the significance of the Grade II listed Ship Canal House, resulting in '**no effect**' on its significance when assessed against **Policy HE5 (2b)** of the NPPF. The Proposed Development will be understood as a sensitive adaptation of the sixth-floor and will not detract from the ability to understand and appreciate the significance of the designated heritage asset.

The significance and setting of the Grade II listed Ship Canal House is therefore preserved, as required by Section 66 of the 1990 Act.

The proposals are considered to comply with the relevant national and local planning policy, including NPPF Policy HE5 and Policy HE6; Policy JP-P2 of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority Places for Everyone ('PfE') (2024); Local Plan Policies CC9 and EN3; Unitary Development Plan Policies 18.1 and 19.1; and Draft Local Plan Policies Policy D 4 (Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, and Registered Parks and Gardens), and Policy D 5 (Heritage).

7. Appendices

Appendix I: List Entry Descriptions

1. Ship Canal House, 88-96, King Street

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1219203

Date first listed: 09-Mar-1982

Statutory Address 1: SHIP CANAL HOUSE, 88-96, KING STREET

Details
MANCHESTER
SJ8398SE KING STREET 698-1/27/196 (South side) 09/03/82 Nos.88 TO 96 (Even) Ship Canal House

GV II

Office building. 1927, by Harry S.Fairhurst. Steel-framed structure with cladding of Portland stone (roof not visible). L-shaped plan (rectangular but for re-entrant round rear of 44-46 Brown Street). C20 classical style. Seven storeys with basement and attic, 7 bays, symmetrical; with channelled rustication to ground floor, unusual giant colonnaded screen to 5th and 6th floors consisting of paired fluted Tuscan columns in antis, plain frieze and prominent mutuled cornice, parapet surmounted by figure of Neptune flanked by Tritons, and set-back attic storey. The centre has a round-headed entrance arch breaking into the 1st floor, with rusticated voussoirs and triple keystone, and internal steps up to a recessed doorway; and above this a stone balcony and pedimented architrave the central 2nd floor window. Otherwise all the windows have plain surrounds and margin panes to centrally-hinged casement openings, those behind the colonnade being tiered; and the attic has lunettes. Right-hand side abutted by Nos 84-86 (q.v.), left side abutted by No.98 (q.v.). Interior not inspected

Listing NGR: SJ8396198244

2. Atlas Chambers

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1197941

Date first listed: 06-June-1994

Statutory Address 1: ATLAS CHAMBERS, 98, KING STREET

Details

MANCHESTER
SJ8398SE KING STREET 698-1/27/197 (South side) No.98 Atlas Chambers

GV II

Insurance company office, now banking hall and offices. 1929, by Michael Waterhouse (grandson of Alfred Waterhouse), for the Atlas Assurance Company. Steel-framed with cladding of Portland

stone (roof not visible). Narrow rectangular plan on corner site, with chamfered corner. C20 classical style. A 6-storey 4-window facade plus 3-window attic, consisting of a 2-storey banking hall with a cornice, then 3 regular storeys (the upper 2 with shallow giant pilasters) with another cornice, and the top floor and attic treated as a 2-storey 3-window pedimented penthouse with flanking 1-storey wings. The banking hall has a plate-glass screen with a bronze doorway set in the centre and surmounted by a bronze Atlas with golden globe, a bronze plaque on the corner and a cartouche above this, and its left return side (to Brown Street) has a similar plate-glass screen with fluted Doric columns distyle in antis. The upper floors have very regular fenestration (matching that of Ship Canal House to the right) consisting of tilting casement windows with margin panes and plain surrounds, the one-window corner and 6-window return side matching the front (but the attic storey set back at this side). Forms group with Ship Canal House (with which it is easily confused at first sight; q.v.).

Listing NGR: SJ8398798247

3. Lombard Chambers

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1208211

Date first listed: 03-Oct-1974

Statutory Address 1: LOMBARD CHAMBERS, BROWN STREET

Details:

MANCHESTER
SJ8398SE BROWN STREET 698-1/27/31 (West side) 03/10/74 Nos.46 AND 48 Lombard Chambers

GV II

Bank, now offices. Dated 1868 over doorway, by George Truefitt. Sandstone ashlar, slate roof. Rectangular plan on corner site. Eclectic style, with Gothic details. Three storeys, with a 4-window facade to Brown Street and 4:3-window facade to Chancery Lane, hinged on a 3-window semi-cylindrical oriel above ground floor; with channelled rustication at ground floor, enriched frieze and cornice above 2nd floor, and steeply-pitched roof with gabled dormers. The principal feature of both facades is the corner, which has a round-headed doorway in each side with incised decoration to the heads and enriched linked imposts, the doorways protected by a very prominent underhang to the oriel balcony, which has arch-vaults over the doorways and concave pendentives all richly carved, including a shield and the date 1868 in the centre; a wrought-iron balustrade to the balcony, tall curved French windows at 1st floor with pilaster strips and elaborate consoles to an enriched cornice, curved casements at 2nd floor with enriched surrounds, and an attic turret with gables over windows which have foliated colonnettes and carved tympana, the whole finished with a wrought-iron corona. Otherwise, each facade has a 3-bay arcade of windows in style matching the doorways, plus a doorway to the right of that to Brown Street; tall casements at 1st floor with cornices on consoles and linked pseudo-balconies on brackets, a semi-circular balcony to the window over the right-hand doorway, and windows at 2nd floor and attic level like those of the oriel; and the further end of the Chancery Lane facade has a wide round-headed archway at ground floor, and windows like the others but without the balcony at 1st floor. Interior not inspected.

Listing NGR: SJ8398698224

Appendix II: Summary of Relevant Planning History

Reference	Detail	Status
114461/LO/2016	LISTED BUILDING CONSENT Internal alterations to 6th floor to subdivide existing open plan office into 2 separate offices, together with provision of new kitchen/breakout space and 3 no. meeting rooms	Approved 05/01/2017
092016/LO/2009/C1	LISTED BUILDING CONSENT for internal partitions	Approved 27/04/2010
079179/LO/2006/C1	LISTED BUILING CONSENT Internal alterations to ground floor reception toilets and office floor lobby areas, refurbishment of boardrooms at thrid floor level, refurbishment of office areas (1st to 9th floors) and alterations to form new door (after removal of louvred opening and alterations to stonework) on King Street	Approved 31/08/2006
079180/LO/2006/C1	LISTED BUILDING CONSENT Internal alterations to allow refurbishment of office accommodation	Approved 31/08/2006
053133/LO/CITY1/97	LISTED BUILDING CONSENT Internal alterations in connection with retail use	Approved 05/12/1997
051583/FU/CITY1/97	Change of use from Class A2 (financial and professional services) to A1 (retail use)	Permitted Development 24/03/1997
034574	Change of use of Atlas Chambers Suite from A1 to A1, A2 & B1 use classes	Approved 29/08/1989
019058	ISTED BUILDING CONSENT Partial demolition and alteration of building within a conservation area	Approved 10/05/1983
019057	LISTED BUILDING CONSENT Partial demolition and alteration of listed building to form office accommodation	Approved 10/05/1983
019081	Refurbishment of existing offices including partial demolition, alteration and extension to form new offices with associated showrooms/ office equipment sales	Approved 10/05/1983

Appendix III: Methodology

Literature and Research Review

This Heritage Impact Assessment is the result of an extensive process which synthesises relevant evidence sourced from documentary research, site analysis, building surveying, and professional judgment.

The documentary research was based upon primary and secondary sources, including maps, drawings, and reports, as well as archive material. Reference with the following organisations, and documentation sources has been undertaken:

- Council Planning Records;
- Manchester City Archives;
- Historic Environment Record (HER);
- Historic mapping (Ordnance Survey where appropriate); and
- Various online resources (including the National Heritage List for England and Britain from Above)

Visual surveys of the Site were conducted in October 2026, in order to map out and identify the relative heritage interest of the Site and its contribution to the setting of surrounding heritage assets within the wider townscape, and to establish the most appropriate locations for key views from which to assess visual impact. The purpose is to define the contribution of the built form to the appreciation and understanding of the special interest of the area.

Significance Assessment

The appraisal of significance includes the result of desktop and site surveys, as well as professional judgement. Assumptions have been made based on previous experience and historical research sources where findings have been limited.

The key criteria for assessing the significance of assets are set-out in Historic England's 'Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets', published 21 October 2019. These definitions are in alignment with the NPPF definition of significance and are 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 and Artistic interest – These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skills, like sculpture.
- Historic interest – An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.

The grading of values as set out in the ICOMOS Guidance for Heritage Impact Assessments (2011), is typically considered using the categories of none, negligible, low, medium, high, and very high.

Very High / Exceptional: Heritage assets of international architectural and historic interest and importance.

> This grading relates specifically to inscribed UNESCO World Heritage Sites, sites on the UNESCO Tentative List and Non-designated assets of acknowledged global rarity.

High: Heritage Assets of exceptional or outstanding architectural and historic interest of national importance.

> This heritage grading relates to Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Grade I and Grade II*listed buildings, and Grade I and Grade II* listed Registered Parks and Gardens, and Registered Battlefields as defined by statute, and Conservation Areas containing very important buildings. This grading can also relate to Grade II listed buildings (dependent on character), and Grade II historic parks/gardens and battlefields.

Medium: Heritage assets of regional architectural and historic importance and interest.

> This heritage grading relates to Grade II listed buildings (dependent on character), Grade II historic parks/gardens and battlefields, designated Conservation Areas, and Unscheduled archaeological sites and landscapes of potential national interest where the fabric and character of the site is well represented in the impacted historic environment. This grading can also relate to non-designated heritage assets where they are demonstrably of regional significance, rather than just local interest.

Low: Local architectural and historic importance and interest.

> This heritage grading relates to Locally Listed Buildings / Non-designated Heritage Assets (as formally identified by the Council and defined by an adopted Local Planning Policy), and sites identified and recorded as being of heritage interest on the Historic Environment Record. The asset is well represented in the impacted historic environment, possessing primarily local architectural, archaeological, and historic interest.

Negligible: Limited architectural and historic importance and interest.

> This heritage grading relates to 'Find Sites' on the Historic Environment Record (HER) or buildings and structures with very limited historic or architectural interest. This includes heavily altered or severely degraded structures, standard 21st-century architectural fabric, and heavily disturbed ground with no remaining archaeological potential. These sites are unlikely to warrant sufficient interest to be considered a 'non-designated'.

None: No architectural and historic importance and interest.

> This definition relates to buildings / structures or elements of a site which yield no heritage significance (i.e., no definable architectural or historic interest).

Impact Assessment

The following grading system has been used for impact assessments in this report.

Substantial / Major adverse: a fundamental change in the appreciation of the heritage asset and its historic context, or setting, involving the degradation of a cultural heritage site of national importance, or the substantial demolition of any grade of a statutorily listed building. This is usually considered as 'substantial harm' or 'total loss', whereby a proposal would 'seriously affect a key element of the asset's significance'.

Moderate adverse: a change resulting in a level of impact that noticeably reduces the significance of a listed building or its setting, a locally important building, site, or landscape, but does not totally destroy its value. A moderate adverse impact to a conservation area occurs when development causes a noticeable, negative impact on its overall character or appearance, but does not fundamentally destroy its significance. This could be considered 'substantial harm' or 'harm'.

Minor adverse: a subtle change to a heritage asset resulting in a low-level, non-fundamental reduction in its significance or setting. Such harm or impact often includes reversible alterations, minor setting changes, or non-intrusive material changes. This could be considered 'harm'.

Neutral: the development would not materially affect the status quo.

Negligible: can be *adverse* or *beneficial* but essentially would have no significant effect on the heritage asset

Minor beneficial: small yet perceptible improvement in the setting of, or condition of, or character of the heritage asset or its setting. It may involve the removal of minor adverse features or be limited to appropriate reinstatement.

Moderate beneficial: a change that appreciably helps to explain the significance and history of the site and surrounding area, ensuring the long-term future and understanding of a heritage asset. This may include the reinstatement of lost historic features and the removal of inappropriate and intrusive later features.

Substantial / Major beneficial: brought about when a development proposal significantly enhances, sustains, or better reveals the significance of a designated or non-designated asset.

The following definitions are employed to align the assessment of impact within the report to the potential effects of development proposals on the significance of heritage assets contained within the NPPF Policy HE 5:

Positive Effect: The proposals enhance, restore, structurally safeguard or better reveal the attributes that contribute to the heritage asset's significance, supporting its conservation and long-term sustainable reuse. The degree of the effect can be Low, Medium, or High.

> Low: The proposals result in a minor but identifiable enhancement to the heritage asset's significance, improve the ability to appreciate its significance, or provide limited improvements to its historic fabric, character or setting.
>
> Medium: The proposals result in a noticeable enhancement to the heritage asset's significance, better reveal important attributes, or provide meaningful conservation and restoration benefits that improve its condition and long-term conservation, or its setting.
>
> High: The proposals result in a substantial enhancement to the heritage asset's significance, restore or reinstate important historic features, significantly improve its setting, better reveal the understanding and appreciation of its significance, or secure its long-term conservation through a highly beneficial and appropriate reuse.

No Effect (Neutral): The proposals do not alter the asset's baseline significance or the attributes that contribute to it, resulting in neither harm nor benefit. A neutral effect may arise from physical or visual changes which may occur within its vicinity or setting, including imperceptible alterations, but which do not diminish or compromise its significance.

Harmful Effect: The proposals would have a negative effect on the asset's significance or setting. The degree of the effect can be Low, Medium, or High.

> Low: Minor physical intervention into historic fabric, or a slight, non-dominant visual intrusion into a secondary aspect of its setting. The asset's overarching significance is fully maintained, but a minor negative effect is still identified.
>
> Medium: Physical or visual changes that cause clear, noticeable damage to an important supporting attribute of a heritage asset's fabric or to the contribution made by its setting, reducing its significance and affecting how it is appreciated or understood, without fundamentally altering its defining character.

High: Physical or visual changes that cause a marked reduction in a heritage asset's significance through pronounced change to its historic fabric or to the contribution made by its setting, diminishing its historic legibility or integrity. For a conservation area, this may involve a pronounced adverse effect on its character or appearance. The effect remains below the threshold for Substantial Harm.

Substantial Harm: Where a proposal would 'seriously affect a key element of the asset's significance', fundamentally undermining the attributes that contribute to its significance. This may involve a fundamental change in the appreciation of the asset, its historic context, or the contribution made by its setting, or substantial loss of significant historic fabric. The assessment is based on the effect on the asset's significance, rather than the extent of demolition or physical change alone.

Total Loss: The physical fabric or entire significance of the heritage asset is completely eradicated.

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Appendix IV: Relevant Policy and Guidance

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

The Act provides the legislative basis for decision making on applications that relate to the historic environment. Sections 16, 66 and 72(1) of the Act impose a statutory duty upon local planning authorities to consider the impact of proposals upon listed buildings and conservation areas.

Section 16 of the Act states that "in considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority or the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses".

Section 66 of the Act states that "in considering whether to grant permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority, or as the case may be the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses".

Section 72 of the Act states that "with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, of any [functions under or by virtue of] any of the provisions mentioned in subsection (2), special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area".

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2026)

Chapter 20 of the framework sets out the Government's planning policies for 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment', and how these are expected to be applied.

HE4: Securing the conservation of heritage assets

1. Heritage assets, as an irreplaceable resource, should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. To achieve this, development proposals which would affect the significance of heritage assets, including any contribution made by their setting should:
2. Maintain or secure a use consistent with their conservation, taking into account the importance of maintaining the assets, the positive contribution they can make to sustainable communities including local economies, and the positive contribution they can make to local character and distinctiveness; and
3. Avoid (or if that is not possible, minimise) harm to the significance of heritage assets, and instead conserve this significance.
4. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (including from development within its setting) should have a clear and convincing justification in accordance with the policies in this chapter.
5. Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of, or damage to, a heritage asset, the deteriorated state of the asset should not be taken into account in any decision relating to the asset.
6. Proposals for enabling development, which would otherwise conflict with other policies in this Framework and/or those in the development plan, but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset, should be considered on the basis of whether the conservation benefits outweigh the disbenefits of departing from the policies concerned.

HE5: Assessing effects on heritage assets

1. Development proposals affecting heritage assets should be accompanied by an assessment of the significance of the assets affected (including any contribution made by their setting) and of the potential effect of the proposal on their significance. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is necessary to understand the potential effect of the proposal on their significance. The relevant historic environment record should be referred to in making this assessment, and appropriate expertise employed where necessary.
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 would 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 from 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 the significance of a heritage asset.
3. In making this assessment it is the effect on a heritage asset's significance rather than the scale of the development which should be considered.
4. Decision-makers should be satisfied that assessments accurately reflect the effects on heritage assets caused by development proposals.
5. Where a development proposal involves, or has the potential to involve, a heritage asset with archaeological interest, an appropriate desk-based assessment should be undertaken and, where necessary, a field evaluation. These should be used to help understand the asset's significance and the potential effect of the proposal on this, which should inform the design, mitigation and implementation of the development.

HE6: Proposals affecting designated heritage assets

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 its significance.
2. Development proposals which would have a positive effect on a designated heritage asset should be supported.
3. Any harm to a designated heritage asset will be a matter of considerable importance and weight, which should be dealt with in accordance with paragraphs 4 to 6 of this policy.
4. Where a development proposal would harm the significance of a designated heritage asset the effect on the asset and its significance should be weighed against any public benefits resulting from the proposal. Important public benefits can include securing the long-term reuse of a vacant or underused listed building, and enabling energy efficiency and low carbon heating measures to be employed.
5. Where a development proposal would cause substantial harm to, or the total loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset, consent should be refused unless it can be demonstrated that the harm is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh the harm or loss, or if all of the following apply:

a. The nature of the heritage asset would otherwise prevent all reasonable uses of the site;

b. No suitable use for the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation;

c. Conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is not possible; and

d. The harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the asset back into use.

6. Within this context, development which would cause substantial harm to, or the total loss of, the significance of grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional; while development which would cause substantial harm to, or the total loss of, assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional[64].

HE9: Conservation areas

1. Development proposals within or affecting the significance of conservation areas should:
2. Retain and conserve buildings and other features which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area where possible; and
3. Consider the area's special architectural or historic interest (as identified as part of the designation of the conservation area) in the design of development. 65 Any development affecting World Heritage Sites should be assessed against this policy. It should be noted that some World Heritage Sites are inscribed by UNESCO to be of natural significance rather than cultural significance; and in some cases they are inscribed for both their natural and cultural significance.
4. Not all elements of a conservation area will necessarily contribute to its significance. Where a development proposal would result in the loss of a building or other element which contributes to the character or appearance of a conservation area that is desirable to conserve, the assessment of impact should take into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the conservation area as a whole, and the effects of this considered in accordance with policies HE5 and HE6.
5. Proposals which conserve those elements of a conservation area that make a positive contribution to the area (or which better reveal its significance) should be supported.

Regional Planning Policy

The Greater Manchester Combined Authority Places for Everyone ('PfE') (2024) is the long-term plan of nine Greater Manchester districts for jobs, new homes, and sustainable growth. The plan sets out a strategic policy framework for the nine boroughs and helps these areas to meet their local housing and employment needs by identifying land and infrastructure to support growth.

Objective 4 of the PfE seeks to:

- Enhance our cultural, heritage and educational assets;
- Improve sustainable transport and active travel access to these locations; and
- Improve access for local people to jobs in these locations.

Policy JP-P2 addresses 'Heritage,' and states that:

Through this Plan we will proactively manage and work with partners to positively conserve, sustain and enhance its historic environment and heritage assets and their settings. Opportunities

will be pursued to aid the promotion, enjoyment, understanding and interpretation of heritage assets, as a means of maximising wider public benefits and reinforcing Greater Manchester's distinct identity and sense of place. Local Plans will set out the key elements which contribute to the district's identity, character, and distinctiveness and which should be the priority for safeguarding and enhancing in the future, and demonstrate a clear understanding of the historic environment and the heritage values of sites, buildings or areas and their relationship with their surroundings. This knowledge should be used to inform the positive integration of our heritage by:

1. Setting out a clear vision that recognises and embeds the role of heritage in place-making;

2. Utilising the heritage significance of a site or area in the planning and design process, providing opportunities for interpretation and local engagement;

3. Integrating the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets and their settings, with creative contextual architectural responses that contribute to their significance and sense of place;

4. Delivering positive benefits that sustain and enhance the historic environment, as well as contributing to the economic viability, accessibility, and environmental quality of a place, and to social wellbeing; and

5. Exploring opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that restoration of historic buildings offer.

Particular consideration will be given to ensure that the significance of key elements of the historic environment which contribute to Greater Manchester's distinctive identity and sense of place are protected from harm. These include historic town centres, places of worship, historic Places for Everyone transport routes including the canal network, industrial buildings and structures including textile mills, farmsteads and other sites, buildings, and areas of identified archaeological, architectural, artistic and historic value.

Development proposals affecting a designated heritage asset (or an archaeological site of national importance) and a conservation area should conserve those elements which contribute to its significance including those identified in any conservation area appraisal as making a positive contribution to the area. Harm to such elements will only be permitted where this is clearly justified and outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal.

Proposals should be informed, as necessary, by the findings and recommendations of the appropriate heritage assessment(s) in the development plan evidence base and/or any updated heritage assessment submitted as part of the planning application process.

Local Context

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Local Plan (2012)

The relevant, local heritage Planning Policy maintains the same focus as the NPPF. The City Council's heritage policies focus on the fundamental importance of "preserving or, where possible, enhancing the historic environment." The following policies from Manchester's Core Strategy (2012) are of importance to the heritage assets considered within this statement.

Policy CC9 (Design and Heritage) states that development in Manchester City Centre should preserve or enhance the heritage assets that have been identified, including listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled ancient monuments. The policy also establishes that new development must support the range of uses the Council expects in the City Centre and contribute to a coherent and integrated physical environment.

Policy EN3 (Heritage) states that throughout the City, MCC will encourage development that complements and takes advantage of the distinct historic and heritage features of its districts and neighbourhoods. New developments must be designed to support MCC in preserving or, where possible, enhancing the historic environment, the character, setting and accessibility of areas and buildings of acknowledged importance.

Policy EN2 is also of relevance, as it stresses that "suitable locations will include sites within and immediately adjacent to the City Centre with particular encouragement given to non-conservation areas and sites which can easily be served by public transport nodes."

The Council's key regeneration objective is tempered by the need to ensure that "historic sites and areas of particular heritage value should be both safeguarded for the future and, where possible, enhanced for their own heritage merits and as part of wider heritage regeneration proposals" (paragraph 12.21, Policy EN3). The policy thus evidently requires development proposals to be sensitive to the inherent values of the designated heritage asset, with any impact justified by clear, documentary evidence.

Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester, 1995

The Unitary Development Plan (the 'UDP') for Manchester was adopted by the Council in 1995. The Core Strategy, adopted in 2012, replaced significant elements of the UDP, though there are saved policies which are extant, and which are relevant to a consideration of the impact of development proposals on heritage assets.

Development Control Policies 18.1 and 19.1 are saved from the UDP and address conservation areas and listed buildings. The policies stipulate that careful consideration is to be given to development proposals which affect the respective heritage assets, providing a series of provisions to consider such as relationships between new and old buildings, and promote their preservation and enhancement.

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Policy D 4

Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, and Registered Parks and Gardens

New development will conserve or enhance the significance of Conservation Areas taking into account their special character and setting, and will:

- Conserve the unique and distinctive townscape characteristics and features of the conservation areas including landscape character, boundary treatments, walls, gardens, open spaces and trees.
- Preserve or enhance key views and vistas.
- Expect high quality design in new development that enhances the historic an architectural character.
- Use high quality materials and detailing appropriate to the context.
- Refurbish or replace buildings that have a negative impact on the area and take opportunities to better reveal the significance of the area.
- Resist harmful incremental changes where the cumulative effect erodes the special character.
- Take account of any further guidance and frameworks approved by the Council.

Listed Buildings

Alterations to listed buildings and their settings will conserve their significance, restoring original architectural detail and historic fabric through:

- Development affecting settings of Listed Buildings should take opportunities to enhance or better reveal their significance.
- Taking opportunities to reinstate internal and external features of special architectural or historic significance and remove harmful features.
- Ensuring change of use and adaption will be consistent with their long term conservation particularly those which have been identified at risk.
- Resisting the demolition of Listed Buildings in whole or in part or the removal or modification of later features of interest.

Ensuring work is informed by appropriate specialists and carried out to high quality conservation standards.

Registered Parks and Gardens.

Proposals affecting registered parks, gardens and open spaces must conserve their significance including setting and will:

- Take opportunities to reinstate landscape or built features that contribute positively to their historic interest.
- Remove harmful landscape and built features.

Policy D 5

Heritage

Manchester has a distinctive historic environment with a concentration of heritage assets in the city which contribute to the character, economy, sustainability, culture and quality of life.

Development affecting Heritage assets will positively conserve or enhance their significance as an integral part of sustainable growth, and will:

- Describe and assess the significance of the heritage asset which will inform proposals for their positive conservation.
- Ensure heritage assets and their settings are conserved and enhanced in a manner appropriate to their significance.
- Secure the continued beneficial use of heritage assets while allowing them to meet changing needs and adapt to climate change.
- Ensure heritage is at the heart of place making and sustainable growth, responding positively to the distinctive character of our heritage assets and delivering high quality buildings and spaces which enhance their settings.
- Avoid harm to the significance of heritage assets, but where unavoidable clearly demonstrate the public benefit of the proposals and seek to mitigate the harm in all cases.

Non-designated Heritage assets (NDHAs)

Non-designated heritage assets including local buildings and structures of merit, archaeology, and open spaces will be conserved. When assessing Proposals affecting NDHAs a balanced judgement will be made regarding the scale of any harm or loss of the asset and the public benefit of the development.

National Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) (Historic Environment, 2019, 2024)

The National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) was last updated in February 2024 to support the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the planning system. It includes particular guidance on matters relating to protecting the historic environment in the section: Conserving and

Enhancing the Historic Environment. Our assessment methodology (Appendix 3) uses the NPPF and PPG's terminology for significance.

Paragraph 7: Why is 'significance' important in decision-taking? Heritage assets may be affected by direct physical change or by change in their setting. Being able to properly assess the nature, extent and importance of the significance of a heritage asset, and the contribution of its setting, is very important to understanding the potential impact and acceptability of development proposals.

Paragraph 8: How can proposals avoid or minimise harm to the significance of a heritage asset?

Understanding the significance of a heritage asset and its setting from an early stage in the design process can help to inform the development of proposals which avoid or minimise harm. Analysis of relevant information can generate a clear understanding of the affected asset, the heritage interests represented in it, and their relative importance.

Early appraisals, a conservation plan or targeted specialist investigation can help to identify constraints and opportunities arising from the asset at an early stage. Such appraisals or investigations can identify alternative development options, for example more sensitive designs or different orientations, that will both conserve the heritage assets and deliver public benefits in a more sustainable and appropriate way.

Paragraph 13: What is the setting of a heritage asset and how should it be taken into account?

The setting of a heritage asset is defined in the Glossary of the National Planning Policy Framework. All heritage assets have a setting, irrespective of the form in which they survive and whether they are designated or not. The setting of a heritage asset and the asset's curtilage may not have the same extent. The extent and importance of setting is often expressed by reference to the visual relationship between the asset and the proposed development and associated visual/physical considerations. Although views of or from an asset will play an important part in the assessment of impacts on setting, the way in which we experience an asset in its setting is also influenced by other environmental factors such as noise, dust, smell and vibration from other land uses in the vicinity, and by our understanding of the historic relationship between places. For example, buildings that are in close proximity but are not visible from each other may have a historic or aesthetic connection that amplifies the experience of the significance of each. The contribution that setting makes to the significance of the heritage asset does not depend on there being public rights of way or an ability to otherwise access or experience that setting. The contribution may vary over time. When assessing any application which may affect the setting of a heritage asset, local planning authorities may need to consider the implications of cumulative change. They may also need to consider the fact that developments which materially detract from the asset's significance may also damage its economic viability now, or in the future, thereby threatening its ongoing conservation.

Appendix V: References

Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Department of Communities and Local Government (2026). National Planning Policy Framework.

Department of Communities and Local Government (2019) Planning Practice Guidance. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Historic England (2008). Conservation Principles. Policies and Guidance.

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