Library Walk Link, Manchester

Heritage Statement
in support of an Application for Listed Building Consent
7 May 2012
The Town Hall Extension under construction showing the concrete slab cast over the basement and before any paving was laid

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The Town Hall Extension under construction showing the concrete slab cast over the basement and before any paving was laid.
1 Introduction

A new ‘glazed link’ in Library Walk is proposed as a public route connecting the ground floor of the Town Hall Extension (THx) with the new ground floor level of the Central Library (CL). The design for the ‘glazed link’ is fully described in a separate Design and Access Statement and shown in drawings included with applications for the Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent.

To support applications for Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent for the new ‘glazed link’ and associated paving and minor changes to two ground level bays of the THx and CL façades, Manchester City Council commissioned HOK to prepare a Heritage Statement that also assesses the potential impact of the ‘glazed link’ proposal on the significance of the ‘heritage assets’ that are listed below. The Heritage Statement follows guidance within National Planning Policy Framework, in particular section 12: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

2 The Heritage Assets

The Manchester Civic Complex comprises:

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<th>Building</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Architect</th>
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<tr>
<td>Manchester Town Hall</td>
<td>1877</td>
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All three buildings in the Civic Complex are recognised as ‘heritage assets’ – the Town Hall being statutorily listed Grade I (25 February 1952); the Town Hall Extension listed Grade II* (3 October 1974); and Central Library listed Grade II* (3 October 1974).

The Town Hall and Town Hall Extension sit in the Albert Square Conservation Area and the Central Library sits in the St Peter’s Square Conservation Area. Library Walk straddles the boundary between the two Conservation Areas.

Library Walk itself is not recognised as a separate ‘heritage asset’, however, the new ‘glazed link’ will be located between and connected to the THx and CL on either side which are both ‘heritage assets’ as noted above.

The THx and CL are both undergoing refurbishment. PPSS Heritage Statements and Conservation Strategies for both building were submitted with applications for Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent submitted 6 August 2010, receiving Consent at the end of October 2010.

3 Listing Descriptions

The Listing Description for the Town Hall Extension is as follows:

MANCHESTER
SJ8398SE LLOYD STREET
698-1/27/220 (South side)
03/10/74 Town Hall Extension
GV II*

Town hall extension. 1938, by Vincent Harris. Steel frame with cladding of sandstone ashlar and steeply-pitched slate roof (this is incorrect as it has a cast lead covering). Large irregular plan with long concave south side. Eclectic style with Gothic accent. Eight storeys and attic, the 7th and 8th storeys set back behind a parapet, with 29-window facade to Lloyd Street (linked to Town Hall by bridge), 17-window facade to St Peter’s Square, and contrasting 5-bay facade to Mount Street (see below). In all these facades the ground floor is treated as a plinth with a continuous arcade of simple round-headed openings and a chamfered coping; the upper floors of those to Lloyd Street and St Peter’s Square are divided horizontally by a band over the 1st floor and a parapet over the 5th floor, have small rectangular windows up to that level and 2-light mullioned windows to the set-back 6th and 7th floors, and attic dormers with wooden cross-windows and hipped roofs; and the last 5 bays of the Lloyd Street facade are set back. The Mount Street facade, by contrast, has 5 giant oriel windows from the 2nd to the 5th floors (inclusive), all rising from a straight band carried on large brackets at 1st floor, but the 2nd and 4th slightly set back, and all filled with a continuous grid of mullion-and-transom windows divided by a king mullion and 2 transoms into pairs of 8, 6 and 4 lights on successive levels. The gable ends of the Mount Street and St Peter’s Square wings have tall stair-turrets with giant round-headed arches containing elaborate geometrically traceried windows, over the head of each arch a square-headed niche with a statue, and stepped back top stages with bands. At the rear (towards the circular Library building) the wings are linked by a curved 4-storey range which has widely spaced round-headed arches and small windows.
The Listing Description for the Central Library is as follows:

MANCHESTER

SJ8397NE ST PETER’S SQUARE
698-1/31/408 (West side)
03/10/74 Central Public Library
GV II*

Public library. 1930-4, by Vincent Harris. Portland stone, slate roof (this is incorrect as the roof covering is in cast lead) with concealed glazed lantern light. Circular plan with rectangular portico on east side. Classical style. Four storeys with basement and attic (surrounding a large central reading room); with a chamfered plinth, rusticated masonry to ground and 1st floors with a Greek-key frieze, a continuous Tuscan colonnaded screen to set-back 2nd and 3rd floors, with a plain frieze, cornice and parapet concealing a low set-back attic storey. The east side (to the square) has a rectangular 2-storey projection with a central 5-bay portico of giant Corinthian columns tetrastyle in antis, with round-headed arches in the returned ends, and entablature with dentilled cornice. Otherwise, the ground floor has tall round-headed windows with keystones, the 1st floor has tall square-headed windows, and the 2nd and 3rd floors have smaller rectangular windows; all these windows with metal-framed small-paned glazing (this is incorrect as the majority of windows are in timber). Interior: domed circular reading room surrounded by giant Tuscan colonnade.

5 Library Walk – originally a space between buildings

The 1927 competition brief for a new Town Hall Extension (THx) and Central Reference Library (CL) allowed entrants to submit designs that either included the library within the town hall extension or as a separate building. However, if an entrant decided to submit a design showing two entirely separate buildings, the brief did not office advice on how to use any left-over space between them.

E Vincent Harris won the competition with a design for two buildings – one in a Classical tradition, the other in what he described as Tudor Gothic. What Harris had in mind for the space between his two buildings is unclear, although the plan of his entry published in The Builder of 7 October 1927 indicates that he intended to build over part of Dickinson Street, which crossed the site. The perspective drawing of the winning entry (on the cover of this Heritage Statement) published in the same edition of The Builder shows both the THx and CL as he imagined them, however, the delineation of Library Walk is unhelpfully vague.

Plan from The Builder 7 October 1927 – note the plan shows within the Town Hall Extension another variation of a large central public space entered from Library Walk
It has been suggested that Harris had little interest in designing the public realm around his public buildings, leaving this to the Highways or Parks Departments of the local authority client – and Library Walk may be an example. The reason for suggesting this is because the ground floor of Harris’ competition design for the THx in 1927 is different from the ground floor plan of the finished building but the original design may give a clue to his original ideas for using the space between the two buildings which were later abandoned.

In his competition design published in The Builder of 7 October 1927, Harris offered a ground floor plan showing the main public entrance on Mount Street – the same road as the main public entrance to Waterhouse’s Town Hall. This entrance gave visitor access to the Water Department and Gas Showroom – the two public utilities in common use, when Electricity use in the home was still quite rare and in need of promotion – hence the location of the Electricity showroom overlooking the future enlarged St Peter’s Square as planned by G Noel Hill the City Architect. The other areas of the ground floor to which the public needed access were the Water, Gas and Electrics Accounts Halls.

To link the Mount Street entrance with the Accounts Halls in the centre of the THx, Harris included ‘The Public Approach Corridor’, the Council thinking it essential to provide sufficient comfort in an enclosed promenade so residents and businesses could still queue to pay their bills in inclement weather. Harris published section drawings that also show domes over the Gas Showroom and the Water, Gas and Electrics Accounts Halls like that over the Great Hall in the CL. The two Accounts Halls were separated from each other by a corridor run between an entrance on Lloyd Street opposite the old Town Hall and The Public Approach Corridor – where three pairs of doors allowed entry and exit to the narrow space between the THx and the CL. Crossing the narrow space it was possible to enter the CL using the side entrance portico, and this would have been a very convenient route for council staff working in Waterhouse’s Town Hall or in the future THx needing to refer to the collection of Ordnance Survey Maps, and other reference material when carrying out their duties.

Interestingly, the Accounts Hall included a central desk hiding a pair of radiused stairs leading down to cash storage vaults in the basement, a design similar to the central desk in the Great Hall of the CL. A later plan published in The Builder in 1938 show a very different floor plan and no longer includes the two domes. (It is not known whether the acoustic problem of the Great Hall in the CL led to Harris removing the domes over the Accounts Halls from his design for the THx.)
Plan of the Town Hall Extension from The Builder 7 October 1927 showing The Public Approach Corridor (now the Rates Hall) with three entrances / exits in the centre.

Plan of the Town Hall Extension from The Builder 27 May 1938 showing a different ground floor with the Rates Hall desk shown and a new Gas Showroom beside Mount Street.
That Harris decided to include in his design for three pairs of entrance doors into the space between The Public Approach Corridor of the THx and directly opposite the side portico entrance to the CL indicates his understanding that people needed to transfer easily and quickly between the ground floors of both buildings. It also shows how it was originally imagined the two buildings would work together. However, it is not known whether Harris intended to develop his design later to include a garden or a roofed colonnade between the two buildings, but it can be conjectured. In addition, it has to be appreciated that in Harris’ original design of 1927 The Public Approach Corridor was a double-height room much narrower in width than his later Rates Hall, and with three floors above which could be let as office space to provide an income when they were not required by the Council. Also, the taller curved wing with its different façade style and noticeable variety of window widths, would have given the space between the THx and CL a very different appearance from what was eventually constructed.

In this new plan for the Thx, the Public Approach Corridor was renamed the Rates Hall and widened to accommodate a continuous mahogany counter along one side where clerks dealt with the public and businesses before transferring the paperwork and cash through the tall polished mahogany doors to the vast unadorned processing room hidden away beneath the roof-lights of the central courtyard. Sadly, the three pairs of entrance doors in the centre of The Public Approach Corridor were omitted from the design leaving a space between the THx and CL which had no real purpose other than to separate the buildings and ease their construction. In the later design from 1938 the proposed Rates Hall was increased in width, and with just one office floor above. It was only after building work had started that a decision was made to add a further two floors and provide three floors of accommodation for rental to third parties.

For reasons unknown, Harris’ floor plans for the THx changed even more prior to building. The Gas and Electricity showrooms moved to façades facing Mount Street and St Peter’s Square, with shop windows at street level for the display of the equipment becoming available for home use, such as gas and electric fires, water heaters, gas and electric lighting. Functioning displays of large scale equipment for factory and office canteens were set up in the basement with regular demonstrations for how to use it effectively. Cookery classes were also held where families could learn how to get the best results using the new gas and electric cookers then coming onto the market.

There is, however, a facet of Harris’ competition design for the THx that has gone un-noticed, and it adds a further complication to understanding what he had in mind for the left-over space between the two buildings. The drawings from 1927 show a vehicle ramp at the Mount Street end leading down into a basement storage area. The vehicle ramp provided access into a vast delivery / collection / storage area in the THx basement with an iron track and turntable system for moving heavy items about the space. The plan indicates the roof between the two buildings was to incorporate pavement lights to bring natural light into the delivery / collection area. It is assumed that in 1927 pavement lights would have been acceptable as the surface of an escape route from the side entrance portico of the CL.

Photographs from 1934 show a small area paved as a standing area where the official party attended King George V as he laid the foundation stone for the THx following the ceremonial opening of the CL. This paving was linked with some small road changes to St Peter’s Square. While records show that on 10 November 1938 ‘the Highways Committee agree to accept the maintenance of the passage between the CL and the THx’ the earliest reference found for the name Library Walk is from 11 May 1950 when referring to maintenance at the public expense, perhaps indicating the name was by then in common use. Also, given the anticipation of war in Europe and continuing austerity, there may not have been the appetite or the budget to do much more than lay paving to provide the means of escape route from the CL. At the same time a minimal number of lights were installed on the THx but these could not be considered sufficient to illuminate a public thoroughfare, therefore it has to be questioned whether Harris ever intended the space between the two buildings for general public use and that it was paved ahead of the Second World War to allow the fire fighting services access to the buildings for their wheeled 80 foot ladders.

Given the curious history of how this left-over space came into being and the fact it is not a particularly pleasant space, it is necessary to consider how Harris imagined it might have been viewed from inside each building. From the ground floor of the CL, the only publicly accessible space from which it can be seen is the plain room at the front of the building to the right of the Portico which was originally the location of the Henry Watson Music Library. The majority of this room looks out onto the area to the side of the Portico and the semi-circular stone seat where it is possible to imagine people might have sat beside an area of landscape which would catch the sun in both summer and winter – realised
in 1953 when Library Walk was turned into a flower bed for the Coronation. The remainder of the ground floor on this side of the CL and facing Library Walk is occupied by two layers of book stacks which benefit from being on the darker side of the building and would also have overlooked the vehicle ramp shown in the original competition plan.

The present paving and lighting of the space between the two buildings now known as Library Walk is not the original. The slabs may have been laid in 1988 when ramps were installed to improve access for people visiting the CL.

Library Walk is a space between buildings that was never really designed. While it is used by pedestrians in the daytime as a cut-through from St Peter’s Square to Mount Street, at night it is often used as a public toilet. As a potential tourist destination, Library Walk is not a pleasant public space for visitors to the Civic heart of one of the largest cities in the UK. As an enhancement to ground floor public circulation between the refurbished THx and CL, the new ‘glazed link’ in Library Walk and changes to the paving is a timely intervention that offers every opportunity for long-term improvements to this part of the public realm.
Library Walk in the 1960s by Ian Nairn and illustrating a cut-through passage rather than a carefully considered civic space

Library Walk in the 1980s by John Archer showing the original light fittings that were replaced before 2003, and the paving that was most likely laid in 1988
6 Assessment of design proposals for the Library Walk Link in relation to the National Planning Policy Framework, in particular section 12: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Policies from the National Planning Policy Framework taken into consideration when preparing the design proposals for the new ‘glazed link’ are as follows:

**Paragraph 128**

Paragraph 128 of the National Planning Policy Framework advises that ‘In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary.’ This assessment follows these principles.

**Paragraph 65**

Paragraph 65 of the National Planning Policy Framework advises that ‘Local planning authorities should not refuse planning permission for buildings or infrastructure which promote high levels of sustainability because of concerns about incompatibility with an existing townscape, if those concerns have been mitigated by good design (unless the concern relates to a designated heritage asset and the impact would cause material harm to the asset or its setting which is not outweighed by the proposal’s economic, social and environmental benefits).’

The THx and CL being ‘public buildings’, the new ‘glazed link’, in Library Walk, will offer all visitors a new and additional entry point to both buildings. The ‘glazed link’ will also provide a covered connection between the ground floors of the two buildings so people can transfer between them and use the services available. In particular the ‘glazed link’ will make navigation between buildings easier for people with disabilities and families with young children.

Pre-application discussions have taken place over the past year with English Heritage, and planning and conservation officers to create a design for a ‘glazed link’ in Library Walk that respects the significance, integrity, and setting of the THx and CL and has minimal impact on the historic fabric of both buildings.

**Paragaphs 128**

Paragraph 128 of the National Planning Policy Framework advises that ‘In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes or has the potential to include heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.’

Heritage Statements for the THx and CL submitted for Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent 6 August 2010 provided an assessment in sufficient detail of the significance of the THx and CL as ‘heritage assets’. This Heritage Statement for a new ‘glazed link’, in Library Walk, also includes in Appendix I relevant pages from the Conservation Strategies for the basement and ground floor of the THx and CL as included within the earlier Heritage Statements. A further Appendix II provides descriptions of the Library Walk facades to both buildings.

Information regarding the scope and effect of the current proposals on the two ‘heritage assets’ are shown in the drawings, and described in the Design and Access Statement for the new ‘glazed link’ to be erected in Library Walk and submitted with this application for Listed Building Consent.

The scope for finding archaeology beneath the THx and CL basements below Library Walk was addressed in Archaeology Assessments for the THx and CL submitted 6 August 2010 with applications for Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent. Given that basements were created for the THx and CL it is considered there is little or no potential for further archaeology.

As the Manchester Town Hall Complex Conservation Plan, the Assessment of Significance of Manchester Town Hall Extension and Central Library, and the Heritage Statements for the THx and CL submitted for Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent do not contain an Assessment of the Significance of Library Walk as a ‘heritage asset’, further research has been carried out and is presented in the pages that follow.
SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HERITAGE ASSET
The THx and CL are Grade II* listed and an ‘assessment of the significance’ informed by reference to English Heritage publication ‘Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance – for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment’ (2008) was provided in the Heritage Statement included with the applications for Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent submitted 6 August 2010.

The ‘assessment of the significance’ did not, however, include any information about the space between the two buildings that was originally described as a ‘passage’ and is now known as Library Walk. (Refer to Section 5: Library walk – originally a space between buildings.)

Under a heading in that publication ‘Understanding the significance of places is vital’, the authors suggest ‘the significance of a place embraces all the diverse cultural and natural heritage values that people associate with it, or which prompt them or respond to it’, and that ‘these values tend to grow in strength and complexity over time, as understanding deepens and people’s perceptions evolve’. (paragraph 3.2)

The authors further suggest that ‘in order to identify the significance of a place, it is necessary first to understand its fabric, and how and why it has changed over time; and then to consider who values the place, and why they do so; how those values relate to its fabric; their relative importance; whether associated objects relate to them; the contribution made by the setting and context of the place; and how the place compares with others sharing similar values’ (paragraph 3.3). They also suggest that ‘understanding and articulating the values and significance of a place is necessary to inform decisions about its future and that the degree of significance determines what, if any, protection, including statutory designation, is appropriate under law and policy’ (paragraph 3.4).

The authors proposed that such heritage values for Library Walk can be evaluated by using four headings: Evidential, Historic, Aesthetic and Communal.

EVIDENTIAL VALUE
‘Evidential value derives from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity’ and ‘evidential value derives from the physical remains ... that have been inherited from the past. (paragraphs 35 and 38)

Manchester City Council in recognising the value of the ‘heritage assets’ in its care has commissioned the following studies:

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<th>Study</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Manchester Town Hall Complex Conservation Plan</td>
<td>John Archer with Building Design Partnership</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volume 1 The Buildings and Squares</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volume 2 The Furniture</td>
<td>John Archer and Stuart Evens</td>
<td>2006</td>
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<tr>
<td>Volume 3 The Collections</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessment of the Significance of Manchester Town Hall Extension and Central Library</td>
<td>Stephen Levrant Heritage Architecture</td>
<td>01/2010</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manchester Town Hall Extension Conservation Strategy</td>
<td>HOK International Limited</td>
<td>05/2010</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manchester Central Library Conservation Strategy</td>
<td>HOK International Limited</td>
<td>05/2010</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manchester Town Hall Extension Heritage Statement</td>
<td>HOK International Limited</td>
<td>08/2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manchester Central Library Heritage Statement</td>
<td>HOK International Limited</td>
<td>08/2010</td>
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Each successive study has built on the knowledge made available in the earlier work and copies have been lodged with the Local History Collection at the Manchester Central Library, the local office of English Heritage and the Planning Department of Manchester City Council.

HISTORICAL VALUE
‘Historical value derives from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present’ and ‘it tends to be illustrative or associative’. (paragraph 39)

Manchester City Council appreciates that for eighty years the space between the THx and CL originally described as a ‘passage’, and is now known as Library Walk, has been a feature in the lives of many citizens and businesses. Until its recent closure as part of the construction site for the Refurbishment of the THx and CL, it was in daily use as a cut-through between St Peter’s Square and Mount Street. It is also part of the Means of Escape route from the upper floors of the CL and the Library Theatre in the basement of the same building. Although the original competition winning entry showed three pairs of doors
between the Public Approach Corridor and the ‘passage’, the later plans as built have never included access into Library Walk from the Rates Hall of the THx.

Historically, part of the ‘passage’ was first used in 1934 when a small area at the St Peter’s Square end was partly paved and used by the official Civic party that attended King George V as he laid the foundation stone for the THx after the ceremonial opening of the CL.

A memorandum of 17 November 1976 from the City Engineer and Surveyor to the Director of Cultural Services is particularly helpful in confirming that the space between the two buildings was originally referred to as a ‘passage’ when it was decided to pave it over and was not called Library Walk until later.

I refer to your memorandum dated 7 September, 1976, regarding responsibility for the maintenance of the paved area known as Library Walk.

Although it has been assumed until recently that Library Walk was not an adopted highway, further intensive investigation has revealed that maintenance of the surface of ‘the passage between Central Library and Town Hall Extension’ was accepted as the responsibility of the Highways Committee on 10 November, 1938, subject to certain exclusions and the decision of the Committee was approved by the City Council on 7 December, 1938.

The decision taken on 10 November, 1938 was that ‘the Highways Committee agree to accept the maintenance of the surface of the passage between the Central Library and the Town Hall Extension, on the understanding that they do not accept any liability in connection with the subway under the passage whatsoever, or any decklights, hatchways or other easements existing in the passage and as the surface water drainage of the passage is connected to the drainage system of the Town Hall Extension, they do not accept liability for such drains.’

I have arranged for a survey to be made of Library Walk, the position of decklights and other relevant features to be included in the survey and will forward to you in due course, a revised copy of the plan which will indicate the areas maintainable by the Highways Committee Expense and those areas which are maintainable at the Cultural Services Committees expense.

I regret the incorrect information given to you in my memorandum dated 26 August, 1976, but assure you that it was given in good faith, there apparently being no information to the contrary available to us at the time.

Prior to that, the first reference to Library Walk found in the Manchester City Archives is a record card dating from 11 May 1950 which confirms ‘The length declared a Highway (not adopted – responsible for maintenance of the surface of the passage only) maintainable at the public expense constitutes the full length of the Street. Length from Mount Street to St Peter’s Square – Length of Street – Public – 90 linear metres, width 6m to 14m varies.’

The earliest published reference to Library Walk is The Manchester Guardian of 10 December 1952 in a report to explain the decorations proposed for the Coronation. ‘Six purple banners and the royal crest in gold embellish the portico of the Central Library and Library Walk will be brightened with a flower bed’.

Contrary to perception, Library Walk is barely mentioned in fiction or non-fiction, and there have only been a handful of references. Barry Worthington in Discovering Manchester (2002) refers to Library Walk as an ‘impressive curved passageway’; and Guy MacDonald in England (2004) describes Library Walk as ‘canyon like’; while Charles Tyrie in The Cheshire Conspiracy (2009) simply calls it ‘narrow’. But it is Anthony Thompson in his study Library buildings of Britain and Europe: an international study, with examples mainly from Britain and some from Europe and overseas (1963) who perhaps captures the feeling of many people living in Manchester and using Library Walk when he acknowledges that it is better known locally as ‘pneumonia alley because of the winter winds’.

The historical value of Library Walk appears limited to it being an unplanned pedestrian cut-through connecting St Peter’s Square and Mount Street.

**AESTHETIC VALUE**

‘Aesthetic value derives from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place’. (paragraph 46)

The space between the THx and CL that was originally described as a ‘passage’ and now known as Library Walk, has from the beginning simply been a space between two buildings. Originally it may only have been part of a Means of Escape route from the side portico of the CL to St Peter’s Square or Mount Street and its width may have been governed by the distance necessary to prevent the spread of flames from one building to another and provide room for the mobile turntable ladders which at the time could only reach a height of eighty feet. Although from the beginning it was poorly lit at night with only four lights of modest output, since being paved over in 1938 the ‘passage’ has been
regularly used by pedestrians as a cut-through between St Peter’s Square and Mount Street, except for part of the year 1953 when Library Walk was planted as a flower bed for the Coronation celebrations.

When considering the aesthetic value of Library Walk, reference has first to be made to the very few published descriptions which describe it as ‘an impressive curved passageway’, ‘canyon like’, and ‘narrow’, although many residents will know it better as ‘pneumonia alley because of the winter winds’. It is a great surprise that there are so few published references, which would seem to indicate not all the people of Manchester or indeed visitors to the City ‘draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from the place’.

Yet Library Walk does have aesthetic value, and it is possible to appreciate this by spending time there and looking about rather than just treating the ‘passage’ as a cut-through between St Peter’s Square and Mount Street. Viewing Library Walk from the far side of St Peter’s Square it is obvious the space between the two buildings, and the use of different coloured stone in the façades, helps to separate the low height Classical CL from the taller Tudor Gothic THx. It is also interesting to note that Harris kept the height of the wing containing the Rates Hall lower than the height of the curved façade of the CL so it is always possible to see the rear of the upper floors of the Lloyd Street wing and the row of faience panels containing bas-reliefs of flowers symbolising England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland, which are particularly beautiful when highlighted by the sun as it crosses that façade of the THx for a few hours each day. It is obviously this view which Barry Worthington saw as ‘an impressive curved passageway’, and the best view of Library Walk is from the far side of St Peter’s Square or the THx is first seen when entering the Square from Oxford Road.

Interestingly from the far side of Mount Street and standing near the Friends Meeting House the view is quite different. This is because the gap between the two different curves of the CL and the Rates Hall wing of the THx are at their closest. It must have been this view that gave Guy MacDonald the feeling that Library Walk is ‘canyon like’, and encouraged Charles Tyrie to choose the word ‘narrow’. That is the reality of Library Walk, and very like the ‘Siq’ passageway between cliffs at Petra, along which visitors pass before being astonished at their first sight of the ‘Treasury’ as viewed through the final tiny slit before the route opens into a wide expanse of rock strewn sand.

The two ends of Library Walk look very different and do feel different to the senses, therefore the aesthetic value of these intangible aspects of the space between the THx and CL, that was originally described as a ‘passage’ and now known as Library Walk are important to retain.

COMMUNAL VALUE

‘Communal value derives from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory’ and that ‘communal values are closely bound up with historical (particularly associative) and aesthetic values, but tend to have additional and specific aspects’ (paragraph 54)

Apart from the many thousands of people who have used Library Walk as a cut-through, the most relevant person to have a connection with the buildings on either side is the architect Emmanuel Vincent Harris (1876-1971), for it was he who in 1927 submitted the winning design to a competition organised by Manchester City Council for a THx and CL. Although the competition brief proposed that both Office and Library uses should be incorporated in one building, it was Harris’s perception that being quite different the two functions would be better served by two separate buildings, and this proved to be a competition winning concept.

In 1934 when King George V and Queen Mary visited Manchester to open the newly completed CL to the public and to meet with Harris and some of the workmen involved with its construction, that same day the King unveiled a foundation stone to mark the commencement of work on the THx. For this event part of the St Peter’s Square end, of what would later become the space between the buildings, was paved over so those attending the ceremony had somewhere clean and level on which to stand.

The ‘passage’ now known as Library Walk was also originally part of Dickinson Street and adjacent to what was named St Peter’s Field, where in August 1819 a peaceful gathering of local people demanding parliamentary representation was cut down and killed by Cavalry from the local garrison in an outrage known as the Peterloo Massacre. Also, between 1825-7, Bouton & Daguerre’s Diorama stood at the same end of Dickenson Street approximately in the space between the THx and CL. Although very little is known about the building, the opening diorama displayed a view 80 feet by 50 of the Sarnen Valley in Switzerland.
That Dickinson Street, or the ‘passage’, or Library Walk has provided a route for pedestrians for at least two centuries is already in the collective memory of Manchester people, therefore finding ways in which it can still be used as an entry point to the THx and CL and be a muster point for those wishing to have access to knowledge seems a worthwhile aim to be continued – in much the same way people visiting Bouton & Daguerre’s Diorama could gain something of an impression of places they did not have the financial means to visit.

CONCLUSION

Having applied Evidential, Historic, Aesthetic and Communal values to Library Walk it has limited value when compared with the THx and CL. While not a ‘heritage asset’ in its own right, the significance of Library Walk derives from long-term use as a pedestrian cut-through between St Peter’s Square and Mount Street.

The need for a ‘glazed link’ between the ground floor of the THx and CL was identified during the development of proposals for the THx and CL. (Refer to the Business Case included in the Design and Access Statement). Manchester City Council, is keen to stress that by erecting a new ‘glazed link’ between the two principal ‘heritage assets’ of the THx and CL it is not their intention to diminish the significance of either building but to enhance the experience of visitors to the area and help users to have better access to Council services.

Pre-application discussions have also taken place over the past year with English Heritage, and planning and conservation officers, to create a design for a ‘glazed link’ in Library Walk that respects the significance, integrity and setting of the THx and CL and has minimal impact on the historic fabric of both buildings.

SOURCES CONSULTED

Sources consulted and considered when preparing design proposals for the new ‘glazed link’ between the THx and CL in Library Walk were as follows:

STUDIES and PUBLISHED WORKS

Manchester Central Library – An illustrated record with an account of the official opening
No author 1934

Town Hall Extensions – Commemorating the Centenary of Manchester’s Charter of Incorporation
No author 1938

Manchester Town Hall Complex Conservation Plan
Volume 1 The Buildings and Squares

Assessment of the Significance of Manchester Town Hall Extension and Central Library
by Stephen Levrant Heritage Architecture 01/2010

Manchester Town Hall Extension Conservation Strategy
by HOK International Limited 05/2010

Manchester Central Library Conservation Strategy
By HOK International Limited 05/2010

Discovering Manchester
Barry Worthington 2002

England
Guy MacDonald 2004

The Cheshire Conspiracy
Charles Tyrie 2009

Paragaphs 129, 131, 130 and 136

Paragraph 129 of the National Planning Policy Framework advises that ‘Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal.’

This Heritage Statement for Library Walk provides an assessment of its values and significance as a pedestrian cut-through. The assessment has been achieved through research in relevant archives and visits throughout the year to observe Library Walk at different times of the day and to understand the way it is used.

Read in combination with the Manchester Civic Complex Conservation Plan, and Conservation Strategies for the THx and CL (relevant parts of which are
included in Appendix I of this Heritage Statement), the information provided in this Heritage Statement is proportionate to the significance of Library Walk.

This Heritage Statement has identified the particular nature of the significance Library Walk has for this and future generations. Designs for the proposed new ‘glazed link’, shown in drawings and described in a Design and Access Statement accompanying this application for Listed Building Consent, reflect the aspiration of Manchester City Council for retaining Library Walk and continuing its use as a pedestrian cut-through, for which purpose it has been used for over eighty years.

Paragraph 131 of the National Planning Policy Framework advises that ‘In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.’

The design of the new ‘glazed link’ between the THx and CL in Library Walk and submitted for Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent is of a scale, height, massing, alignment, materials, and use, that is no more than essential for the functions it is to fulfill of offering all visitors a new and additional entry point to both the THx and CL.

The new ‘glazed link’ will also offer a covered connection between the ground floors of the THx and CL so people can transfer between them and use all the services available. In particular the ‘glazed link’ will make navigation between the buildings easier for people with disabilities and families with young children.

Manchester City Council is already committed to the long-term use of the THx and CL as council offices and public library, for which purpose each building was originally designed. There is no intention for the proposed new ‘glazed link’ to affect the scale, height, massing, or alignment of either building, rather it is intended that the new ‘glazed link’ will support the provision of and enhance the function of all the public services that are available.

Proposals for the new ‘glazed link’ between the THx and CL and submitted for Listed Building Consent will:

- Preserve the particular significance of Library Walk as a pedestrian cut-through;
- Preserve the particular, special and architectural interest overall of the THx and CL and sustain their long-term significance as ‘heritage assets’;
- Preserve and continue the use of the THx and CL for the greater benefit of the citizens of Manchester;
- Preserve the setting of nearby listed building and structures and sustain their significance as ‘heritage assets’; and
- Preserve and enhance the particular character and appearance of the associated parts of St Peter’s Square and Mount Street, and the relevant Conservation Areas which are straddled by Library Walk and sustain their long-term significance as ‘heritage assets’;
- Contribute positively to the character and local distinctiveness of the surrounding historic environment.

Paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework advises that ‘Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of or damage to a heritage asset the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision.’

Manchester City Council can assert that Library Walk, the THx and CL have not been neglected or damaged in any way in the hope of obtaining a Listed Building Consent or other consent.

Paragraph 136 of the National Planning Policy Framework advises that ‘Local planning authorities should not permit loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred.

The need for a new ‘glazed link’ between the ground floor of the THx and CL was clearly identified during the development of improvements to the provision of public services that are distributed between the two buildings. The new ‘glazed link’ is integral to the provision of public Services by Manchester City Council and make navigation between the buildings easier for people with disabilities and families with young children. Its construction is to proceed as a key element in the overall THx and CL Transformation Project.
Paragraphs 132, 134, and 138

Paragraph 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework advises that ‘When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.’

Paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework further advises that ‘Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.’

Design proposals for the new ‘glazed link’ in the space between the THx and CL, originally a ‘passage’, and now known as Library Walk are described in the Design and Access Statement accompanying this application for Listed Building Consent. The proposed new ‘glazed link’ will bring considerable benefit in the continued long-term use of both the THx and CL as ‘heritage assets’, will make navigation between buildings easier for people with disabilities and families with young children, and provide easier access to the wide variety of public services provided by Manchester City Council.

The need for a ‘glazed link’ between the ground floor of the THx and CL was identified during the development of proposals for the THx and CL. Over the last year, pre-application discussions have taken place with English Heritage, and planning and conservation officers, to create a design for a ‘glazed link’ and changes to paving levels in Library Walk that respect the integrity and setting of the THx and CL as ‘heritage assets’, has minimal impact on the significance of the two buildings and causes least harm to the historic fabric.

The purpose of the ‘glazed link’ is to help encourage greater public access to the THx and CL and help visitors make better use of services available to them. The ‘glazed link’ also offers a new and additional entry point for visitors arriving from St Peter’s Square and Mount Street and a main covered public connection between the ground floors of the two buildings. It is not intended for the ‘glazed link’ to be a substitute for the original entrances to the THx and the ‘public approach corridor’ that is now called the Rates Hall. Nor is it intended that visitors to the CL should not experience and enjoy the Shakespeare Hall and the sequence of staircase and balcony access to the Great Hall Reading Room and Libraries on the first floor. The benefit of the ‘glazed link’ will be to remove any feeling of exclusion by those with disabilities, those who rely on wheelchairs to aid mobility, and families with small children and buggies who may find the original narrow entrances more difficult to manoeuvre through.

View the new ‘glazed link’ in Library Walk from the far side of St Peter’s Square

The design of the ‘glazed link’ has been carefully considered so it is of the size necessary for its function and can be perceived as a building set down in Library Walk between the two ‘heritage assets’ rather than appearing as an extension to either the THx or CL. To achieve this, the plan form of the ‘glazed link’ has been located at a distance from the stone façades with the glazed connections into each building reduced in size and set back so they are almost unseen.
The height of the ‘glazed link’ has also been carefully considered. As the two stone façades are very different in their appearance and because the floor levels in the two buildings are not the same, great care has been taken in determining the level of the floor within the ‘glazed link’ that connects the CL with the THx. The same care has been taken in determining the height and appearance of the polished stainless steel roof since neither building has common horizontal ‘lines’ that can be used in guiding the design. By locating the form of the ‘glazed link’ away from the stone façades this has allowed the roof to find its own level and be at a height proportionate to its width and not compete with the detailing on the façades of the THx and CL.

The form, massing, and location of the ‘glazed link’ has also been carefully considered so that it creates an enhancement to Library Walk without hiding the form, mass and detailing of the THx and CL on either side. All walls of the ‘glazed link’, and the automatic opening sliding doors, are to be constructed in the most transparent structural glass to further ensure the façades of the THx and CL can always be seen, particularly in distant views from St Peter’s Square. The ‘glazed link’ will also be barely visible from turning the corner from Oxford Road or entering from Mosley Street and it will not be seen from Mount Street.

The choice of having a polished stainless steel roof has also been very carefully thought about. Standing in St Peter’s Square it is obvious the edge profile of any roof where it joins the top of the glass walls needs to be as thin as can possibly be achieved. However, there still needs to be a structure within the thickness of the roof. Through discussion it was determined that a thin edge profile could be achieved if the bulk of the structure was confined to the centre of the roof. From this was born the idea of a double skinned hollow polished stainless steel roof which could also be the ceiling. While the polished roof surface is curved to aid drainage, the polished ceiling surface is moulded in undulating curves that will reflect the colours of stone in the two façades. Reflecting colour from the surroundings will further assist in bringing transparency to the ‘glazed link’ so it appears to have less impact on the space between the two buildings and does not compete with the significant architectural interest of the THx and CL.

The ‘glazed link’ has also been designed so the main structural glass walls can support structural glass brackets that carry the weight of glass panels and roofs that form the connections between the ‘glazed link’ to the façades of the THx and CL. In this way junctions to the two principal ‘heritage assets’ are reduced to the minimum necessary to prevent rainwater ingress.

During the design process for the ‘glazed link’, thought was given to the effect on views from the THx Rates Hall and the new Stair and Lift Core quadrant of the CL from setting a building in Library Walk, and how the level and quality of daylight into these two spaces might be affected. From observation it was noted that people using the internal spaces either side of Library Walk always viewed the interior spaces rather than looking through the windows into Library Walk or toward the building opposite. Although windows in the Rates Hall are large they are located in a reverse curve and the visual power of the striped marble walls and mahogany doors on the wall opposite attracts attention away from the windows and any view into Library Walk and to the CL opposite. In the future it is also unlikely that the new ‘glazed link’ in Library Walk will increase the number of visitors looking out from the windows of the CL and THx.
In relation to the level and quality of daylight, the quadrant for the new Stair and Lift Core in CL was chosen for being less visible than the quadrant facing the Midland Hotel. Also, the new Stair and Lift Core quadrant would be in shade for the greater part of the day, therefore the new ‘glazed link’ will not change the level or quality of light entering the CL. There will also be a limited effect on the level and quality of light entering the Rates Hall. Again for part of the day the Rates Hall is in shade. Only a few windows where the ‘glazed link’ is to be located are penetrated by the sun and the ‘glazed link’ will benefit the room by helping to even out the level of daylight, reducing glare and heat gain.

Although the ‘glazed link’ will rely on daylight, at certain times of the day and when necessary the ‘glazed link’ will require artificial light. All lighting will be at floor level around the perimeter of the main building form and shine upwards to be reflected back from the polished stainless steel ceiling. This conscious choice was made in order to avoid the ceiling becoming the focus when it is dark and placing light sources into the overall view people will still have of the THx and CL as the principal ‘heritage assets’. Lighting will be dimmable so that when the building is closed a very low glow can be achieved just above floor level so that security and maintenance staff can pass between the two buildings.

Early in the design process it was noted that filling the width of Library Walk with a ‘glazed link’ would deny its continued use as a pedestrian cut-through between St Peter’s Square and Mount. To overcome this a decision was made to install pairs of automatic opening sliding doors in both ends of the ‘glazed link’ so pedestrians could continue using the route. However, it is recognised that at night Library Walk is not a pleasant place for pedestrians to use and recent incidents have brought to the fore the need for greater security.

To provide greater safety, particularly at night, and supported by the Police, it is proposed to erect gates at the Mount Street end of Library Walk, which with closure of the pedestrian route through the ‘glazed link’ will curtail the use of Library Walk between the proposed hours of 10-00pm and 6-00am. Although this will affect the permeability between the two Conservation Areas which are straddled by Library Walk, it is considered that sufficient time is available during the remainder of the day for people to enjoy and appreciate the architecture of all the Civic Buildings forming the Town Hall Complex.

To install the gates it will be necessary to form a concrete pad within Library Walk to avoid structure passing through the basement below and creating a future waterproofing problem. To achieve this will require the paving level in Library Walk to be raised and on a gradient. This will be included in the general change to paving levels necessary to provide a gently graded approach to the floor level within the new ‘glazed link’.

Although few pedestrians using Library Walk are aware of it, the existing paving is already sloped to a high point in the centre of the Rates Hall on the THx side and was graded in various ways to deal with the different radial curves of the two buildings, to meet the flat area of pavement lights around the base of the CL, and provide a rainwater gulley running along the centre.

Library Walk has always proved difficult to drain and large puddles form which over time have been penetrating into the basements of both buildings. To overcome this, the new levels will be higher where the paving is next to the two buildings and will require that the deep recessed windows in the base of the CL are in-filled with stone blocks. The new levels will change the appearance of the steps up to the side entrance portico of the CL to Library Walk and this will be mitigated by creating steps down to meet the original floor level.
The design proposals for the new ‘glazed link’ in the space between the THx and CL will require the removal of the existing paving from Library Walk laid in 1988 and the installation of new paving to provide easier access to the ground floor of the ‘glazed link’ and provide level access between the ground floor level of the THx and the new ground floor level of the CL. The removal of the 1988 paving from Library Walk and its replacement will have no ‘harmful effect’ on the overall significance of the THx and CL as ‘heritage assets’, and is justified on the basis that new paving will make a positive improvement to the public realm.

The design proposals for the new ‘glazed link’ within the space between the THx and CL will require the removal of pavement lights from part of the base around the CL and replacement by a concrete slab supporting a waterproof layer and new stone paving as described in drawings, documents, Design and Access Statement, and Heritage Statement, submitted in a separate application for Listed Building Consent for Replacement of the Pavement Lights to the CL.

The design proposals for the new ‘glazed link’ within the space between the THx and CL will, however, alter the level at which the new stone paving is laid, as shown on drawings and described in the Design and Access Statement that accompanies this current submission for Listed Building Consent. While the new paving levels will require a stone infill to basement window openings along part of the length of Library Walk, the paving does not cover the keystones except at the two windows where the new floor level connects both buildings across the ‘glazed link’. While the revised levels for paving to replace the pavement lights will have a minor effect on the overall appearance of the THx and CL as ‘heritage assets’, this is justified by the greater public benefit that will make navigation between the two buildings easier for people with disabilities and families with young children, and provide easier access to the wide variety of public services provided by Manchester City Council.

Design proposals for the new ‘glazed link’ will, however, require a number of alterations to limited areas of the THx and CL façades at ground floor level. When compared with the overall scale of the THx and CL all of the alterations can be considered as having minor ‘harmful effect’ on the principal ‘heritage assets’.

To form the glazed connections will required the removal of glass and mullions on the quarter points from two bronze framed external windows from the Rates Hall of the THx, and the removal of glass and two entire timber framed external windows from the CL, and the removal of stone from floor level to window sill in the THx and CL to provide level access between the two buildings. The removal of the four windows and lowering cills will have minor ‘harmful effect’ on the overall significance of the THx and CL as ‘heritage assets’. This is justified by the greater public benefit that will accrue from being able to transfer from one building to the other by a shorter route that will greatly benefit visitors with disabilities, or use wheelchairs for mobility, and also families with small children.

Design proposals for the new ‘glazed link’ within the space between the THx and CL will require removal of metal window frames around part of the base of the CL and infilling the deep recessed openings with matching radiused stone in appropriate sized blocks to provide a new flat surface which permits the new paving to be laid up to the face of the CL. Infilling the recesses in the base of the CL will have minor ‘harmful effect’ on the overall significance of the THx and CL as ‘heritage assets’, however, this can be justified by the greater public benefit that will accrue from visitors with disabilities, or use wheelchairs for mobility, and also families with small children, being able to use the new ‘glazed link’ and access the THx and CL more easily.
The design proposals for the new ‘glazed link’ within the space between the THx and CL, will require fitting structural glass side and roof panels between the main ‘glazed link’ and the stone façades of the THx and CL. These junctions have been kept to a minimum, and have been the subject of pre-application discussions with English Heritage, and planning and conservation officers. The junctions are shown on drawings and described in the Design and Access Statement accompanying this submission for Listed Building Consent. The junctions of new glass to original stone fabric will have minor ‘harmful effect’ on the overall significance of the ‘heritage assets’ of the THx and CL, however, it is the intention to refine the design of these junctions, in discussion with specialist contractors, to further minimise their contact with the original façades.

The proposals for Library Walk include the installation of ‘commemorative gates’ close to Mount Street and their design will be the obtained through a Design Competition. In addition wall lights on the façade of the THx will be replaced with fittings close in appearance to the originals that will improve the security of pedestrians using Library Walk during the evening. The ‘commemorative gates’ and replacement lighting will have no ‘harmful effect’ on the overall significance of the THx and CL as ‘heritage assets’ and overall will improve the enjoyment of pedestrians and building users for the long-term.

Design proposals for a new ‘glazed link’ within the space between the THx and CL, originally a ‘passage’ and now known as Library Walk, and submitted for Listed Building Consent, will therefore have no ‘harmful effect’ on the overall significance of the THx and CL as the principal ‘heritage assets’ needing to be considered or on their overall urban setting. Nor will the new ‘glazed link’ have any ‘harmful effect’ on the significance or the settings of nearby listed buildings and structures, nor on the significance of the Albert Square and St Peter’s Square Conservation Areas as designated ‘heritage assets’.

Paragraph 138 of the National Planning Policy Framework advises that ‘Not all elements of a World Heritage Site or Conservation Area will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 133 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 134, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole.’
Proposals for the new ‘glazed link’ between the THx and CL and improvements to Library Walk, shown on drawings and described in the Design and Access Statement that accompanies this submission for Listed Building Consent, are intended to make a positive improvement to an otherwise unattractive space that has needed attention for some years. In combination with refurbishment of the THx and CL, the new ‘glazed link’ will enhance the setting of both buildings and attract visitors to make use of the services on offer. The new ‘glazed link’ does not affect any other elements already recognised as contributing to the significance of the Albert Square and St Peter’s Square Conservation Areas.

While it will never be possible to see any part of the new ‘glazed link’ from the Town Hall, Albert Square, Lloyd Street, Mount Street, or Peter Street, it will be seen by pedestrians in the southern half of the St Peter’s Square Conservation Area. While conceived as a separate building, the new ‘glazed link’ will remain subservient to the Central Library and Town Hall Extension when viewed from St Peter’s Square. This has been achieved by discreetly locating it within Library Walk and set back from the main entrance portico of the Central Library and the long wing of the Town Hall Extension facing St Peter’s Square. Also the new ‘glazed link’ is purposely partly hidden by the projecting stair tower of the Town Hall Extension, so that it is only appreciated as a separate building when pedestrians stand on the centre-line between the Central Library and the Town Hall Extension.

The new ‘glazed link’ will also just be visible to those walking the short length of Oxford Road where it joins St Peter’s Square. However, this distant view will be part hidden by the Grade II listed St Peter’s Cross (designed by Temple Moore 1856-1920) erected over the crossing of St Peter’s Church (the vaults of which remain below ground), which in design proposals being put forward for the ‘new’ St Peter’s Square will provide a principal focal point to that part of the square, following the proposed relocation of the Grade II* listed Cenotaph and War Memorial (designed by Sir Edwin Landseer Lutyens 1869-1944) to a more tranquil and contemplative location in the north-west part of St Peter’s Square, centred on the east entrance of the Town Hall.

Proposals for the ‘new’ St Peter’s Square include relocation of the MetroLink platforms to the northern end of the square so that a new cross-over between the old and new lines can be accommodated in the southern half of the square. Relocating the MetroLink platforms and the Cenotaph and War Memorial from their current location allows the design for the public realm in St Peter’s Square to be reconsidered. The entire square is to be brought together as a major new public space by the use of consistent paving both in material, colour and detail. The new paved area adjacent to the Town Hall Extension will offer a pleasant tree canopied pedestrian walk focussed on the Cenotaph. In good weather this paved area will form outdoor overspill to the new Library Café. The new paved area in front of the Central Library will form an open space with a focus on St Peter’s Cross. A new garden and trees on the east side will appear to continue the façades of the buildings along that side Moseley Street and help to contain the square. Where the new paving meets with Library Walk there will be a zone of transition between the general flatness of paving of St Peter’s Square and the gentle ramp in the paving that is necessary in Library Walk to meet the ground floor level within the new ‘glazed link’. The design of the transition zone and changes in level are to be agreed between the design team for the Town Hall Transformation Project and designers of the new public realm in St Peter’s Square. The two Grade II listed K6 Telephone Kiosks already removed from Library Walk for repair and refurbishment will return to St Peter’s Square and relocated in an agreed position.

Plan showing the new ‘glazed link’ in context with the new public realm of St Peter’s Square
Paragraphs 129 and 137

Paragraph 129 of the National Planning Policy Framework advises that ‘Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal.’

Paragraph 137 of the National Planning Policy Framework further advises that ‘Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites and within the setting of heritage assets to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably.’

As noted above, the new ‘glazed link’ in Library Walk between the THx and CL, and the subject of this application for Listed Building Consent, will have minor or no ‘harmful effect’ on the ‘significance’ or the setting of the THx and CL as ‘heritage assets’. It is considered that the proposals for the new ‘glazed link’ in Library Walk will serve to better reveal and enhance the settings of the THx and CL as ‘heritage assets’. It can also be noted that by encouraging the use of Library Walk in a manner greater than it simply being a pedestrian ‘cut-through’, and a careful considered design that improves access to and between the THx and CL, the new ‘glazed link’ constitutes a very positive contribution to effective ‘place-shaping’.

CONCLUSION

This assessment of proposal for a new ‘glazed link’ between the THx and CL, and other improvement works to Library Walk, have been assessed in relation to the policy tests within the National Planning Policy Framework (2012), and, in particular the clauses in Section 12 of that document.

This Heritage Statement demonstrates that the new ‘glazed link’ will have no ‘harmful effect’ on Library Walk or on the overall significance of the THx and CL as significant ‘heritage assets’. Nor, will the proposal have any ‘harmful effect’ on any nearby listed buildings or structures, nor on the Albert Square and St Peter’s Square Conservation Areas as ‘heritage assets’, for the following reasons:

1. Externally, there will be no ‘harmful effect’ on Library Walk. The proposed works are limited and comprise minor changes to the pavement levels along Library Walk in order to accommodate an almost horizontal floor between the existing floor level in the Rates Hall of the THx and the new floor level in the lift and stair core area of the CL. This work includes blocking deeply recessed windows with stone panels incorporating light fittings in a number of the basement windows within the base of the CL.

2. Externally, there will be limited ‘harmful effect’ on the significance of the façades of the THx and CL which are the principal ‘heritage assets’ and only where works are necessary to remove windows and cills as already described, and where gutters and glass sheets meet the existing stone façades using the lightest of contact. The limited amount of work being undertaken is also easily reversible.

3. Internally, the proposals include the removal of some parts of the original fabric of the CL and THx. While in the CL, the internal fabric is not of special character or interest, the internal fabric of the THx (Rates Hall) has been assessed as contributing to the special character or interest of the building. However, given the wider public benefit of the ‘glazed link’ between the ground floor level of the THx and the new ground floor level of the CL, and while removing some parts of the original fabric will have no ‘harmful effect’ on the significance of the CL as a ‘heritage asset’, the removal of some parts of the original fabric in the THx (Rates Hall) will have minor ‘harmful effect’ on the significance of the THx as a ‘heritage asset’. Given the size and overall significance of the THx and CL, it is considered the minimal loss of fabric, associated with removing windows (4 No) and their stone cills, is outweighed by the greater long-term public benefits that will accrue from constructing the ‘glazed link’.

The new ‘glazed link’ in Library Walk between the THx and CL, and the subject of this application for Listed Building Consent, represent a positive benefit for the long-term future of Library Walk as a publicly accessible space and will on balance have no ‘harmful effect’, substantial or otherwise, on the overall significance of the THx or CL or its setting, or on the setting of nearby listed
buildings and structures, nor on the significance of the Albert Square and St Peter’s Square Conservation Areas, as designated ‘heritage assets’. Indeed, it is considered that the proposals will serve to:

- Preserve the particular significance of Library Walk as a pedestrian cut-through;
- Preserve the particular, special and architectural interest overall of the THx and CL and sustain their significance as ‘heritage assets’;
- Preserve and continue the long-term use of the THx and CL for the greater benefit of the citizens of Manchester;
- Preserve the setting of nearby listed building and structures, particularly those forming the Manchester Civic Complex, and sustain their significance as ‘heritage assets’; and
- Preserve and enhance the particular character and appearance of the associated parts of St Peter’s Square and Mount Street, and the relevant Conservation Areas which are straddled by Library Walk and sustain their significance as ‘heritage assets’.

It is therefore recommended that Listed Building Consent should be granted for the new ‘glazed link’ in Library Walk and changes to the paving, and for the associated alterations to two bronze windows in the THx and removal of their stone cills, and the removal of two timber windows and removal of stone their cills in the CL, and the junction of glass sheets to the stone façades, as shown in drawings and in the Design & Access Statement submitted for Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent.
APPENDIX I

Extracts from Conservation Strategies for the Town Hall Extension and Central Library
8 Town Hall Extension – Level 0 / Basement

Electricity Showroom

The basic form and the majority of column, wall and floor finishes survive in the lower basement area of what was originally built as the Electricity Showroom – however it is without the false ceiling (which may have been in metal panels supplied by Luxfer Ltd like those that partly survive in the basement of the Gas Showroom also at Level 0). The two-tone granolithic stair joining the basement to the upper ground floor of the Electricity Showroom largely survives although the present bronze handrail has been added. Access to the basement Electricity Showroom was also probably achieved via the main stair and lifts in Lobby 4. Areas of the original black and cream floor tiling may survive below the present finishes. Further showroom survivals are a pair of built-in bronze-framed mirror-lined showcases with sliding glass doors (similar to those in the Lobby 4) and these should be retained and reused in the building.

Subject to investigation, and further design development, it may be possible to revive this area with an acceptable degree of change and bring it into public use.

Gas Showroom

The basic form and the majority of column, wall and floor finishes survive in the lower basement area of what was originally built as the Gas Showroom – although some elements of the metal false ceiling supplied Luxfer Ltd are missing and parts are damaged. This includes a central area that incorporates timber columns and obscured glass lighting panels that was altered to provide a Health Clinic. Two original stairs with cast granolithic treads and bronze handrails survive to reach the lower display area from an upper walkway and column fixings survive onto which a missing bronze rail was fixed. Area of the original black and cream floor tiles have survived although many tiles have been damaged and some may have been replaced given the wider joints between the tiles. No dedicated stair was provided to join the two levels of the Gas Showroom and access was most probably via the main stairs and lifts in Lobby 1. A small theatre / cinema used for cooking demonstrations by the Gas Showroom survives, complete with its stepped floor. An adjoining small projection room survives with projector slots through the wall.

Subject to investigation, and further design development, it may be possible to revive this area with an acceptable degree of change and bring it into public use.

Electrical switchgear and boiler control panels

There are two areas in Level 0 where the original Electrical switchgear and Boiler controls survive but they are no longer operational. In the recent past these items have been offered freely to the Manchester Museum of Science and Technology but they have not been deemed of sufficient importance or uniqueness to warrant their transfer to the museum’s collections. Inspection reveals there is evidence of leakage from a number of the items and this may be toxic in nature. Other items have been identified as containing asbestos. While it may be possible to install the controls as a display somewhere in the building or be given to a museum, this would be dependent on all the items being tested and certified as being free of asbestos and other toxins and contaminants – however, the testing may in fact require the partial destruction of the item and consequently the loss of its potential for display or adding to a museum collection.
9 Town Hall Extension – Level 1 / Ground Floor

External walls, windows and internal structural columns

The stone clad external walls, bronze windows, and the overall form and profile of the building survives almost intact. The missing bronze windows in the public toilet area and the four public entrances to the building should be reinstated. While it is desirable for the entrance doors to the building to be returned close to their original appearance this may not be possible if the doors cannot be used by people with disabilities therefore a suitable design solution will need to be agreed with English Heritage. Internal alterations that provide persons with disabilities easy access to the building must also be considered.

Electricity Showroom

The basic form and the majority of column, wall and floor finishes survive in the ground floor area of what was originally built as the Electricity Showrooms. The two-tone granolithic stair joining the ground floor to the basement part of the Showroom largely survives although the present bronze handrail has been added for originally there was none. Photographs that show the floor opening for the stair reveal a very modern looking glass and bronze balustrade. It is not known whether the original black and cream floor finish survives under a raised floor. Access to the Electricity Showroom was via the main entrances at Lobby 1 and from the Lloyd Street end where a ‘lit-up’ column stood in front of a back-lit curved glazed wall. A metal column in Lobby 4 also survives but its use is unclear. Several built-in bronze framed glazed showcases also survive as do the sliding folding gates that were drawn across the showroom entrance while access to the Rates Hall was maintained. The original barrel-vaulted ceiling survives over most of the area is complete with lighting trough in fibrous plaster and should be retained.

Subject to investigation, and further design development, it may be possible to revive this area with an acceptable degree of change and bring it into public use.

Rates Hall

The Rates Hall was originally there to present the ‘public’ face of the Town Hall Extension and was where citizens and businesses came to pay their ‘Rates’ to the Council and their Electricity, Gas and Water bills. The entire decoration of the Hall is intended to give the impression of strength and security. Sadly the long curving mahogany payments desk was removed many years ago and none of it survives. The walls and floor of the long curved room are decorated with two-tone marble (Black Ashburton) and stone (Hopton Wood). The plaster ceiling is decorated with stencil patterns and above each of the two entrances is a huge civic coat of arms. The ceiling is stained with nicotine and the flat panels of the ceiling have been over-painted in recent years to make the ceiling appear less stained. Small areas of stencilled decoration are missing – possibly having flaked off – leaving white patches all over the beams. At one end of the Rates Hall an attempt has also been made to either clean and/or repaint the coat of arms but the repainted patterns do not quite match the originals. A run of tall mahogany doors links the Rates Hall to the adjoining clerks area – except closer inspection reveals that not all are doors and there are over-panels to conceal the ceiling and roof behind.

The Rates Hall should be subject to further investigation and the ceiling cleaned or repainted and the entire room repaired and refurbished close to its original appearance so it can be returned to use as a public thoroughfare.

Floor finishes

In corridors are a number of areas of what appears to be original red and fawn linoleum. What is there appears to be a modern rubber sheet material that was most likely laid when the original revolving doors were replaced. Consideration should be given to reinstating the original patterns and colours on the ground floor using an alternative harder wearing material such as granolithic.
9. Central Library – Basement / Stack 4

**Generally**
Nothing in the Basement is of significance.

**Retaining Wall and Light Well**
Prior to building the Central Library a concrete retaining wall was formed. The gap between the external Library wall and the retaining wall is now roofed in pavement lights set in concrete but these are not the originals. Sections of the external wall are glazed windows in metal frames and should be retained.

**Main Stairs A and B**
Being partly hidden, stairs leading to the Basement from the Shakespeare Hall on the Ground Floor are utilitarian in character. The half landing on the north side is illuminated by a leaded-light window. The half-landing on the south side has a pair of glazed doors onto the light-well that gives access to the plant room below the Entrance Portico. All of this should be retained.

**Coffee Lounge (formerly Lobby 1 / Lobby)**
The Coffee Lounge is utilitarian in character. The spaces and rooms from which it is formed no longer have their original uses. The original below stair store is now the Cloakroom and the original Rest Room is now the Box Office. The original Cloaks store has been replaced with a counter and this together with what was originally a foyer to the Lecture Theatre now functions as a Café. Where possible the area should be returned closer to its original appearance.

**Theatre / Stage**
Originally a Lecture Theatre it is now the Library Theatre. It has been re-fitted a number of times and nothing of the original interior or furnishings survives. The stage, proscenium and back of stage area are not as originally constructed.

**Toilets**
The public toilets for use by the Theatre, Coffee Lounge and Theatre Bar have been re-fitted a number of times and are not as originally constructed.

**North Plants Rooms (formerly Electrode Boilers and Sub-Station)**
None of the plant in these rooms is the original.

**Plant Room**
The Plant Room below the Portico is accessed via a light well hidden behind a semi-circular stone seat to the south of the Portico at ground level. Fresh air reaches the Plant Room via an identical semi-circular stone seat on the north side of the portico at ground level. None of the plant is original, having been replaced over the years to better serve the needs of the Library Theatre.

**Library Stack (formerly Thermal Storage)**
None of the original plant survives. The Library Stack is modern roller racking.

**Stair C and D / Means of Escape**
The Stairs survive complete with their metal handrails which are to be retained. On either side are zones for services and book lifts which will be reused.

**Cleaners Room and Store (formerly Porter’s Room)**
Very little that is original survives of these two rooms.

**Passenger Lift / Book Lift**
The lift doors and cars would not appear to be original.

**Theatre Storage, Rehearsal Rooms, Theatre Offices / Corridor**
The rooms around the perimeter are utilitarian in nature and are not original. The areas now used by the Library Theatre as offices etc., was originally an open area of storage, a packing area, and a book bindery. Originally there was no corridor in this part of the Basement.

**Strong Room / Dressing Rooms**
These rooms are utilitarian in nature.

**Theatre Bar (formerly Battery Room) / Switch Room**
The Theatre Bar and Switch Room are utilitarian in nature.

**Means of Escape from the Stack 3**
Two escape stairs from the Library Stacks have been inserted into the corridor to improved means of escape and are not original.
10. Central Library – Ground / Stack 2

Generally
Parts of the Ground floor are of significance.

Portico / Steps / External Seats
The Entrance Portico, memorial panels and semi-circular stone seats are the originals. The main steps were entirely replaced in 1988 and include ramps to assist the entry of persons with disabilities.

Main Bronze Entrance Doors
The main bronze entrance doors survive, however, the original revolving doors were replaced in 1988 to improve the access for persons with disabilities.

Shakespeare Hall
The Shakespeare Hall survives almost intact with its Hopton Wood stone walls, painted ceiling, memorial and stained glass, however, the original Porter’s Desk has not survived and been replaced by displays. Modern Security Desks have also been installed together with metal detectors and gates. The original stone floor has been covered in order to make it non-slip and a modern solution to this will need to be determined and agreed with English Heritage. The lighting is not the original and the Shakespeare Hall requires further study to determine which of the modern elements can be removed or replaced so the room can be brought back closer to its original appearance.

The painted ceiling should also be closely inspected to check its condition and to determine whether any work is required. Any remedial work will need to be agreed with English Heritage.

Semi-Circular Lobby to Stairs A and B and Main Lift (Lobby 1)
Most elements of this area survive intact including the Hopton Wood stone walls and the columns and curved entablatures, possibly of cast ceramic, through which entry is made to the ground floor libraries and the basement.

Main Stairs A and B
The Hopton Wood stone stairs provide a magnificent ascent to the first floor. A large commemorative memorial sits under the window of the north landing while the ‘Reading Lady’ in marble by the sculptor G Cinselli sits on the south half-landing. Handrails have been added to this stair and are not original. The stair is covered in a ribbed rubber flooring material and further study is needed to determine whether this can be removed. A modern anti-slip solution will need to be determined and agreed with English Heritage.

Short flights of stair to the Lending and Commercial Libraries
The two short flights of stairs leading to the Lending and Commercial Libraries survive complete with low handrail. An access ramp over part of the stair to the Lending Library dates from the 1988 access improvements. Removal of the short flights of stairs is to be agreed with English Heritage and a design solution agreed for the revised handrail requirements.

Commercial Library (former Lending Library)
The Lending Library survives almost intact but it is utilitarian in nature. The Enquiries Desk is not the original. The wire mesh panels to the Bookstacks are original but will be removed to permit free access throughout the ground floor.

Lending Library (former Henry Watson Music Library)
The Lending Library survives almost intact but it is utilitarian in nature. The wire mesh panels to the Bookstacks are the originals but do not provide any fire separation and have to be removed. A section of wire mesh has already been removed and altered to provide a space for an Enquiries Desk.

Stair C and D / Means of Escape
The Stairs survive complete with their metal handrails which are to be retained. On either side are zones for services and book lifts which will be reused.

Cleaners Rooms adjacent to Stairs C and D
Very little that is original survives of these two rooms.

Passenger Lift / Book Lift
The lift doors and cars would not appear to be original.

Loading Bay
The original Loading Bay at the rear of the building survives with its heavy timber doors. The squat central stone column and capital between the doors is the original. The external appearance of the Loading Bay is to be retained.
APPENDIX 2

Additions to the Conservation Strategies describing the Façades
Façade of the Town Hall Extension facing Library Walk

General Description

The THx façade facing Library Walk comprises a long curving stone wall that sits between tall stone clad stair towers that form the ends of two main wings of the building that face onto Mount Street and West Moseley Street (looking out onto St Peter’s Square). While the two stair towers are nine floors high, with stone gables to steep pitched lead roofs above that, the greater part of the façade facing Library Walk is a long sweeping curve of stonework that is the equivalent of five floors in height, although in Harris’s original design it was only the equivalent of three floors in height – comprising a double height Public Approach Corridor (now the Rates Hall) with a single floor of offices above. When the building was underway, Manchester City Council took a decision to add two additional floors of offices that could be let and generate income. In the original design the windows along Library Walk were of different widths with the three in the centre being replaced by pairs of doors. In the later design the windows are all the same width, apart from two smaller windows at either end which are outside the rates Hall and actually within the two main wings.

Stone Wall

From Library Walk upwards, the flat ashlar wall comprises a stone base course up to window cill level. The stone wall rises two storeys to a double platband either side of large square blocks of stone. This double height part of the wall contains regularly spaced tall arched bronze framed windows with flat stone panels between that are wider than the windows. The windows are set in deep square recesses that flow into mouldings over the arched part of the window. A triple height flat ashlar stone wall rises up above the platband and contains windows lighting the three floor levels. The bottom two rows of windows are rectangular and similar in size, whereas the upper level windows are small and square and set back further into the wall and within a recessed surround. Above this row of windows is another double platband with a flat band of ashlar between them, with the uppermost band forming a parapet. As a long curved stone façade it is rather anodyne in comparison with the classical façade of the CL opposite, and very different from the other façades of the THx which are much busier in their design.

Bronze Windows to the Rates Hall at Ground Floor Level

The bronze windows facing Library Walk are not the same as windows on the ground floor of the other main blocks of the THx. Not only are these windows much taller but below the arched part they are divided by vertical glazing bars on the quarter points. These glazing bars are surmounted by bronze eagles with upstretched wings. The frames and glazing bars are also different in profile and may be in solid metal.

Others Bronze Windows

The other bronze windows within this façade are of the same pattern as is used elsewhere on the THx. This includes the windows that are located in the two main wings of the THx and the very small fixed light windows in the base of the stair towers that give an oblique view along Library Walk.

Foundation Stones

The Foundation Stones incorporated in the base of stair towers at either end of Library Walk were laid by King George V after opening the CL on 17 July 1934, and by George VI on opening the THx on 18 May 1938.

Light Fittings

When the space between THx and CL, or ‘passage’ as it was originally known was paved, light fittings were installed on the stone panels, three windows apart. Photographs indicate this was a long half-cylinder of white glass with bronze ends and backing plate. The current light fittings are not the originals and are likely to have been installed in 1988.

Paving

The paving laid along Library Walk is not the original, and is likely to have been replaced in 1988 when the disabled ramps were installed to the CL.

Overall

Apart from the more recently installed light fittings, the THx façade facing onto Library Walk is the least changed the external facing elevations of the building. Any proposed changes to this façade should be reversible and easily repaired.
**Façade of the Central Library facing Library Walk**

**General Description**

The CL façade facing Library Walk comprises a long stone wall that is part of a circle in plan between the main entrance portico facing St Peter’s Square and the Loading Dock on Mount Street. The façade is in the stripped down classical ‘Wrenaissance’ style created by Sir Edwin Lutyens and favoured by architects working in the Edwardian era including E Vincent Harris. In the centre of the circle is a smaller portico side entrance that also serves as a means of escape exit from the upper floor of the CL as well as from the basement. At the top the façade steps back from the main line of the circle in plan and culminating in a lead covered roof giving the appearance of a Roman clay tiled roof. In an interview given to a newspaper prior to the official opening of the CL, Harris was asked why he had designed a circular building. His answer is quite revealing as he admitted it was easier to make a classical design for one bay and to wrap multiples of this around the building to form a façade. In choosing the circular form Harris cleverly realised that the window to wall ratio was not so readily evident when seen in a perspective view, whereas, a flat façade like that of the Thx, required a great deal more thought in adjusting the proportion of window to wall to achieve a harmonious design.

**Stone Wall**

From Library Walk upwards the façade is in almost identical vertical sections that comprise a plain stone band above which is a plain flat band interrupted by deep recessed windows lighting basement rooms (which did not originally have iron barred security grilles), over which is a platband. Rising from this base is the main wall of arched windows alternating with flat stone columns to the ground floor level. Above flat styled capitals the wall is rusticated including the arches over the windows which have large projecting keystones at the centre point. The second floor continues upward in rusticated stone and incorporates tall rectangular windows. A deep stone band carved with the Greek ‘key’ motif separates the lower half of the CL from the upper part of the main wall in plain stone which is set back behind a double height colonnade, which supports the radius ed entablature. Above this the stone wall is set even further back, rising to a shallow lead covered roof. Also, on different areas of the façade are stone mouldings over windows, deeply recessed blind stone panels, and carved swags.

**Timber Windows at Ground Floor Level**

The timber windows facing Library Walk are not the same as the other timber windows in the CL and have a pattern of principal mullions and transoms that divides the window into three equal parts vertically and three unequal parts horizontally with the mullions on the quarter points.

**Timber Windows above Ground Level**

The windows to all upper floors and around the side entrance porticos are also in timber, with opening casements, however, their sizes vary from floor to floor as does the pattern of mullions and transoms in each window.

**Steel Windows at Basement Level**

The deep recessed windows within the stone base of the CL that provide light to basement rooms are in either steel or bronze. In most instances iron barred security grilles have been added to protect windows. There are variants where the recess has a stone panel, and others originally divided by stone mullions to create smaller windows. One or more iron grille is hinged to perhaps permit emergency escape from the basement.

**Pavement Lights**

The pavement lights are a mixture of original and replacement panels and allow rainwater to leak into the basement. These will need to be replaced to ensure the fabric of the building is protected from unnecessary long-term damage.

**Circular Stone Seats**

The circular stone seat adjacent to the main entrance portico is an integral part of Harris’s original design and matches an identical but handed stone seat on the other side of the portico. The seat was compromised in 1988 by the addition of stone paving to improve disabled access to the CL. Any new paving around the stone seats should be laid without further compromising the design.

**Overall**

Apart from the more recently installed iron barred grilles over the basement windows, the CL façade facing onto Library Walk is little changed from when it was built. Any proposed changes to this façade should be reversible and easily repaired.