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The Balconies . Hanley Swan . Worcestershire . WR8 0DN

MANCHESTER OPERA HOUSE.

DESIGN, ACCESS AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

FOR THE INSTALLATION OF PAVEMENT LIGHTS AND REPLACEMENT OF EXISTING STEEL BEAMS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This statement supports the application for repairs and replacement of corroded steel beams in the lower ground floor bar area and above a gated entrance of the Manchester Opera House and the installation of concrete pavement lights to the pavement along Byrom street.

This statement documents the key elements of the proposal in terms of design, access and heritage.

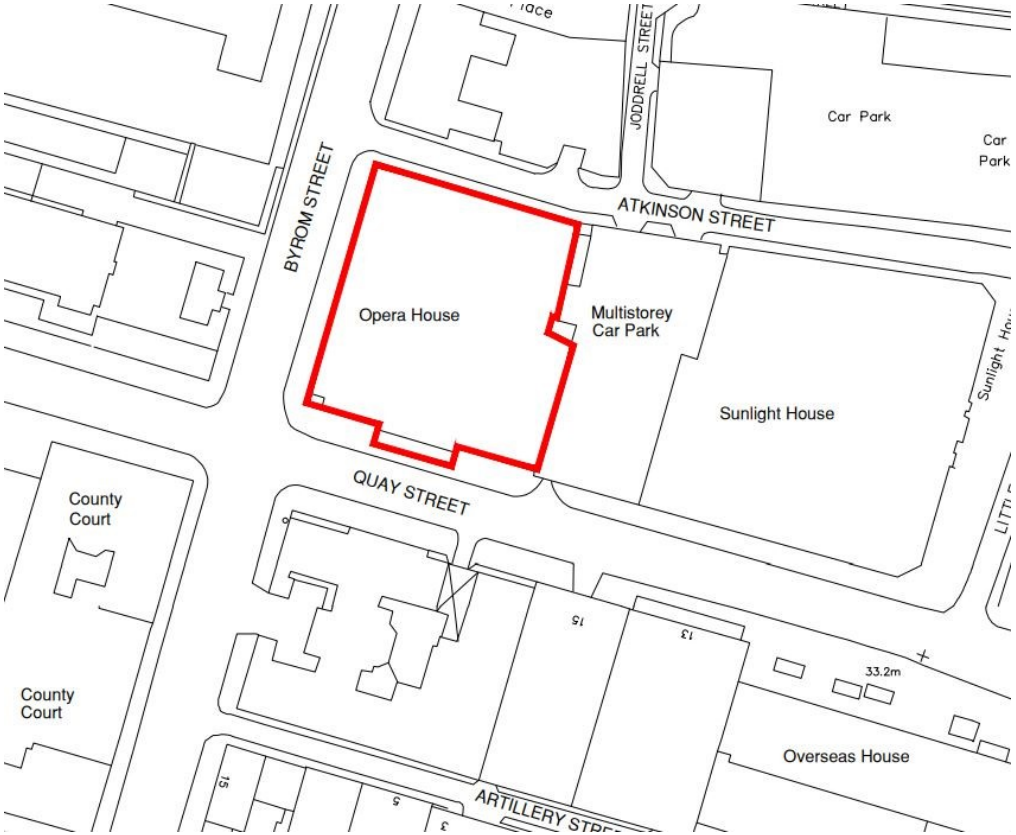
It will be used to support the application for Listed Building Consent and for a full planning application.

1.2 THE SITE

The site is located on Quay Street, Manchester. The frontage is more visible on the approach from the East. The recent addition of the Quay House development to the West has made the frontage less visible as the elevation of Quay house has moved further forward on the street than the previous building.

Permission has previously been granted as follows:

126635/LO/2020	06/07/2020 LISTED BUILDING CONSENT Repairs to external windows
118311/LO/2017	27/11/2017 LISTED BUILDING CONSENT Replacement of the Theatres Main Entrance Doors off the Quay Street Elevation
092689/LO/2010/C1	31/01/2013 LISTED BUILDING CONSENT for works to rooftop comprising installation of 2 no. new access ladders, installation of new edge protection, re-roofing of flat and pitched roofs and retention of existing edge protection
091693/FO/2009/C1	20/04/2010 Replacement of the existing external lighting units with 16 no. lighting units, 2 to be located on the Byrom Street elevation and the remainder on the Quay Street elevation
087679/LO/2008/C1	11/09/2008 LISTED BUILDING CONSENT for the installation of bird netting to 9 No. windows on front elevation



2.0 HERITAGE -

When it first opened its doors, the venue was aptly named New Theatre. The venue celebrated its opening day on Boxing Day in 1912. The venue struggled to compete with other establishments in the area, and was consequently sold to United Theatre Ltd three years after its opening. After being sold, the venue was renamed New Queens Theatre.

Between 1916 and 1920, Sir Thomas Beecham performed on several occasions. In his honour, the theatre was renamed The Opera House in 1920.

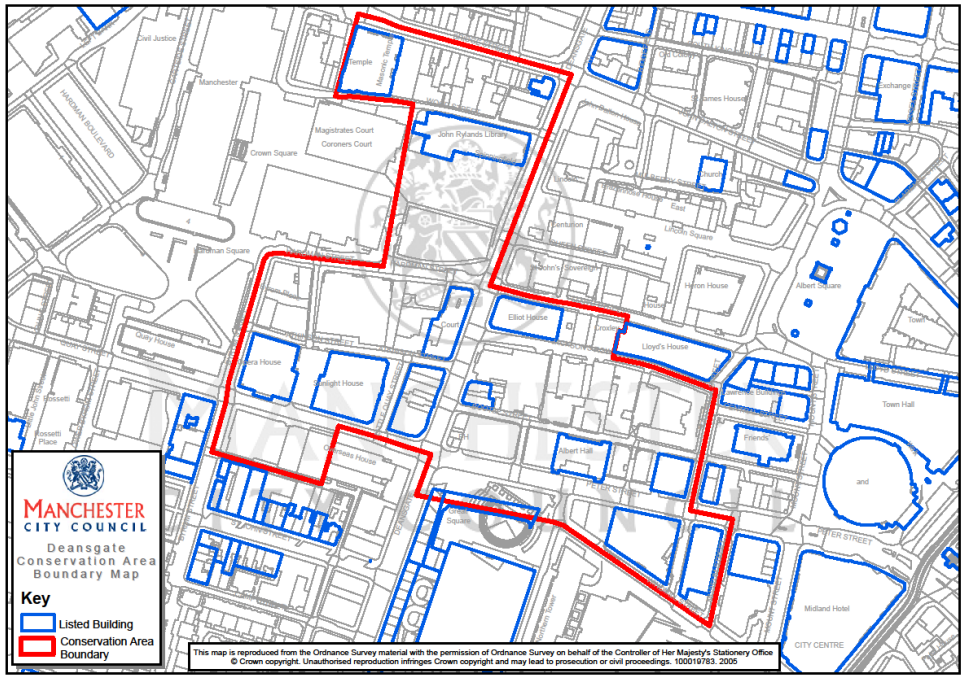
Throughout its history, the venue has adapted to the world around it. The Opera House survived the Second World War and even served as a cinema and bingo hall for some time. It wasn't until 1984 that the venue would once again operate as a theatre. Since this time, the theatre has played host to several famous shows, including Phantom of the Opera, Barnum and Oliver.

In 2003, the venue was refurbished and still continues to attract some of the best in entertainment.

The manchester Opera House has a very large auditorium with two cantilevered balconies, each with a capacity of around 500, but because of their size they have rather restricted sight-lines to the rear. The Theatre's current capacity is 1,920. The Theatre was bought by the Ambassador Theatre Group in November 2009

The Manchester Opera House features a 15 bay facade and was designed in the Classical style. A relief of a horse-drawn carriage is situated above the central bays. An entrance canopy was added during the 20th century.

The opera house features a seating capacity of 1,920. Two cantilevered, curved balconies inside of the auditorium hold 500 seats each. The spacious stage and orchestra pit makes the theatre a great venue for musicals and orchestral performances. The theatre's stage is 37 feet wide and 42 feet deep, and the orchestra pit can hold up to 80 musicians. Although the theatre was redecorated in March of 2011, the green and gold colour scheme inside of the auditorium was preserved.



The Opera house is situated on the edge of the Deansgate conservation area.

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2.1 HERITAGE - Significance

Significance

Construction as described in the listing, is of a classical style, the front block of three storeys with Attic 1:1:11:1:1 bays symmetrical, the first and last bays set back with plinth, banded rusticated stucco to all levels; giant order to first and second floors consisting of a five bay centre with engaged fluted ionic columns.

The first and fifth bays breaking forwards and each containing lettered pedestal at the foot and mask roundel at the top, flanked by three pilastered bay each side, these and the three centre bays having windows at the top with geometric glazing. There is an entablature with frieze letter “THE PLAY MIRRORS LIFE” in the centre and decorated in Wedgewood style in the other bays, dentilled cornice carried round and surmounted in the centre by a large semi-circular tympanum with allegorical relief.

There is a pedimental gable with moulded cornice on the brackets. At street level there is a five bay entrance at ground floor with canopy. The left side of the elevation is less ornate however the entablature extends to this elevation at the second floor level, forming the eaves detailing through without the Wedgewood styling. The plinth extends along the left elevation. The left elevation is divided into three bays with the first and last of banded stucco appearance, the central bay is mostly facing brick.

The inside of the theatre also holds much significance. The large auditorium has two very deep, slightly curved cantilevered balconies of approximately 500 seats each, which overhang to an excessive degree, evidence, perhaps, of the architect’s unfamiliarity with theatre design, producing poor sight-lines at the rear and a feeling of oppressiveness.

The space between the balcony fronts and the stage is architecturally impressive. It displays an assured handling of Neo-Classical motifs. Flanking each side is a stack of superimposed boxes between pairs of giant fluted Corinthian columns. The upper boxes are a later insertion, following the removal of heavily-draped canopies over the dress-circle

MANCHESTER OPERA HOUSE

boxes. The balcony and box fronts are formed of enriched iron balustrading. Spanning between the entablatures over the giant columns is a deep, coffered segmental arch which forms the tympanum above the high rectangular proscenium, filled by a large circular medallion flanked by winged gryphons. The immensely high main ceiling, covering the full width and depth of the auditorium, is in the form of a coffered segmental tunnel vault.

The theatre is ingeniously planned to take maximum advantage of the site, with the stalls below street level and the main entrance foyer formed within the void of the first balcony - the rear wall of the auditorium thus forming the wall of the street façade.

Architectural Significance

The Theatre once held a significant position on Quay St with land to the West of the site largely vacant affording better views of the front corner and side of the theatre from this approach. The photo opposite shows the vacant plot opposite to the West of the theatre.

Some sketches of the proposed Theatre, originally to be called His Majesty's Theatre, were published in the Academy Architecture and Architectural review of 1912, both long standing publications.

There is a consistent design to the windows within the primary front elevation of the theatre overlooking quay street. The windows are casement style windows with a cross detail formed by glazing bars. These decorative windows are in contrast to the Byrom Street elevation where plain sash windows are located. The inside of the windows have a decorative bead detail whilst the external frames are simple square section. The decoration hints that the upper areas may once have been accessible to the public although the

2.1 HERITAGE - Significance

historic plans of the building do not support this.

The principal and most decorative elevation of the theatre fronts on to Quay Street and is largely unchanged from the original building save for a new link extension to the right hand side forming an access onto the main road and housing a bar area above.

Internally the plan of the building again stays true to the original although uses of spaces has been adapted in some areas and decoration has been added and updated over the years, perhaps most significantly in the entrance foyer.

Historic photos of the building show that the main façade remains largely unchanged.

Some of the windows to the frontage have been altered particularly on the front West corner of the façade. The original decorative lights set above the canopy have also now been removed.

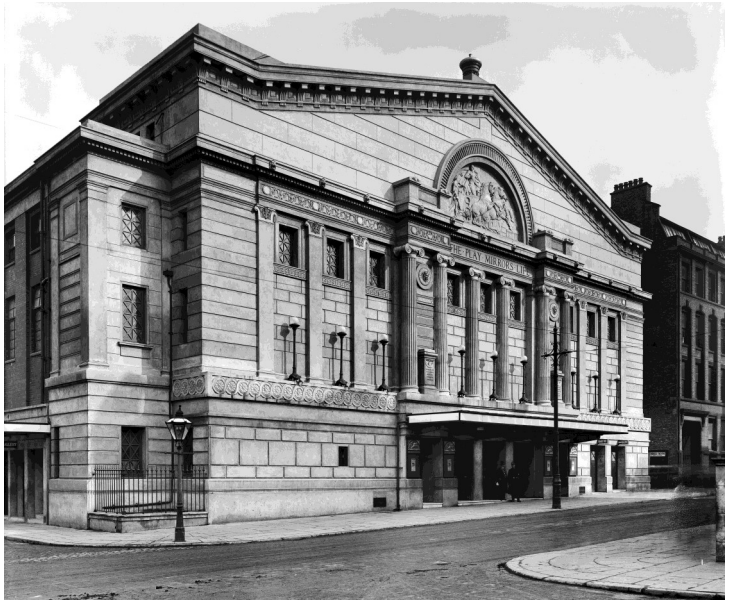
The Byrom Street elevation is more utilitarian in its appearance with decorative render reserved for the ground floor section only. Windows are simple non decorative sashes and walls above ground floor are finished with facing brick.

Historical Significance

The ERA reported on the opening of the New Theatre in their 4th of January 1913 edition saying:- 'After tremendous efforts to keep faith with its undertaking to open on Boxing Day, the New Theatre, Quay-street, Manchester, duly threw open its doors to the public for a matinee performance of "Kismet."

The reporting of the opening of a Manchester Theatre in the National publication shows the prominence of the building at the time of opening.

Today the building retains its original use as a theatre.



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2.2 HERITAGE - Development

Brief Summary of Architectural development

1912

The Opera House on Quay Street, Manchester was designed by Farquharson, Richardson & Gill and originally opened as the 'New Theatre' with a production of 'Kismet' on Boxing Day, the 26th of December 1912.

1915

The Theatre was renamed the New Queen's Theatre in 1915, as an homage to the former Queen's Theatres on Spring Gardens and Bridge Street.

1931

In 1931 the Theatre was bought by Howard & Wyndham Ltd, led by A. Stewart Cruikshank from its headquarters in the King's Theatre, Edinburgh.

1979

The Theatre was Manchester's main Touring House until 1979 when it closed and was converted for Bingo use but this lasted for only five years and in 1984 it was bought by the Palace Theatre Trust. During the 80's a large scale refurbishment of the Opera House was undertaken and some of the windows to the front elevation are believed to have been replaced during this time.

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2.3 HERITAGE - Listing Information.

HARVARD HOUSE

Heritage Category: Listed Building

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1247470

Date first listed: 03-Oct-1974

Statutory Address: THE OPERA HOUSE, QUAY STREET

Location

Statutory Address:

THE OPERA HOUSE, QUAY STREET

District: Manchester (Metropolitan Authority)

National Grid Reference: SJ 83414 98041

Details

MANCHESTER

SJ8398 QUAY STREET 698-1/16/348 (North side) 03/10/74 The Opera House
GV II
Formerly known as: The New Theatre QUAY STREET. Theatre, now opera house. 1912, by Richardson and Gill with Farquarson; altered. Stucco on brick, slate roof. Rectangular plan at right-angles to street. Classical style. Front block of 3 storeys with attic, 1:1:11:1:1 bays, symmetrical, the first and last bays set back; with plinth, banded rusticated stucco to all levels; giant order to 1st and 2nd floors, consisting of a 5-bay centre with engaged fluted Ionic columns, the 1st and 5th bays breaking forwards and each containing a lettered pedestal at the foot and a mask roundel at the top, flanked by 3 pilastered bays each side, these and the 3 centre bays having windows at the top with geometric glazing; entablature with frieze lettered "THE PLAY MIRRORS LIFE" in the centre and decorated in Wedgwood style in the other bays, dentilled cornice carried round and surmounted in the centre by a large semi-circular tympanum with allegorical relief; pedimental gable with moulded cornice on brackets. Five-bay wide entrance at ground floor, with later C20 canopy.

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3.0 REPAIRS

PROPOSALS

There are currently 2 No. steels within the stalls bar area of the Opera House. These steels support the wall above the opening creating a lightwell area that was previously boarded up.

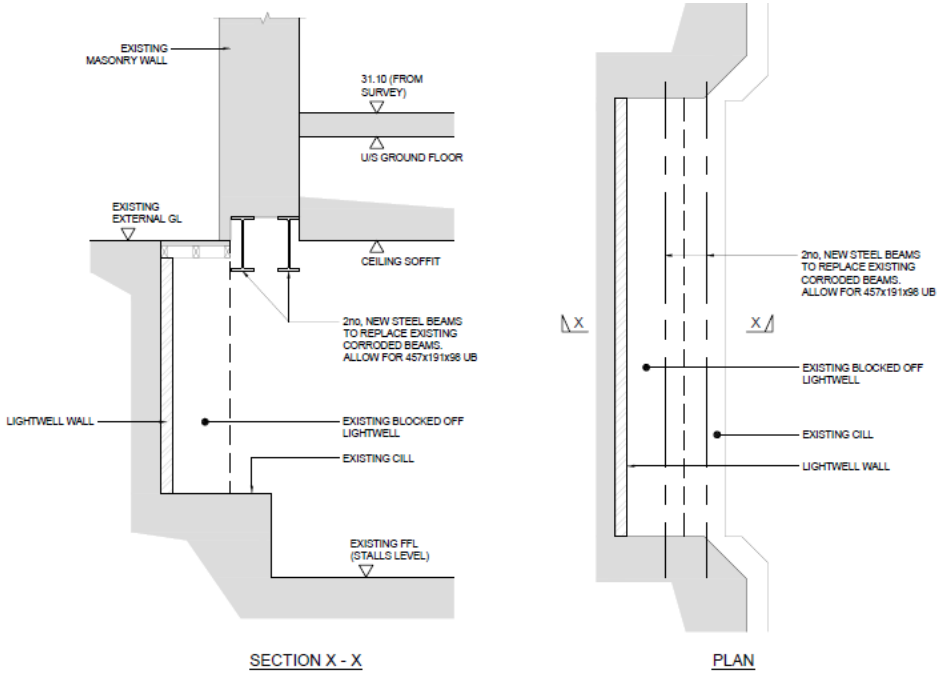
As can be seen from the photo the steels are heavily corroded and in need of replacement. This opening up has been achieved by the removal of the existing window and the temporary propping of the beams.

The structural engineer HBL noted the following within their report:

'In our opinion the corroded outer beam is no longer adequate and should be replaced. The inner beam and the concrete infill is likely forming a steel and concrete composite section, and removal of the outer beam will compromise this system. As such, we recommend allowance is made to replace the inner beam and infill structure also.'

It is therefore proposed that the two existing beams will be removed and 2 No. new steel beams to be installed in their place with infill between as recommended by the structural engineer.

As part of this work it is proposed to undertake works to reinstate some of the original features of the stalls bar. The existing window is to be overhauled and a reinstated in the existing opening. The existing concrete infill to the original pavement light location is to be broken out and a new pavement light introduced that allows natural light into the lower bar area.



Steel replacement proposals

3.0 REPAIRS

PROPOSALS

Following the failure of a section of render to the underside and front of the link extension investigations of steels were undertaken to determine the cause for the render failure.

The structural engineer advised that the beam has badly corroded and as such temporary propping was installed underneath the beam to stabilise the opening and to reduce the risk of collapse.

As part of the works it is proposed include the replacement of the steel in this area on a like for like basis.

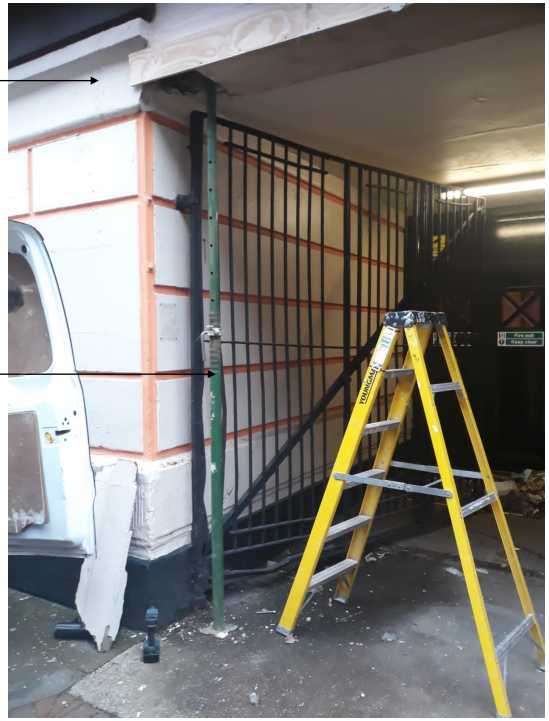
Existing corroded steel

The proposed work will disturb the existing render to the walls. New render will be applied following the steel beam replacement. New cement render (analysis of existing render to be undertaken prior to repair in order to match) and paint decoration to match existing.

As the existing beams bear onto the existing corner of the wall, a small localised section of render will be removed to allow the removal of the existing beam. Once the new beam is in place, the render will be made good to match the existing and redecorated. Following inspection it appears that a section of render in this area had previously been replaced, it is possible this occurred during previous works to install the original beam in this area.

Area of render showing evidence of previous repairs/ work

Temporary propping



4.0 New Works

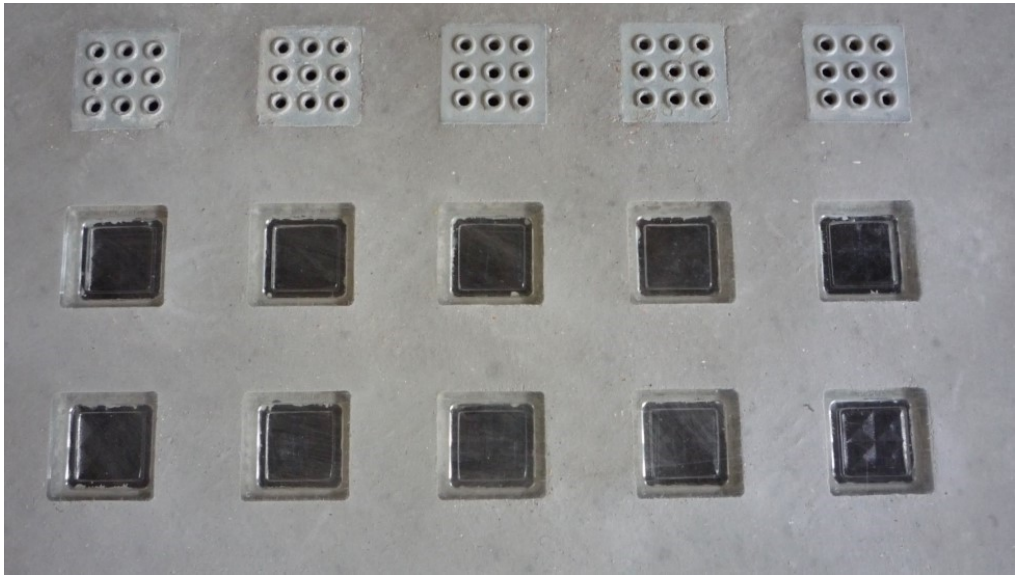
PROPOSALS

It is likely that during the removal and replacement of the steel beams that the concrete infill covering the lightwell at pavement level will be disturbed in order to provide sufficient access.

As part of the work it is proposed that there is an opportunity to improve the existing stall bars area by reinstating the existing window that has been removed to facilitate the temporary propping and also to reintroduce some natural daylight by installing a new pavement light.

Whilst the original pavement lights around the theatre would have been cast iron it is proposed new pavement lights would be cast concrete units.

It is proposed that this concrete fill be replaced with new reinforced concrete pavement lights with both glass lenses and ventilation tiles. The photograph opposite shows the external view of the concrete fill which is outlined in red for ease of identification.



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The installation of pavement lights will provide two main benefits, firstly these will provide natural daylight into the lower ground bar area. Secondly this will provide the opportunity for the installation of ventilation tiles as part of the new system.

The corrosion of the steels in this areas was caused by moisture in this confined space. The provision of ventilation tiles would help to alleviate this problem. The photograph below opposite shows an example of a concrete pavement lights systems, with both the square glass lenses and the inclusion of ventilation tiles.

4.0 IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSALS

STEEL REPLACEMENT

As the existing steel beams are in a poor condition due to corrosion, these would require replacement in order to ensure that there is no damage caused to the rest of the building should they fail. The beams at both locations are currently propped, however this a temporary solution. The replacement of the beams would therefore be a more permanent solution.

When considering the NPPF guidance in relation to this type of intervention to the heritage asset, the reason noted above, we believe, would be a clear justification for the need for the works.

It should also be noted that the replacement steels will be similar in size to the existing.

PAVEMENT LIGHT INSTALLATION

The existing concrete fill on the pavement to Byrom Street is a relatively new addition installed sometime in 2016/2017 and had been installed to block up the opening for previously removed pavement lights installed in its place. The opposite image show the previously existing pavement lights which were in place. It is noted that these pavement lights were concrete lights and were presumably already replacements of original cast iron pavement lights.

The original pavement lights would have had medium significance as part of the original listed building. If replacing the original lights the impact would be a low level change causing slight harm to the significance of the heritage asset, however the fact that these have been replaced at least twice means the reintroduction of a pavement light would be an improvement on the existing situation.

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The existing area of concrete to be removed is of no historical significance to the heritage asset.

The installation of the proposed pavement light would have a positive impact on the heritage asset and would involve reinstating an item that allows a greater positive impact on the internal appearance of the building.

The proposed pavement lights will be a reinforced concrete system. This would match the previously existing concrete system as evident in the photograph below. In addition the pavement light system provides a ventilated tile option which would allow the ventilation reduction of moisture within the light well area. This will would help to alleviate problems with corrosion occurring in the future.