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Touchstones Art Gallery, Rochdale
Alterations and Repairs to Roof Zone 2

Heritage, Design and Access Statement

For Rochdale Development Agency



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1.0 Summary of Heritage, Design and Access Statement

1.1 Introduction

Donald Insall Associates were commissioned by the Rochdale Development Agency to carry out a roof condition survey and propose remediation works recommended for the building fabric as a part of the larger renovation project to form a new museum and art gallery at Touchstones Gallery, Rochdale. The works were divided into Zones 1 and 2. Listed Building Consent was granted for Zone 1 in December 2024 (RN: 13646475). This document and the accompanying drawings have been prepared in support of an application for Listed Building Consent for Zone 2 only.

1.2 The Building, its Legal Status and Policy Context

The Touchstones Gallery is a Grade II building (List no: 1367096) and is located in the Rochdale Town Centre Conservation Area.

Listing description: SD 81 SE ROCHDALE THE ESPLANADE (north-west side) 6/55 Rochdale Central Library, Museum and Art Gallery.

Library, museum and art gallery, now library. Library 1883, museum and art gallery 1903 and 1913. Jesse Horsfall. Yorkshire stone with slate roof. The 1883 library consists of a central porch and entrance hall flanked on either side by parallel reading rooms. The 1903 extension added a linking passage, porch, hall and stairway to the left of the original building and a two-storey range with art gallery on the upper floor. The 1913 extension involved further rooms to the west and a diagonal wing, all on two storeys. The original library has

3 gables and is symmetrical about the smaller central one; it is all of one storey and has a low central porch with arcaded parapet, elliptical headed door opening with enriched spandrels, over light enriched advanced gablet with ball finial and 3-light mullion and transom windows to either side with ovolo-moulding. The large gables to either side have 5-light ovolo-moulded mullion and transom windows with segmental heads and drip moulds, heraldic and inscribed panels above, and ball finials. The linking passage is detailed similarly but has elliptical headed 3 and 4-light mullioned windows with Art Nouveau-stained glass. The museum and art gallery has a 4-bay central section with a 3-bay gable to the right and diagonally set gable to the left. Detailing is again similar, but each gable includes 3 panels of carved figures, one representing science art and literature designed by C.J. Allan and carved by J.J. Millson. The museum was requisitioned in the war and has since been used as part of the library.

1.3 Assessment of Significance

Constructed in 1884 as a public library and museum to designs by local architect Jesse Horsfall, the building exemplifies the architectural values of late 19th-century Rochdale. Its architectural style characteristic of its civic function, with ornate stonework, arched windows, and symbolic carvings. The building echoes the cultural values of the town of Rochdale, particularly in the provision of education, public access to culture and community involvement. These values were closely linked to the town's role in the foundation of the Co-Operative Movement and are once again being celebrated through the revitalisation of the building as a multifunctional arts and heritage centre and its position within Rochdale's wider cultural and community offer.

The roofscape of Touchstones Art Gallery is a key component of the building's architectural composition and makes a particular contribution to its significance as a Grade II listed Victorian public building. This expressed through its complex form, material quality, detailing and visual prominence.

The roof comprises a series of steeply pitched roofs, incorporating a series of gable ends, eaves, rooflights, and fleche ventilators, in keeping with Victorian Gothic and municipal design aesthetics. The variation in height and pitch of different roof sections reflects the building's original internal zoning, which is legible from the exterior. These features break up the mass of the roof and lend it rhythm and architectural character, contributing positively to the building's elevation from The Esplanade [Plates 1.3.1 and 1.3.2].

The roof design reflects Victorian engineering responses to issues of ventilation, lighting and waterproofing in large public buildings. It also demonstrates a hierarchical approach to roofing in public architecture. The presence of fleches, rooflights, and decorated gables show a commitment to a layered and expressive architectural language, reflecting Rochdale's economic and cultural importance in the 19th century. The roof contributes to the building's visual relationship with surrounding heritage assets, including Rochdale Town Hall (Grade I) and the wider Civic Quarter. From public viewpoints, particularly The Esplanade and surrounding streets, the roofline and detailing are visible and legible, reinforcing the building's landmark status. More recent interventions, however, detract including modern rooflights and rainwater goods whilst there has been a visible degradation in the historic fabric; the modern decoration to the fleche and other timber makes no contribution to its significance,



1.3.1



1.3.2

1.4 Summary of Proposals and Justification

- The existing slate roof and lead flashings are defective and allowing water ingress into the building. The slates may be original and been re-used in re-roofing the building, having been re-nailed. The backs of the slates have degraded, and slates lifted had de-laminated. Non breathable underlay has been used in the re-roofing and where insulation has been retrofitted without ventilation being incorporated. The roof will need re-slatting, and at best only 25% on existing slate is likely to be re-usable. Re-slatting is proposed using Westmoorland slate to match the existing as closely as possible.
- The existing copings, stone balustrades and chimneys have no dampproof course (dpc) and have defective or inadequate flashings. It is proposed to lift and re-bed copings on a dpc, and to add a dpc and extra lead cladding. Where upstand to insides of parapets is inadequate a lead abutment gutter is proposed to be added – this should have nominal visual impact. The stone balustrade around the porch may be improved by lifting and re-bedding on a dpc, and by adding lead to the blocking course and cornice. The additional lead will change appearance but mitigated by means of being a high-quality heritage material.
- The existing rooflights do not follow the original bays formed by the internal trusses. These rooflights are in poor condition with defective timber being viewed in multiple instances. These rooflights form an

important part of the elevation and can be seen from the Esplanade and Town Hall Square. It is proposed that they are replaced with rooflights that sit in the original bays to match their historic layout. This would return the appearance of the roofs to a design more akin to the original and enhance the elevation more widely as well as the internal museum and gallery layout.

- The leadwork, is poorly formed and cheeks appear to be laid over non breathable plastic membrane. The lead needs reforming to correct detailing, with ventilation adding. This includes new “hidden” gutter details that would not be visible on the elevation but would enhance the function of the roof.
- A number of rafters are ‘soft’ where water has been leaking from defective gutters. The rafter ends are to be replaced as a side-by-side repair, and these will not be visible once ceiling finishes are repaired. Purlin ends built into walls appear to have been affected by damp in the past and there are a number of existing repairs using steel plate. Remaining purlin ends are reported as being soft and it is anticipated that similar steel plate repairs will be needed. Visible steel plate will have a painted finish, as per existing.
- The fleches on Zone 2 also need restoring with new leadwork detailing to enhance the existing function, timber repairs to structural timber, re-slatting with like-for-like to match the architectural language of the rest of the roof. A key proposal in the fleche works is to strip back and re-decorate the timber with RAL 6028 green to match the original paintwork that was evidenced upon the stripping off of the decorative elements.

- Existing cast iron hoppers and downpipes require refurbishment, repainting and better fixing, however there are plastic downpipes and gutters to the north elevations and to the dormers which require replacement in painted cast iron. This is considered to be an enhancement.
- Add a proprietary metal capped vent to the chimney. The chimney is at the rear elevation and so not prominently located – considered to have minimal visual impact.

[Plate 1.4.1] [Plate 1.4.2]

As outlined above the proposals are essential to remedy failings with the roof to ensure the long-term conservation of the building and to enable the wider success of the previously consented adaptive reuse scheme without causing harm to the significance of the listed building or its contribution to the Rochdale Town Centre Conservation Area. As such they meet the requirements of the NPPF, specifically paragraph 210 which requires that heritage assets are sustained and enhanced in a manner according to their significance. Indeed works such as the proposed rooflight design, redecoration of the fleche and replacement of plastic downpipes with painted cast iron in accordance with the building’s original designs would present an enhancement alongside the significant benefits to both the building and the local community that its new multifunctional arts and heritage centre use will bring. As such the proposal would also meet the statutory duties of the Town and Country Planning Act (paragraphs 16, 66 and 72) and the requirements of the Local Plan



1.4.1



1.4.2

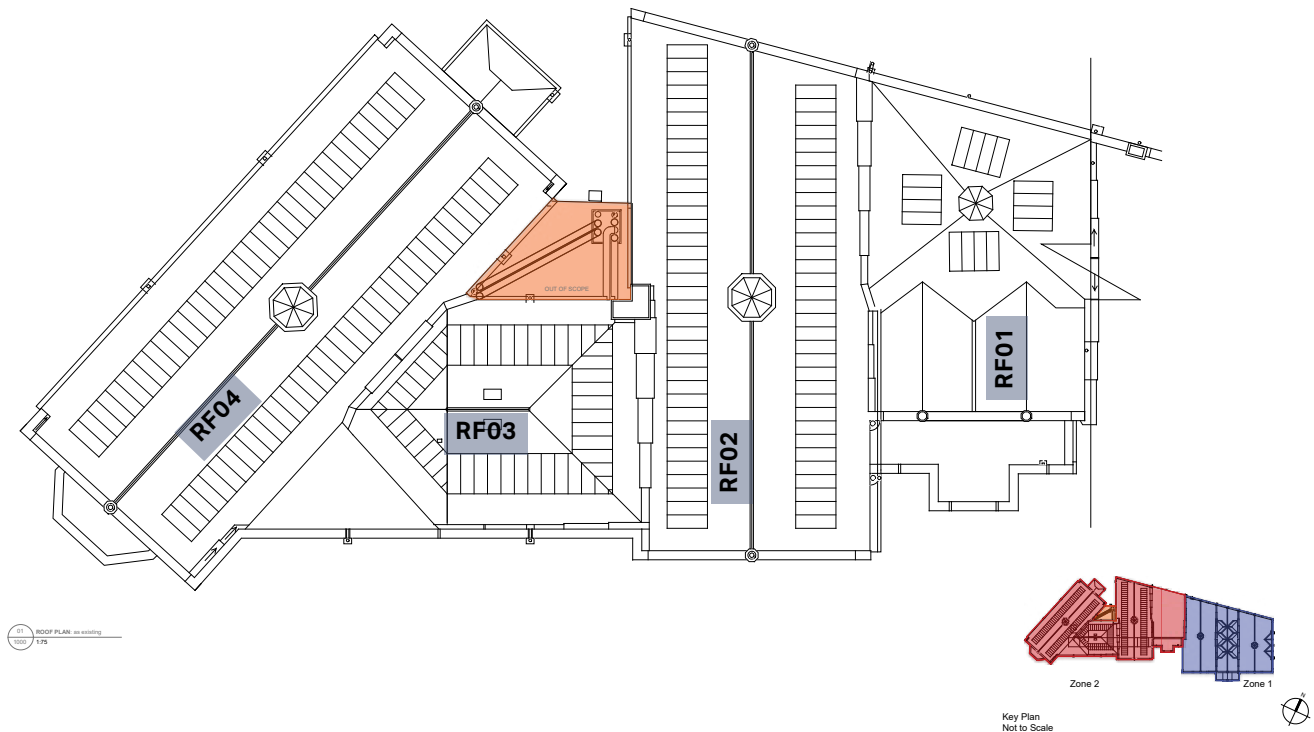
2.0 Description of Proposals

2.1 Existing Roof Arrangements

Roof Zone 2 comprises four bays with RF01, RF02 and RF04 running North-South and RF03 running East-West each comprising a slate covered pitched roof with stone gables with parapets to the south and north. Roofs RF01, RF02 and RF04 both have a fleche which incorporates passive stack ventilation, each with a lead lined base and slate covered capping. There is a lead lined abutment gutter at the junctions of the bays. RF03 has a section of flat roof to the North which is outside the scope of this application. All four bays have rooflights running along the roof slopes. These rooflights are not original and it is unclear the exact date when they were installed. The rooflights also do not follow the original bays defined by the roof trusses[Plates 2.1.1 and 2.1.2].



2.1.1



2.1.2

2.1.1 Slate Roof Coverings

The roof requires stripping and sound slates set aside for re-use. As detailed above, optimistically only about 25% of slates are thought to be re-usable. Matching Westmorland green slate is on long order and a like for like replacement imported slate may be necessary, dependant on programme and lead in times. As the roof is being re-slatted an upgrade in the insulation will be required. The existing plaster ceiling will be retained, and so nominal insulation only will be added between the rafters from above. Ventilation to cold roof voids and between rafters will be provided at valleys, abutment and ridges using proprietary ventilation packs [Plates 2.1.1.1 and 2.1.1.2].



2.1.1.1



2.1.1.2

2.1.2 Flashings, Soakers and Leadwork

Inadequate laps were found at the junctions between soakers and cover flashings at the roof abutment with the back of the stone parapets. Some of the roof slopes have inadequate height between the slates and current top of flashing to meet recommended lap requirements. Chimney flashings and back gutter are in poor condition, with slipped lead and patch repairs in flash-band. The chimney appears to have been capped off using concrete, and it is proposed that it is unblocked and vented using a proprietary metal vented capping. The abutment gutters are blocked and leaking and drips are undersized [Plates 2.1.2.1 and 2.1.2.2].

The proposals include renewing all leadwork to latest Lead Sheet Training Academy details and recommendations. A 'secret' lead lined abutment gutter is proposed to mitigate where recommended upstands and laps are not achievable.



2.1.2.1



2.1.2.2

2.1.3 Parapets and Finials

The parapets have no dpc and lack any overhang or drip - dark staining relating to damp at the top of the walls can be clearly seen. Parapet copings and stone finials have moved in places and there is cracking to mortar joints between coping units and between copings and masonry wall beneath. Fixings are visible to the top surface of the copings (eroded and forming a water trap), and extra fixings have been added to some of the copings [Plates 2.1.3.1 and 2.1.3.2].

Due to the movement noted it is proposed that all parapet copings and finials are carefully lifted and re-bedded on a lead dpc, integrated with the flashings and soakers, to make the back of the upstand fully weather proof. The porch will be reset on lead dpc, with lead taken down the front of the blocking course and over the top of the cornice.



2.1.3.1



2.1.3.2

2.1.4 Flat Roof at RF01 Porch and between RF03 and RF04

The entrance porch has a flat roof concealed behind a stone balustrade. The roof coverings appear to be in asphalt which needs stripping out for further inspection. The proposal includes a new asphalt roof at the entrance porch hidden behind the parapets for security reasons. To the second flat roof between RF03 and RF04 it is proposed to reinstate a lead covering as per LSTA details upon strip out works.

2.1.5 Fleche

Water ingress was reported beneath both fleches and it appears the secret gutter around the top of the leaded base of each fleche is blocked or cracked whilst outlet pipes are undersized. Some of the slate has slipped. The lightning protection system on both needs testing as well.

The proposal includes to re-slate defecting slates on the fleches following an inspection of the sarking boards, membranes and other structural timber. The leadwork is proposed to be renewed with appropriate details as per LSTA recommendations. The original green paint colour to the fleche at Zone 1 was uncovered during those works and there it is proposed to redecorate the timber to match the original with RAL 6028. It is also proposed for a specialist to assess the current lightning protection and to propose renewal works **[Plate 2.1.5]**.



2.1.5

2.1.6 Rooflights

All four bays of the roof at Zone 1 have modern rooflights. The existing windows are modern, with fixed glass double glazing and lead flashings over the original rooflight bays. They also have blinds fixed on timber rails on the internal face of the roof. The rooflight at RF03 form a continuous channel on all four slopes of the roof.

There is evidence of the original rooflights to follow the bays formed by trusses on the roof and the proposal includes to reinstall the rooflights to match the historic layout and design [Plates 2.1.6.1 - 2.1.6.3].



2.1.6.1



2.1.6.2

2.1.7 Downpipes, Hoppers, Eaves Gutters and Rainwater Goods

It is proposed that all cast iron fittings will be retained, cleaned back and repainted and reinstated. Unsuitable modern replacements will be replaced with cast iron fittings.



2.1.6.3



2.1.7.1

3.0 Sustainability

The existing ceiling finishes are to be retained and there is limited scope to increase the height of the roof build up to significantly increase the amount of insulation. All of the slates are to be lifted and the roof re-slatted, as such there will be an opportunity to add insulation between the rafter although new roofing membrane will need to be draped and the space above the insulation ventilated.

The existing modern dormer windows, with double glazing, are to be renewed due to decay to sills and mullions. Improved double glazing can be incorporated within the replacement windows. Hardwood is specified for durability due to the windows 'out of sight' location.

4.0 Access

The proposals have no implications for vehicular access to the site, nor increase in traffic on the public highway.

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