



# DR WILLIAMS'S LIBRARY- 14 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0AR

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE | SEPTEMBER 2021

8555-CPM- ZZ-ZZ-RP-A-10002\_P04

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# 1.0 Introduction

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## 1.01 The Report

CPMG have prepared this document for Dr Williams's Library Trust which owns and occupies Dr Williams's Library, formerly University Hall, 14-15 Gordon Square, London. The Trust is faced with the need to undertake a programme essential repairs and internal reorganisation.

The overall objective of the Trustees is to secure the continuation of the Library within its present building, by improving the conditions in which its important collections are held and to restore the building to a satisfactory condition for the foreseeable future.

In 2018 the Trusts Structural advisers reported concerns, following this the library took on the task of removing its collection from the timber joisted floors which in places were showing distress due to overloading. This is an ongoing task due to the size of collections and problems the library has faced during the Covid pandemic.

The building was constructed in 1849 as a hall of residence, known as University Hall. Dr Williams's Library, formerly housed in Queen's Square acquired and moved to the building in 1890.

The building designed by TL Donaldson, is of great historic significance due to its connection with the Dissenters Chapel Act, as it is considered one of few buildings constructed as a permanent memorial to mark the passing of an act in Parliament.

## 2.0 Legacy

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### 2.01 Religious Dissent

Religious Dissent dates from the Restoration of Charles II in 1660 and the re-establishment of the Church of England as a state church requiring absolute conformity to its ceremonies and the Book of Common Prayer. Over 2000 ministers in England and Wales (including about a sixth of the parochial clergy and many university and school teachers) for conscientious reasons could not accept the terms of conformity and were ejected from their livings or posts. They were joined by a significant body of their former parishioners, upon whose charity they depended, who also rejected an Anglican prayer-book religion seeking instead an evangelical preaching ministry. For nearly three decades ministers and their lay supporters held illegal meetings for worship, experiencing harassment from local officials and informers, and suffering fines and imprisonment. Persecution if not continuous was at times extremely fierce, especially during the late 1670's and 1680's when most open meetings were suppressed. The Toleration Act (1689), passed after the Glorious Revolution, allowed Dissenters a bare toleration to worship in public. In many areas of civil and religious life, most notably education and politics, they continued to be discriminated against. Roman Catholics and those who denied the Doctrine of the Trinity were excluded from the Act. Nevertheless the Toleration Act represented a major advance in the liberty of the individual. For the first time the state recognised its subjects could hold alternative religious views from the established church. It was the foundation of many of those rights we take for granted today: the freedom to assemble for religious worship, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and in time the removal of the Anglican monopoly in most areas of public life, notably education, politics and the law.

Before the mid-eighteenth century Dissent consisted of four major denominations: English Presbyterians, the largest, wealthiest, and most influential part; Congregationalists; Baptists; and Quakers. During the second half of the eighteenth century the religious landscape of Britain was transformed by a series of evangelical revivals. For the first time these revivals reached groups previously untouched by formal religion, the agricultural labourer, the collier, and the industrial worker, as well as revitalising the religion of many regular churchgoers. The results were striking. The growth of Methodism is the best known example, though before the mid-nineteenth century the largest body, the Wesleyan Methodists, were still tied to the Church of England. The main beneficiaries in England and Wales among the Dissenters were the

Congregationalists, who grew from about 900 congregations at the end of the eighteenth century, to around 2,000 by 1831, and to over 3,200 in 1851. The Baptists were also to experience considerable growth. By contrast the leading Presbyterian congregations rejected religious enthusiasm adopting rational beliefs. Many became Unitarian. By the end of the eighteenth century their congregations had become centres of considerable wealth and influence in the main urban centres, providing many of the leaders for reform, both locally and nationally. The Presbyterians, and later their Unitarian successors, drew certain practical conclusions from their religious beliefs. Because of their minority status, they had a deep-seated commitment to the concept of religious (and therefore civil) liberty. They can be found in the vanguard of every major reform movement from the late eighteenth to the end of the nineteenth century: parliamentary reform, Friends of Peace, anti-slavery, agitation for civil and religious equality, women's rights and suffrage, educational reform, and so on.

Dissenters included many of the industrial magnates and leading businessmen, particularly in Lancashire, West Yorkshire and the East and West Midlands, who transformed the economy making Britain the leading industrial nation of the world. They included many household names: in business Courtauld (textiles), Tate (sugar), Holt (Blue Funnel Line shipping), Brunner (later ICI), Pilkington (glass), Nettlefold (later GKN), Lever Brothers (later Unilever), Cadburys, Rowntree, and a host of less celebrated but historically crucial firms in banking, brewing, railways, and textiles; in literature such well-known writers as Coleridge, Charles Dickens, Charles Lamb, and Elizabeth Gaskell; in local and national government, the Chamberlains of Birmingham, together with many MPs and mayors and councillors; and major intellectuals such as the theologian and scientist Joseph Priestley, who discovered oxygen. Many dissenting businessmen and their families used their wealth to establish major philanthropic enterprises: for example the Tate Gallery, Morley College (for Working Men and Women), the John Rylands Library in Manchester, and new towns to house their workers at Saltaire, Port Sunlight, and Bournville. More generally Dissenters founded domestic missions and schools to aid the poor. They worked in public health and through local politics to improve living conditions, particularly in the towns. By the mid-nineteenth century, according to the 1851 Religious Census, less than half those attending a place of worship attended the Church of England, yet the latter retained most of its privileges as an established church, particularly in education.

## 2.0 Legacy

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### 2.01 Religious Dissent (cont)

Dissenters were excluded from Oxford and Cambridge by religious tests. As a consequence Dissenters played a major part in establishing the University of London in 1826; the first English university to admit students regardless of their religion. Before the 1832 Reform Act Dissenters were largely excluded from voting in parliamentary election; they could only marry in their own chapels after 1836; and until 1868 they were forced to pay church rates to support the Church of England.

### 2.02 History and Development of The Library

The Trust was established by the will of Dr Daniel Williams, the leading London dissenting minister of his day, who died in January 1716. He left instructions to his trustees to house his books and to make them available in London to dissenting ministers and students. The Library opened in 1730 and is therefore the oldest Library open to the public on its original benefaction. The collections were greatly enlarged over the years with many important gifts of books, manuscripts, and portraits. It is still maintained by the charitable Trust on the endowment that Daniel Williams gave; it receives no external funding. Though surrounded by University College London, and the other Colleges in the University of London, the Trust is independent.

Dr Williams's Library has become a major research collection, and is regarded as the pre-eminent library for the study of English Protestant Nonconformity. But its holdings are of even wider significance because of the importance of Puritanism and religious dissent in the history and culture of both this country and of the United States of America. The manuscript collections include the original minutes of the Westminster Assembly (1643-52), the most important parliamentary committee of the Civil War and Interregnum period, and the last of the post-Reformation synods; Richard Baxter's *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, the most significant and substantial seventeenth-century account never to have received scholarly edition (comparable to Bunyan, Burnet, Clarendon, Evelyn, Pepys). Roger Morrice's historical manuscripts, including the *Entring Book*, the most significant record of British political and religious history of the late seventeenth century; together with the major sources for the history of eighteenth and nineteenth-century dissent. Among the many substantial collections of eighteenth-century letters are those of Joseph Priestley, the discover of oxygen.

The extensive archive of Henry Crabb Robinson, containing his diary (1811-1867), reminiscences, correspondence, and other papers, is of great literary significance for students of Romantic poetry. Robinson corresponded with many of the leading German and British Romantic literary figures of the first half of the nineteenth century, including Coleridge, Wordsworth, Southey (a reader in the Library), Sir Walter Scott and Harriet Martineau, and their letters to Robinson are included in the collection. The Library today serves a very wide readership, which includes ministers of all denominations, academics, independent scholars, general readers, and students, and is open to the general public free of charge for reference, with a small membership fee for those who wish to borrow books. But many of those who use the Library are not members, and visitors include a large number from overseas, particularly from North America. A postal service is maintained for those members who live outside London and are unable to visit the Library in person.

## 3.0 The Site

### 3.01 Historical Development of The Site

The present Library building, the oldest building on the West side of Gordon Square, it was completed as University Hall in 1849 and formed an important part of the development of the Duke of Bedford's Estate in the 1840's. It is one of a handful of buildings built to commemorate the passing of an act of parliament and was built following the passing of the Dissenters' Chapels Act (1844) as a permanent memorial to perpetuate the great principle of religious liberty. The Act safeguarded the chapels and endowments of Unitarian and liberal Dissenters from the threat of confiscation by their orthodox opponents. Following a design by the distinguished professor of architecture, Thomas Leverton Donaldson, it cost £10,000.00 and was completed in October 1849 in just over a year. The money was raised from 200 subscribers contributing £50.00 each.

It was built originally as a residential hall to provide the sons of liberal dissenters an opportunity to study at University College London, which had been founded as a non-denominational alternative to Oxford and Cambridge. Conscientious Dissenters could not study at the old universities because of the requirement to subscribe to Anglican religious tests. In 1853 Manchester New College, which trained students for the ministry, moved from Manchester to share the building. Due to financial difficulties, the Society of University Hall was dissolved in 1881, and the building was handed over to Manchester College. In 1884 a detached building, known as the Annex, now referred to as the Morley building (currently leased to UCL), was built to provide accommodation for a further nine students. Manchester College (now Harris Manchester College) moved to Oxford in 1889 following the abolition of the religious tests at the old universities. University Hall was then sold to the Trustees of Dr Williams's Library to house the collection of books and manuscripts. The building was sold to the Trustees of Dr Williams's Library, rather than UCL due to the recognised symbiotic relationship between the building and the library. The Library opened in Gordon Square in 1890.

### 3.02 The Site

The Library is situated on the West side of Gordon Square. To the South side is a terrace of Georgian style buildings (number 16+) in the ownership of University College London (UCL) and

to the North is a building known as the Cloisters (1-15) and is part of the Catholic Apostolic Church of Christ the King that stands at the corner of Gordon Square and Byng Place. To the rear of the site is an area of open space containing a two storey building in the ownership of the Trust. This building, known as the Morley Building is leased to UCL.

The site is included with the Bloomsbury Conservation area under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. sub-Area. 1969).





# 3.0 The Site

## 3.03 Statutory Listing

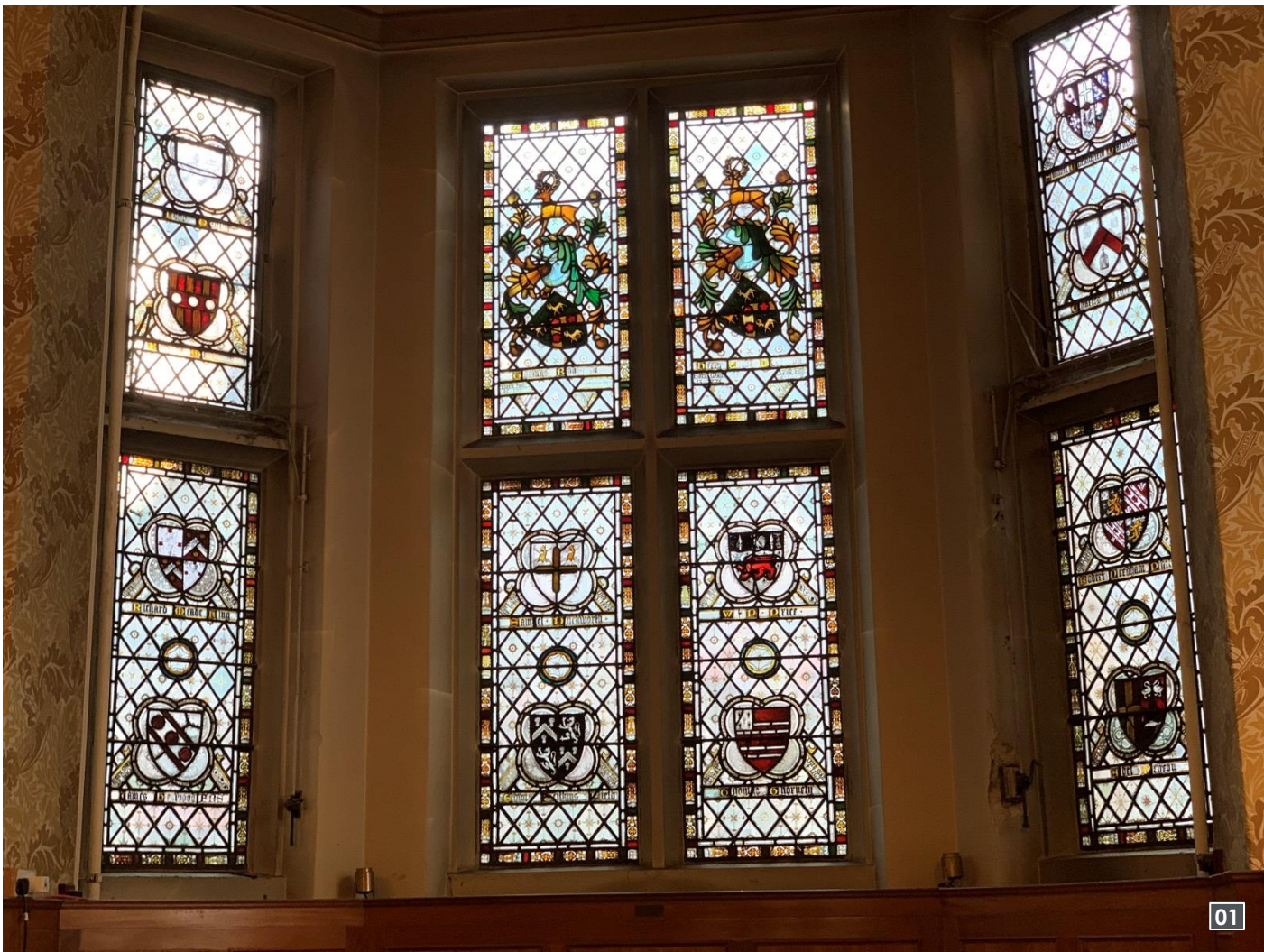
Dr Williams's Library that comprises numbers 14 and 15 Gordon Square and attached Railings and Pillars is listed Grade 2 under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The listing (List Entry Number: 111307 - 28th March 1969) is as follows –

*University Hall, later library. 1848. By TL Donaldson. Red brick with stone dressings. Tudor style.*

*EXTERIOR: 5 storeys and semi-basement. Double fronted with 5 bays of windows. Façade articulated by octagonal turrets with stone octagonal finials, rising the height of the building. Stone band at first floor cill, wide 2nd floor sill band with quatrefoil enrichment and crockets. 3rd floor strings on with crockets. 4-centred arch doorway with moulded architrave, decorated spandrels, hood mould with decorated label stops and panelled door. Above the entrance, and oriel window of 4 pointed leaded lights rising through the 1st and 2nd floors, with a quatrefoil enriched apron at 2nd floor level, cornice and terminating in a brick gable. Windows, except the semi-basement, with pointed headed lights and hood moulds with devoted label stops. Ground floor windows with enriched aprons, of two lights flanking the entrance and 4 lights to the outer bays. Similar windows to the 1st and 2nd floors but with enriched spandrel panels. String with crockets beneath stone-capped, crenelated parapet.*

*INTERIOR: entrance hall with heavy Gothic style stone in imperial style type stairs. Behind, a panelled room with stained glass windows. 1st floor library with cast-iron gallery.*

*SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast iron railings with octagonal stone pillars having shaped finials (Survey of London: Vol. XXI, Tottenham Court Road and Neighbourhood, St Pancras III: London :-1949)*



SITE AND CONTEXT:  
01 Interior- Stained Glass Windows  
02 Interior- Imperial Style Type Stairs



# 3.0 The Site

## 3.04 Building Timeline

There are no original drawings for the building and prior to the 1920's other than odd sketches  
there are no plans for the building. What is known is

1846-	Bedford Estate approached, for lease / purchase over land.
1848 -	May 13 Inquirer article confirms the land leasehold agreed with the option to buy the land outright within ten years.
1848-	Construction of University Hall commenced.
1849-	Construction Completed.
1853-	Manchester New College moved in and shared the building with The Society of University Hall.
1855-	Instead of purchasing the land freehold from Bedford Estate, a thousand-year lease was agreed.
1881-	The Society of University Hall was dissolved, and the property was transferred to Manchester New College.
1884-	The Henry Morley Building (Annex) was constructed.
1890-	Dr Williams's Library purchased the building from Manchester New College, selected over the £10,000 offer by University College London. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The timber bookcases and associated timber gallery was believed to be constructed</li><li>• The level 7 cast iron floor was inserted</li><li>• The Trust Subdivided the building and let the North wing and Annex to Mary Ward and others</li><li>• Number 14, comprising the South Wing and Central core was occupied by Dr Williams's Library. They dropped University Hall from the address</li><li>• Number 15, comprised of the North wing, along with the Annex was let to Mary Ward and others</li></ul>
1892-	The cast iron galleries and associated Spiral staircases are believed to have been installed.
1961-	Historic Planning Application (TP4146/11811)- Application to convert rooms from residential use to Library use.
1964-	The Henry Morley Building (Annex) was leased to University College London, agreed for a period of ninety-nine years.
1968-	The building and its surrounding area was designated within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area
1969-	The building was designated Grade II
1998-	Planning Permission Granted (LS9804923)- Permission to alter / upgrade flats on level two and three within the South wing.
2004-	Planning Permission Granted (2004/0196/P & 2004/0197/L)- New internal passenger lift installation involving the removal of an existing later lift shaft. Alterations to basement to allow for archive storage areas
2009-	Planning Permission Granted (2009/1557/L)- Amendment to the permission granted in 2004



# 4.0 Heritage Significance

## 4.01 Assessment

The Government advises local planning authorities at paragraph 128 of the NPPF that, in determining planning applications that would affect heritage assets, they should require applicants to describe the ‘significance’ of any heritage asset that would be affected by the development proposals. Significance is defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF as ‘The value of the physical presence of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its architectural or historic interest’. This is discussed in detail in sections 5 and 6.

The Government recommends that the effect of an application on the significance of a designated heritage asset such as Dr Williams’s Library should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing these applications a balanced judgment is required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss to the significance of the heritage asset.

It is evident that the external presence of the building was a key factor to show a dominance within the square, internally the building is much more modest with the exception of a few key internal rooms. As such the internal and external fabric will be valued separately.

## 4.02 Criteria for Assessment

The English Heritage document Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance published in 2008 sets out logical approach for evaluating decisions on the historic environment. This includes the provision of a framework of four key values that should be used to assess the significance of historic buildings.

Understanding the values and the significance of buildings is necessary to inform decisions about their future.

The four key values are as follows -

- Evidential value - the potential of a building to yield evidence about past human activity.
- Historical value - the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a building to the present – it tends to be illustrative or associative.

- Aesthetic value - the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a building.
- Communal value - the meanings of a building for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory.

When assessing the above values we will use the table below which is based on the Heritage Value definitions based on the ICOMOS (2011) guidance document. The impact of the proposed works will be assessed separately within the Heritage Impact Assessment.

Value Grading	Built Heritage- value gradings derived from the impact definitions within the ICOMOS (2011)
Very High	Buildings or structures of recognised/designated value that have internationally important architectural features and fabric (aesthetic value); and/or internationally important meaning to people (communal value); and/or internationally important potential to yield evidence from the past (evidential value); and/or internationally important associations (historic value).
High	Historic buildings or structures of recognised/designated value that have nationally important architectural features and fabric (aesthetic value); and/or nationally important meaning to people (communal value); and/or nationally important potential to yield evidence from the past (evidential value); and/or nationally important associations (historic value).
Medium	Historic buildings or structures of regional value that have regionally important architectural features and fabric (aesthetic value); and/or regionally important meaning to people (communal value); and/or regionally important potential to yield evidence from the past (evidential value); and/or regionally important associations (historic value).
Low	Historic buildings or structures of recognised/designated local value that have locally important architectural features and fabric (aesthetic value); and/or locally important meaning to people (communal value); and/or locally important potential to yield evidence from the past (evidential value); and/or locally important associations (historic value).
Negligible	Historic buildings, structures, features, fabric of: no architectural merit; and/or no meaning to people; and/or, no potential to yield evidence from the past; and/or, no important associations.
Detrimental	Buildings, features of buildings or building fabrics that have an intrusive character or that are detrimental to the heritage significance of a historic building or structure.

# 5.0 Significance of External Elevations

## 5.01 Evidential Value

Evidential value is assessed in relation to significance when physical remains of past human activity can be considered likely or are documented on the site of the heritage asset. These provide the primary source of evidence identifying the development of place, people and cultures.

Referring to the London Borough of Camden Archaeological Priority Areas Appraisal 2018, the site does not fall within any of the designated archaeological priority areas. The closest being Camden APA 2.11 London Suburbs, which is on the opposite side of Russel Square, graded Tier 2.

The works proposed are limited to small areas of low dig landscaping within the courtyard and replacement of some of the internal floor's, on this basis there would have been considerable disturbance to the ground already. Considering the works which have already taken place historically to build 14-15 Gordon Square, the Morley Building (The Annex) and to lay the drainage routes.

On this basis evidential value is considered low when assessing the heritage assets significance

## 5.02 Historical Value

It is clear that the heritage value of the asset does not reside solely in the built form, its key significance resides within its historical value.

As discussed throughout this document and the associated Heritage Impact Assessment. The building is unique in being one of very few buildings in the United Kingdom erected to celebrate the passing of an Act of Parliament.

Consistent with the original ethos behind University Hall, the Library and its collections are intrinsically tied to the significance of the building. The Trust was formed to provide a focus for non-conformist thinking and the use of the building is entirely appropriate for this purpose being constructed as a memorial to the passing of legislation giving legal status to the freedoms so long

sought by the non-established religions in this country. As such retention of the library within the building is of strategic importance for 14-15 Gordon Square.

On this basis historical value is considered medium when assessing the heritage assets significance.



SIGNIFICANCE OF EXTERNAL ELEV.  
Photograph of T L Donaldson- [https://wellcomeimages.org/indexplus/obf\\_images/62/c9/bdb44502cc450f3a2efb0a0c4372.jpg](https://wellcomeimages.org/indexplus/obf_images/62/c9/bdb44502cc450f3a2efb0a0c4372.jpg)



## 5.0 Significance of External Elevations

### 5.03 Aesthetic Value

The Library is an example of the Gothic Revival architectural style. Beginning in 1740's in England this became an international style of increasing popularity particularly in early to middle Victorian England reaching its peak in the 1870's. Whilst of good quality it cannot be noted as a particularly unusual or notable work of architecture.

Key changes can be seen and assumed based on the information that has been found. A subsidiary entrance on the North wing at street level was introduced in 1890. The early twentieth-century photographs show that the brick octagonal turret features that extend the full height of the building were originally topped with crocketed finials that are now lost. From the original specification we understand the roof ridge line was likely adorned with black glazed crested ridge tiles. And the earliest elevation drawing within the specification by Donaldson would suggest the building was original constructed without the main entrance door, with the main entrance open to the elements. In observing the interior treatment of the main entrance its not hard to believe that this was possibly a design consideration.

The front elevation facing Gordon Square was extensively repaired and overhauled over ten years ago. The rear elevations have not been preserved in the same way and here, a number of windows have been modified and new widows introduced as these break into the rear diaper pattern within the brickwork to the rear of the building. In the 1890's to accommodate the Library holdings two of the large double height windows to the rear of the library had their lower sections boarded off to make way for book shelving. The boarding is still evident now to the external elevation of the building.

Approximately forty years ago, the whole of the original slated roof coverings were removed and a new covering of concrete interlocking tiles installed.

The construction of the building is well documented. A full specification for the construction of the original building is to found in Donaldson T.L. and Cunningham G.W. (1860) Handbook of Specifications London. Atchley & Co. Donaldson (1795-1885) being the architect for the building.



SIGNIFICANCE OF EXTERNAL ELEV.:  
01 Historic Image of 14-15 Gordon Square  
02 Photo taken from Gordon Square 2018, Finials Gone



# 5.0 Significance of External Elevations

## 5.03 Aesthetic Value (cont.)

The design is unified by the use of stone label mouldings, embellished stone banding, hood moulds above windows and a crenelated parapet. To give emphasise to both the ends and the central section of the building are octagonal pillars in brick which were originally capped with decorated finials. The piers between the sections of cast iron railings to the footpath echo the design of the octagonal features.

On the basis that much has been lost and that this is not deemed a particularly unusual or notable work of architecture historical value is considered low when assessing the heritage assets significance.

## 5.04 Communal Value

Compared to the other three main values: evidential, historic and aesthetic. Communal value is different in that the significance of this value is less dependent on the historic fabric of the building. Its value is held in the relationship of meaning and associations of a place for the community and individual.

The Library has importance not solely in respect of its individual architectural qualities as it forms an important part of the ensemble of buildings on the Eastern side of Gordon Square and which are prominent from the Square itself. To one side is the Cloisters building, a gothic revival building attached to the church of Christ the King and to the other is a neo-Georgian terrace built sometime after in the twentieth century. It also holds importance to Unitarians due to its link with the Dissenters' Chapels Act.

As the value is limited in relation to who knows about the building and its significance, its communal value is considered low when assessing the heritage assets significance.

might sanction a proceeding which would deprive them of their possessions. The excess of the wrong produced a remedy, and the Dissenters Chapels' Act of 1844 placed the Unitarian property in the same security in which their persons already were.

It was with a grateful sense of the importance of this act that the leading promoters of it resolved upon forming an educational establishment as a memorial of the act. And out of this resolution arose the University Hall which it was and is expected will be what the Warrington Academy, the York and Manchester Colleges, and the Hackney New College, all tried to be, but in vain ; a large educational establishment in which may be brought together the two classes of lay and divinity students, and who at all events will enjoy advantages which none of the other colleges could possess. In the first place—the one great incident which is of im-

SIGNIFICANCE OF EXTERNAL ELEVATIONS

Extract taken from the Inquirer, March 11, 1848 Pg 164

variety the institution.

The Report and the plans show that the Council are proceeding wisely. They will start with offering accommodation to thirty students only, reserving room to build for thirty more. They do not aim at too much at first, and, if pictures are to be trusted, mean to do things completely and handsomely as they go along. We have always thought this was the only way in which the scheme could answer. A mean appearance would be fatal. A greater amount of house-room than inmates could be found to fill in a reasonable time would be as bad.

... doubt that the subscription-list

SIGNIFICANCE OF EXTERNAL ELEVATIONS

Extract taken from the Inquirer, February 12 1848, Front Page



## 6.0 Significance of Interior Spaces

### 6.01 Evidential Value

The interior of the building has inevitably been altered and adapted to reflect its use as a library, little internally is believed to be unaltered in some way.

As discussed at section 3, the building was constructed originally as a hall of residence before being acquired and used thereafter, as a dedicated Library in 1890. The earliest plans for the building date from 1924: prior to this, at the start of its life the building started out as being solely occupied by Society of University Hall residents, before potentially being altered to also accommodate New Manchester College Students. It is likely that there was some form of separation between the two institutes prior to The Society of University Hall being dissolved and Manchester New College taking full ownership of the building. More is known about the key alterations of the fabric from 1890 when Dr Williams's Trust bought the building. Its known at this time the new entrance door was added and the North wing was physically separated from the rest of the building.

Due to the number of alterations and there being no drawings to understand how the building was originally laid out to consider the living conditions of the first students to New Hall as originally constituted. Evidential value is considered low when assessing the heritage assets significance

### 6.02 Historical Value

Arguably, the most significant elements of the interior are contained in the central bay. Here, the central entrance lobby and internal Tudor styled stone stairs raising from the street level to level 3, with the double-height lecture hall behind and the double height reading room at level 4 are of most architectural significance.

While the reading rooms at level 4 with the associated timber and cast iron galleries are of interest these are not original to the building, nor is the introduction of a steel floor at level 7 in the rear part of the central core.

Painted on the walls of the Lecture Hall was a series of well-documented murals by the Victorian artist Edward Armitage RA (1817-1896). In the late 1950's they were whitewashed over as they had begun to decay and there was insufficient funds to repair them. In the mid-1980's these were then also covered with wallpaper. At some later stage it may be possible to remove the paper and whitewash to reveal these paintings. In the interim, nothing will be done to compromise the painted work further.

Due to this and the connection with the Dissenters' Chapels Act the historical value is considered medium.



SIGNIFICANCE OF INTERIOR SPACES

Historic Image of Armitage murals within what was the Dining Hall, now known as the Lecture Hall, prior to the removal of the linenfold timber panelling



# 6.0 Significance of Interior Spaces

## 6.03 Aesthetic Value

The internal style and detailing of the building was the leading architectural style characteristic of mid-Victorian England. As noted in 5.03 it is not unusual or a notable work of architecture.

The main façade to Gordon Square contains an imposing main entrance lobby reached by way of a set of stone steps. And, above this are the full height windows of the main Library offices and Reading Room. Balancing this, on either side are symmetrical wings to a more domestic scale.

The ground floor Entrance Hall with its Imperial style staircases is an impressive space, but simple in design. Its clear the two side doors have been closed off. And the remaining double doors at level 2 and three show the historic changes in the building when the North wing was divided from the rest of the building as the arched plaster detailed opening at level 2 has been lost. While the arch remains or was reinstated at level 3 the door is less ornate than that of the South wing.

The Lecture Hall is an impressive double height space with exposed ceiling beams, a timber dado and leaded light windows containing late Victorian stained glass. As discussed in 6.02 the murals are gone, perhaps these can be restored at some point but the original wall panelling and raised timber stage are gone.

The front reading room at level four is an interesting example of a formal Victorian Library with cast iron spiral staircases serving the surrounding cast iron galleries. These galleries are later interventions not specifically designed for the room, as such they impact on the simple detailing Donaldson envisioned for the space. This space is likely to have been clad similarly to the dining hall with linenfold panelling to the lower portions of the wall, as can be seen in the image supporting section 6.02, two small panels can still be seen within the space. The large stone oriel window with leaded lights facing what was once a formal garden, Gordon Square, serves to give considerable stature to the space.

The rear Reading Room is a further and equally interesting example of a formal Victorian library. The built-in furniture consists of double-sided sets of impressive book presses with ornamented features. These and the galleries over are of timber construction and are evidence of good quality Victorian carpentry. Again though they were forced into the space based on need versus what was necessarily appropriate for the room as the timber gallery cuts in front of the double height windows. To the North the bookshelves are designed around the windows allowing natural light to flood in. To the South the bookcases cover the lower portion of the double height windows.





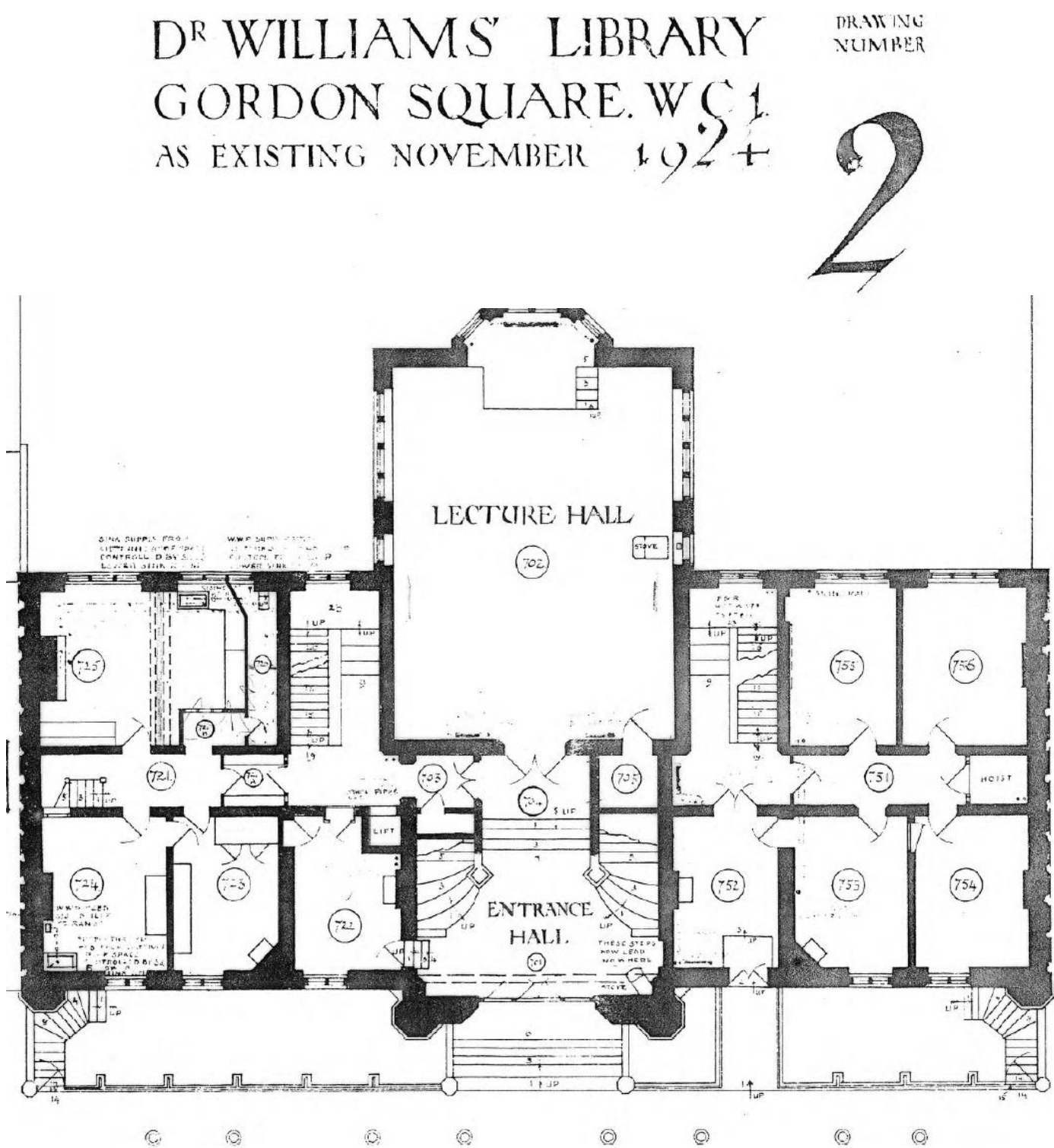
# 6.0 Significance of Interior Spaces

## 6.03 Aesthetic Value (cont.)

On the basis that much has been lost and that this is not deemed a particularly unusual or notable work of architecture historical value is considered low when assessing the heritage assets significance.

## 6.04 Communal Value

No further comments are made in relation to communal value. As noted within 5.04 this is deemed of low value.



**SIGNIFICANCE OF INTERNAL SPACES**  
Extract taken from historic plans dating back to 1924. Drawings show the North Wing subdivided from the rest of the building at what is now referred to as Level two. Drawing predates the removal of the raised floor and linenfold panelling.

# 7.0 Summary

## 7.01 Heritage Value Grading

Using the heritage value gradings derived from the impact definitions within the ICOMOS (2011) guidance set out in section 4.02, the asset holds most significance in its historical value.

	5.0 External	6.0 Internal
Evidential Value	Low	Low
Historical Value	Medium	Medium
Aesthetic Value	Low	Low
Communal Value	Low	Low

Considered Built Heritage Value = MEDIUM

Based off this summary it is deemed the building as a whole should be considered as holding Medium value. The Heritage Impact Assessment will asses the impact of proposed works based on a Built Value Grading of Medium.







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