

Exploring Greater Manchester

a fieldwork guide

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Changing landscapes of places of worship in Manchester city centre: how religious buildings have left a legacy in the modern city.

Angela Connelly, Ian Douglas, Maureen Douglas and Nigel Lawson

School of Environment, Education and Development, The University of Manchester

Angela.Connelly-2@manchester.ac.uk, ian.douglas@manchester.ac.uk,

maureendouglas0@googlemail.com, nigel.lawson@manchester.ac.uk

Aims: This walking tour investigates traces of a past urban religious landscape, once dominated by church towers and spires as evidence of a prosperous, expanding late eighteenth and early nineteenth century town. Many of these buildings have become redundant and were demolished or adapted for different purposes. The walk also examines nineteenth and twentieth century secular buildings that have been converted to religious buildings and the modern uses of former places of worship.

Starting point: Deansgate-Castlefield Metrolink station (which adjoins Deansgate Railway Station)

Estimated time: 2 hours (2.6 miles / 4.2 km)

Further information:

Connelly, A., Lunn, J., Walsh, R. and Millar, C. (2012) *Slums, squalor and salvation: a self-guided walk around Victorian Manchester*. London: Royal Geographical Society with IBG, available to download at <http://www.discoveringbritain.org/walks/region/north-west-england/manchester-victorian.html#tabbox> [accessed 26 October 2015]

Edensor, T. and Drew, I. (2007) *Building Stone in the City of Manchester*, http://www.sci-eng.mmu.ac.uk/manchester_stone/ [accessed 26 October 2015]

Hylton, S. (2003) *A History of Manchester*, Phillimore, Chichester.

Makepeace, C.E. (1986) *Manchester and Salford in the 1890s: a collection of photographs by Samuel Coulthurst*, Hendon Publishing Co, Nelson.

Parkinson-Bailey, John J. 2000 *Manchester: An Architectural History*, Manchester University Press, Manchester.

Maps:

Ordnance Survey Greater Manchester Street Atlas (large scale city centre pages)

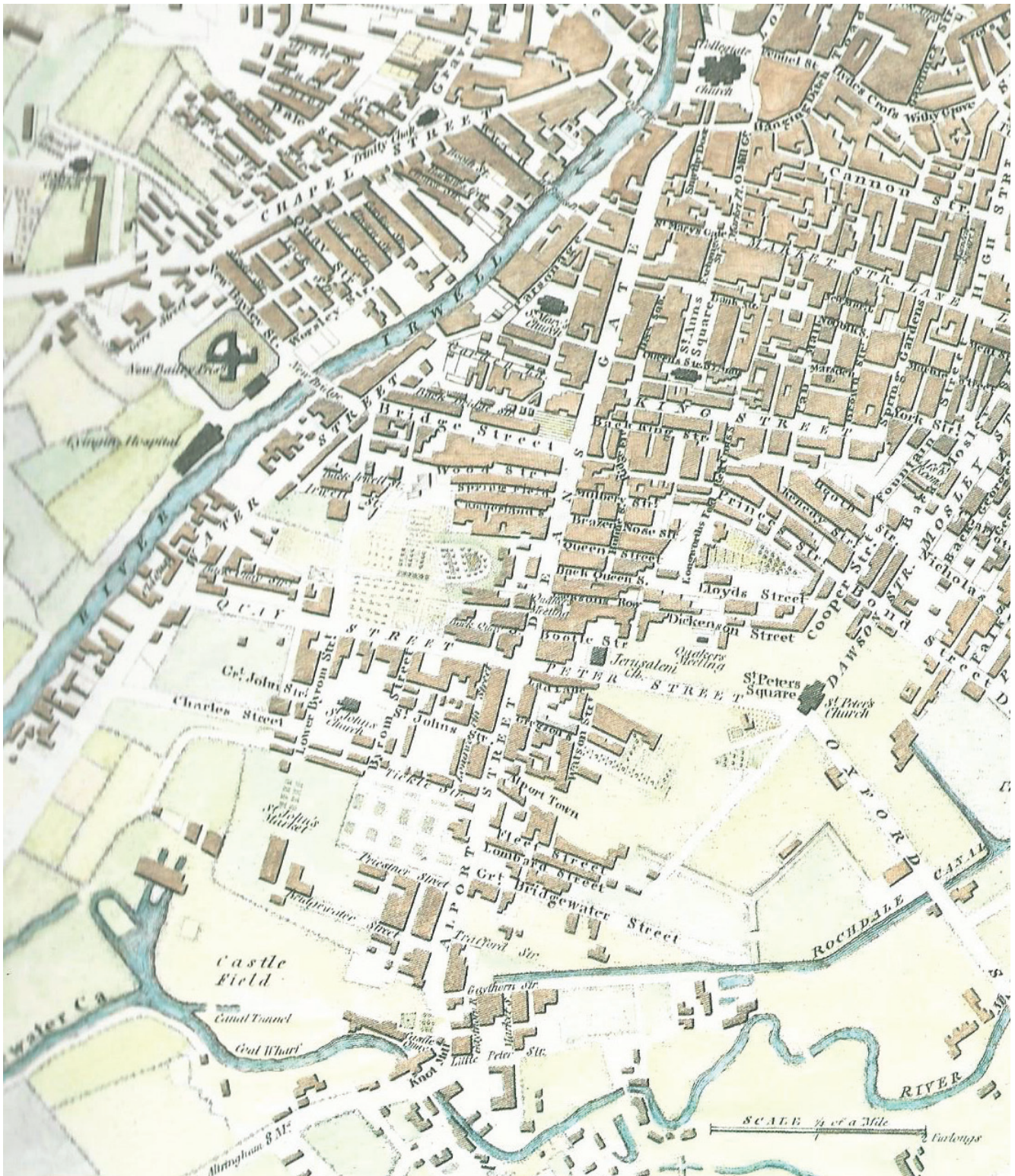
Bancks and Co's Plan of Manchester and Salford 1831

Date of Last Revision: November 2015

Introduction

Early images of Manchester reveal a landscape dominated by church spires and towers. Although this is no longer the case, the urban landscape retains subtle, often partially hidden, legacies of former churches and of religious buildings whose use has changed. This short urban walk seeks to unravel traces of that past and to develop some aspects of the history of Manchester's places of worship. In particular it reveals how the rapid expansion of the city of Manchester in the Georgian period, after the coming of the canals led to the building of many new churches, often using stones from more distant quarries. Four of the five Church of England churches built between 1700 and 1830

have subsequently disappeared. The walk visits two pocket parks that are key elements of today's urban ecology, but were the sites of Georgian churches. It takes us to three surviving Georgian religious buildings and examines the sites of four that were demolished. More recent buildings are also considered, especially in terms of how the uses of some of them have changed through time with former places of worship becoming office buildings or places of entertainment. These changes remind us of our ever changing urban surroundings and the constant evolution of all landscapes.



Map 1: Extract from Cole and Roper's 1801 map of Manchester and Salford (after Baynton-Williams, 1992). The new Georgian churches of St. Mary's, St. Ann's, St. John's and St Peter's are shown clearly, with the new Georgian town houses of St. John's Street and the fields surrounding St. Peter's. The Quaker Meeting house is also marked, but not the Cross Street Chapel or the Hidden Gem Roman Catholic Church. The all-important Rochdale and Bridgewater canals are also shown.

Table 1: Religious buildings past and present in the areas of this exploration of Greater Manchester.

Religious Building	Grade, if listed	Stop on this walk	Adherence	Location	Date of Construction	Date of demolition or present use in 2015
Mithraic Temple		2	Mithraic cult	South of river Medlock opposite the Roman Fort	2 nd century CE	4 th century CE
Manchester Cathedral (successor to earlier St. Mary's)	I	12	Church of England	Fennel Street	1421	In use for worship
Cross St. Chapel		14	Presbyterian to 1750, then Unitarian	Cross Street	1662 rebuilt 1959 and again 1997	In use for worship
St. Ann's	I	13	Church of England	St. Ann's Square	1712	In use for worship
St. Mary's		11	Church of England	St. Mary's Parsonage	1756	1880
St. John's		5	Church of England	Byrom Street	1769	1932
St. Peter's		19	Church of England	St. Peter's Square	1794	1907
St. Mary	II	16	Roman Catholic	Mulberry Street	1794	In use for worship
Friends Meeting House	II	17	Quaker	Mount Street	1795 original building; 1828 present one	In use for worship
St. Matthew's		3	Church of England	Liverpool Road	1825	1951
St. Matthew's Sunday School	II	4	Church of England	Liverpool Road	1827	Used as offices
Bridgewater (Knott Mill)	II	1	Independent	Bridgewater Viaduct	1858	Used for lawyers' offices
St' Mary's Convent and Chapel	II	6	Roman Catholic	Byrom and Camp Streets	1874	Ceased to be used for worship 1894, now office and residential use.
Congregational Church House		7	Congregational	Deansgate	1900	Now the Milton Club: a members' club
Albert Hall	II	8	Wesleyan Methodist	Peter Street	1910	Used as a multipurpose music hall
YMCA (now St. George's House)	II	18	Interdenominational	Peter Street	1912	Used as offices
Reform Synagogue		9	Reformed Judaism	Jackson's Row	1952	In use for worship: reconstruction planned
New-Church House		15	Swedenborgian	John Dalton St	First used for worship 1970	To let as office space

During the period from 1770 to 1830, Manchester was a town of rapid change. In 1826, Joseph Aston wrote: "During the last fifty years, perhaps no town in the United Kingdom has made such rapid improvements as Manchester. Each year has witnessed an increase of buildings. Churches, chapels, places of amusement, and streets, have started into existence with a rapidity which has constantly afforded matter for astonishment in the minds of occasional visitors" (Aston, 1826 p. 22). The rapid growth of the urban areas of Manchester and Salford from a population of 8,000 in 1717 to 50,000 in 1788 and 134,000 in 1821 gave rise to a surge in religious building construction as the residential area expanded southwards from St. Ann's Square. By 1735 the south side of St. Ann's Square was laid out and

elegant houses began to be built on parts of King Street and Ridgefield (Parkinson-Bailey, 2000). In the 1770s, St. John Street was laid out with houses for the gentry, while narrow side passages at right angles to the Street had much smaller dwellings for workers. Princess, George, Charlotte and Hanover streets were all developed between 1772 and 1793. Among the new religious buildings erected between 1740 and 1830 to meet the needs of these new areas were Anglican, Catholic, and Nonconformist chapels (Table 1). This walk will visit both those that survive and the sites of some of those which have disappeared.

The walk will reveal examples of how churches have been converted to new uses, how non-religious buildings have been adapted to religious uses, how suburbanization of

the population that began after 1840 changed the way that people used the city centre and left many of the Victorian behemoths redundant, and how some religious premises have been incorporated into modern office buildings. The built urban landscape tells us much about what went on in the past, but not everything is revealed by the buildings themselves. The altered functions within the structures reveal much about social, religious and cultural change in city centre Manchester.

The walk in detail

The walk begins at the Deansgate-Castlefield Metrolink station (Map 2. Note: the route is shown on three maps). Take the footbridge to Deansgate railway station and descend to street level. Cross Deansgate and turn left under the railway arch.

Stop1: The former Independent Chapel (Figures 1, 2 & 3). On the right, immediately adjacent to the viaduct, is the former [Independent Chapel](#) (1858), now in commercial use. The 1893 OS map shows it as Knott Mill Congregational Church. On the 1908 and 1922 versions, it is simply named Hall, and on the 1950 to 1965 maps it is named as a Christian Science Church. This brick-built, slate-roofed [Grade II listed](#) building was once owned by Peter Waterman and in the 1980s became the recording studio where many of the Stock Aitken & Waterman hits were recorded. Historic England records the building as Artingstall's Auctioneers (<http://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list->

[entry/1292311](#)), as does a 2008 survey (Blythe, 2008). Probably part of the former chapel complex was the recording studio and another part the auction room. In 2015 it became the new home of the law firm Pannone Corporate after the Australian company Slater & Gordon had taken over most of Pannone in late 2013.

After examining the former Independent Chapel, turn back towards the city and walk along Deansgate, under the railway arch to the second street on the left, to Bridgewater Street. Turn left and walk to the small park containing the remains of the Roman Fort.

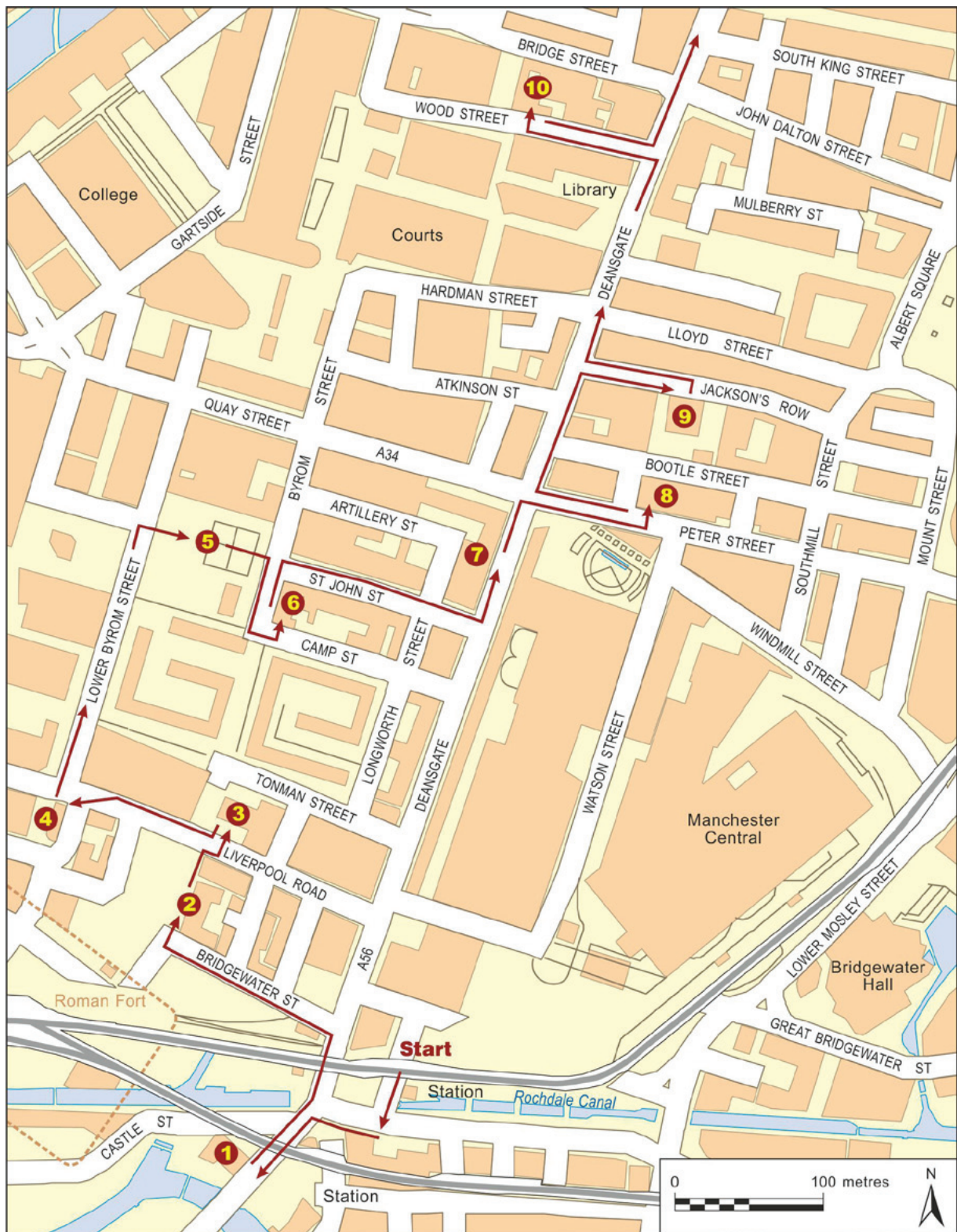
Stop 2: The Roman Fort. Examine the replica of the wall and gatehouse of the fort and the footings of Roman buildings. The building stones are Binney Sandstone quarried at Collyhurst and probably transported on rafts down the River Medlock (Edensor and Drew, 2007). Just south of here, on the other side of the canal and by what was the River Medlock, was one of the first religious buildings of Manchester, a Mithraeum, where Roman legionnaires are believed to have worshipped the Persian god, Mithras.

Walk up to Liverpool Road and cross it to read the information panel, opposite the park, about Castlefield's covered markets (Figure 4).

Stop 3: The site of the former St. Matthew's Church. The present Castlefield House occupies the site of the former St. Matthew's Church which was founded in 1825 and demolished in 1951.



Figures 1, 2 and 3: Views of the former Independent Chapel (photos, Nigel Lawson).



Map 2: Route from Deansgate Castlefield Metrolink Station to the Wood Street Mission.

Stop 4: St. Matthew's Church Sunday School. Turn left along Liverpool Road and walk to the junction with Lower Byrom Street. Across Liverpool Road to the left is the Grade II listed former St. Matthew's Church Sunday School, now used as offices (Figure 5).

Stop 5: The former St. John's Church (Figures 6, 7 & 8). Walk up Lower Byrom Street with the Air and Space Museum (in one of the former covered markets) on your right until you reach St. John's Garden which is the site of the former St. John's Church, founded in 1769 by Edward Byrom and closed in 1931. The church has been described as the first significant [Gothic Revival](#) style building in Manchester.

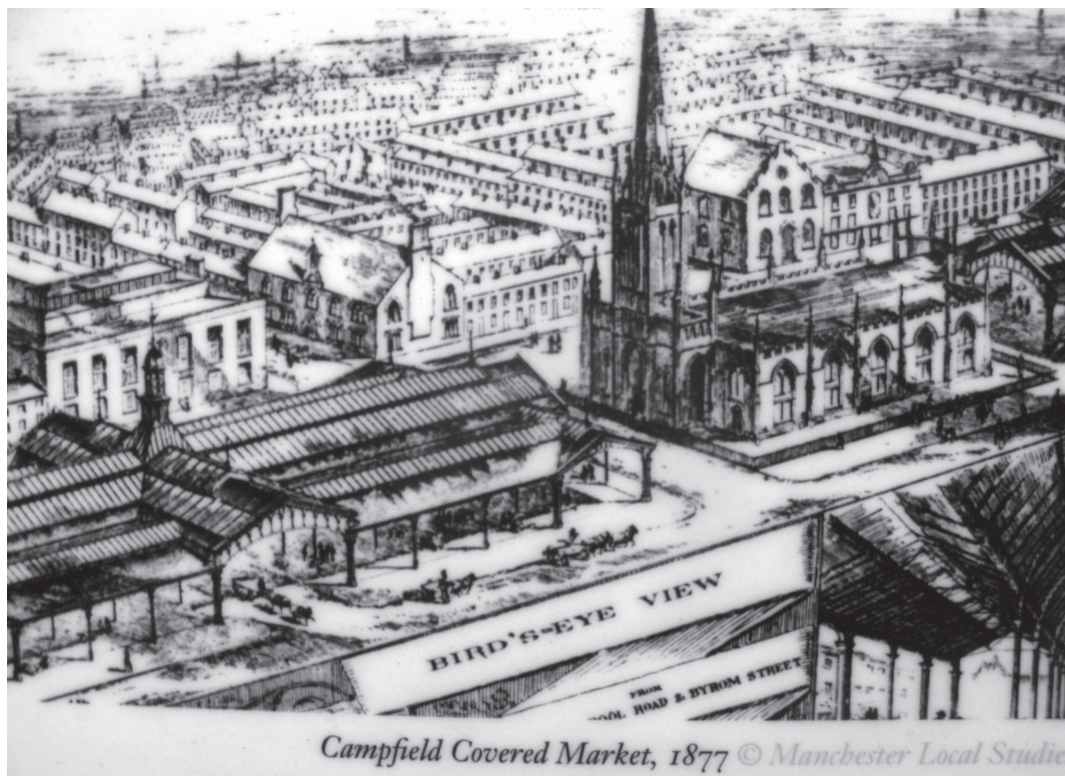


Figure 4: Sketch of St. Matthews Church, Castlefield from the Information Panel in Liverpool Road.



Figure 5: The entrance to the former St. Matthew's Church Sunday School (photo, Nigel Lawson).

Cross the gardens to Byrom Street and walk towards Camp Street, at the SE corner of the gardens. At the corner examine the buildings at 29 and 31 Byrom Street.

Stop 6: Camp Street Chapel. Here at 31 and 29 Byrom Street the Sisters of the Cross and Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ established St. Mary's Convent in 1873, at a time when there was still much poor quality housing and many immigrants from Ireland and further afield around this end of Deansgate (mainly on the site of the LNER Goods Warehouse that was constructed in 1896-98) (Hayes, 2000). Later, in 1889, they opened the St. Joseph's Home for Girls at 29 Byrom Street, with the aim of "saving and rescuing young women from the dangers of city life and restoring them to the ways of honest and industrious service" (information supplied by Father David Lannon and Sister Dominic Savio, November 2015). The Congregation of the Sisters of the Cross and Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ is a group founded in 1851 in Manchester during the 19th century by Elizabeth Prout (known in the Church as Mother Mary Joseph). She was a convert to Catholicism at the time the first Passionist missionaries arrived in England. From 1851 the Sisters lived in towns around Manchester, working in schools for poor children, teaching young working class women good housekeeping, and sheltering them in homes. The Community of Sisters lived and prayed together. Some of



Figure 6: Memorial stone to St. John's Church (photo, Nigel Lawson) and, Figure 7: An image of the church in 1900.



Figure 8: The panel on the memorial recording that John Owens, founder of the Victoria University (one of the precursors of the present University of Manchester), is among the 20,000 people buried in the churchyard which is now the gardens (photo, Nigel Lawson).

the Sisters were teachers, particularly at St. Mary's School in Tonman Street off Deansgate; some ran the Home, including the laundry; some looked after the domestic affairs of the convent itself. Most of them would also have done parish visitation, visiting the needy and poor in their own homes.

Turn into Camp Street and look at the building on your left with the steeply pitched roof (Figures 9 and 10). This was the Chapel of the convent and was officially opened on 21st November 1874. It was built of grey stock brick with stone dressings. The interior walls are lined with rich pine skirtings and the flooring of the aisles was inlaid with mosaic tiles. The roof, formed of pointed principals, springing from stone corbels, showed six bays each holding a rich, silvery plate of stained glass, bearing the Passionist Sign, or Badge, emblems of Christ's Passion and the Scriptural text (Sister Dominic, 2008). From the outside, the Signs of the Passion can be seen on the windows of the chapel. In December 2015 the entire building was being refurbished (Figure 11).

From Camp Street return to Byrom Street turn right and right again into St. John's Street walk towards Deansgate passing the Georgian buildings that are now the premises of law firms and medical consultants. At Deansgate turn left. Walk to the shopfront of the Church of Scientology at number 248 (Figure 12).



Figures 9, 10 and 11: The former St. Mary's Convent and Chapel of the Sisters of the Cross and Passion in Camp Street (photos, Nigel Lawson).

Stop 7: Church of Scientology and Congregational Church House. Next to the Church of Scientology is a larger building which is the former Congregational Church House (Figures 13 & 14), designed by Henry Lord and built in 1900 on land donated by Mrs. Rylands. It is now a day members' club, bar and restaurant, the Milton Club.

From Congregational Church House, cross Deansgate and walk up Peter Street to the brick fronted building just before the Albert Hall.



Figure 12: The Church of Scientology premises in Deansgate (photo, Nigel Lawson).

Stop 8: Three buildings: No. 23: a former theatre that became a religious building; No. 27: a Methodist Hall that became a music hall; and across the road an office block that houses a place of worship. Although No. 23, the building at the corner of Peter Street and Jerusalem Place, may seem to be undistinguished, it is actually a modern frontage to a former theatre that was converted to a religious use. The Grand Theatre (also named the Grand Pavilion, Figure 15) was built by Edward Garcia and opened in 1883, and reputedly was hastily-constructed. Although several owners made various improvements and undertook some restructuring, it was probably the least successful of Manchester's variety theatres. It ceased to be a theatre in 1916 and was remodelled as a cinema with new balconies, reducing the size of the auditorium. At first called the Palladium and later the Futurist, the cinema seated about 900. That role ceased in 1924 and the Christian Science Church took over the building (Figure 16). The front was subsequently used as a car showroom and the façade was changed. In 1970 the front of the building had become unsafe and was replaced by the present brickwork. The original Grand Theatre then became the Chicago Rock Café and is now occupied by the Sakana Restaurant (Figure 17). Inside aspects of the 1916 cinema conversion and a few of the original theatre fittings, including open-lattice balcony fronts and part of the proscenium, may still be seen.



Figures 13 and 14: Views of the former Congregational Church House in Deansgate (photos, Nigel Lawson).

No. 27, the Albert Hall (Figures 18, 19 & 20), is the Grade II former Methodist Central Hall built to a design by W. J. Morley of Bradford, for the Manchester and Salford Wesleyan Mission. It is probably iron or steel framed, and is clad in buff Burmantoft's 'vitreous' terracotta. It is rectangular in shape, with the long side parallel to the street; and the interior was largely given over to a 2000 seater hall with a curved horseshoe gallery as well as a myriad of offices and meeting rooms. After being closed and hidden for 40 years, except for the ground floor which was used as a pub,

the Albert Hall was recently revived by Trof, the people behind Gorilla and the Deaf Institute. The Hall is now an events venue, restaurant and bar. The ornate, grand worship space has been brought to life again as a stunning purpose-built music hall hosting a variety of music events. The first performance in the refurbished hall was the Michelangelo Sonnets during the Manchester International Festival in 2013. Further details and good photographs on the interior can be found at: <http://www.theskyliner.org/the-albert-hall-manchester/> [accessed 26 October 2015].



No. 23 Peter Street – Figure 15: The original Grand Theatre; Figure 16: The Christian Scientist church; and Figure 17: The present-day Sakana Restaurant (photos, Nigel Lawson).



Figures 18 and 19: Views of the Albert Hall at 27 Peter Street (photos, Nigel Lawson and Angela Connelly).

Across Peter Street from the Albert Hall in Peter Street is the Fourth Church of Christ Scientist (Figure 21). Built in 1950 this Portland stone office building was once a car showroom. Today it is a Christian Science Church with a double height auditorium rising from the basement and a Christian Science Reading Room. OMI Architects inserted the new church into the basement, ground and first floors of the office building, carrying out major structural alterations

allowed the introduction of two and three-storey height voids. Although the new space is stripped of ornament and overt religious symbolism, in keeping with Christian Scientist beliefs, the congregation told the architects that they find the building spiritual and other-worldly.

From the Albert Hall, return to Deansgate and turn right and walk along to Jackson's Row. Turn right again and walk up to the Reform Synagogue.



Figure 20: Rear view of the Albert Hall from Jackson's Row (photo, Nigel Lawson).



Figure 21: Fourth Church of Christ Scientist in Peter Street opposite the Sakana (photo, Nigel Lawson).

Stop 9: Jackson's Row Synagogue (Figure 22). The Manchester Congregation of British Jews was founded in 1856 by Jews who emigrated from Germany with ambitious plans for social emancipation and reform from the doctrines of ultra-orthodox Judaism. Their first Synagogue in Park Place, Strangeways (opened in 1858) was destroyed by fire as a result of an air raid on Manchester in 1941 and the congregation met for services in rented accommodation (the Houldsworth Hall on Deansgate) until it acquired a prefabricated building in Park Place in 1948 (Goldberg, 1957).

The site of the Jackson's Row Synagogue was acquired in 1952 and the Synagogue was opened on the 29th November 1953. It was designed by Peter Cummings with Eric Levy; Cummings was also responsible for the former Cornerhouse Cinema Number 1 on Oxford Road. Much of the south side of Jackson's Row is due to be redeveloped by a consortium headed by former Manchester United players Gary Neville and Ryan Giggs. The £240 million redevelopment project will include a 5 star hotel, retail along with a larger synagogue and community centre with a library and banqueting hall for the Manchester Congregation of British Jews. Redevelopment is scheduled to take 18-24 months and be completed by 2018. The Congregation has arranged for temporary accommodation for Friday evening, Saturday and High Holiday services in the Friends Meeting House (Jackman, 2015).

Return to Deansgate (Map 3), cross to the west wide and turn right to walk past the new Spinningfields development and the John Rylands Library (whose displays are well worth visiting). Immediately past the Library, walk down Wood Street to the Wood Street Mission.



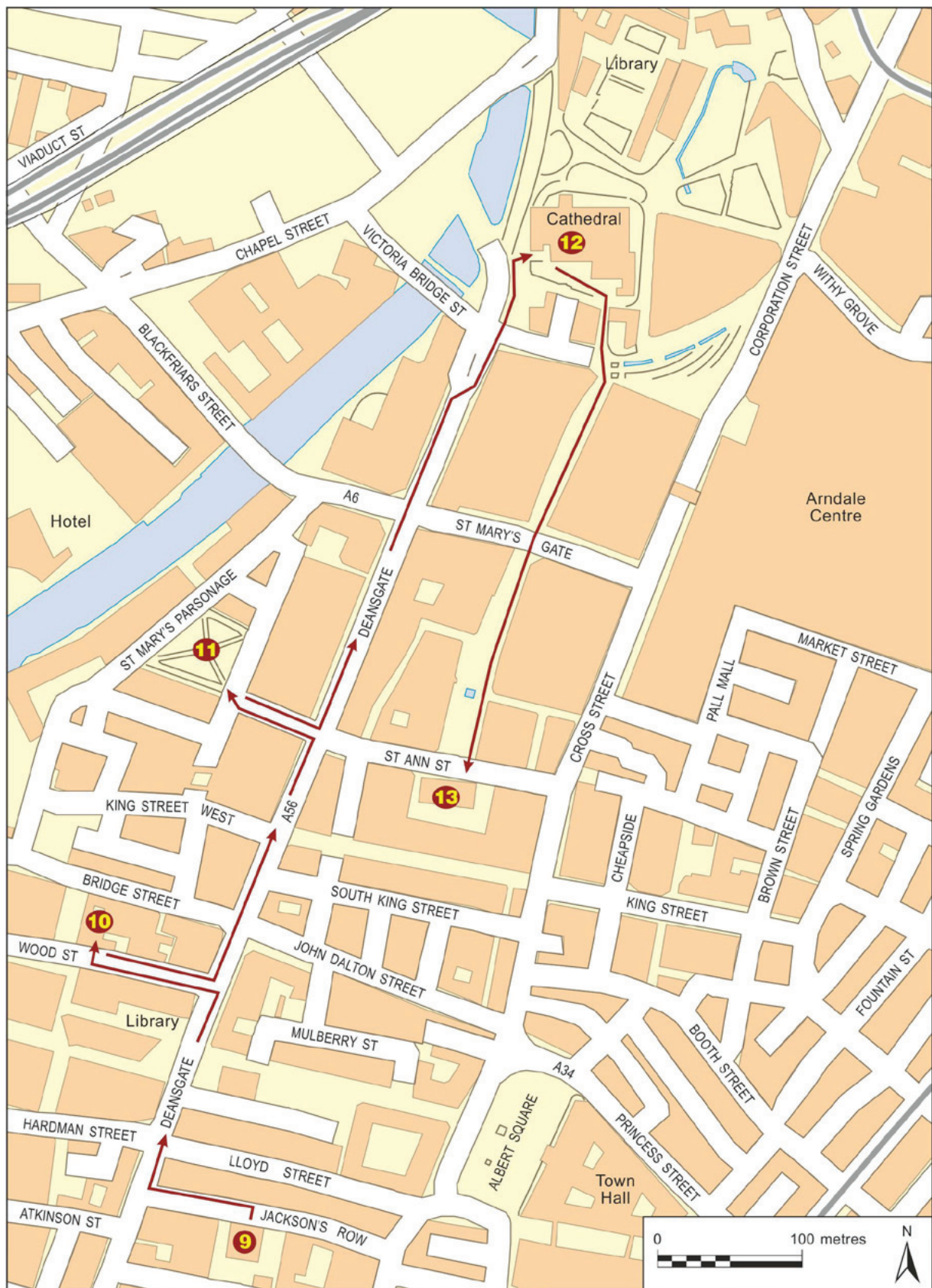
Figure 22: The Reform Synagogue in Jackson's Row (photo, Nigel Lawson).

Stop 10: The Wood Street Mission (Figures 23 & 24) is a registered children's charity located in the centre of Manchester. It was founded by Alfred Alsop, a Methodist minister in 1869, and its aim is to alleviate the effects of poverty on children and families in Manchester and Salford. During the late 19th century, the mission worked in the slums of Deansgate, running a soup kitchen, a rescue society and home for neglected boys, and a night shelter for the homeless. A further development was the establishment of a Working Men's Church in Bridge Street. Hundreds of meals were served from a soup kitchen and thousands of clogs and clothing were given away. At Christmas hundreds of local children were provided with breakfast and thousands of toys presented. Over 400 homeless people and criminals were invited to a meal and church service. Much of this may be thought ineffectual because the giving of a treat merely relieved the misery for a short time but at least it did, at least, provide some respite (Connelly *et al.*, 2012). The Mission is still an active charity helping many hundreds of children annually. Among the activities is helping disadvantaged children with free school uniforms, helping them to remain at school and gain access to a full education.

Return to Deansgate, turn left and continue to walk northwards. After passing the House of Fraser department store (formerly Kendals) turn into St. Mary's Street and enter Parsonage Gardens.

Stop 11: Parsonage Gardens, the site of St. Mary's Church (Figure 25). Built in 1759, St. Mary's was the first new church in the expanding Georgian city. When much of the resident population left the centre of town after 1870, many of the churches were deserted. Several were demolished, and St Mary's was the first to go. The last regular services were held on the last Sunday of 1887, and the church was finally closed after a service on October 4th 1890, at which the last Rector, the Rev. Richard Tonge, officiated. The Parish was then united with St Ann's.

From Parsonage Gardens retrace your steps up St. Mary's Street, to Deansgate, turn left and walk up to Manchester Cathedral. (Those who are short of time or do not wish to visit the Cathedral, may proceed straight across Deansgate and up St. Ann's Street to Stop Thirteen at St. Ann's Church).



Map 3: Route from Jackson's Row to the St Ann's Church.



Figures 23 and 24: Wood Street Childrens Mission and Working Men's Church (photos, Nigel Lawson).



Figure 25: Drawing of the tower of the former St. Mary's Church. Originally the spire was capped by a gilt ball and cross which were removed after storm damage in 1823. The spire itself later became unsafe and was pulled down in 1854 (Makepeace, 1986).

Stop 12: Manchester Cathedral (Figure 26). One of two Manchester churches mentioned in the Domesday Book was St. Mary's church, at Hunts Bank, close to the Irwell, on a site now nearly midway between Victoria railway station and the Royal Exchange. It served as the parish church for many centuries, acquiring a new Lady Chapel and a western tower in about 1330. In 1421 Henry V granted the rector of Manchester, Thomas West, a license to refound St. Mary's as a collegiate church dedicated to St. Mary, St. Denys and St. George (Parkinson-Bailey, 2000). Soon afterwards, the church was rebuilt of stone with further additions between 1485 and 1509. In 1847, with the name of Christ Church, it was made the cathedral of the newly constituted Manchester Diocese. The Grade 1 listed cathedral is 70 m long, and 40 m wide and mainly late perpendicular in style. It underwent extensive restorations, at a cost of about £40,000, in the years up to 1867. Severely damaged by World War II bombing, it again had major reconstruction work. During this restoration, stones from the cathedral were sent to new churches that were built in response to post-war suburban growth, for example, St Mark's in Chadderton.



Figures 26 and 27: Manchester Cathedral and details of the weathering of some sandstone blocks near the base of cathedral walls (photos, Nigel Lawson).

A history of repeated repair and renovation means that building stones from many sources have been used. The exterior is largely of buff-coloured Upper Carboniferous sandstone from various localities in northern England, including from Horwich and Fletcher Bank in Lancashire and from various Derbyshire quarries. Some sandstone blocks show signs of the original stratification. Inside, the nave has pillars and walls of New Red sandstone from Delamere in Cheshire. Parts of the floor are buff-coloured crinoidal and shelly limestone from Derbyshire, including from Hopton Wood Quarry. Various marbles are used in strips on the floor between the South and North doors. There are also areas of artificial stone (Simpson and Broadhurst, 1975). Although Manchester's air now contains less sulphur than it did 100 years ago when so much stonework had to be replaced, many signs of weathering can be found on the exterior stonework (Figure 27).

From the Cathedral, walk down Cathedral Street, cross Exchange Square into New Cathedral Street, cross St. Mary's Gate into Exchange Street which leads into St. Ann's Square.

Stop 13: St Ann's Church (Figures 28 & 29), completed in 1712, is one of the oldest buildings in central Manchester and is Grade I Listed. The church is traditionally said to have been designed by Sir Christopher Wren or one of his pupils, but Simon Jenkins (2000) attributes it to the Derbyshire architect, John Barker. It was restored in 1886-91 by Alfred Waterhouse. In the 18th century, the most easily accessible stone was the purplish-red Binney sandstone quarried at Collyhurst whence the stone was transported on barges or rafts via the River Medlock. Because of its unsuitable character for building, much of the original stone in St Ann's has been replaced by a mixture of replacement sandstones: from pale brown from Parbold in Lancashire, pinkish from Hollington in Staffordshire, yellow-grey from Darley Dale, and dark red from Runcorn. More recent repairs have also added St Bees sandstone and Kerridge sandstone from Macclesfield (Edensor and Drew, 2007). Accordingly, St Ann's is now an extraordinary mosaic of sandstones from the north and midlands of England. Heavy air pollution and associated acid rain damaged the stonework of the church, and of other buildings, throughout the nineteenth century and until the mid-twentieth century decline in coal burning. Subsequent cleaning of the church has revealed its multi-coloured stone, even though weathering is still readily visible (Figure 30). It is also worth noting that the original church had a steeple that was lost following an earthquake in 1777 (Melville, 1985)



Figures 28 and 29: St. Ann's Church and Figure 30: An example of the diverse building materials and the weathering of the sandstones of the church (photos, Nigel Lawson).

Repairs by successive generations of architects and stonemasons have replaced stone and involved multiple attempts at maintenance of the surface of St Ann's. Some repairs have stabilized the church's properties while others have exacerbated decay, such as the insertion of impermeable mortar and excessive stone cleansing. (Much more detail on the building stones of St. Ann's is available in Edensor 2010 and 2012 and Edensor and Drew 2007).

From the church, go left up St. Ann's Street to Cross Street and look at Cross Street Chapel opposite (Map 4).

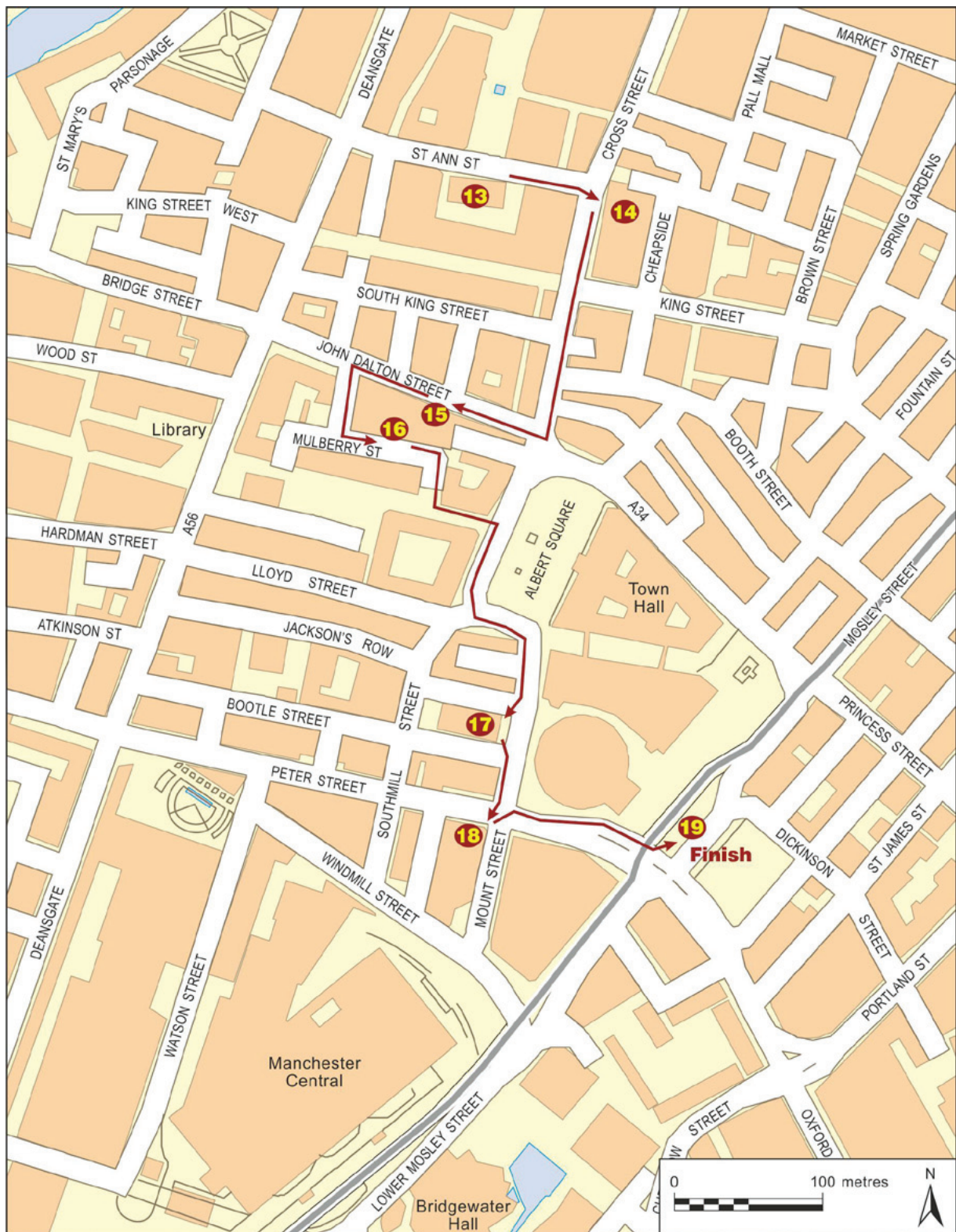
Stop 14: Cross Street Chapel (Figures 31 & 32). The first chapel on this site was built in 1694. Initially used by Presbyterians, under Rev. Joseph Mottershead (Minister 1717 – 1771) doctrinal changes occurred which led the congregation towards a Unitarian position (Head, 2013).

The Unitarians were very influential in Manchester's politics with many wealthy commercial and industrial entrepreneurs worshipping at Cross Street. Sadly, the chapel was destroyed during the Manchester Blitz in 1940. Its 1959 successor was replaced in 1997 by a new office block (Figure 32), designed by Holford Associates, called 'The Observatory'. Ward Hadaway Law Firm occupies the seventh floor and LHS Solicitors are in another of the higher floors. The first two floors now house the modern chapel. The chapel complex offers a peaceful spiritual oasis in the city centre. Among the outside organizations currently using the meeting rooms is the Manchester Geographical Society. Work outside the chapel to build the Metrolink tramway's second city crossing has revealed about 270 bodies, less than half a metre below Cross Street, which

had been buried in the grounds of the chapel in the 18th century (see: <http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/metrolink-cross-street-270-bodies-9670347>). The remains are being re-interred in Manchester Southern Cemetery.



Figures 31: Cross Street Chapel in 1856 and, Figure 32: in 2015 (photo, Nigel Lawson).



Map 4: Route from St. Ann's Church to St. Peter's Square.

From the Chapel walk to the right along Cross Street to the corner of John Dalton Street. Turn left and walk down to New Church House

Stop 15: The New Jerusalem (Swedenborgian) Church (Figure 33). The New Jerusalem Church began in Manchester and London in the 1780s, with a Manchester congregation existing by 1791 (Lineham, 1988). In the 1840s there was a New Jerusalem Church on the site of the Albert Hall (Stop 8 on this walk) in Peter Street. The congregation subsequently met in different places until 1970 when it moved to New-Church House, on John Dalton Street where it worshipped until about 2003. The building was retained by the church until it was sold in 2013. It housed a religious bookshop (closed 2013), and an archive of closed churches. It was vacant and 'to let' in September 2015 (Figure 34).

From New Church House continue down John Dalton Street and take the first left into Ridgfield and the next left into Mulberry Street and St.Mary's Church, the Hidden Gem is on the left.



Figure 33: New Church House when it was still a bookshop and, Figure 34: when it was vacant and to let in 2015 (photo, Nigel Lawson).

Stop 16: The Hidden Gem (Figure 35). Father Broomhead purchased a plot of land in Mulberry Street for the erection of a new church, dedicated to Our Lady's Assumption into Heaven. The official opening of the church was on 30th November 1794. Catholics only became able to build churches legally in 1791 when the government passed a bill that enabled British Catholics to practice their religion without fear of civil penalties (Bartlett, 1983; Canuel, 2004). Unofficial worship, particularly in parts of Lancashire, had continued through the previous two centuries.

Rev Arthur J. Dobb, an Anglican historian commented in his "History of the Diocese of Manchester" published in 1978:

"The Roman Catholic Church sought to tackle Manchester's deepest troubled area which lay between Deansgate and Albert Square. A church was built in 1794 in Mulberry Street on a site crowded in by intensive poor-quality housing on land which had so recently been open meadow and grazing pasture ... St. Mary's much rebuilt, still stands on the same plot of land, now surrounded by the edifices of sophisticated materialism, which is probably more spiritually barren ground than the moral vileness of the 18th century."

Along with the church, on the same plot of land, the presbytery stands next to it, and has been continuously occupied since 1794. The present church, built in 1848, is made of plain red brick with sandstone dressings and slate roofs, with a blend of Norman, Gothic and Byzantine detail. The finely carved ornate stone doorway depicts two Angelic Hosts bearing a medallion of Agnus Dei (Figure 36). Unfortunately the sandstone around the doorway shows several signs of weathering (Figure 37).

The name "Hidden Gem" allegedly arose from a comment of a visiting Bishop who said that the interior decoration was so splendid that wherever you looked inside the church you would discover "a hidden gem". The interior contains high quality Victorian carving. The High Altar is composed of marble, is finely carved with life size images of the Virgin Mary and Saints. Norman Adams painted the striking expressionist style Stations of the Cross in 1994.

Opposite the church a passage leads through to Brazennose Street. Follow the passage turn left up Brazennose Street and walk to the right around Albert Square to Mount Street. Turn right down Mount Street to the Friends Meeting House.



Figures 35 and 36: Views of St. Mary's Church, the Hidden Gem and, Figure 37: An example of the weathering of the building stones of the church entrance (photos, Nigel Lawson).



Stop 17: Friends Meeting House (Figures 38 & 39). The first Quaker Meeting House to be built on the current site at Mount Street was erected in 1795. The present Meeting House built in 1828 was designed by Richard Lane, a Quaker Architect, whose pupil was Alfred Waterhouse (himself a Manchester Friend) who went on to build the Manchester Town Hall, Manchester University and the Natural History Museum in South Kensington. The cost of the building, £7,600, was raised by subscription from local Quakers, one of whom was John Dalton, the famous chemist and discoverer of atomic theory. The building essentially has a brick carcass with sandstone ashlar façade and a slate roof. Interestingly,

it was designed to be flexible – Lane provided a dividing partition panel that could be raised in order to turn two meeting spaces into one.

The interior of the building has been remodeled several times, most recently in 2012 to accommodate the needs of the many external organizations that use the building.

From the Meeting house continue down Mount Street to Peter Street. Look half right across the road at St. George's House, which used to be the YMCA building.



Figures 38 and 39: An early print of the Meeting House and a view in 2015 (photo, Nigel Lawson).

for in a large city during his leisure hours, and where at the same time opportunities are given for educational and moral improvement surrounded by a Christian atmosphere". (The Manchester Guardian, 1911: 15).

At six storeys high, there was a lounge on the ground floor with a library and a public hall on the first. The upper floors contained a swimming pool and a gymnasium with an upper gallery that was an oval running track. There was even room in the attic to squeeze in five courts. The building's restrained ornamentation has Art Nouveau motifs and a copy of Donatello's St George. The size, boldness and complexity of the building and its thousands of young clients reflected the strength and popularity of the YMCA movement in the UK in the early twentieth century. Today it has nearly 5000 m² of office space and is known as St. George's House. The Manchester YMCA is now located on Liverpool Road in Castlefield.

From the YMCA turn left to St. Peters Square and the Metrolink station (at the time of writing in 2015 this was under construction).

Stop18: Former YMCA building (Figure 40). The Manchester YMCA building was opened in 1912. Its highly innovative reinforced concrete structure and external tiling contrast strongly against the city's many stone and red brick buildings. Exterior tiles (in evidence at the Albert Hall too) were specified because it was widely believed that tiles were resistant to dirt as well as the soot and sulphur dioxide from coal burning in the city. Technologically, it was amongst the first buildings in Manchester to use reinforced concrete, supplied by the Trussed Concrete Steel Company of London, which was necessary because more traditional methods of using a steel frame could not, according to *The Builder*, have met YMCA's accommodation requirements without much more expense and risk.

The YMCA financed opulent premises, constructed between 1907 and 1911, in response to increased membership and changing attitudes towards hygiene (*The Builder* 1911: 192). The architects, Woodhouse, Corbett and Dean, gave the YMCA a building that respected its immediate context but stylistically paid homage to the kind of buildings to be found in New York (Hartwell 2001: 184). Its protagonists fused the secular and sacred to meet:

"The varied and legitimate demands which the nature of a young man (especially one away from his home) craves



Figure 40: The YMCA, now called St. George's House, on Peter Street (photo, Nigel Lawson).

Stop 19: The former St. Peter's Church and St. Peter's Cross. The new Metrolink station will have a cross to mark the site of the Church. St. Peter's Church (Figure 41) was built by James Wyatt in 1788 to meet the demands for church accommodation as the city grew rapidly with people being attracted by expanding work and business opportunities. When the church was opened in 1794, it overlooked open fields, including what became known as St. Peter's Fields. The Peterloo Massacre occurred in this area on 16 August 1819, when cavalry charged into a crowd of 60,000–80,000 that had gathered to protest against the Corn Laws and demand the reform of parliamentary representation. Although St. Peter's had a strong congregation in the early decades of the nineteenth century, by about 1850 church attendances were falling as middle-class families moved out into the suburbs. The church was closed and demolished in 1907. The church trustees decided to leave the areas open and to record the position of the church by a memorial cross. The architect, Temple Moore, a pupil of George Gilbert Scott, designed a Gothic cross, of Portland limestone, rising from a stepped base. Three angels holding shields into which were carved the key of St. Peter, decorate the cross (Wyke and Cocks, 2004). The stone has weathered over time and parts of the inscription are illegible. It will be relocated at the original site when the Metrolink station rebuilding has been completed (Figure 42). The vaulted crypt of St Peter's Church was exposed during excavations during the Metrolink reconstruction work.

The walk ends here. In 2017 it will be possible to get trams from the new St. Peter's Square station. In the meantime, it is probably easiest to walk to the bus stop on Portland Street 20 metres up from Oxford Street and take a bus to Piccadilly bus station and thence make connections to trams or other buses.

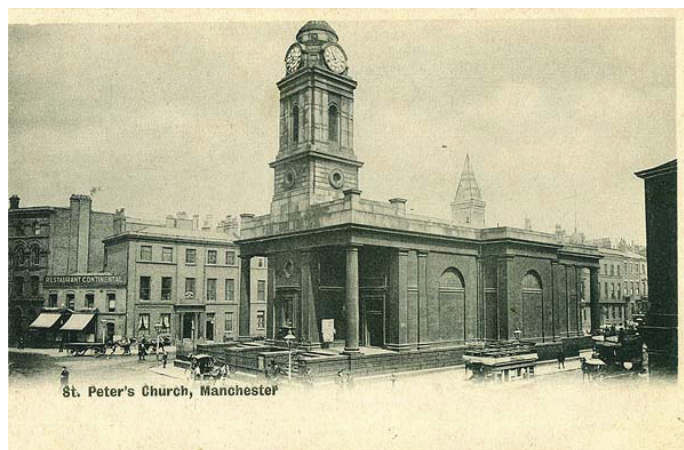


Figure 41: A print of St. Peter's Church shortly before it was demolished. Note the trams running through the square at the end of the nineteenth century.



Figure 42: A photo of an image on a hoarding in the Square in 2015 showing planned location of the cross marking the site of St. Peter's Church at the future rebuilt St. Peter's Square Metrolink station (photo Nigel Lawson).

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