

## Oxford Road

Oxford Road is a key city spine; linking both Manchester and Metropolitan Universities to major theatres, civic buildings and transport interchanges. New additions such as the Manchester Aquatics Centre for the 2002 Commonwealth Games and new Contact Theatre have enlivened the street scene. Manchester Metropolitan University has made a significant contribution to the city, providing high-quality education and enlightened architectural patronage. Notable are the new Hollins library; the Aytoun Street library and resource centre (designed by MBLC); and the Sir Geoffrey Manton building. Buildings of this calibre will continue to attract students internationally, significantly adding to the city's cosmopolitan status.

## Canada House

3 Chepstow Street, 1909

**Architect[s]:** [William G. Higginbottom](#)  
**Area[s]:** [Oxford Road](#)  
**Theme[s]:** [Grade II Listed Manchester Edwardian](#)

The framed construction is revealed by the extensive glazed elevations, with the more public façades being clad in elaborate buff terracotta employing a wide range of eclectic, classically inspired motifs with Art Nouveau iron work. The five major storeys meet the street line, with two attic storeys set back and revealing a more functional form. A comparison of the façade now facing towards Oxford Road with the three major façades reveals the different architectural approach to public and non-public faces of the building. Terracotta is dispensed with to reveal a cast-iron frame of semi-recessed octagonal columns, defining three window wide, five storey high bays of unembellished sash windows. This façade's functional language relates to the attic storeys and is surprisingly modern in feel.

## Career Services Unit (CSU)

Booth Street East, 1995

**Architect[s]:** [Hodder Associates](#)  
**Area[s]:** [Oxford Road](#)  
**Theme[s]:** [Education](#)

Hodder Associates' new csu building is a welcome addition to a campus not over-blessed with architectural merit. The csu, established in 1972, previously occupied two sites within the Wilson and Womersley's Precinct Centre, now successfully unified.

On a site bound by three uninspiring brick-clad buildings, the architect has designed two rectilinear blocks - unified by a huge porte-cochere arranged at right angles in a traditional collegiate style. This creates a landscaped courtyard, formerly an exposed area of planting, knitting together the dislocated and dreary urban fabric around its perimeter, bringing a new focus point for the campus. With a growing national reputation, Stephen Hodder has to be one of the most successful 'new' modernists of his time and place. Exquisitely detailed and formally executed, this building brings life to its tired surroundings and also celebrates the heady days of modernism in a totally contemporary manner.

## Cenotaph

St Peter's Square, 1924

**Architect[s]:** [Sir Edwin Lutyens](#)

**Area[s]:** [Oxford Road](#)

**Theme[s]:** [Civic](#) [Early Modern \(Interwar\)](#) [Grade II Listed](#) [Urban Spaces and Parks](#)

Similar to his design in Whitehall, London, the Cenotaph forms a sombre composition with its backdrop of Central Library. Its white Portland stone form stands on the site of St. Peter's Church, demolished in 1907. Axially aligned with Mosley Street, the monument suffers in its current context from the clutter created by the new Metrolink tram stop. Although the seating is well used by office workers at lunch time and for annual remembrance parades, the central pylon and its subsidiary cross and obelisks have insufficient scale to read effectively against the varying quality of the buildings around the square. The gravitas of Lutyens's monument is particularly diminished by the poor examples of recent public art which have followed it.

## Central Library

St Peter's Square, 1934

**Architect[s]:** [E. Vincent Harris](#)

**Area[s]:** [Oxford Road](#)

**Theme[s]:** [Civic](#) [Early Modern \(Interwar\)](#) [Grade II Listed](#)

Originally designed as a 1925 competition entry with the Town Hall Extension, Harris employed a cunning circular design to mask the misalignments of Oxford Street and Peter Street, creating as a by-product the dramatic sweeping space of Library Walk. Central Library forms a major pivot in the city's most prestigious civic quarter. Its huge drum-like external wall is treated in a restrained manner, topped by a line of Doric columns, while the massive scale of the Corinthian portico to St. Peter's Square acts as an urban focus from considerable distance. Internally, the domed principal reading room at first floor level, inspired by the Pantheon in Rome, affords an opulent if echoing place for study.

## Chorlton Mill

Cambridge Street, 2001

**Architect[s]:** [The Space Group](#)

**Area[s]:** [Oxford Road](#)

**Theme[s]:** [DesRes](#) [Warehouses](#)

Chorlton Mill is the brainchild of Roger Shoesmith of the Space Group. It is situated within a very fashionable up and coming area close to shops (Oxford Road), theatres, bars and business centres. The Mill is an award winning conversion and most of the units are brand new retaining the original features of its former use. Tastefully designed the development is hugely successful offering attractive loft style apartments in the southern sector of Manchester City Centre.

## Hollins Library

Old Hall Lane (off Wilmslow Road), 1995

**Architect[s]:** Mills Beaumont Leavey Channon

**Area[s]:** Oxford Road

**Theme[s]:** Education

1995The 'toaster', 'rasher of bacon' and 'fried egg' is a collection of buildings synonymous with Manchester Metropolitan University. Nicknamed because of their quite literal form, the 'fried egg' (formerly an under-utilised examination hall) has been replaced by the new Hollins Library which is located in the same position. The new library continues the culinary theme: it now resembles an electric chip fryer, especially from above. Two storeys higher than the previous 'egg', its circular facade is softened by terracotta render, a departure from the white Meier-esque purity of the architect's previous Siemens and Aytoun Library projects. Sitting comfortably with its neighbours, the LRC is a nucleus of modern learning, relegating the 1960s relics around its circumference to the archives. Despite being criticised for not pushing the environmental agenda and so resulting in increased running and maintenance costs for the university, the building has received a very positive reaction from both clients and users. Indeed, like the Aytoun Library, this building not only significantly improves the university's facilities and image but also provides a modern, progressive and uplifting place in which to study.

## Kro Bar

Oxford Road, 1999

**Architect[s]:** [Stephenson Bell](#)

**Area[s]:** [Oxford Road](#)

**Theme[s]:** [Bars and Cocktail Lounges](#) [Contemporary Interiors](#) [Grade II Listed](#)

Kro Bar is located within the campus of Manchester University and was, ironically enough former home to the Manchester Temperance Society. It is a largely intact Grade II listed building originally constructed in the mid-19th century.

Existing walls and interior features were restored and service rooms created. The first floor was conceived as a series of plush lounges with high ceilings, dark colours and comfortable furniture. The ground floor is an altogether lighter more dynamic space with a single intervention in the form of a long bar linking the main rooms, interlocking with the existing internal fabric. This intervention reveals itself at the front of the building in the form of fixed seating, under cover of an awning, and in a more dramatic way in the rear as a summer house which terminates in a sculptural garden.

## Kro2

Oxford Road, 2002

**Architect[s]:** [Stephenson Bell](#)

**Area[s]:** [Oxford Road](#)

**Theme[s]:** [Bars and Cocktail Lounges](#) [Contemporary Interiors](#)

Kro2 is situated beneath the National Computing Centre on Oxford Road. Glass fronted from floor to ceiling, with a capacity of over 200 people, the bar has made a significant impact on the Manchester bar scene. To the right of Kro2 is a courtyard with seating (and heating) that doubles up as extra drinking space in the summer months. Internally, the bar is strongly reminiscent of a gallery with its smooth white walls and blocky divides. Seating can be taken on large comfy sofa's or café style tables and chairs. One minor drawback is that the toilets are located upstairs at the rear, so when the venue is crowded it is often difficult to navigate the tight circulation space to reach upstairs.

## Lee House

90 Great Bridgewater Street, 1931

**Architect[s]:** [Harry S. Fairhurst](#)

**Area[s]:** [Oxford Road](#)

**Theme[s]:** [Early Modern \(Interwar\)](#) [Grade II Listed](#) [Warehouses](#)

Quintessentially Art Deco in style, Lee House is the base of an unrealised 17 storey vertical warehouse. Now in use as offices, the elevations show the influence of American skyscraper design of the period. Strong masonry corners frame extensively glazed, vertically accentuated, shallow bays. The windows and spandrel panels, originally framed in bronze, provide a subtle modelling to the surface of an

essentially rather bulky building. The cornice is replaced with a window cleaning cradle rail supported on stylised brackets and aligns in height with the adjacent Tootal Building of 33 years earlier.

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## Manchester Museum

Oxford Road, 2003

**Architect[s]:** [Ian Simpson Architects](#)

**Area[s]:** [Oxford Road](#)

**Theme[s]:** [Grade II Listed Museums and Galleries](#)

Ian Simpson was appointed to the three phase development of the Manchester Museum; a grade II listed building, originally designed by Alfred and Paul Waterhouse.

The review established the need for a new public entrance within a previously undefined courtyard. The entrance structure links previously unconnected areas of the museum and provides three new galleries to increase access to more of the collections.

## Manchester School of Management

Oxford Road / Booth Street, 1998

**Architect[s]:** [Stephenson Bell](#)

**Area[s]:** [Oxford Road](#)

**Theme[s]:** [Education](#)

Manchester is a city renowned for its large student population, with three universities co-existing within a mile of one another. The three collide at the junction of Booth Street and Oxford Road, creating a critical melting pot of academic cultures. The new building for the Manchester School of Management (MSM) is strategically placed to unify the three education schools, drawing on their diverse resources. Predominantly clad in robust Lazonby red sandstone, the MSM projects a gritty presence, in keeping with the Manchester vernacular. The building has been developed around a large central atrium,

allowing daylight to penetrate throughout the school. The two lower floors of the building house lecture theatres, seminar rooms and computer suites, each neatly inserted into the structural grid of the building, visible from both inside and out. Above, three floors are devoted to the heavily used office and teaching rooms. The central steel staircase allows unfettered movement through the space, providing users with a clear means of orientating themselves within the interior. Internal finishes are hard wearing – minimizing maintenance costs was a consideration the architect took fully into account. It is remarkable that a building of this quality was designed and built on a minuscule budget, proving yet again that good design need not be a costly indulgence.

## Manchester University Visitor Centre

Oxford Road, 1999

**Architect[s]:** [Ian Simpson Architects](#)

**Area[s]:** [Oxford Road](#)

**Theme[s]:** [Contemporary Interiors](#) [Education](#) [Grade II Listed](#)

Into this High Gothic interior by Alfred Waterhouse, ISA has made a clear contemporary intervention. The University has a visitor's centre that both respects its history and underlines its commitment to the present. Minimal glass screens have been provided within the original openings and a new random coursed stone floor has been laid. Care has been taken to differentiate all new fittings and services from the purity of the High Gothic interior. Paving reinforces the alignment of the vaulting which is turned 3 degrees to align the linear space with the Quad clock. ISA have also designed a series of highly crafted display cases and interactive information points that sit as discrete forms within the space. The tension between old and new, container and contents reflects the dynamic university environment

## Mancunian Way

Oxford Road, 1967

**Architect[s]:** [G.H. Maunsell and Partners with J. Hayes, City Engineer 1967](#)

**Area[s]:** [Oxford Road](#)

**Theme[s]:** [1960's Modern](#) [Civic](#)

The only completed fragment of one of the proposed inner city orbital motorways, the A57(M) Mancunian Way slices through the decayed and bomb damaged fabric of Hulme to produce efficient east-west vehicular communication, superseding Stretford Road as the primary cross axial route to the south of the city centre. Opened by Prime Minister Harold Wilson, the 1000 yard (915 metres) long sinuous concrete elevated section provides a dynamic and fluid transect through the Modernist world of UMIST and Manchester Metropolitan University campuses. Remnants of the former road structure abut it like relics of a previous era whilst elements such as the unfinished off ramp where the motorway crosses Brook Street provide reminders of unfulfilled highway engineer's dreams.

(Eastern Extension: City Engineers 1992)

## National Computing Centre

Oxford Road, 1964

**Architect[s]:** [Cruikshank and Seward](#)

**Area[s]:** [Oxford Road](#)

**Theme[s]:** [1960's Modern](#)

An inverted ziggurat in section, the National Computing Centre sits temple like on Oxford Road. Originally the intermediate (first) storey was supported on piloti-like columns. These have subsequently been encased in glazing and incorporated into retail and bar space at street level (including KRO2 by Stephenson Architecture), reducing the object like quality of the scheme. The use of white tiles as the sole external cladding maintains a crisp appearance however. Dynamically the scheme is best appreciated from the elevated Mancunian Way where expressive triangular light scoops animate the roofscape, contrasting with the extreme horizontality of the top storey with its continuous ribbon window. This scheme is comparable with the architect's work at of the period at UMIST.

## Oxford Road Train Station

Oxford Road, 1960

**Architect[s]:** [Headley/Moorcroft with Glendinning](#)

**Area[s]:** [Oxford Road](#)

**Theme[s]:** [1960's Modern](#) [Grade II Listed](#)

With one of Britain's most dramatic station roofs Oxford Road Station was the result of collaboration between British Rail's architects and the engineer / furniture designer Max Glendinning. The advanced structure of a laminated timber conoid shell was developed to cope with a difficult triangular site and was originally to be built in concrete. The station is notable for its bold and consistent timber detailing exploiting the structural and formal qualities of the material. Its unique and overtly Modern overall form is consistent with the desire for British Rail to re-brand itself with the move away from steam.

## Peveril of the Peak

127 Chepstow Street, 1820

**Architect[s]:** [Original Architect Unknown](#)

**Area[s]:** [Oxford Road](#)

**Theme[s]:** [Bars and Cocktail Lounges](#) [Grade II Listed](#) [Late Georgian and Victorian](#)

On a narrow triangular plot formed by converging strips of canal edge industrial development, the low scale of the building indicates its early date. Most of what is visible dates from the refurbishment at the turn of the century. Externally covered in green glazed tiles with jolly if rudimentary classical detail, the interior furnishings are remarkable now as authentic survivals in the era of theme pubs. Despite the clearance of large parts of the original surrounding context, the building retains a distinctive public presence beyond its small size. A particular highlight is the table football machine

## Sir Geoffrey Manton Building

All Saints Campus, Oxford Road, 1999

**Architect[s]:** [Sheppard Robson](#)

**Area[s]:** [Oxford Road](#)

**Theme[s]:** [Education](#)

Sheppard Robson designed the masterplan for the All Saints campus (Site 3) in 1976 and the development of this teaching facility for the Humanities Department, situated on the campus' south-east corner, gave them an opportunity to readdress the site. The brief called for adaptable space for students and staff to suit the university's changing needs; to reurbanise the campus within its city site; and to integrate all buildings on the campus. Turning its hack on Oxford Road, the main entrance directly engages with the rest of the campus buildings. Leading into the atrium space, this entrance has been given a focus by the dynamic juxtaposition of a triangular section, also highlighting the bridged link to the Mabel Tylecote Building, part of the same faculty. This triangular form is reflected on the other side of the building: diametrically opposite in plan, it punctuates the southern tip of the campus to Oxford Road. This diagonal is emphasised internally by the central position of a semi-circular dogleg stair, and the curved lattice roof structure. These elements, together with its volume, make the atrium a dramatic space. A bold gesture, this building respects the Mancunian tradition and also meets the university's changing requirements for the new century.

## St James' Buildings

65-95 Oxford Street, 1912

**Architect[s]:** [Clegg, Fryer & Penman](#)

**Area[s]:** [Oxford Road](#)

**Theme[s]:** [Grade II Listed](#) [Manchester Edwardian](#)

Exuberant Edwardian Baroque struggles to reduce the massive scale of the long Portland stone elevation of this building. The façade fronted over 1000 rooms and contributes to the diverse range of architectural styles in evidence on this stretch of Oxford Street. The lower three storeys are rusticated to form a base with heavily modelled windows, the ends and centre of the elevation expressed as pavilions. Above four storeys of framed windows sit on a planar ground on top of which is a storey of triple windows punched into the façade below the cornice. An elaborate central tower marks the main entrance. Recently, the lower storey has been refurbished to give continuity to the signage of the shops, marred by the introduction of a remarkably crude neo-Art Nouveau canopy over the building's main entrance.

## Temple of Convenience

Great Bridgewater Street, 2001

**Architect[s]:** [Original Architect Unknown](#)

**Area[s]:** [Oxford Road](#)

**Theme[s]:** [Bars and Cocktail Lounges](#)

Amazingly, this bar is built in a former public toilet and strangely enough it's actually quite homely although incredibly small. With a maximum capacity of about 20, it offers a haven of normality in this modern city of glass and exposed metal. Surprisingly, the 'Facilities' aren't that great, which considering it used to be a toilet is rather strange. At times the atmosphere is quite cold (again odd in such a small space) but otherwise well worth a visit to such an eccentric bar