

Development Management
Manchester City Council
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Our ref EKPS/200801/KD

Submitted via the
Planning Portal:
PP-10167511

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Dear Sir or Madam,

Full planning application for the creation of 3 no. car parking spaces with associated access and landscaping works at land at Atherton Street, Manchester, M3 4FD.

Planning Portal Reference: PP-10167511

On behalf of our client, THG, we are pleased to submit a planning application which seeks approval for the creation of 3 no. car parking spaces with associated access and landscaping works at land at Atherton Street, Manchester, M3 4FD (hereafter referred to as the 'Site').

The application submission comprises the following:

- This extended Covering Letter prepared by Euan Kellie Property Solutions;
- Planning Application Form, Certificates and fee¹;
- Site Location Plan prepared by LDA Design;
- Landscaping drawings prepared by LDA Design;
 - Landscape Proposals Report
 - Landscape Plan (8215-LDA-8001)
 - Illustrative Plan (8215-LDA-8000)
 - Retention and Removals Plan (8215-LDA-0001)
- Heritage Statement prepared by Stephen Levrant Heritage Architecture;
- Traffic and Transport Technical Note prepared by Curtins; and
- Arboricultural and Ecology Report prepared by Urban Green.

¹ The required fee of £234 (based on the fees outlined for 'Car parks, service roads or other accesses' within the Town and Country Planning (Fees for Applications, Deemed Applications, Requests and Site Visits) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended), has been paid via the planning portal.

Background

On the 18 December 2020, planning permission and Listed Building Consent was granted for a single storey glazed ground floor extension; external lighting; replacement rooftop extension, with associated rooftop plant and other associated works at Great John Street Hotel (Ref. 126750/FO/2020 and 126751/LO/2020).

The works consented seek to refurbish the existing hotel to build world class, five-star facilities, deliver enhanced customer experiences and offer an unparalleled service to disrupt the current hotel market and complement and strengthen THG's existing online offer, through experiences and events within facilities that are recognised globally. These refurbishment works are currently underway and to accompany the refurbishment works at Great John Street Hotel, THG now wishes to introduce 3 no. 'VIP' car parking spaces at the adjacent Breeze Gardens site.

This additional parking will provide parking facilities (and offer flexibility for Valet Parking) for hotel guests, contributing to the ambition to offer a truly five-star experience.

The Site and Surroundings

The Site falls within the administrative boundary of Manchester City Council ("MCC") and the Deansgate ward, and is located within the St John's Regeneration Framework Area of Manchester City Centre. It is approximately 0.03 hectares (0.08 acres) in size. **Figure 1** shows the Site context whilst **Figure 2** shows the indicative site boundary. The Site is located within the Castlefield Conservation Area and close to the St. John Street Conservation Area.

The Site currently comprises a vacant area of hardstanding which has historically been used for vehicular parking but has more recently been cordoned off due to the construction compound associated with the adjacent Allied London development (see **Figure 3** and **Figure 4** overleaf).

Adjacent to the site lies 'Breeze Gardens', a site previously associated with the former Granada Studios, which includes a 3 no. storey building (Breeze Studios) and associated gardens. The 'Breeze Gardens' site is separated from the application site and enclosed by a red brick wall and metal railings on its northern, eastern and western boundary.

The Site is also bound by Great John Street to the north, Atherton Street to the west and buildings and surface level car parking associated with the Crystal Maze experience to the south.



^ Figure 1



^ Figure 2



^ Figure 3 Previous parking on the site (taken from Google Maps circa. 2008).



^ Figure 4: Current Site (taken from within the Site looking towards Great John Street)

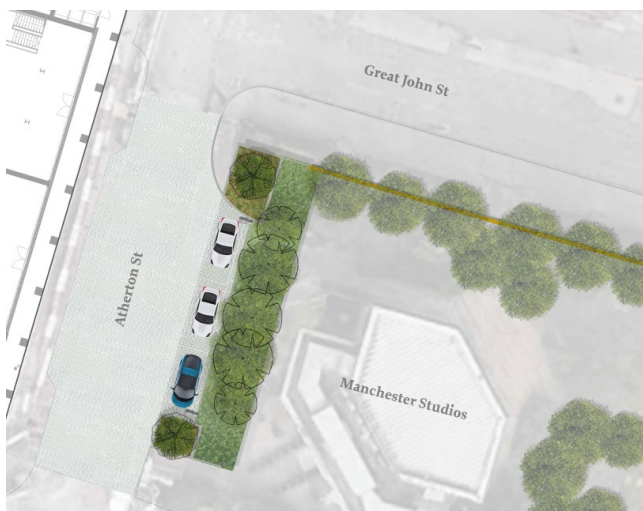
The Site is surrounded by a range of uses, typical of its city centre location including apartments (Class C3), offices (Class E), and restaurant / bar uses (Class E). As mentioned in the preceding section, Great John Street Hotel (Class C1) is located to the North of the Site.

To the west of the Site is the former Granada Studios site. Planning permission for a residential-led scheme (including student residential and “co-living”) was approved by MCC in November 2020, as well as the development of The Factory (approved July 2018) – a new purpose-built cultural centre, in line with the St John’s Strategic Generation Framework. Both developments are currently under construction.

On review of the Manchester City Council Planning Explorer, there have been no previous notable planning applications of relevance on the Site. In addition, the Site lies within Flood Zone 1 therefore has a low probability of flooding.

Proposed Development

The application seeks to provide 3 no. ‘VIP’ parking bays on land at Atherton Street (as illustrated in **Figure 5** below). Each space provided is 6m x 3m. These parking spaces are intended for use by guests at Great John Street Hotel.



^ Figure 5: Proposed Site Plan

The existing laurel hedge between the existing hardstanding and the 'Breeze Gardens' site will be retained. The removal of the breeze block wall which currently separates the site from Atherton Street will however be removed, ensuring visual and physical permeability between Atherton Street and the site. Two large planting beds are also proposed either side of the parking area to frame the new car parking spaces and bring colour, seasonal interest and scent to space.

No trees are required to be removed, however a small section of laurel hedge will be removed from the corner of Great John Street and Atherton Street, to improve visual permeability and security.

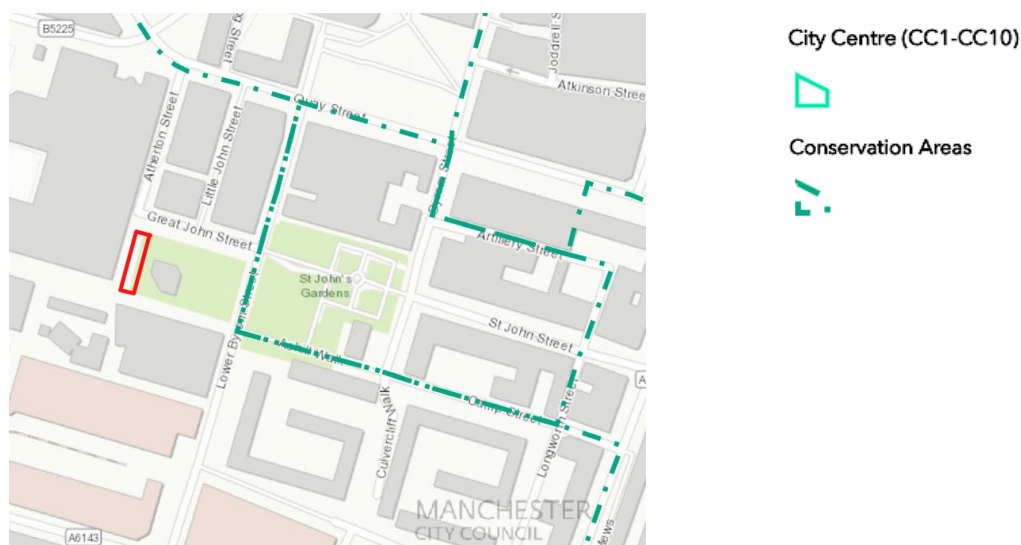
Relevant Local and National Planning Policies

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning decisions to be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Local Planning Policy

The adopted Development Plan for MCC comprises the Core Strategy 2012-2027 ("CS") which was adopted on 11 July 2012' and the 'saved' policies of the Unitary Development Plan ("UDP").

The Site is unallocated within MCC's adopted Core Strategy, as shown in **Figure 6** below. It is located within the defined City Centre boundary (Core Strategy Policies CC1-CC10) and Regional Centre boundary (Core Strategy Policy EC3). The Site also sits within the Castlefield Conservation Area and close to the St. John Street Conservation Area.



^ Figure 6

The Core Strategy outlines the Council's vision and spatial principles for Manchester along with the planning policies which will be used to deliver that vision. Policies of most relevance to the determination of the application are as follows:

- **Policy SP 1: Spatial Principles** – Sets out how the Regional Centre will be the focus of economic and commercial development.
- **Policy EC2: Existing Employment Space** – States that the Council will seek to retain and enhance existing employment space and sites.

- **Policy EN1: Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas** – requires all development in Manchester to regard to the strategic character area in which the development is located. The Site is located within the City Centre Character Area, where developers will be expected to consider the City's heritage and continue the rich pattern of activity in the core area.
- **Policy EN3: Heritage** – asserts that the Council will encourage development that where possible, preserves and enhances conservation areas.
- **Policy EN15: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation** – sets out that the Council will protect and conserve the City's existing trees and woodlands.
- **Policy CC4: Visitors, Tourism, Culture and Leisure** – supports City Centre development which improves facilities for visitors, specifically focusing on hotel development in the City Centre.
- **Policy CC9: Design and Heritage Design** – Requires development in Manchester City Centre should preserve or enhance the heritage assets that have been identified, including listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled ancient monuments

The following 'saved' policies of the UDP are also relevant:

- **Policy DC18.1e 'Conservation Areas'** informs that the Council will seek to preserve and enhance the character of its designated conservation areas by carefully considering the following issues:
 - a) the relationship of new structures to neighbouring buildings and spaces;
 - b) the effect of major changes to the appearance of existing buildings;
 - c) the desirability of retaining existing features, such as boundary walls, gardens, trees, (including street trees); and
 - d) the effect of signs and advertisements.

Furthermore, the site is located within the area covered by the St. John's Strategic Regeneration Framework ("SJSRF") November 2016, which was endorsed by MCC at Executive Committee in January 2017.

The SJSRF November 2016 provided an update to the original St. John's Strategic Regeneration Framework adopted by MCC in February 2015 and sets out a vision and set of development principles focused on the following key areas:

- To deliver a best-in-class city centre neighbourhood; a place to live, work and play; a place for enterprise and innovation; for culture, entertainment and leisure; a unique proposition for Manchester that will raise its international profile and set it apart from its peer cities.
- To re-establish, where appropriate, its tight-knit urban grain and to create a meandering network of spaces and complementary range of uses.
- A form of development that retains and reutilises the site's key heritage assets and integrates those features into the new urban form.

National Planning Policy

The revised National Planning Policy Framework (“NPPF”) was published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (“MHCLG”) on 20 July 2021 and is a significant material consideration in planning decisions.

The economic objective of the NPPF is particularly significant in relation to this planning application. It aims to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure.

Policies of most relevance to the determination of the application are as follows:

- **Section 6 Building a strong, competitive economy:** Section 6 of the NPPF states that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development (paragraph 81). Furthermore, it states that planning policies and decisions should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors (paragraph 83).
- **Section 7 Ensuring the Vitality of Town Centres:** Section 7 sets out that planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation (paragraph 86).
- **Section 12 Achieving Well-Designed Places:** Section 12 of the NPPF provides design guidance and states that “the creation of high quality beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve”.
- **Section 15 Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment Section:** This section sets out that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment.
- **Section 16 Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment:** Section 16 outlines that when considering the impact of a Proposed Development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation. Paragraph 202 states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

Planning Appraisal

Having introduced the background, the Proposed Development, Site and surroundings, along with the relevant local and national planning policies, it is now important to appraise the proposals.

Principle of Development

The Proposed Development will complement to the overall functionality of the Great John Street Hotel, contributing to the creation of ‘world-class’ five-star Hotel offering. It is important to note that Core Strategy Policy EC2 (Existing Employment Space) emphasises the importance of retaining and enhancing existing employment spaces and sites. In addition, Policy CC4 is of relevance as it recognises the importance of hotel accommodation within the city and supports development that improves facilities in the city centre for visitors.

The proposed VIP car parking spaces will contribute to improving the hotel experience at Great John Street Hotel and overall functionality, ensuring the long-term viability and vitality of the Hotel Business and as such according with Policy EC2.

This position is supported by Section 6 of the NPPF – in particular paragraph 81 which states that planning decisions should help create conditions in which businesses can invest, expand, and adapt, taking into account local business needs and wider opportunities for development. By adding 3 no. 'VIP' parking bays will make the Great John Street Hotel more competitive within the hotel market in Manchester.

With consideration to the long-term vision and goals for the St. John's Strategic Regeneration Framework Area, the proposals aim to meet the objectives of regenerating the area to become a '*destination of choice for visitors, both from abroad and from other parts of the UK*' and to provide a '*strong base of tourist and leisure attractions*'. Ensuring the ongoing viability of the Hotel business in turn will bring other important benefits to the local communities, through employment, tourism and increased footfall.

The area identified for parking is currently an area of hardstanding which had previously been utilised for private parking. In recent years, however it had been cordoned off as a result of the adjacent Allied London development works by the construction of a breeze block wall on the periphery of the site compound. As such the principle of parking in this location has previously been established.

The proposals will therefore contribute towards improving the accommodation offering in the City Centre, attracting more tourists and positioning Manchester as a successful destination. As such, the Proposed Development directly responds to Core Strategy Policies EC2 and CC4. It also aligns with the provisions of Section 6 and 7 of the NPPF.

Design Quality

The key driver of the Proposed Development is the ambition to upgrade the hotel offer and facilities of Great John Street Hotel to create luxury destination spaces and boutique experiences for guests. As such, the scheme has been carefully designed to complement the character of the surrounding area. A Suite of Landscaping drawings prepared by LDA Design are submitted with this planning application to demonstrate the high-quality design of the scheme.

The landscaping has also been designed to ensure the creation of the spaces do not create spaces for anti-social behaviour and activity. This includes choosing planting at appropriate heights to ensure visual permeability of the area.

It is therefore considered that the Proposed Development accord with the Section 7 of the NPPF, Core Strategy Policies EN1, EN3, CC9 and the Guide to Development SPD.

Heritage

Due to the Site being located in the Castlefield Conservation Area, and in close proximity to St John's Conservation Area and a number of Listed Buildings, a Heritage Statement has been prepared by Stephen Levrant Heritage Architecture and is submitted with this application.

The Heritage Statement appraises the proposed development in the context of the surrounding heritage assets and concludes that due to the minor proposed works to the Site, and the Site's orientation/location, the proposals are considered to have no impact on the character or appearance of the Castlefield Conservation Area, or the setting of the Grade II Great John Street Hotel.

As such, it is considered that the Proposed Development will not result in any 'harm', as defined within the NPPF, resulting from the proposals. The development is therefore considered to be wholly in accordance with Section 16 of the NPPF, Core Strategy Policy EN3 and Saved UDP Policy DC18.

Highways

A Traffic and Transport Technical Note has been prepared by Curtins and is submitted with this application. The Note demonstrates that a parking area for 3 no. vehicles is feasible subject to removal of the wall to the west of Breeze Gardens, and that safe and suitable access to the parking bays can be achieved. As a result, it is concluded that there are no traffic and transportation related reasons why the proposed development should not be granted planning approval.

It is therefore considered that the Proposed Development accord with all relevant local and national transport planning policy, including Core Strategy Policy T1 and Section 4 of the NPPF.

Ecology and Trees

A Preliminary Ecological Assessment (“PEA”) and an Arboricultural Impact Assessment (“AIA”) have been prepared by Urban Green and submitted with the application. The PEA report identifies the major habitats on site including hardstanding, ornamental shrub and hedgerow. The PEA confirms no further surveys are required for the development to proceed.

The AIA confirms the site includes seven trees and two hedges. To facilitate the construction of the three parking spaces a small section to the northern end of the hedge facing Great John Street (which is considered to be of ‘low’ quality – Category C) requires removal. All other trees and hedges are to be retained.

Crown raising is also proposed to the western canopies of those trees overhanging the parking area to facilitate the use of car parking spaces while avoiding damaging the canopies. The AIA recommends the submission of an Arboricultural Method Statement (to be secured by condition) to ensure the protection of the trees and hedges during construction work.

With consideration to the Proposed Development and the findings of the PEA and AIA, it can be concluded that the Proposed Development accords with Core Strategy Policy EN15 and Section 15 of the NPPF.

Summary and Conclusions

With regards to the planning appraisal of the proposed development set out within this letter, it is considered that the principle of development would be acceptable and that there are no technical considerations which would restrict the granting of planning permission.

Crucially, the additional parking provision will enable THG to enhance the visitor experience of Great John Street Hotel, contributing to and improving the luxury boutique hotel offer. It will also assist in continuing to encourage economic growth in the area – a local and national planning priority.

I trust the submitted information is sufficient, however should you have any questions, or require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me by email or telephone (0161 485 5025).

Yours faithfully,



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