

Application Number/s: 132707/FO/2022

Applicant: The Unite Group

Agent: Smith Jenkins Ltd

Location: New Medlock House, 24-45 Chester Street, Manchester

Proposal: Internal alterations to increase number of bedrooms to by 21

Ward: Deansgate

Description of Site and Surrounding Area

The application relates to New Medlock House, a set of two buildings on one site housing purpose-built student accommodation. The building was built in the early 2000s. The buildings rise to eight stories in height and are built around a central courtyard. The existing building has a total of 146 apartments contained within and some ground floor retail space. The building is on an island site with Chester Street to the north, Cambridge Street to the east, A5103/Mancunian Way to the south and Wilmott Street to the west. The building is adjacent to the First Street Strategic Regeneration Area.

Description of Proposal

The application seeks permission to create an additional 21 bedrooms across the building, by reducing the size of the communal areas within a number of the apartment groups.

Publicity LBC

Site Notice/s Posted and Dates: Not Required

Press Adverts Published and Dates: Not Required

Neighbour Notification: Notified 09 March 2022

Representations Received: No Comments Received

Consultations

Highway Services

Commented that additional cycle spaces would be required than proposed. Amended plans received increasing number of cycle spaces by 24.

Environmental Health

Queried whether windows in the current communal areas are acceptable should the same window become part of a bedroom unit, this has been confirmed by the applicant. Queried whether refuse storage would increase. Applicant has been confirmed that refuse storage is already surplus to requirements.

Save Unitary Development Plan Policies:

- Development and Noise (26)

Saved policy DC26.1 of the UDP states that the LPA shall use the development control process to ensure, amongst other things, that the implications of new development being exposed to existing noise sources are considered, with existing external noise sources effectively outside of planning control.

In this instance, consideration was made as to whether the existing windows within communal areas are the same as windows within existing bedrooms. The applicant has confirmed that this is the case, with all windows across the two buildings being the same and fitted in accordance with relevant policies at the time of construction and with consideration to the external noise environment.

As such, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable in this regard, with the development consistent with UDP Policy DC26.1

Core Strategy Policies:

- Spatial Principles (SP1)

SP1 sets out the key spatial principles that shall guide development in Manchester. The overarching aim is to ensure development in all parts of the city create well designed places, make a positive contribution to health, safety and wellbeing, consider the needs of all people and protect and enhance the built and natural environment.

The development proposed would accord with this policy's requirements. The proposal would efficiently increase the amount of space provided for students within Manchester city centre in a sustainable location.

- Purpose Built Student Accommodation (H12)

The provision of new purpose built student accommodation will be supported where the development satisfies certain criteria.

It is acknowledged that the proposal is not new student accommodation. However, the amendments to the building's layout will lead to an increase in the amount of accommodation in this location. As a result, H12 is considered relevant.

The proposal consists of alterations to an existing and well established purpose-built student accommodation development close to the university campuses of University of Manchester and Manchester Metropolitan University. The issues identified for consideration within Policy H12 centre primarily around new student accommodation in new locations, with this development affecting existing student accommodation in an established location for student accommodation.

It is thus considered that the proposal accords with Policy H12 and is appropriate.

- Sustainable Transport (T1)

In order to deliver a sustainable, high quality and integrated transport system to encourage reduction in use of the private car, the council will support proposals that improve choice by developing alternatives to the private car etc.

In this instance, the proposal intensifies the use of an existing building in a highly sustainable location, on a site that has no car parking provision but ample cycle parking provision and easy access to sustainable public transport options. As part of the proposal, the amount of cycle parking provided is increasing by more than the number of bedroom spaces added to the student accommodation. As such, it is considered that the proposal would be consistent with the aims of Policy T1.

- Development Management (DM1)

All development shall have regard to a variety of specific issues relating to design, amenity, road safety etc.

The proposal does not include any external alterations. As such, it is not considered the proposal presents any concerns in this regard. In terms of amenity, the site is to remain in its existing use. However, the intensification of use may lead to modest increase in trips to and from the building and associated impacts. It is not expected that the increase would be significant enough to warrant further consideration, with the increase in 21 bedrooms being modest overall.

The existing building and proposed new bedrooms would remain accessible to those with disabilities and is accessible in terms of access to public transport. Existing community safety and crime prevention measures designed into the building will remain intact and no further information is considered to be needed in this regard.

It is key that internal accommodation is acceptable. The proposal will reduce the size of a number of the shared apartment's communal kitchen/living space, which will inevitably have some impact on the residents of the shared apartment units. Upon consideration of the wider building, it is noted that those apartments that are having the communal space reduced have an existing situation where the kitchen/living area is considerably larger than others within the building. It is not considered that the space would be reduced to such a degree that it would be detrimental to the living conditions of the students within the apartment groups affected. It is also noted that the new en-suite bedrooms to be created are similar in size to the existing bedrooms within the building. There is no policy stipulating minimum space standards specifically for purpose-built student accommodation. However, all the proposed bedrooms and communal areas would accord with the minimum standards for homes in multiple occupation, as stipulated in The Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Mandatory Conditions of Licences) (England) Regulations 2018. As such, it is considered that the proposal is in accordance with national policy and the relevant part of Policy DM1 of the Core Strategy.

The existing refuse storage and collection regimes in place are considered acceptable, with the size of the existing bin store adequate to accommodate an additional 21no. students across the site.

National Planning Policy Framework:

The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied, providing a framework within which locally prepared plans can be produced. Applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF should be considered as a material planning consideration.

Proposals that accord with an up to date development plan should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development and be approved without delay.

Conclusion

The proposal accords with relevant policies DM1, H12, T1 and SP1 of the Core Strategy and saved Unitary Development Plan policy DC26.1. As such, the proposal is acceptable and should be approved without delay.

Other Matters

The applicant and LPA discussed whether the proposal would require planning permission and whether or not it is defined as 'development' as per Section 55 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The LPA asserted that as the proposal only affected the interior of the building and do not material affect the external appearance of the building, that the proposal did not constitute development. However, the applicant asserted that the proposal would include structural alterations to the building. Though this point remains moot, the application was duly decided with consideration made to the possibility that the proposal does not require planning permission taken into account when reaching the conclusion.

RECOMMENDATION:

That planning permission be granted subject to the following planning conditions:

1. The development must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason - Required to be imposed pursuant to Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following drawings and documents:

- Location Plan (Drawing A-09-100 Revision P03 dated 11 November 2021) – Received 17 January 2022
- Existing Floor Plans (Drawing Pack 004503 dated December 2000) – Received 17 January 2022
- Existing/Proposed Elevations (Drawing N 1226/2 dated November 2021) – Received 17 January 2022
- Existing/Proposed Elevations (Drawing N 1226/3 dated November 2021) – Received 17 January 2022

- Existing/Proposed Elevations (Drawing N 1226/4 dated November 2021) – Received 17 January 2022
- Proposed Site Plan (Drawing A-09-102 Revision P02 dated 21/03/2022) – Received 04 April 2022
- Proposed Level 00 (Drawing A-04-000 Revision P08 dated 22/03/2022) – Received 04 April 2022.
- Proposed Level 01 (Drawing A-04-001 Revision P07 dated 07/12/2021) – Received 17 January 2022
- Proposed Level 02 (Drawing A-04-002 Revision P09 dated 24/02/2022) – Received 04 April 2022
- Proposed Level 03 (Drawing A-04-003 Revision P07 dated 07/12/2021) – Received 17 January 2022
- Proposed Level 04 (Drawing A-04-004 Revision P07 dated 07/12/2021) – Received 17 January 2022
- Proposed Level 05 (Drawing A-04-005 Revision P07 dated 07/12/2021) – Received 17 January 2022
- Proposed Level 06 (Drawing A-04-006 Revision P07 dated 07/12/2021) – Received 17 January 2022
- Proposed Level 07 (Drawing A-04-007 Revision P06 dated 07/12/2021) – Received 17 January 2022
- Acoustic Technical Note prepared by RBA Acoustics (Document 11427.ATN.0 dated 10 January 2022) – Received 17 January 2022
- Manchester City Council Waste Proforma (Appendix E) – Received 17 January 2022

Reason - To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans. Pursuant to policies SP1 and DM1 of the Core Strategy

Officers have worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner to seek solutions to problems arising in relation to dealing with the planning application. In this instance, no further details were needed. However, the applicant volunteered additional information during the course of assessing the application.