

Planning
Manchester City Council
PO Box 532
Town Hall
Manchester M60 2LA

30 March 2022

Our Ref: 22/4748C

Dear Sir / Madam

Unicorn Pub, 26 Church Street, Manchester, M4 1PW – Advertisement Consent & Listed Building Consent

This cover letter is written on behalf of the Stonegate Group seeking advertisement consent at the Unicorn Pub, 26 Church Street, Manchester, M4 1PW for the installation of various Craft Union branded signage. Listed Building Consent is also sought.

The proposals are intended to facilitate the improvement of the pub, preventing business failure whilst protecting and promoting the heritage of the property. The proposals will allow for a Craft Union brand approach to improve its viability whilst also preserving the special architectural and historic interest of the pub

Proposals

Advertisement consent is sought for minor changes to the existing signage at The Unicorn pub. This includes the installation of:

- **Sign A** – timber, externally illuminated projecting sign
- **Sign B1 & B2** – aluminium, externally illuminated fascia signs (x3)
- **Sign C** – aluminium boards (x2)
- **Sign D** – timber plaque (x2)
- **Sign E** – black lantern (x2)
- **Sign F** – LED floodlights (x7)
- **Sign G** – aluminium fascia sign

Further information on the specific signage is contained within the Design & Access Statement, which has been submitted alongside this cover letter.

Public houses require the necessary signage to announce their presence within the local street scene and the proposed signage scheme replaces the previously consented signage displayed at the application site. The proposed signage scheme forms a key part of the visual enhancement and refreshing of the appearance of the application site premises, which is intended to be an important and integral part of the applicant's investment into the application site.

Directors
Helen Cuthbert | Stuart Slatter | Claire Temple | Alastair Close
Dan Templeton
Associate Directors
Katie Turvey | Heather Vickers | Alan Williams | Sally Arnold

Consultant
Lorna Byrne
Associates
Rob Scadding | Penny Moss | Sam Deegan | Paul Galgey | Niall Hanrahan
Phil Marsden | Charlotte Perry | Charlotte Hunter | Grace Mollart

Application site and surroundings

The Unicorn is located on the corner of Church Street and Joiner Lane, within the City Centre, where a number of substantial commercial, retail and residential uses dominate. The public house is a prominent three-storey property; the ground floor contains an open plan pub trading area with the upper floors bedrooms and a function room.

The application site is located within the Smithfield Conservation Area. The area was designated as a conservation area in 1987. The Unicorn is not identified as a key building within the Smithfield Conservation Area – probably due to the fact the pub was only listed in June 2019. Church Street is referenced, with comment made about how the buildings tend to be larger and of a later date than the rest of the area.

As mentioned, in June 2019, Historic England's Listing Team (North) sent confirmation that site had been awarded listed status. The Grade II Listed Building (ref: 1464011) is recognised as an improved public house with accommodation, that has been subjected to minor alterations.

None of the building's primary architectural and historical interest, which is principally derived from the external façade, or the historic significance derived from its internal-plan form, will be affected by the proposals.

Planning History

The host building already has a long history of a series of signage strategies and other applications, which is entirely normal for commercial leisure businesses such as this. The signage scheme should be seen within this context, as part of the commercial need to regularly refurbish and update signage associated with commercial leisure businesses.

In December 2019, an application (app ref:124555/AO/2019) that sought 3no. plaques, 4no. fascia signs, 1no. projecting sign and associated lighting was approved by the Council. Listed Building Consent was also sought and approved. The signage proposals being sought as part of this application are comparable.

There are currently two pending applications relating to the public house:

1. **Application No:** CDN/22/0112. **Description:** Discharge of condition 3 (Methodology internal works) attached to application ref no. 124556/LO/2019
2. **Application No:** CDN/22/0111. **Description:** Discharge of condition 3 (Samples of the proposed paint finish to satellite dish, pole, rackets and associated fixings) and 4 (Method Statement) attached to application ref no 124102/LO/2019

The submission of the applications above demonstrates the client's commitment to the site despite the financial implications the hospitality sector faced during lockdown.

Policy Position

National

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) acknowledges that poorly placed advertisements can have a negative impact on the appearance of the built and natural environment. Only those advertisements which will clearly have an appreciable impact on the building or on their surroundings should be subject to the Local Planning Authority's detailed assessment. Advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts (paragraph 136).

Paragraph 195 of the NPPF states that LPAs should assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal and should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

In relation to Heritage Assets, the NPPF also states that only where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to/or total loss of significance of a designated Heritage Asset should local planning authorities refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss (paragraph 201). Where a development proposal will lead to a 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 securing its optimum viable use (paragraph 202).

Local

Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Saved Policies (1995)

Policy DC18.1 'Conservation Areas' seeks to ensure that development proposals preserve and enhance the character of its designed conservation area by carefully considering the following (Inter alia):

- The desirability of retaining existing structures;

Policy DC19.1 'Listed Buildings' states that the council will have regard to the desirability of securing the retention, restoration, maintenance and continued use of such buildings. In assessing proposals the council will (inter alia):

- Not permit any external or internal alteration or addition to a Listed Building where, in its opinion, there would be an adverse effect on its architectural or historic character.
- Not permit alterations to a listed building which could prevent the future use of any part of the building, in particular upper floors or basements, or where poor maintenance is likely to result.

Core Strategy (July 2012)

Policy SP1 'Spatial Planning' and DM1 'Development Management' states that in all parts of the City development should make a positive contribution to neighbourhoods, by creating well designed places that enhance and create character, protect and enhance the built and natural environment and improve access to services and facilities.

Policy EN3 'Heritage' seeks to encourage development that complements the distinct historic and heritage features of the City. All new developments must be designed to support the council's aim of preserving, and where possible enhancing the historic character, buildings of importance including listed building and their setting.

Advertisement Legislation

The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations is clear that advertisement controls are only exercisable in terms of amenity and public safety, with the provisions of the development plan only considered as far as they are material. The NPPF is unambiguous that only those advertisements which will clearly have an appreciable impact on the building or on their surroundings should be subject to the detailed assessment of the LPA. The NPPF is also clear that only where substantial harm to/or loss of the significance of a Heritage Asset occurs should LPAs refuse consent.

Section 220 (1) of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 states that regulation under the Act '*shall make provision for restricting or regulating the display of advertisements so far as appears to the Secretary of State to be expedient in the interests of amenity and public safety*' (our emphasis).

Impact on Heritage Assets

Overall, it is considered that the proposed external works are sympathetic to the Grade II Listed building. The proposed signage is considered to be very much in scale with the host building and does not over-dominate, swamp or clutter the appearance of this building in any way. The existing and proposed are closely comparable in size and positioning to the existing displayed signage at the application site.

Impact of Replacement Signage

The most obvious external alterations to the pub front and side elevation are the change in colour scheme of the signage. The existing pub presents a largely cream signage colour scheme. The signage will be reinstated in established locations, most notably the timber fascia boards will replace the existing signage across the Church Street and Joiner Street elevations. A double-sided hanging sign will be installed in the same location as the existing hanging sign bracket to allow for consistency. The fascia and hanging signs will be illuminated by LED trough lighting, this is a subtle external form of illumination and is encouraged within the Smithfield Conservation Area. The replacement of the amenity board signage and lanterns are consistent with existing pub paraphernalia and will not result in the obscuring or replacement of any item of significance.

The replacement white and grey colour scheme is consistent with the Craft Union brand and is a clearly distinctive design theme that helps establish brand identity. The replacement fascia signage, hanging signs, amenity boards and ornate lighting is consistent and appropriate in scale and location, according fully with the requirement of local policy.

The proposals also do not result in an over intensive form of advertising, given the scale and visual context of the host building, with its largescale elevations, its major road interchange siting, and the necessary commercial role that these signs must play in order to announce and identify this public house. The proposed signage must be considered within this context and its implications for the appearance of this building, the local street scene and the setting of the conservation areas must be assessed accordingly. The visual amenity impacts of the signage must be assessed within the genuine visual context within which they are located.

Overall

Overall, it is considered that the proposals, which seek to improve the vitality and viability of the public house and ensure its survival within its historic use, will sustain the significance of the building and result in negligible harm. The sensitive works are largely focused on areas of a lower architectural and historic significance and are appropriate to allow Craft Union to establish their brand identity.

The revised signage is considered to form an important element of a necessary and appropriate bespoke signage solution to refresh and update the appearance of this public house building. With the continuing challenges presented by the ongoing difficult economic climate, it is now more imperative than ever that new customers are enticed into this public house and the overall replacement signage scheme is a key and critical element of this strategy. The proposed signage is a necessary method to identify, announce and refresh the visual appearance of the premises and it is, in short, commercial necessity that this signage is displayed for the future trading health of this existing business.

This Statement has identified that the building's primary architectural and historic interest is principally derived from the architectural detailing on the external façade, none of which are affected by the proposed works. The proposals will preserve this primary interest. In addition, a large part of the pubs historic significance is derived from its continued use as a public house, its internal plan-form and fixtures and fittings – none of which will be affected by this proposal. The improved viability of the public house will ensure that the use is retained, and the public can continue to appreciate this heritage asset for many years to come.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Will Rogers', enclosed within a large, loopy oval flourish.

Will Rogers

Senior Planner

Planning Potential

Harrogate