



Planning and Heritage Statement

Erection of first floor rear extension above existing single storey to form additional storage area for existing pharmacy at Everest Pharmacy, 117B Withington Road, Whalley Range, Manchester, M16 8EE

for Everest Pharmacy Ltd

Emery Planning project number: 21-479



Project : 21-479
Site address : Everest Pharmacy, 117B
Withington Road,
Whalley Range,
Manchester, M16 8EE
Client : Everest Pharmacy Ltd

Date : 27 January 2022
Author : Clare Gascoigne

Approved by : Alison Freeman

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Contents:

1. Introduction	1
2. The application	1
3. Context	2
4. Policy context	3
5. Heritage Assessment and considerations	7
6. Planning Considerations	9
7. Summary and conclusions	13



1. Introduction

- 1.1 This planning and heritage statement has been prepared to support the resubmission of a previously refused application for a first floor extension on behalf of Everest Pharmacy Ltd at 117B Withington Road, Whalley Range.
- 1.2 Heritage is dealt with in Section 5.

2. The application

- 2.1 This application is an amended scheme following the refusal of the previous planning application (planning application reference number 129729/FO/2021).
- 2.2 The application now submitted takes on board the comments made by officers in relation to the design of the previous scheme. It should also be noted that the details for the outrigger at the rear of the property have been amended.
- 2.3 The reasons for refusal on application 129729/FO/2021 were given as:

1. Having regard to the pattern of development found in the area the proposed first floor extension by reason of its scale, design and prominent location would have a detrimental impact on the character of the Whalley Range Conservation area and the area in general. The proposed development is therefore contrary to the provisions of Core Strategy policies DM1 and EN3 and saved Unitary Development Plan policy DC18.

2. The proposed first floor rear extension by reason of its scale, position on the site boundary and orientation would have an overbearing impact on the first floor window in the rear elevation of the outrigger and the rear yard of the attached property. The proposed development is therefore contrary to the provisions of Core Strategy policy DM1.

3. Context

Site location and description

- 3.1 The property is one half of a pair of traditional semi-detached buildings located at the junction of Withington Road and Yarburgh Street in Whalley Range. The property is three storeys with the ground floor element being entirely in retail use in connection with the pharmacy business; the first and second floor is used as a residential flat. The flat is also in the ownership of the applicant.
- 3.2 The other semi detached property is in mixed use with commercial use at ground floor with residential use on the first and second floor.
- 3.3 The application property is located within the commercial area of Whalley Range and for planning policy purposes falls within the designation of Central Manchester and the Inner Area and the Whalley Range Conservation Area.
- 3.4 The Whalley range Conservation Area is located approximately 3.2km from the City Centre with the area being predominantly residential, with a local centre being located on Withington Road. The application property is located towards the northern end of the local centre.

Relevant planning history

- 3.5 A desk based review of the relevant planning history for no 117B Withington Road has been carried out and the following applications are considered to be relevant:
- July 2013 – planning permission granted for single storey side and rear extension to provide storage for pharmacy approved – application reference 102276/FO/2013/S1.
 - June 2021 – planning permission refused for first floor extension on top of existing single storey extension to form additional storage – application reference 129729/FO/2021.
 - December 2021 – planning permission granted for installation of prescription dispensing machine on the ground floor elevation facing onto Yarburgh Street - application reference 131927/FO/2021.

4. Policy context

- 4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the relevant development plan:

"If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."

- 4.2 The application must (in part) also be considered in the context of the legal duty as conferred by S72(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which states:

"In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, of any powers under the provisions mentioned in subsection (2), special attention must be given to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and special appearance of that area."*

(* includes the Planning Acts)

Development plan context

Manchester Development Plan

- 4.3 The development plan comprises the Manchester Core Strategy, which was adopted in 2012, and the saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan, which was adopted in 1995.
- 4.4 The relevant Core Strategy Policies are:
- DM1 – Development Management Policy
 - EN3 – Heritage
 - C8 - Local Centres
- 4.5 The relevant saved policy of the UDP is:
- DC18 – Conservation Areas
- 4.6 Manchester City Council's (MCC) heritage policies focus on the fundamental importance of "preserving or, where possible, enhancing the historic environment". This same focus is reflected within the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 4.7 Core Strategy Policy EN3 policy requires development proposals to be sensitive to the values of the designated heritage asset. In this instance the heritage asset is the Whalley Range Conservation Area. There is no detailed description of the conservation area appraisal to view or download on the Council's website.

Emerging Development Plan

Greater Manchester Spatial Framework

- 4.8 The Publication GMSF was approved at the AGMA Executive Board on 30 October 2020. The document then required the approval of the ten Greater Manchester Councils prior to the launch of the formal period for consultation. Following the decision of Stockport Council on 3rd December to not approve the Publication GMSF for consultation the formal public consultation period did not commence. No weight can be attached to this document at present.

Emerging Manchester Local Plan

- 4.9 The council is currently undertaking a review of the Core Strategy and the saved policies from the Unitary Development Plan. The first stage of the consultation process began in January 2020 and is still considered to be in its early stage due to delays being experienced during the current pandemic. It can carry no significant weight in decision making

National planning policy and guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework)

- 4.10 The revised Framework was published in July 2021 setting out the Government's planning policies for England and how they expect these to be implemented.

Achieving sustainable development

- 4.11 Paragraph 8 states that achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are independent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways:

- An economic objective
- A social objective
- An environmental objective

The presumption in favour of sustainable development

- 4.12 Paragraph 11 states that “Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.”
- 4.13 It also states that for decision-taking this means approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date, granting permission unless:
- The application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
 - any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

Determining applications

- 4.14 Paragraph 47 states that planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Design

- 4.15 Section 12 of the Framework seeks to achieve well-designed places. Paragraph 126 recognises that the creation of high -quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work. Paragraph 130 of the Framework also reinforces the good design principles of paragraph 126 and provides guidance on how this can be achieved.

Heritage

- 4.16 Section 16 of the Framework provides details on assessing, conserving, and enhancing the historic environment in respect of designated and non-designated heritage assets. In particular, paragraph 194 states that: -

“The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance”

4.17 Paragraph 197 of the Framework states that in determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation.
- The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality.
- The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

4.18 The Framework confirms that in 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 199). The designated heritage asset in this case is the Whalley Range Conservation Area. Clearly it is desirable to sustain and enhance this heritage asset.

Other material considerations

Supplementary planning guidance documents

4.19 The following supplementary planning guidance document is relevant to the determination of this planning application:

- Guide to Development in Manchester Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (Adopted April 2007).

5. Heritage Assessment and considerations

The Heritage Asset

- 5.1 As set out above, the Framework states at paragraph 194 that:-

"In determining applications Local Planning Authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected including any contribution made by their setting. The level of details should be proportionate to the assets importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposals on their significance"

- 5.2 The application building lies within the Whalley Range Conservation Area, which was designated in 1992. The heritage asset in this case is the Conservation Area. The building itself is neither listed, nor is it a non designated heritage asset. It is a much altered building.

Designated Heritage Asset – The Whalley Range Conservation Area

- 5.3 Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act (1990) states that special attention must be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The test can be met by either development which makes a positive contribution to an area's character or by development which leaves the character and appearance unharmed.
- 5.4 The Framework confirms that in 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 199). The designated heritage asset in this case is the Whalley Range Conservation Area. Clearly it is desirable to sustain and enhance this heritage asset.
- 5.5 There is no conservation area appraisal to view on the Council website to be able to provide a detailed assessment of the area. However, Whalley Range was since the 1850's, one of the first suburbs in the city with the aim of creating a location where people could escape the increasing congestion of the city centre. The area has continued to develop since this date and was designated a conservation area in 1992 with the aim of the halting the demolition of the older houses and property given the pressures for redevelopment of the area. No specific evidence can be found with regard to development of the retail areas.

- 5.6 However, the area where the application is located is recognised within the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework maps as a local commercial centre, providing important local service to the community, with the wider setting along Withington Road classed as residential.

6. Planning Considerations

- 6.1 This section of the report assesses the proposed development within the context of the planning policies set out in previous section.

Principle of the development

- 6.2 The property is located within the busy retail and commercial area of Whalley Range on the corner of Withington Road and Yarrowburgh Street. The existing pharmacy business is located on the ground floor of the property where there is limited storage and back of house facilities.
- 6.3 As the building is located within a retail area the principle of further modifications /extensions to commercial property is acceptable under the principles of Policy C8 of the Core Strategy. Indeed, within the officer report for the previous refused application, the officer considered that the principle of the extension was acceptable. The reason for refusal was with regards to the alleged impact of the development on the conservation area and impact on the amenity of the adjacent property.
- 6.4 This application seeks to address the previous concerns with regards to the heritage and residential amenity design considerations.

Need for the extension

- 6.5 Due to the growing demand on the pharmacy, not only as a result of the increased services being provided during the Covid pandemic (including a vaccination clinic) but also the government's emphasis for local pharmacist to provide more services and medical advice to customers and the local community. There is now an essential need to provide more space to enable the pharmacy to accommodate these improved services. This application is seeking to extend the property at first floor to provide much needed storage for all products and possible meeting space for this busy pharmacy practice.
- 6.6 As referred to earlier within this statement the applicant has also provided a detailed letter to explain in detail the services that are provided by the business. This accompanies the application.

Existing building and previous scheme

- 6.7 Officers for the previous refused application raised concerns to the scale, design and prominence on the character of the area as a whole and the Conservation Area. These concerns have now been addressed within this new scheme.
- 6.8 The host property is a large three storey building with its main frontage facing onto Withington Road. There is an existing/original two storey outrigger at the rear which is shared with the adjacent property. The previously approved single storey extension wraps around the outrigger and extends across the full width of the property. The design of this ground floor extension has resulted in a long blank elevation with the only detailing being two emergency exit doors (although permission has now been granted to provide an automatic prescription dispensing machine). This results in the existing elevation of the building onto Yarburgh Street being unattractive, bland and, devoid of any character.
- 6.9 The recently refused first floor extension projected from the rear of the outrigger and extended across the previous ground floor extension leaving a small element between the outrigger and Yarburgh Street single storey. Previously, the outrigger was inaccurately drawn but has now been corrected as part of the new proposal. Also, the extension was bland with plain brick, was poorly detailed and with windows which did not reflect the existing building in terms of size, design and position.
- 6.10 In reviewing the officer report on application 129729/FO/2021, this new scheme seeks to address all the concerns raised.

New Design

- 6.11 The proposed scheme seeks to provide the much needed storage and back of house space for the business but with significantly improved design detailing and also seeks to improve the appearance to the existing ground floor elevation onto Yarburgh Street which will in turn have apposite impact on the Conservation Area.
- 6.12 As part of the design process for this new application, alternative schemes of different floor areas and heights were considered, but these were ruled out due to the need to optimise the size of space required by the pharmacy. In particular, a reduction in the size of the first floor footprint was considered but the resulting small floor area and the resulting increased building costs rendered this option to be neither a realistic or viable compromise.

- 6.13 Consequently, the floor size of the new scheme is virtually the same size as the ground floor extension. However, the external design of the extension has been improved and taken on board officers' previous comments.
- 6.14 Following a review of the measurements taken for the outrigger, the proposed roof pitch now accurately reflects and follows the same roof pitch as the existing outrigger. (Please note the roof design is of a single pitch as we understand that the neighboring property is also looking to seek planning permission to extend his property at the rear. Should this scheme come to fruition the roof design as shown should enable an easy transition with this scheme).
- 6.15 The Yarburgh Street elevation now includes brick string course detailing which picks up the brick string course detailing of the original building.
- 6.16 The new first floor windows are a timber sash window design, have been reduced in size and are similar proportions to those of the existing building and the windows are raised in height to be more in keeping with the existing building.
- 6.17 The scheme also proposes to improve the current blank façade on the ground floor by introducing 3 new false windows on the side elevation to improve the street presence and provide the impression of greater commercial activity on Yarburgh Street. This will have a positive impact on the design of the building and on the street scene, which in turn will have a positive impact on the conservation area. The proposal therefore accords with policies DM1, EN3 of the Core Strategy and saved policy DC18 of the UDP

Heritage

- 6.18 As referred to above the proposed scheme has taken on board all the officers comments on application 129729/FO/2021 in relation to improvements to the external design. These modifications will result in a change to the appearance of the commercial/retails part of the conservation area. The design is now complimentary to the host building and the conservation area as a whole with good fenestration detailing and notably further improvements to the fenestration on the ground floor of the building. These will have a positive impact on the street scene thereby meeting the tests in the Framework, in particular paragraph 202, where the proposal will result in strong public benefit to the local community by improving the health and welfare options available.

Amenity

- 6.19 Officers previously raised concerns about the potential impact on the first floor accommodation to the neighbouring property. As referred to earlier the first and second floor accommodation of the attached property is in residential use. The first floor rear outrigger, is understood to house the kitchen for this accommodation.
- 6.20 In preparation of this application, we have spoken to neighbour, who we understand also owns the building. He has confirmed that he raised no objections to the previous scheme and has no objections to the proposed scheme. The only window that is affected by the development is believed to be the first floor kitchen window. For information he is also likely to be seeking planning permission for a similar extension at the rear of 117A Withington Road.

Parking

- 6.21 As the proposal is located in the commercial local centre of Whalley Range and is only seeking an increase in the back of house facilities rather than retail floor space there is no requirement to provide additional parking.

7. Summary and conclusions

- 7.1 This statement is submitted in support of an application for a first floor extension above an existing retail premises to provide much need storage accommodation for the retail unit.
- 7.2 The proposed extension is to be constructed to virtually the same size as the existing ground floor extension and will be constructed in matching materials. This design has now been modified to address the concerns raised by officers on the previous application.
- 7.3 It has been demonstrated through the improvements to the design that the proposed first floor extension has been considerably modified to provide a much improved external appearance, which in turn will have a positive impact on the street scene. The proposal is therefore fully compliant with policy DM1 of the Core Strategy.
- 7.4 We also conclude that there is no harm to the designated heritage asset of the Whalley Range Conservation Area and that any perceived harm to the designated heritage asset of the conservation area is low and far outweighed by the public benefits acquired by the improvements to this much valued community facility by improving the services provided. This assessment accords with the balanced judgement required by paragraph 196 of the Framework where if the development leads to a less than substantial harm to the significance of the heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate when improvements to everyday local services centres are proposed.
- 7.5 The proposal is therefore fully compliant with policy EN3 and C8 of the Core Strategy and saved policy DC18 of the UDP