

Windmill Green, 24 Mount Street, Manchester – Application for Full Planning Permission

Planning, Design and Heritage Statement

1. Introduction

Daniel Watney LLP has been instructed by Trinova Real Estate to submit a planning application for external works to the ground floor unit of Windmill Green, 24 Mount Street in Manchester City Centre, M2 3XN.

Supported by this Planning, Design and Heritage Statement and a full suite of architectural drawings including plans and elevations, this planning application proposes the following:

“Installation of new external doors and high-level louvres within two ground floor elevations, in association with the use of the ground floor unit as offices.”

This Statement considers the existing site and its context at Section 2, whilst the relevant planning history for the site is reviewed at Section 3. Section 4 provides greater detail on the works proposed through the application, whilst Sections 5 and 6 provide an assessment of the scheme against relevant adopted planning policies and national guidance.

2. Site Description

The site comprises the ground floor unit of Windmill Green, which is a recently developed 7 storey mixed-use, building located at 24 Mount Street in Manchester City Centre. The building has been recently refurbished following planning permission being granted in 2017.

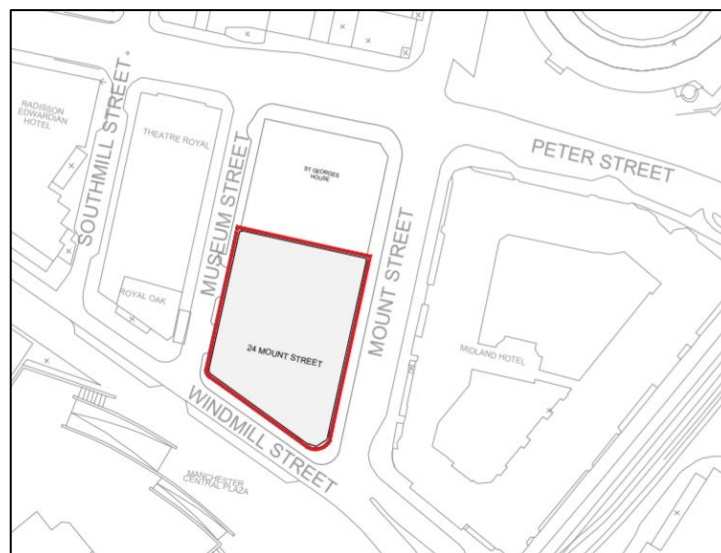


Figure 1: Site Location

The building has its principal frontages and access along Windmill Street and Mount Street, albeit with secondary frontage along Museum Street. Immediately adjoining it to the north is the Grade II listed five-storey St. George's House, which is the former YMCA building now in use as offices with a ground floor café and restaurant use.

St. Georges House fronts on to Peter Street to the north, which forms a main east-west route of the City linking the Manchester Corridor and St Peter's Square to Deansgate.

The 5 upper floors of Windmill Green comprise office floorspace, with this part of the ground floor being vacant following the shell and core construction of the building.

In addition to the Grade II listed St George's House to the immediate north, there are further listed buildings near the site. To the east, on the opposite side of Mount Street, is the Grade II* Listed Midland Hotel.

Opposite the site to the south is the Grade II* Listed former Central Station, now known as Manchester Central with a large area of public open space to its front which adjoins Windmill Road. Figure 2 below is extracted from the Historic England map search function with the blue triangles identifying the extent of listed buildings around the site, which is reflective of the historic character of Manchester City Centre.



Figure 2: Listed Buildings

The site is also within the St. Peter's Square Conservation Area, which was first designated in 1973 and contains a mixture of commercial, cultural and civic buildings of national importance.

The site benefits from a highly accessible location in the City Centre, particularly with the Metrolink station at St. Peter's Square being only a 2- minute walk away. There are also train connections within walking distance at Deansgate, Victoria and Piccadilly stations, as well as convenient access to local bus services available from stops on Peter Street, Oxford Road and Deansgate amongst others.

3. Planning History

Daniel Watney LLP has reviewed the available statutory planning history for the site as made available online by Manchester City Council. The available planning history for the site is reproduced in chronological order in Table 1 below.

Reference	Description	Decision	Date
106437/FO/2014/C1	Demolition of London Scottish House and construction of new 17 Storey (inc ground floor) office building (Use Class B1) with ground floor uses (Class A1 (shops), A2 (financial and professional services), and B1 Office) car parking, bicycle parking, landscaping, access and servicing arrangements and associated works	Approved	29/10/2014
112455/FO/2016	Partial demolition and reconfiguration of London Scottish House to create a new office building (Use Class B1) with retail uses (Use Classes A1, A3 or B1) at the ground and first floor, servicing and cycle parking, access and servicing arrangements and associated works	Approved	20/09/2016
115779/NMC/2017	Partial demolition and reconfiguration of London Scottish House to create a new office building (Use Class B1) with retail uses (Use Classes A1, A3 or B1) at the ground and first floor, servicing and cycle parking, access and servicing arrangements and associated works. This was an application for a non-material amendment to the previous approval and related to minor elevational design changes.	Approved	18/05/2017
125452/FO/2019	Change of use of part of ground floor (Unit 0A) from retail (Use Class A1/A3) to Bicycle Spinning Studio (Use Class D2).	Approved	08/07/2020

Table 1: Planning History for site

Planning permission was granted in 2014 for the redevelopment of the site and delivery of a 17 storey, mixed use commercial building however this was never implemented.

A refurbishment and reconfiguration scheme was then subsequently submitted and approved in 2016 to provide a mixed A1/A3/B1 use at ground floor with office accommodation above. This was revised in 2017 to address some minor elevational design changes.

Planning permission was granted in July 2020 for the change of use of the ground floor unit to a cycle spinning studio however this was never implemented, and this is the unit that is subject to this planning application.

4. Proposed Works

It is proposed through this planning application to undertake some minor external alteration works to the ground floor to enable the ground floor unit to be used as an office. These works are proposed as part of a fit-out of the ground floor space to provide a higher quality office product for incoming tenants.

The application is accompanied by existing and proposed floorplans and elevations which detail the works further, but can be summarised below:

- Installation of a new double door to the Mount Street elevation, alongside 2x high level external louvres above the glazed windows to allow for air filtration as part of the M&E strategy for the space.
- Installation of a new single door to the Museum Street elevation, alongside 2x high level external louvres above the glazed windows to allow for air filtration as part of the M&E strategy for the space.

As detailed below, the property benefits from a flexible use at ground floor based on both the 2016 approval and the 2020 changes to the Use Classes Order and therefore land use is not a matter for this planning application to consider. However the unit's use as offices is included for reference.

5. Planning Policy Context

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that if regard is to be had to the Development Plan for the purpose 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.

The Development Plan for the site currently comprises:

- Manchester Core Strategy, 2012;
- Extant Manchester Unitary Development Plan Policies (Saved July 2012)

Regard should also be given to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPGs) in Manchester City Council.

Policy Allocations

Within the Manchester Core Strategy, the site is located within the Regional Centre of the North West and the City Centre boundary of Manchester.

As outlined earlier within this Statement, the site is also within the St. Peter's Square Conservation Area, and whilst Windmill Green is not a Listed Building, there are several nearby, including:

- Harvester House – Grade II
- Lancaster House – Grade II
- Free Trade Hall – Grade II
- Former Theatre Royal – Grade II
- St George's House (Former YMCA) – Grade II
- Midland Hotel – Grade II*

- G Mex (former Central Station) – Grade II*
- Central Library – Grade II*
- Town Hall Extension – Grade II*
- Town Hall – Grade I
- Albert Memorial – Grade I

The site is within the City Centre's Civic Quarter, which is bound by Deansgate to the west; Peter Street, Mount Street and Lower Mosley Street to the north; Portland Street, Oxford Street and Lower Mosley Street to the east; and Whitworth Street West to the south. The Civic Quarter is characterised by large freestanding buildings including the Midland Hotel, which is directly to the east of Windmill Green.

The site lies within an area classified as Flood Zone 1, where the risk of flooding is considered low.

6. Planning Considerations

Land Use

It is worth noting that the land use of the ground floor of the building is not proposed to be amended through this planning application, as the flexible use of the ground floor accommodation was approved in 2016 as accommodating B1 floorspace, which is how the unit is intended to be operated.

Furthermore, the September 2020 amendments to the Planning Use Class system mean the ground floor flexible uses previously proposed (A1/A2/B1) would all now fall into Class E and can move between this use class without the need for planning permission.

Whilst planning permission is not required for any change of use, the application does however seek to improve the quality of office accommodation provided on the site through a wider programme of refurbishment at the ground floor of the property, both internal and external. This would meet the employment policy objectives of adopted Policies CC1 and EC1 of the Core Strategy and Section 6 of the NPPF in respect of supporting a prosperous economy.

In addition to quality of accommodation, aspects of this proposal seek to ensure that the building meets modern standards in respect of accessibility, which includes the provision of dedicated disabled access and refuge to the Museum Street elevation.

Design and Appearance

As identified above, the building is not listed, however it does fall within the St Peter's Conservation Area and near several statutory listed buildings, therefore its design and impact on heritage are important considerations.

The proposed new doors are very similar to those approved under application 112455/FO/2016 and then amended under 115779/NMC/2017 with the door to Mount Street only different by way of its precise location within the frontage, and the new door to Museum Street required to provide dedicated disabled access to this elevation. The design of both doors however reflect those that were previously approved.



Figure 3: Approved Mount Street Elevation

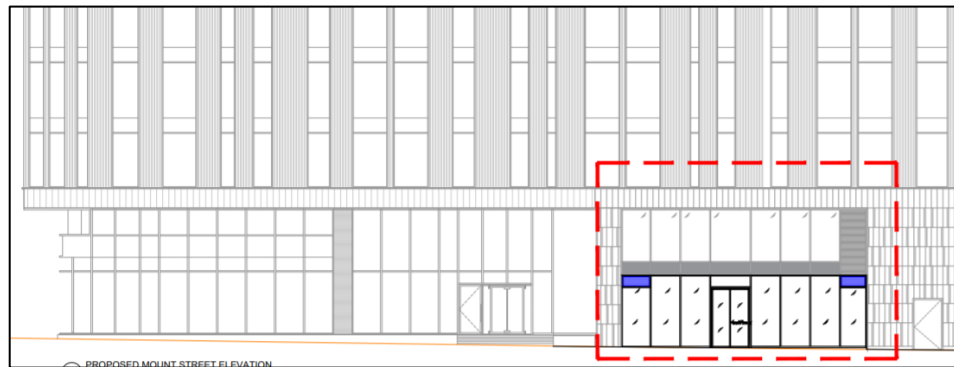


Figure 4: Proposed Mount Street Elevation

The new louvres will slightly reduce the amount of glazing on the elevations that were approved however they will replicate louvres that are already present on the building and that formed part of the 2016 approval and 2017 amendment. Louvres have been installed to both elevations as identified within the elevations. Therefore it is considered that the materiality is generally accepted and the minor reduction in glazing will have a negligible impact on the scheme approved and constructed.



Figure 5: Approved Museum Street Elevation



Figure 6: Proposed Museum Street Elevation

The 2021 NPPF requires the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings, whilst Policy CC9 of the Core Strategy requires the design of new buildings to be of the highest standard in terms of appearance and function, later noting that development within the City Centre should preserve or enhance the heritage assets that have been identified, including listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled ancient monuments.

Heritage Statement

Due to the location of the site within the St. Peter's Square Conservation Area and close to several listed buildings as identified earlier within this Statement, the NPPF requires that an assessment is made of the significance of these designated heritage assets and their settings affected by development, and of the impacts of that development upon them.

The St. Peter's Square Conservation Area was designated in 1973 and contains a mixture of commercial, cultural and civic buildings of national importance.

There are 11 listed buildings nearby the application site as set out in Section 2 of this Statement. Of these, only four have the potential to be affected by the development as they are adjacent to Windmill Green. These include:

- St. George's House - Connects to Windmill Green to the north.
- Former Theatre Royal – To the west of the site on the opposite side of Museum Street.
- Midland Hotel – To the east of the site on the opposite side of Mount Street
- Manchester Central– To the south of the site on the opposite side of Windmill Street.

Policy EN3 of the Core Strategy encourages development that complements and takes advantage of the distinct historic and heritage features of its districts and neighbourhoods, including those of the City Centres. The policy requires new development to be designed to support the Council in preserving or, where possible, enhancing the historic environment, the character, setting and accessibility of areas and buildings of acknowledged importance.

There will be a negligible impact upon the Conservation Area because of these works. The amended configuration of the doors and the louvres is a minor change to that which has been previously approved and in fact there will be a positive contribution to the economic vitality of the Conservation Area through the beneficial use of a vacant unit.

Regarding the impact on nearby Listed Buildings, while these building are adjacent to Windmill Green, there will again be no impact upon their setting due to the minor changes.

We conclude that the development works at the site will not lead to any harm to the significance of the heritage assets, and in accordance with the NPPF, the benefits of a proposal including securing the optimum viable use of a building, should be weighed in favour of approval of the change of use.