

Heritage Statement

Unit 2 St Ann's House, St Ann's Place, Manchester

Full Planning Permission for Sub-Division of Unit 2 and Creation of New Shop Front

Introduction

This Heritage Statement has been prepared to accompany an application seeking permission to sub-divide Unit 2, St Ann's House and the creation of a new shop front to provide access to the new unit. St Ann's House is not a Listed Building however the site lies within the St Ann's Square Conservation Area as set out by Manchester City Council.

This Heritage Statement has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which require applicants to consider the potential impact of proposals on the significance of any heritage asset affected.

Application Site

The application site relates to Unit 2 of St Ann's House, a ground floor retail unit located within the primary shopping area of Manchester City Centre. The site is bounded by St Ann Street to the north, St Ann's Place to the east, properties on Police Street to the west and properties on King Street to the south.

The surrounding area comprises of predominately retail uses with St Ann's Square to the north east and King Street to the south of the site, also in addition to a number of prominent historic buildings within the surrounding area including St Ann's Church directly to the east of the site and the Royal Exchange Building to the north east.

The site also lies within the St Ann's Square Conservation Area, the square was originally developed in the Georgian period, however, St Ann's Church is the only surviving building in the surrounding area from that era. The current buildings in the square replaced the original structures over a long period of time, and as such were constructed in various styles, which creates a rich diversity of built form throughout the square. While the square does have a high degree of built form variety each of the replacement buildings has been designed with respect for the existing surrounding buildings.

Proposed Works

The applicant proposes to sub-divide the existing Unit 2 of St Ann's House to create two new Units, 2a and 2b. This will involve the formation of a new internal wall within the existing Unit 2 as well as the creation of a new shopfront onto St Ann Street to provide access to the new unit.

The proposed development will allow Russell and Bromley to remain within a prominent retail location in the centre of Manchester while trading from a smaller unit. The creation of a new shop front and sub-division of the unit will allow the landlord to market the site to appropriate prospective retail tenants, supporting the viability and vitality of Manchester City Centre.

The proposed external physical works are limited to the creation of a new shopfront to provide access to a new unit created by the sub-division of Unit 2, St Ann's House. The proposed shopfront has been designed to match the existing shopfront of Unit 2 and of Unit 1 adjacent to the application site.

Assessment of Significance

Paragraph 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021 clearly states that the level of detail to be provided by Applicants to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected and 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'*.

Paragraph 202 goes on to state 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'*.

The application site lies within the St Ann's Square Conservation Area. The site is shown on the excerpt of the Conservation Area plan produced by Manchester city Council¹ below. The extent of the Conservation Area is shown in red with Listed Buildings in blue and the application site circled in green.



¹ https://secure.manchester.gov.uk/info/511/conservation_areas/144/st_anns_square_conservation_area

Neither the application site nor the remainder of the building are Listed Buildings however a number of Listed Buildings are present in the surrounding area including the Grade I listed St Ann's Church (ref: 1247612) to the east of St Ann's House.

St Ann's Square Conservation Area was the first Conservation Area to be designated within Manchester, being designated in July 1970. The Area is notable for its built heritage and a number of landmark buildings, notably the Royal Exchange building and St Ann's Church. The area is dominated by a range of traditional city centre uses including ground and first floor retail, offices, food and beverage uses, cultural attractions, civic and religious building and residential development. Many of the Area's key streets and spaces are fully or predominantly pedestrianised, contributing to the setting and environment of the Area.

The Conservation Area comprises of buildings of a range of ages, styles, form, scale and quality and should be considered on an individual basis. St Ann's House, which includes the application site, is a good quality modern building which responds appropriately to its surroundings and offers a neutral contribution to the setting of surrounding heritage assets and the wider Conservation Area, being appropriately scaled and designed yet clearly contributing a modern addition to the area.

The proposed development comprises of internal works to sub-divide Unit 2 and the installation of a new shopfront to provide access to the new unit. The works will allow an existing tenant to remain at St Ann's House while offering a new smaller unit to prospective occupiers. The external works mimic the adjacent unit (Unit 1) in form, scale and materials, resulting in a neat, uniform appearance which is appropriate for a modern building within a Conservation Area.

The application site does not form part of a Listed Building or structure and is not adjacent to any other heritage assets. St Ann's Church is located to the east however it is screened by the remainder of St Ann's House. Intervisibility between three other Listed Buildings; Cobden's Statue (ref: 1270783), 25 St Ann's Street (ref: 1270783) and Mansfield Chambers (ref: 1247654) is possible however any such view would be oblique and would be from a distance of 40m-60m. It is highly unlikely that the proposed development would be perceptible from these locations and therefore the setting of each asset would be unaffected.

The proposed works are considered to represent a neutral impact on the Conservation Area and no material impact on designated and non-designated heritage assets in the area or on the setting of a heritage asset. The proposed development is considered to represent less than substantial harm while supporting an existing retailer in the city centre and contributing to the city centre's role a regional retail destination.

Conclusion

The proposed works are minor in nature and are related to the sub-division of Unit 2 and the introduction of a new shop front to St Ann's House, a modern retail and office building in Manchester City Centre. The application site lies within the St Ann's Square Conservation Area however the proposed development is considered to represent a neutral change and would result in less than substantial harm. The proposed development is therefore considered to be acceptable.