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Manchester City Council
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Our ref EKPS/210606/HB

Submitted via the
Planning Portal PP -
10405505

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19 November 2021

Dear Angela,

Full Planning Application for the installation of external lighting at St. James's Tower, 7 Charlotte Street, Manchester, M1 4DZ.

On behalf of British Airways Pension Trustees Limited (hereafter referred to as 'B.A Limited'), we are pleased to submit a full planning application which seeks permission for the installation of lighting on the external elevations of St. James's Tower, 7 Charlotte Street, Manchester, M1 4DZ (hereafter referred to as "the Site").

The planning application was submitted today via Planning Portal (Planning Portal Ref: PP-10405505).

Supporting Plans and Documents

In addition to this extended covering letter, the planning application is supported by the following plans and documents:

- Planning Application Form, Certificates and fee¹;
- Drawing Pack:
 - Location Plan – Drawing Number 03_000;
 - Existing Elevation – George Street – Drawing Number 11_000;
 - Existing Elevation – Chain Street – Drawing Number 11_001;
 - Existing Elevation – Charlotte Street – Drawing Number 11_002;
 - Existing Elevation – Faulkner Street – Drawing Number 11_003;
 - LED Neon Strip on Building Façade and Roof Perimeter George Street – Drawing Number A3/070921_1 Rev C;
 - LED Neon Strip on Building Façade and Roof Perimeter Faulkner Street – Drawing Number A3/070921_2 Rev C;
 - LED Neon Strip on Building Façade and Roof Perimeter Chain Street – Drawing Number A3/070921_3 Rev C; and

¹ The required fee of £234 (has been paid via the Planning Portal).

- LED Neon Strip on Building Façade and Roof Perimeter Charlotte Street – Drawing Number A3/070921_4 Rev C.
- Lighting Specification Details:
 - ‘Ledline Captain RGB’;
 - ‘Ledline Aston 1615 RGB’; and
 - Photometric Report.
- RGB Control Proposals Document;
- Design and Access Statement, prepared by OBI Property; and
- Heritage Statement prepared by Stephen Levrant Heritage Architecture (“Heritage Architecture”).

Background

B.A Limited are seeking planning permission to install lighting on the external elevations of St James’s Tower which will frame the main entrance including new extension and at the top of the tower. This will enhance the external appearance of St. James’s Tower as part of the continued investment in the building, to maintain existing tenants and attract new occupiers within the competitive Manchester commercial floorspace market.

Planning History of St. James’s Tower

There have previously been a number of planning applications at St James’s Tower. The relevant and recent planning applications at the Site are listed below in **Table 1**.

Application Ref.	Description of Development	Decision and Date
115583/FO/2017	Extension of ground and first floors to provide additional B1 (Office) accommodation at 1st floor and ground floor A1 (Shop), A3 (Restaurant and Cafe), A4 (Drinking Establishment) and B1(Office) uses and associated works external works including extension of 2 current 4th floor roof level plant enclosures.	Approved 7 July 2017.
120889/JO/2018	Application to vary condition 2 (Specified Drawings) imposed upon planning approval reference 115583/FO/2017 under section 73 of the Town And Country Planning Act 1990 to replace the approved plans with new revised plans to reflect changes to bring the facade of the extension further forward and retain rather than replace the existing entrance facade.	Approved 28 September 2018.
128642/AO/2020	Installation of 1no. internally illuminated individual letter sign.	Approved 9 February 2021.

^ Table 1

Proposed Development

The applicant is proposing to introduce LED strip lighting to the top perimeter of the Tower itself (this comprising the 'LED Captain RGB lighting') and side "cheeks" of St James's Tower (this comprising the LED Aston 1615 RGB lighting), as shown on the submitted drawings.

The LED Lighting will be predominately lit white with availability for other colours, including pink, blue, green and red, and will be on continuously. As confirmed by the Lighting Specification documentation, the proposed lighting is designed for architectural lighting such as façade lighting, contour lighting and for signage purposes. The luminance level can vary between the different lighting and colours which can be programmed by a building manager (or similar).

The lighting luminance levels are summarised below:

LED Aston 1615 RGB:

- Red: 971 cd/m²
- Green: 3236 cd/m²
- Blue: 515 cd/m²
- RGB: 4780 cd/m²

LED Captain RGB:

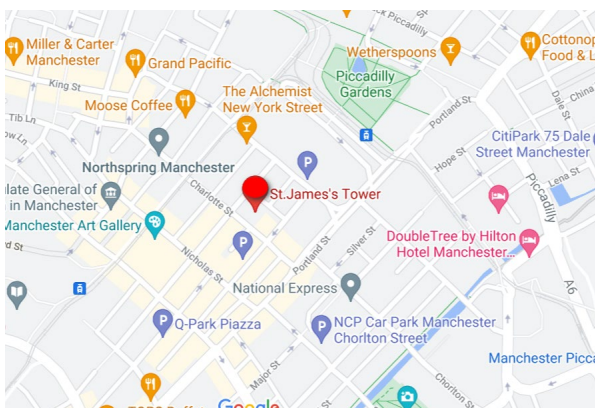
- Red: 742 cd/m²
- Green: 2475 cd/m²
- Blue: 394 cd/m²
- RGB: 3601 cd/m²

Further information is set out in the Lighting Specification Details documents prepared by one electrical submitted with this planning application.

The Site and Surroundings

The Site is bound by Chain Street to the north east, George Street to the north west and Charlotte Street to the south west. At its tallest point, St James's Tower comprises 15-storeys. St James's Tower is predominately operated as 'Grade A' office floorspace (Use Class E(g)i).

Figure 1 shows the Site context whilst **Figure 2** shows the indicative site boundary.



^ Figure 1 (sourced from Google Maps)



^ Figure 2 (sourced from Google Maps)

The Site is within close proximity to the City Centre Primary Shopping Area. The immediate area is mixed in nature with a range of uses, predominately town-centre uses with active ground floors comprising retail and Food and Beverage uses, with office accommodation above (all operating under Use Class E of The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended)).

Pedestrian access into the building is via Charlotte Street. The Site is in a highly accessible location with convenient access to a range of public transport opportunities including via nearby bus stops and Metrolink stations. Additionally, Manchester Piccadilly Train Station is a c. 10 minute walk from the Site.

As shown by **Figure 3** below, the Site (shown with green boundaries as added by EKPS) sits immediately north of the George Street Conservation Area and there are a number of Listed Buildings located close by. The Listed Buildings within the immediate vicinity of the Site are all Grade II Listed.



^ Figure 3 (sourced from Manchester City Council website)

Relevant Policy Considerations

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning decisions to be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Local Planning Policy

The adopted Development Plan for Manchester City Council ("MCC") comprises the Core Strategy 2012-2027 ("CS") which was adopted on 11 July 2012 and the 'saved' policies of the Unitary Development Plan ("UDP") which was adopted on 21 July 1995.

The Core Strategy outlines MCC's vision and spatial principles for Manchester to 2027 along with the planning policies which will be used to deliver that vision. Policies of most relevance to the determination of this application are as follows:

- **Policy SP1: Spatial Principles** – this policy confirms development in all parts of the City should make a positive contribution to neighbourhoods, including by protecting and enhancing the built and natural environment.
- **Policy CC8: Change and Renewal** – this policy identifies that new development should fully exploit opportunities to contribute to the improvement of the City Centre in terms of character and function.
- **Policy CC9: Design and Heritage** – this policy sets out that particular attention should be given to the City Centre context and character when considering the design of development, including to preserve and enhance the heritage assets that have been identified, such as listed buildings and conservation areas.

- **Policy EN1: Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas** – this policy states that opportunities for good design to enhance the overall image of the City should be welcomed and that developments should contribute positively to the experience of all at street level and consider the City's heritage.
- **Policy EN3: Heritage** – this policy encourages development that complements and takes advantage of the distinct historic and heritage features of its districts and neighbourhoods.
- **Policy DM1: Development Management** – this policy identifies that all developments should have regard to the issues including effects on amenity such as light, road safety, community safety and crime prevention, and have regard to the character of the surrounding area.

The following 'saved' policies of the UDP are also relevant:

- **Policy DC18.1: Conservation Areas** – states that the Council will seek to preserve and enhance the character of its designated conservation areas by carefully considering factors including the roles of advertisement and signage. Development proposals adjacent to Conservation Areas will be granted only where it can be shown that they will not harm the appearance or character of the area, which will include the protection of views into and out of Conservation Areas.
- **Policy DC19.1: Listed Buildings** – confirms that in determining planning applications for development which may have an impact on buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, MCC will consider factors including seeking to preserve and enhance the settings of listed buildings by appropriate control over the design of new development in their vicinity, amongst other factors.

Furthermore, as the Site is located within the city centre, MCC's City Centre Strategic Plan 2015-2018 ("CCSP") is also relevant. The CCSP sets a long-term vision for Manchester's future and describes how this will be achieved. The CCSP vision depicts Manchester competing with the best international cities through its thriving economy and vibrant sense of place, and sets out priorities for the Chinatown area; where the Site is located. These priorities include working collaboratively to improve the quality of the environment.

National Planning Policy

The revised National Planning Policy Framework ("NPPF") was published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government ("MHCLG") on 20 July 2021 and is a significant material consideration in planning decisions. As confirmed in the introductory paragraph:

"The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally-prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced" (Paragraph 1)

Given the nature and minor scale of the Proposed Development, there is limited content within the NPPF which is particularly relevant. In summary, key policies are outlined herein:

- **Section 12 Achieving Well-Designed Places:** Section 12 of the NPPF provides design guidance and states that *"the creation of high quality beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve"* (Paragraph 126). The NPPF confirms that planning decisions should ensure that developments *"are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment"* (Paragraph 130). Albeit intended to be referenced specifically in relation to advertisement consent applications, given the nature of the Proposed Development as a visual aid to attract attention to the Site, it is also of note that the NPPF states that advertisement should be *"simple, efficient and effective"* and consider its role with regards to amenity and public safety (Paragraph 136).
- **Section 16 Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment:** Section 16 outlines that when considering the impact of a proposal on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Paragraph 194 states 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 NPPF sets out how applicants and decision-makers should consider the role of heritage where assets may be affected by a proposal.

Planning Appraisal

The Proposed Development is assessed against the relevant Development Plan policies and material considerations below.

Principle of the Development

The Proposed Development seeks to enhance the external appearance of the property. The proposed lighting will make a positive visual impact to St James's Tower, the street scene and the immediate vicinity, further contributing to wider role of providing attractive and high quality commercial / employment floorspace within Manchester City Centre.

It is therefore considered that the Proposed Development accords with Core Strategy Policies SP1, CC8 and EN1, Section 12 of the NPPF and the City Centre Strategic Plan.

Heritage

Due to the Site's immediate proximity to the George Street Conservation Area and designated heritage assets (i.e. Listed Buildings), a Heritage Statement has been prepared by Heritage Architecture.

In accordance with the methodology set out within the NPPF, the Heritage Statement appraises whether the Proposed Development will have an impact on the character or appearance of the George Street Conservation Area or buildings of historic interest. The Heritage Statement concludes that the proposed lighting:

- will enhance the ability to read the clean architectural lines;
- will also define the architectural form of the St. James's Tower building;
- will strengthen the assertive contribution of the new podium as a contemporary addition to the streetscape; and
- will have a neutral impact upon the settings of designated heritage assets identified within this report, thereby resulting in 'no harm' as defined within the NPPF.

Given that it is considered that the Proposed Development will not result in any "harm" to the character and appearance of the George Street Conservation Area, the proposed lighting is compliant with Section 16 of the NPPF, Core Strategy Policies CC9, EN1 and EN3 and Saved UDP Policies DC18 and DC19.

Visual Amenity and Public Safety

The proposed LED lighting strips are not considered to have an impact on amenity, neither those proposed at roof level or along the perimeter of the ground / first floor.

The proposed lighting has been designed in a manner to be deemed simple, efficient and effective and is proposed to be in locations and of a luminance level which will not cause detrimental impact upon amenity or public safety.

As such, the Proposed Development is compliant with Core Strategy Policy DM1, and consistent with Section 12 of the NPPF.

Summary and Conclusions

The Proposed Development will enable B.A Limited to improve the character and external aesthetics of St. James's Tower, making it a more attractive and prominent building, and potentially enhancing its marketability as a desirable workspace. This promotes the ethos of encouraging economic growth and activity in the area – a local and national planning priority. Further, it is considered that the proposed lighting design including colours and luminance level will cause no harm to the historic environment.

Should you have any questions, or require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me by email or telephone (0161 485 5025).

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Euan Kellie', written over a horizontal line.

Euan Kellie FRICS FRTPI
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