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**Proposed change of use
from derelict toilet block to
Class E business (Café) at:
Northenden Riverside Park,
M22 4FX**

Planning statement

Boluwatife Olamusi



Application Site:

The site is located by the entrance of Northenden Riverside Park on Mill Lane. Being a public park, there is lots of green space surrounding the building as well as a car park directly behind the current derelict toilet block. Mill Lane is a secondary road within a residential area.

The site location does not lie within a conservation area. Additionally, the building itself is not listed.



The Proposal

The proposal is for a change of use. Currently sitting on the site is a derelict toilet block, which the client would like to convert to a café. Minimal structural work will need to be undertaken, with only the timber interior walls, which separate the male and female toilets, need to be knocked down. Additionally, an existing door will be enlarged to accommodate wheelchair access. The client has already secured leasing of the building from the Council.

Relevant Planning History

The site location is associated with a strong planning history as there are minimal constraints to development in this area. Although, there are no recent past examples of change of use projects, other proposals have been usually approved at the first occasion showing this is an area where the Council encourages development.

094058/TCA/2010/S2 – Various works to trees. **Status: Approved**



087842/VO/2008/S2 – City Council Development, erection of 1.6m high heron on 3.5m high plinth to take the combined height to 5.1m. **Status: Approved**

Assessment

The following policy and guidance documents are recognised as primary considerations for the decision of the associated application at the site location:

- **National Planning Policy Framework**
- **National Planning Practice Guidance**
- **Manchester Core Strategy Development Plan**

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Paragraph 8 of the NPPF explains that achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):

- i) **an economic objective** – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
- ii) **a social objective** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
- iii) **an environmental objective** – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment, including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

E: The development represents a clear social objective as it will positively contribute to the health and wellbeing of the local area and park goes as it will provide a place of respite where they are able to rest and rejuvenate before continuing on their journeys. Additionally, the proposal will bring income into the local economy as local suppliers and fitters are being sourced, once completed staff will be hired locally creating jobs in the local area. As stated earlier, minimal structural works will need to be carried out thus having little or no impact on the environment and surrounding green space.

Section 12 of the NPPF relates to achieving Well-designed Places which states that “The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable 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 and helps make development acceptable to communities”



E: As highlighted from the supplied elevations and proposed plans, the proposal will not have any significant impact on streetscape character or surrounding amenity.

Paragraph 11 of the NPPF describes the presumption in favor of sustainable development. Paragraph 11 specifically states that for decision-making this means (amongst other things):

- approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or:
- 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:
 - i) 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
 - ii) 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

E: We kindly request that the development is examined within a suitable timeframe in line with paragraph 11 of the NPPF.

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Paragraph 92 of the **NPPG** states: Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which:

(a) promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other – for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages;

(b) are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion – for example through the use of attractive, well-designed, clear and legible pedestrian and cycle routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas; and

(c) enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sports facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling.

Paragraph 93 of the **NPPG** states: To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:

(a) Plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;



(b) Take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all sections of the community;

(c) Guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs;

(d) Ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community; and

(e) Ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.

E: In relation to this, opening a local café by the park encourages the local community to meet together which may lead to people who may not have the opportunity to meet to come into contact, this creates a tighter community and improves the social lives of those living there. The client has decided to only sell vegetarian and vegan products in line with encouraging a healthier lifestyle considering it is by a local park. Overall, this project will promote a healthier way of living not just physically but socially too and for this reason the Council should look favourably upon this project.

Manchester Core Strategy Development Plan

Policy SP1 Spatial Principle

Development in all parts of the City should:

Make a positive contribution to neighbourhoods of choice including creating well designed places that enhance or create character; making a positive contribution to the health, safety and wellbeing of residents; considering the needs of all members of the community regardless of age, gender, disability, sexuality, religion, culture, ethnicity or income; protect and enhance the built and natural environment.

Minimise emissions, ensure efficient use of natural resources and reuse previously developed land wherever possible.

Improve access to jobs, services, education and open space by being located to reduce the need to travel and provide good access to sustainable transport provision.

E: Instantly, the café will be an improvement on the current derelict toilets in terms of design. This will enhance the character of the local area with the café acting as a sort of hub for people to gather and meet. The client has pledged to hire local staff which will boost the local economy not just temporarily but long term.

Policy EN 9 Green Infrastructure

New development will be expected to maintain existing green infrastructure in terms of its quantity, quality and multiple function. Where the opportunity arises and in accordance with current Green Infrastructure Strategies the Council will encourage developers to enhance the quality and quantity



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of green infrastructure, improve the performance of its functions and create and improve linkages to and between areas of green infrastructure. Where the benefits of a proposed development are considered to outweigh the loss of an existing element of green infrastructure, the developer will be required to demonstrate how this loss will be mitigated in terms of quantity, quality, function and future management.

Key features of Manchester's green infrastructure will include: The continued development of a network of green spaces, water bodies, canals, paths and cycle ways, with priority given to those parts of the City where there is an identified existing lack of open space. The Council will seek to protect existing street trees and promote new planting, particularly where this can enhance green links in the urban area.

The encouragement of green roofs, green walls, tree planting and other forms of green infrastructure to allow for the adaption to climate change in heavily urbanised areas. New green infrastructure provision should be an exemplar of best practice and innovation in terms of both its design and management.

E: The proposal is in line with this policy as it preserves the green infrastructure surrounding it. None of the green space around it will be built in during the duration of this project. The client has demonstrated a keenness to encourage positive living through the encouragement of walking and cycling, this will be welcome change for the urban roads of Mill Lane which is used to car usage.

Policy EN 10 Safeguarding Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities

The Council will seek to retain and improve existing open spaces, sport and recreation facilities to the standards set out above and provide a network of diverse, multi-functional open spaces. Proposals will be supported that: improve the quality and quantity of accessible open space, sport and recreation in the local area; provide innovative solutions to improving the network of existing open spaces, increase accessibility to green corridors, and enhance biodiversity; improve access to open space for disabled people.

Proposals on existing open spaces and sport and recreation facilities will only be permitted where:

Equivalent or better replacement open space, sport or recreation facilities will be provided in the local area; or

The site has been demonstrated to be surplus for its current open space, sport or recreation function and the City wide standards set out above are maintained, and it could not fulfil other unsatisfied open space, sport or recreation needs, and a proposed replacement will remedy a deficiency in another type of open space, sport or recreation facility in the local area; or

The development will be ancillary to the open space, sport or recreation facility and complement the use or character.

E: This project is in line with Policy EN10 as the current toilet blocks there are no longer in use. The new café will especially be ancillary to the park behind it as it will act as a pit stop.

Policy CC 9 Design and Heritage



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Design of new buildings will need to be of the highest standard in terms of appearance and function. The standards and guidance explained in other LDF policies should be the basis for the approach to design, with particular attention to be given to the City Centre context and character.

Development in Manchester City Centre should preserve or enhance the heritage assets that have been identified, including listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled ancient monuments.

The Council will support high density and mixed-use development in the City Centre, but developers must recognise the specific design challenges that must be overcome to ensure complementarity of function and form. New development must support the range of uses the Council expects in the City Centre and contribute to a coherent and integrated physical environment.

E: The design of the café is at the forefront of the project and is one of the most crucial aspects. Most certainly, the café has an extremely high standard of design in terms of appearance and function.

Conclusion

Following a review of the proposals applicable policy and material considerations it is of our professional viewing that the development is in strict compliance with all applicable policies as previously illustrated. The development will bring significant living benefits to the applicant while having a minimal impact on the surrounding environment.

Furthermore, the development brings a use back to a currently derelict building which will reduce opportunity for crime, offer a respite area for park users, and allows the community to regain a space which was abandoned.

We see no reason for the council to without our request for planning approval and kindly request for a timely decision to be made in line with applicable guidance of the NPFF.