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Design & Access Statement

Applicant:

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Site Address:

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Proposal:

Planning application to reinstate existing window type and openings and the change of use of existing drinking establishment, (Ground Floor Only) Sui Generis (previously A4) to Restaurant E (b) (previously A3). Proposed new boundary wall to the rear to replace existing wooden fencing to improve and secure the existing outdoor garden area. Proposed side extension to relocate staircase for upper floor.

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Revision	Date	By	Notes
A	08/04/21	ML	Issue for Planning Application
B	09/10/21	ML	Issue for Revised Planning Application



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Introduction

This Design Statement is submitted to Manchester City Council in support of a Planning Application.

Planning application to reinstate existing window type and openings and the change of use of existing drinking establishment, (Ground Floor Only) Sui Generis (previously A4) to Restaurant E (b) (previously A3). Proposed new boundary wall to the rear to replace existing wooden fencing to improve and secure the existing outdoor garden area. Proposed side extension to relocate staircase for upper floor.

This Design Statement should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Planning Application forms
- Ownership Certificates
- Drawing numbers: 1156_0001 – 1156_0605

Background

The Albert Inn was one of the few old and much-loved drinking establishments that was still in business until late 2020. Tucked away on the corner of Walmer Street and Aspinall Street off Wilmslow Road, The Albert was a classic Victorian pub with old fashioned clientele to match.

The growing popularity of the 'Curry Mile' led to the decline in numbers for The Albert, and therefore was subsequently closed in September 2020. Since then, the building has been left vacant, and the exterior has begun to deteriorate. The applicant wishes to give this once busy building, now left isolated, a new life.

Whilst the Curry Mile was historically known for its south Asian cuisine, in the recent years there has been a growing demand for Middle Eastern Foods. The applicant wishes to submit an application for the change of use of the existing drinking establishment to a restaurant in order to give a new life to the existing building.

Location

The proposal site is located just off Wilmslow Road, this is a main arterial route in and out of Central Manchester to surrounding areas. The Albert Inn is situated on the corner of Walmer Street & Aspinall Street, with the south-west of the site boundary adjoining to the Robert Darbishire Medical Practice.

The site itself is in a prominent location, due to its corner position and can also be seen from Wilmslow road, by passing pedestrians and vehicles. The building line faces the public footpath along Walmer Street & Aspinall Street, whereas the site boundary to the south-west consists of high-level vegetation, creating a permeable barrier between the adjoining neighbours.

There is an ample amount of parking space within the locality of the site. The site also has a direct link to Wilmslow Road, allowing all potential users of the site to access without any effect to surrounding neighbours.

There is a substantial amount of new development around the site, including a plethora of accommodation, new build retail outlets and other general refurbishment works to existing business' during the quieter Covid times.

The building is not listed but does have architectural feature detailing to the building elevations, which brings elements of the original heritage architecture to the forefront. Therefore, the building has elements of architectural importance. The proposal has been designed with this in mind, and therefore the preservation of the existing original architectural elements has been at the forefront.





Planning History

Planning Enforcement Notice served to applicant due to work

Design Principles

The key design and access influences of the proposed development, namely its use, layout, amount (density, scale and massing), appearance and access are considered below.

As stated, the upper storey of the building is not part of this application, therefore no assessment is made in this document.

Use

This proposal relates to the Change of Use of Existing Drinking Establishment, Sui Generis (previously A4) to Restaurant E (b) (previously A3) and a proposed side extension to relocate staircase for upper floor. The external garden area would utilise an outdoor area and would be used as ancillary to the restaurant, providing external seating for customers.

Amount

The proposed development aims to improve and enhance the existing building, but not to increase the footprint. There will be no change to the density, scale and massing of the building.

Layout

This proposal relates to the ground floor remodelling and refurbishment only. The proposed covered garden area will have a spacious external layout, with the tables and chairs carefully positioned in order to maximise the available space. The proposed changes in terms of external layout therefore relate to clearing the existing wooden canopy and other temporary structures.

This reflects the requirements of Policy CS.5 of the CS, as well as Policy DM2.1 of the DMP as the proposed garden area will utilise high quality design and improve the appearance of the current external rear area along Aspinall Street, therefore ensuring that the proposal will make a positive contribution to the character of the surrounding locale.

More specifically, the proposed garden area will accord with the Design Guide SPD, as the proposal would effectively utilise the available space whilst ensuring that there would be no visual clutter or impact on public or private views. The boundary walls surrounding the parameter of the existing outdoor area will be rebuilt with a contemporary approach and suitable materials to match the existing building.

Landscaping

There is no green landscaping proposed on site.

Appearance

The proposal in terms of 'the change of use' will have very little impact on the external appearance of the unit, and any new elements such as 'fresh-air' vents will be discreetly installed within existing brick/block layout. However please refer to the accompanying planning application, in which it is proposed to alter the existing elevation on the ground floor level.

The proposal will provide a high quality internal and external dining experience. The outdoor covered garden area will complement the appearance of the existing building. The proposed external garden will be surfaced in paving and composite decking, which will provide an attractive and resilient surface that will mature well with time. In terms of boundary treatments, these will consist of new 1100mm high brick walls with concrete coping tops matching the colour and style of the existing building. Glazing will be installed on top of the coping supporting the retractable roof.

The garden area of course is discreetly positioned to the rear of the building, away from the frontage facing Walmer Street. The terrace would be largely screened from neighbouring buildings by the boundary walls.

The retractable roof will be constructed of waterproof composite fabric with a polyester powder coated shutter box and rails and powder coated frame with glazed panels. These materials will provide an attractive and high-quality appearance which will not detract from the existing external appearance of the building or surrounding area. The proposed alterations are therefore sympathetic to the existing building and surrounding area, and accord with the DM Policies DM2.1 of the Local Development Plan as well as the Supplementary Design Guide. This is due to their appropriate scale, design and materials which are sensitive to the character of the surrounding area.

Environmental Considerations

The client is keen to adhere to all relevant environmental conditions and ensure compliance with all applicable regulations.

Access

The point of access into the site remains the same as existing, however the site security is proposed to be improved through the installation of CCTV and secured locking systems. Concealed security shutters are to be installed internally and sit between the existing wall threshold, and therefore no external security boxes will be installed. There will be a level access to the building. This will be the principle staff access routes into the unit too. We have incorporated a disabled WC within the existing constraints of the building. The new development has been designed to comply with Approved Document Part 'M' and take on board any applicable DDA recommendations. We will also, wherever possible, adopt Design for Access 2 (DFA2) requirements.

Design & Access Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019)

In relation to design, a proactive approach to delivering good design is advocated within the NPPF, which states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments: (Paragraph 127)

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and
- f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

Paragraph 128 advises that Design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals, respond to local character and history while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation.

Paragraphs 184-188 set out Government guidance on conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Heritage assets are seen as an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Proposals should identify the significance of the heritage asset using evidence proportional to the development scheme.

Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. This strategy should take into account:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b) the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;

- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
- d) opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

Local planning authorities should take account of:

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

Paramount to the proposed development, it also states that 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;

- a) The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- b) The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Manchester City Council Core Strategy

The Manchester Core Strategy was adopted in July 2012; relevant policies are summarised below.

Policy SP1 details the key spatial principles which guide the strategic development of Manchester to 2027. Included in these principles is the desire for the regional centre to be the focus for a variety of uses, including economic and commercial development, alongside high-quality city living.

Policy EC1 relates to Employment and Economic Growth in Manchester. Although this application is for a change of use/lawful use, securing planning consent will assist in meeting Policy EC1. It would ensure continued economic growth and improving the employment premises for a small business. Additionally, Policy EC1 states development proposals should have regard to ensuring design makes the best possible use of a site or building in terms of efficient use of space. This proposal will enhance the sense of place of the wider area and minimise the detrimental impacts on adjacent uses.

Policy CC1 relates to the Primary Economic Development Focus of the City Centre and Fringe. This policy states 'developments which lead to the more intensive use of employment land (in terms of floor space provided) will be supported'. This proposal will allow vacant floor space to be brought into active use.

Proposal

Planning application to reinstate existing window type and openings and the change of use of existing drinking establishment, (Ground Floor Only) Sui Generis (previously A4) to Restaurant E (b) (previously A3). Proposed new boundary wall to the rear to replace existing wooden fencing to improve and secure the existing outdoor garden area. Proposed side extension to relocate staircase for upper floor.

Development Aims:

The proposed development will enhance the existing building facilities internally, to create better functional spaces, and externally to provide a positive addition to the locality. The scheme will not only benefit the local area in terms of improving the aesthetics, but also have a positive effect on the local and wider economy through the employment of local skilled workers and delivery drivers. The current state of the site makes it entirely unusable for any reasonable economic activity.

The scheme will eliminate the vacant, derelict and 'disused' aesthetic of the current site, which can be a health and safety hazard to itself (and to the surrounding area.) The proposal is intended to be inclusive, safe and environmentally sensitive. The applicant wishes to improve the existing aesthetic of the building, which can be seen on the drawings attached.

Development Users:

Upon completion, the proposed scheme will provide employment in the local area for at least a dozen people with the potential for this to be increased. Of course, it will provide a new addition to the offerings currently available on the 'Curry Mile.'

Conclusion

In summary, the proposal constitutes positive sustainable development that accords with prevailing Development Plan policy and will deliver significant social, economic and environmental benefits.

There are no significant adverse impacts, policy contradictions or material considerations that indicate planning permission should be refused. It is considered that the proposal complies with the Manchester City Council Core Strategy, as well as the requirements of the NPPF. On balance, it is therefore considered that planning permission should be granted on this basis.

It is considered that this document aptly conveys the design principles – in terms of use, layout, amount, appearance, access and impact on amenity– that have informed the proposal.

The proposal has two separate parts; that which relates to the proposed outdoor garden area and new staircase to upper floor, and that relating to the proposed change of use from existing drinking establishment, Sui Generis (previously A4) to Restaurant E (b) (previously A3)

The design approach has adopted a sympathetic and reflective approach to the alterations. It ensures that local context has been central to the design and the proposals are in keeping with the character and appearance of the street scene and wider town.

The proposed changes are appropriate given the location. The proposed covered garden area will create an attractive area for customers of the premises to congregate, without detracting from the surrounding area in terms of appearance due to its discreet location and screening which is proposed.

The proposed scheme does not have any detrimental effect on the site, or local community, rather the external design and proposed altered fenestration of the scheme enhances the external façade and wider street scene.

Any new proposed materials and glazing elements and any other new materials introduced will be consulted with the planning department prior to use. Our client is keen to satisfy and adhere to all related planning and building regulation guidelines.

Not only, does the proposed scheme not result in any unacceptable detrimental impact on the character of the existing or surrounding dwellings/buildings, it enhances the surrounding area by eradicating the vacant and disused aesthetic. Furthermore, the proposed use will allow local economy to flourish, through the employment of skilled workers and delivery drivers, and therefore we feel that this planning application should be granted. I trust the Planning Authority will support this application and issue a positive response.