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Our Ref: GD/KN0035/21

Brandon House, King Street, Knutsford,
Cheshire WA16 6DX
Tel: 01565 757500
Email: knutsford@walsingplan.co.uk
Web: www.walsinghamplanning.co.uk

20 July 2021

Planning & Development
Manchester City Council
PO Box 532
Town Hall
Manchester
M60 2LA

Dear Sir/Madam

Application for Full Planning Permission
Memorial Hall, 14 Albert Square, Manchester, M2 5PF
Planning Portal Ref – PP - 09840409

We are instructed by Greene King Brewing and Retailing Limited to submit an application for a change of use of the aforementioned property specifically the application proposes:

"Change of use of lower ground, upper ground and first floor from a restaurant (Class E) to a public house/drinking establishment with expanded food provision (sui generis) and retention of existing permitted hotel (Class C1) use on second and third floor"

The application has been submitted electronically via the Planning Portal and contains the completed application form, this covering letter and a site location plan. The planning application fee of £462 has been paid via the Planning Portal.

Site

The proposals relate to the use of the Grade II* Listed Memorial Hall at14 Albert Square which until quite recently was occupied by Albert's Chop House restaurant. Although the premises operated under a planning consent for a restaurant, they functioned very much as a mixed use bar and restaurant use.

The building was built in 1864 and occupies a prominent location at the junction of South Mill Street and Mount Street, at the south western corner of Albert Square. Albert's Chop House has operated from this building since 2012.

Albert Square forms one of Manchester's key public spaces, sitting in front of Manchester Town Hall. In recent years, the Square's use has increased, being the main focus of the City's Christmas Markets, as well as forming a key location for hosting events in the annual Manchester International Festival. The Square accommodates various listed monuments and fountains and sits centrally within the Albert Square Conservation Area. Many of the adjoining properties are also individually listed.

The site lies with the designated City Centre of Manchester and is an area which contains a wide mix of different uses. Manchester Town Hall forms a dominant feature and function in the area. Various other municipal and administrative buildings are prevalent in the immediate area. Various bars, pubs, restaurants and retail units are located around Albert Square, generally with offices located above.

Proposal

The application seeks planning permission for the change of use of the premises from a restaurant (Class E) to a public house/drinking establishment with expanded food (Sui Generis). The applicant proposes to trade the premises under the Metropolitan Pub Company, part of brewer and retailer Greene King's Premium, Urban and Venture division. The division has acquired the freehold of the Memorial Hall building for the first pub of its kind in the north of England.

The philosophy for this group of pubs is to offer unique establishments that are individual, unbranded and have their own character and charm. The site will be renamed The Fountain House and will bring Greene King's premium gastropub offering to the people of Manchester.

The application proposes no changes to the physical structure of the building, either internally or externally, and Listed Building Consent is therefore not required.

Planning History

The site's relevant planning history is summarised as follows:

- Change of use of basement to jazz club (sui generis) and ground floor to (A3) Restaurant Ref. No: 092376/FO/2010/C1 Application Approved 8 September 2010

- Elevational alterations, installation of plant to roof top and change of use to first floor to Use Class A3 and second and third floors to Hotel (Use Class C1) Ref. No: 098877/FO/2012/C1 Application Approved 11 May 2012

- Listed Building Consent for internal and external alterations and installation of plant at roof top. Ref. No: 098878/LO/2012/C1 Application Approved 11 May 2012

- Provision of semi-permanent pavement seating in association with restaurant uses, including removal of existing street furniture. Installation of new permanent bollards, semi-permanent external seating, umbrellas with heaters, planters and fabric screen. Ref. No:101475/FO/2013C1 Application Withdrawn 8 May 2017

Planning Policy

<u>NPPF</u>

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) seeks to ensure that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and that positive planning solutions are found to ensure that economic development is brought forward.

Paragraph 11 of the NPPF states that plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. It goes on to state that Local Planning Authorities should approve development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay.

Paragraph 80 of the NPPF states that planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt.

Development Plan

The adopted development plan consists of the Manchester Core Strategy, adopted in 2012 and the saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan for Manchester (July 1995). There are a number of policies contained within these documents that are relevant to the proposal and these are considered in turn below.

The site falls within the designated City Centre and the Albert Square Conservation Area.

Core Strategy Policy CC4 – '*Visitors – Tourism, Culture and Leisure'* encourages the provision and improvement of leisure and tourism uses in the City Centre.

Saved 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 the following issues: i) the relationship of new structures to neighbouring buildings and spaces; ii) the effect of major changes to the appearance of existing buildings; iv) the effect of signs and advertisements; v) any further guidance on specific areas which has been approved by the Council*.'

The Council identify that the aim of Policy DC19 – '*Listed Buildings'* is to secure the retention, restoration, maintenance and continued use of listed building and to protect their general setting. In consideration of an application on a Listed Building the Council will not permit a change of use, where it would have a detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the building.

Policy DC26 – 'D*evelopment and Noise*' aims to minimise the adverse impact of noise on noise-sensitive developments.

Planning Assessment

The planning issues raised by the proposed development are limited given that there are no proposed changes to the structure of the building. The application focuses purely on a change of use from a restaurant (Class E – Commercial, Business and Service) to a public house/drinking establishment with expanded food provision (Sui Generis).

The building is located within the City Centre where leisure and tourism uses are encouraged by Policy CC4. The site is situated close to the historic Town Hall and it is evident from the range of pub, bars and restaurants within close proximity to this building that it is an important area within the City Centre for leisure and tourism. The proposed use is thus entirely in keeping with the character of the area.

Manchester City Council are undertaking a significant project to create a 'European style' pedestrian area around Manchester Town Hall and Albert Square. As identified above the building is within a cluster of other leisure uses which would make a public house/drinking establishment with expanded food provision a compatible and wholly appropriate neighbour. Furthermore, a public house/drinking establishment with expanded food provision will also be compatible within the wider Albert Square regeneration scheme.

Given that the proposed use is very similar in nature to the current and neighbouring uses it is not expected that the proposal, would have any adverse impacts in terms of noise or residential amenity.

The proposal does not include any internal or external alterations to the listed building, its change in use will ensure the protection, preservation and enhancement of both the conservation area and the listed building. A public house/drinking establishment with expanded food provision will offer an additional leisure facility and will help simulate the leisure economy in the City Centre. The Council should apply the flexible approach advocated in Policy DC19 in determining this application for a change of use for this listed building and apply the statutory obligation to give particular attention to retain, restore, maintain and continue uses in listed buildings.

It is considered that the proposed use is entirely appropriate for its location, and that overall, the scheme is policy compliant. We trust therefore that planning permission will be granted without delay.

The applicant wishes to work closely with the Council in relation to these proposals and as such, should you require any additional information or have any queries then please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours faithfully

Georgina Daintith MRTPI
Consultant
georgina.daintith@walsingplan.co.uk

Cc Andy Cutts, Greene King Brewing and Retailing Ltd