Town and Country Planning Act 1990

Heritage Statement

Proposed Change of Use from Café to Wine Bar

St George's House, 56 Peter Street, Manchester, M2 3NQ

Statement prepared by:

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April 2021

For and on behalf of Tapeo Food & Wine Ltd

Heritage Statement

Onward Buildings
209 Deansgate
Manchester
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Ref: 2021-09b

Approved by:



Russell Adams - Director

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared to support a change of use application a change of use, listed building and advertisement applications for the former Café Nero on the ground floor of St George's House which is located on the southwestern corner of St Peter's Square Conservation Area in Manchester city centre.

1.2 The applicants, Grade A Alternative, have extensive experience of sensitively redeveloping and improving buildings of historical importance both in Manchester and the UK. Within Manchester they have sensitively refurbished Manchester's Old Law Library (Grade II Listed), Lightwell, Parsonage Chambers, the Boardwalk, The Mission and 56 Princess Street (see: https://www.gradeaalternative.co.uk) amongst others, all of which make exemplary contributions to the character and appearance of the built heritage and the economy of Manchester City Centre.

1.3 The proposed works will entail no intervention and impact upon the historic fabric of the building and minor positive intervention on the character and appearance of the conservation area. The works proposed to the fabric of the building are assessed as having less than significant harm given that the historical elements outlined in the Grade II Listing of the building are unaffected, through the absence of physical intervention, by the development proposals.

Conservation Areas

1.4 With regard to Conservation Areas, the fundamentally important statutory provision is contained in s.72 (1) of the Listed Buildings Act, which states that the basic conservation area duty is as follows:

"In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, of any powers under any of the provisions mentioned in subsection (2), special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area."

1.5 This assessment was carried out using desk-based data gathering and fieldwork. The methods used in order to undertake the study were as follows:

Conservation Area and Building Surveying

1.6 Section 69 of the Act imposes a duty on local planning authorities to designate as conservation areas any 'areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. There are now more than 8,000 conservation areas in England. Whilst listing procedures are focused on the protection of individual buildings, conservation area designation is the main instrument available to authorities to give effect to conservation policies for a particular neighbourhood or area. Designation introduces a general control over the demolition of unlisted buildings and provides the basis for policies designed to preserve or enhance all the aspects of character or appearance that define an area's special interest.

1.7 The documentary research is based upon primary and secondary sources of local history and architecture, including maps and reports.

1.8 A building inspection and Conservation Area survey was undertaken by APD and a Heritage Consultant at Lanpro Consultancy Services in March 2021 and included consideration of the following: location and context; the character and interrelationship between spaces;

prevailing uses; architectural and historic quality of the buildings; typical and traditional materials; and the extent of intrusion or damage by previous interventions or lack thereof including an internal and external inspection of the building.

1.9 This assessment has been prepared taking into account the advice and information contained within:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019).
- The National Planning Practice Guidance
- Manchester Core Strategy 2012 to 2027 (July 2012).
- The extant 'saved' Unitary Development Plan Policies 2012.
- Historic England Guidance GPA3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (2017)
- The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990.

1.10 A review of the most relevant planning policy is contained within the Planning, Design and Access Statement submitted alongside this Heritage Statement.

Evaluation

1.11 The evaluation of St. George's House, the character of the Conservation Area and of the proposed development derives from documentary sources and visual evidence; and is based upon experience gained from work at similar buildings and nearby sites.

1.12 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Adams Planning + Development Ltd (APD) and Grade A Alternative. Both parties have worked on a number of Listed buildings in Manchester and England. APD has recently advised on a number of Listed Buildings in Manchester, including 'The Onward Building', 209 Deansgate and The Royal Exchange and are retained by Virgin Active Ltd who have occupied in the region of 125 Health Club sites across the country of which approximately 30% are accommodated within Grade 1 and/or Grade Listed buildings.

1.13 The evaluation takes into consideration the guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework and Policy EN3 'Heritage' of Manchester City Council's adopted Core Strategy 2012 to 2027 (July 2021), which identifies that:

''Throughout the City, the Council will encourage development that complements and takes advantage of the distinct historic and heritage features of its districts and neighbourhoods, including those of the City Centre. New developments must be designed so as to support the Council in preserving or, where possible, enhancing the historic environment, the character, setting and accessibility of areas and buildings of acknowledged importance, including scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings, registered parks and gardens, conservation areas and archaeological remains.''

2.0 Assessment of Heritage Significance

2.1 This section reviews the Significance of the Grade II Listed Building set in the context of the wider St Peter's Square Conservation Area.

St Peter's Square Conservation Area

2.2 St George's House is located on the southwestern corner of St Peter's Square Conservation Area in Manchester city centre. The Conservation Area contains a mixture of commercial, cultural and civic buildings.

2.3 The main characteristic of St Peter's Square conservation area is primarily one of civic grandeur, but it also contains some commercial property. It has been designated to include a more extensive area than just the square described above, in order to include several distinguished buildings. The Peace Garden, although laid out after the designation and therefore not a part of the St Peter's Square conservation area, is regarded as an important element of the same urban space.

2.4 The name of the Conservation Area derives from St. Peter's Church, which stood in the centre of St Peter's Square from 1788 to 1907 and was designated in December 1973. A Map of the full extent of the Conservation Area (outlined in red) is provided in Figure 1 below.

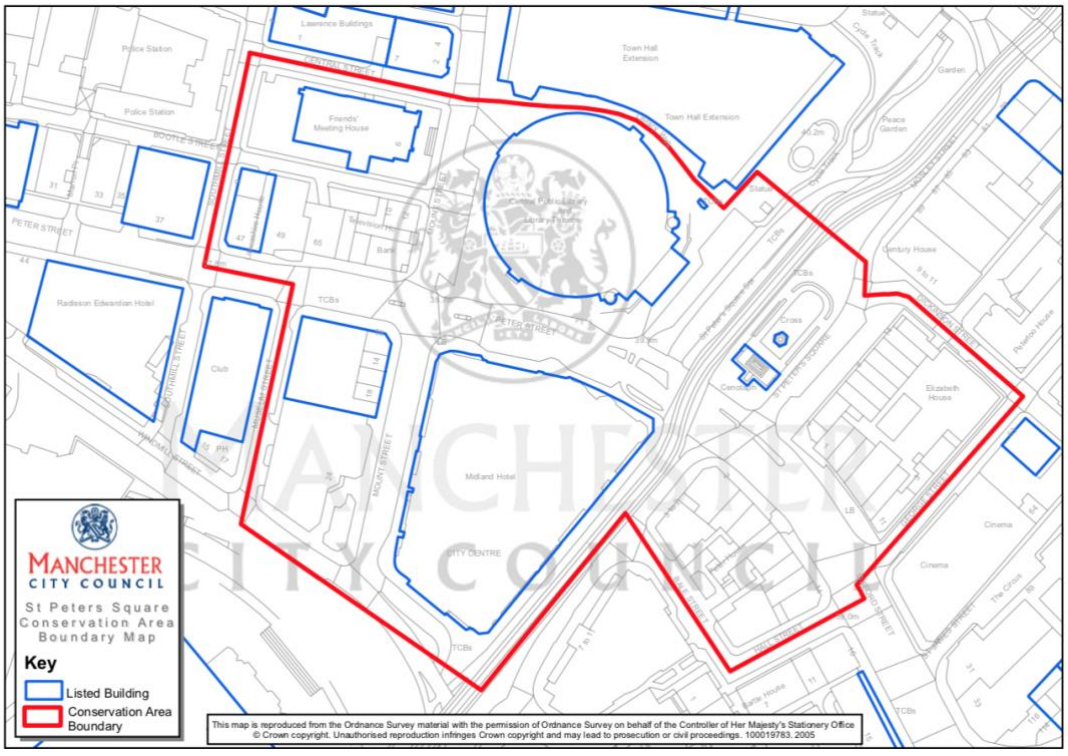

Figure 1 – St Peters Square Conservation Area

2.5 Manchester City Council's Conservation Area guidance identifies that:

''Development control is aimed at encouraging development which enhances the prosperity of the area whilst paying attention to its special architectural and visual qualities.

The urban design context is vital and proposed buildings should take account of the character of the whole conservation area rather than evolving designs which could be located anywhere in Manchester or indeed in any other city."

2.6 The name derives from St Peter's Church which was built in 1788-94 where the gardens are today and also gave its name to Peter Street. In the 1930s, the square was redeveloped around the construction of the Central Library and Town Hall Extension (1930–34). Plans for a rapid transit station in St Peter's Square were made in the 1970s; proposals for the abandoned Picc-Vic tunnel envisaged the construction of an underground station to serve both St Peter's and the neighbouring Albert Square.[2] The early proposals for an on-street light rail system in Manchester revived the idea of a station in the square, and the idea was retained as the project evolved, becoming a reality when the Metrolink system opened in 1992.

2.7 In 2013, Manchester City Council approved plans for the redevelopment of the square, including the expansion of the Metrolink stop to four platforms.[3] This coincided with the construction of the One and Two St Peter's Square buildings and the refurbishment of Manchester Central Library, both adjacent to the square. Numerous archaeological finds were made when construction work uncovered the former crypt of the long-demolished St. Peter's Church. The outline of the church is marked in the paving around the square.

2.8 From 2010 to 2017, the square underwent significant redevelopment which entailed the restoration of Central Library and attached Library Walk link, the relocation of the Cenotaph to the rear of Manchester Town Hall, the creation of a new extended tram stop and the construction of two new office blocks to the south of the square; One St Peter's Square and Two St Peter's Square.

2.9 The present character of this part of the Deansgate/Peter Street Conservation Area is generally one of high quality, large footplate commercial buildings

St George's House

2.10 St George's House is a former YMCA building, on the corner of Peter Street and Mount Street. The building is five-storey building faced in thick terra cotta, which is brown to the ground floor and buff above, with most of the intricate, moulded decoration confined to the third and fourth floors.



Figure 2 – Picture of St. George's House

2.11 St George's House was built in 1909 and is one of Manchester's most iconic structures. It was the first concrete building in Manchester and is built on the site of the 1817 Peterloo Massacre. When the previous building that occupied the space was demolished they found the mummified body of Hannah Beswick (aka 'the Manchester Mummy') which has subsequently inspired the name of the proposed new wine bar.

2.12 When St George's House was the YMCA it had a running track around the roof and a swimming pool, which demonstrates the scale of the building.



Figure 3 – The YMCA, Peter Street, 1986 (MCC Photographer's Collection)

2.13 Whilst the building historically accommodated a running track, gymnasium and swimming pool, which led to an interesting early experiment in the use of reinforced concrete to the swimming pool to be located near the top of the building, it is accepted by Manchester City Council's Conservation Area appraisal that none of these internal features have been retained when the building was refurbished as office accommodation. As such, the only potential heritage impacts relate to any external alterations or additions to the building's fabric.

2.14 St George's House is typical of many of the Victorian Listed Buildings found in the Conservation, with the building covering most of the land area of the site and incorporating a corner entrance on the proposed new HAUNT wine barn, which are typical of Manchester.

2.15 St George's House was listed on 21st September 1973 (English Heritage Building ID: 1271166). The Listing states as follows:

''Includes: Nos.14 TO 18 MOUNT STREET. Former club, etc. 1911, by Woodhouse, Corbett and Dean, rebuilt except for the facade 1991-3. Facade of brown and buff terracotta. Free Baroque style with Art Nouveau accent. Five storeys and attic, 5 bays (articulated only above ground floor); heavily banded dark-brown terracotta to ground floor, channelled 1st floor with string-course, festoons to 3rd and 4th floors, massive bracketed cornice over 4th floor, banded attic storey and high parapet. The ground floor has (inter alia) a massive semi-circular arched entrance to the 2nd bay, with run-out banded voussoirs and a scrolled keyblock with roundel above, a large rectangular window to the left and various rectangular windows to the right. On the upper levels the 2nd bay is slightly recessed but with a raised

centre which has (inter alia) a reproduction of Donatello's St George in a niche at 3rd floor, and a raised attic storey including a tall niche with a shield under a canted canopy; the 4th bay is also recessed, under a wide segmental arch at attic level, and flanked by canted oriels to the 3rd and 5th bays which rise from 1st floor to attic; the windows at 1st and 2nd floors are small vertical rectangles, but those at 3rd and 4th floors of the 1st, 3rd and 5th bays are treated as vertically continuous slots divided by transoms, while those under the arch of the 4th bay are staggered. History: the first important building in Manchester to be built in re-inforced concrete, and the first major use in Britain of the Kahn reinforced-concrete system; original internal arrangement modelled on New York YMCA."

Existing Development

2.16 The 'existing' demise is the former Café Nero. The existing arrangements are detailed in the following plans:

- Existing Site Plan (Drawing No. 400/PD/0001)
- Existing Ground Floor & Mezzanine (Drawing No. 400/PD/0002)
- Existing External Elevations (Drawing No. 400/PD/0003)
- Existing Internal Elevations (Drawing No. 400/PD/0004)
- Existing Signage (Drawing No. 400/PD/0005)

2.17 The following actions were undertaken to review the heritage significance of St George's House:

- A Site visit including internal and external site inspection in March 2021;
- A review of the former Listed Building Applications for the Bet Fred and Café Nero conversions (Ref: 101560/LO/2013/C1); and
- The Listing and Conservation Area appraisal of the subject building.

3.0 Assessment of Impact

3.1 This section considers the impact the proposed development would have on the significance of the heritage asset.

3.2 The planning application is accompanied by the following scope of proposed plans that fully explain and specify the development proposals that are taking place at St George's House:

- Proposed Site Plan (Drawing No. 400/PD/1001)
- Proposed Ground Floor & Mezzanine (Drawing No. 400/PD/1002)
- Existing External Elevations (Drawing No. 400/PD/1003)
- Existing Internal Elevations (Drawing No. 400/PD/1004)
- Proposed Signage and Frontages Plan 1 of 3 (Drawing No. 400/PD/1005)
- Proposed Signage and Frontages Plan 2 of 3 (Drawing No. 400/PD/1006)
- Proposed Signage and Frontages Plan 3 of 3 (Drawing No. 400/PD/1007)

3.3 A full explanation of the development proposals is explained in the Planning, Design and Access Statement accompanying this planning submission.

Proposed Development

3.4 The proposed HAUNT wine bar name is inspired by the site's heritage. When the previous building that occupied the space was demolished they found the mummified body of Hannah Beswick (aka 'the Manchester Mummy') an eccentric 'Grey Lady' who was embalmed and ultimately went on display in the Manchester Museum until 1968.

3.5 The Conservation Area appraisal, site visit and review of the planning history have established that there is no internal fabric of architectural or historic interest. The internal refit of the proposed new wine bar is, therefore, on-going in order to ensure that the replacement HAUNT wine bar is operational as soon as practicable.

3.6 The Heritage Statement and subsequent decision for the Listed Building application for the Café Nero internal refit works and advertisement applications in 2013 verify that the internal parts of the commercial unit contains no items of architectural or historical interest. The significance of St George's House is drawn from its external appearance and the contribution both the buildings historic fabric and its appearance makes to the character and setting of the St. Peter's Square Conservation Area. The assessment of impact should, therefore, only focus on any external alterations to the building.

3.7 With regards to the external alterations, all of the existing doors and windows are retained and there are no fixtures and fittings that connect into the buildings historic fabric. The signage and canopies are connected into the existing concrete bulkhead that has no architectural significance. The suspending rods and frame of the canopies connect into the existing concrete bulkhead and timber window frames. The external heaters are connected into the timber framework of the door frames that are being retained from the previous fit out.

3.8 The ventilation system is contained internally so that it is not visible from the outside of the building, using the existing louvres that are at the mezzanine level. All 'back of house' servicing is positioned at mezzanine level and towards the rear of the building, out of sight of the general public.

3.9 The renaming of the premises provides a subtle link to the site's heritage and the increase in the external seating areas provide an active frontage on to both the Peter Street and Mount

Street elevations, affording the general public the opportunity to visit and dine at the premises and take in the special character of the building and the Conservation Area.

3.10 The design and layout provide improvements to the aesthetic appearance of the building, both internally and externally, to compliment the character and appearance of the Grade II Listed Building, and have no demonstrable adverse impacts on St George's House. The proposals also have a beneficial impact on the character and appearance of St. Peter's Square Conservation Area. Further design details are outlined within the Design and Access Statement.

4.0 Conclusion

4.1 This Heritage Statement provides evidence of the assessments undertaken by the applicant to inform the detailed internal and external design alterations being proposed as part of this change of use application and demonstrate that there is no architectural or historic interest within the internal confines of the building, and all external alterations will not be connected to and/or affect the historical building fabric.

4.2 The proposed rebranding and external improvements better reveal the significance of St George's House. This application should, therefore, be treated favourably in accordance with the guidance contained within Paragraph 137 of the National Planning Policy Framework.