Design and Access Statement

42-44 Fountain Street, Manchester

on behalf of

UKRO Property Holdings II Limited

Prepared by
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Origin
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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This Design & Access Statement has been prepared by Sixteen Real Estate on behalf of UKRO Property Holdings in support of a full application to Manchester City Council (MCC).

1.2 The planning application relates to the replacement of windows at 42 to 44 Fountain Street in Manchester City Centre. The description of development as stated on the application form is:

"***Replacement of windows from 2nd to 6th floors***."

1.3 The upper floors of the property are offices which are currently vacant. The existing uPVC windows are now over 25 years old and have reached the end of their lifespan. Their replacement with windows of a very similar appearance is needed as part of a wider strategy to enhance the building in order to attract new occupiers within a competitive office market.

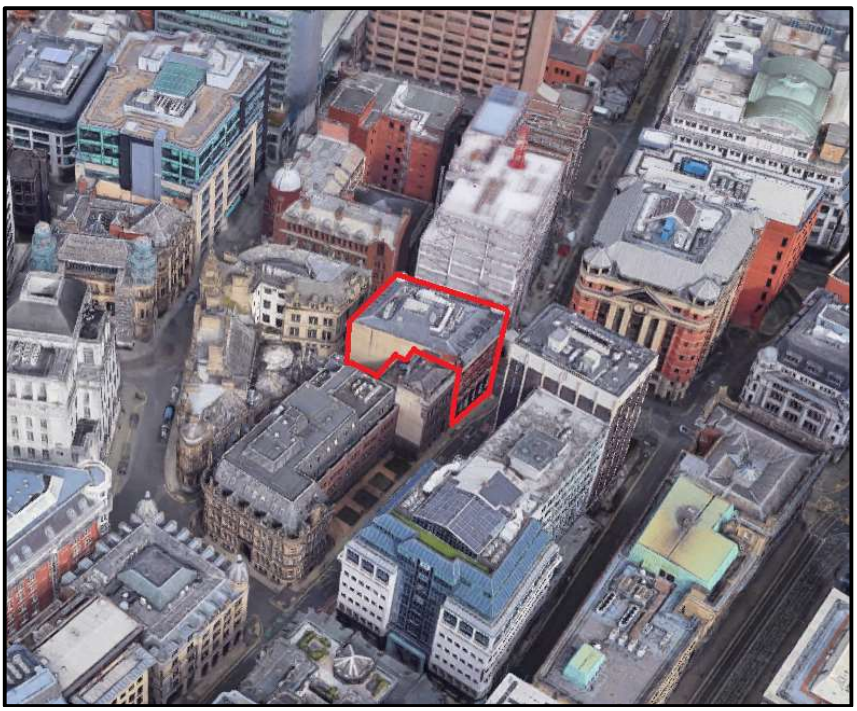
1.4 The Statement will explain how design principles and concepts have been applied to the works, and demonstrate the steps taken to appraise the context of the development will illustrate how the final design was achieved.

1.5 The Statement should be read in conjunction with the Heritage Statement which accompanies the application.

2.0 Site and Context

Physical Context

2.1 The building, formerly known as Spring House, is located at 42-44 Fountain Street within Manchester City Centre and is believed to have been built in the late 1980s.



2.2 It is 7-storeys in height, built with a concrete frame and brick clad with stone detailing and a marble-tiled plinth to the low-level elevations.

2.3 The existing windows from the 2nd to 6th floor are over 25 years old, originally being a white uPVC but were recoated grey in 2016.

2.4 The main entrance of the building, fronts onto Fountain Street, incorporating glazed doors with stainless steel head and base framing, and cast stone column encasements to each side.

2.5 This entrance provides access to office occupiers to the upper floors with a reception area to the ground floor. There is an additional entrance at the junction of Fountain Street and York Street which provide access to the London School of Barbering.

2.6 The existing windows are over 25 years old, originally being a white uPVC but were recoated grey in 2016.



Image 1: View of windows on Fountain Street elevation

2.7 The property sits within an area that contains buildings with a variety of uses, predominantly within the commercial, business and service sectors. This includes a number of office blocks, consisting of both older properties that have been refurbished and more modern buildings. An 8-storey mixed-use building is currently being erected adjacent to the north of the site at 11 York Street.

2.8 The building is bounded by Fountain Street to the east, York Street to the north, Concert Lane to the west and the Estate Exchange building to the south (a Grade II Listed building).

2.9 It is also located within the Upper King Street Conservation Area which was designated in 1970 due to the high number of buildings of architectural and historic interest. This includes several Listed Building, with the Grade II Listed Estate Exchange adjoining the property to the south.

Relevant Planning History

2.10 The following previous planning applications are relevant to the proposal:

- **Erection of a multi-storey office building after demolition of existing building** (ref: 029605) – Application approved 24th September 1987.
- **Alterations to building façade and installation of air handling equipment on roof** (ref: 109151/FO/2015/C1) – Application approved 20th October 2015.

Planning Policy

Local Policies

2.11 The following policies from the *Manchester Core Strategy* and the *Saved Policies of Unitary Development Plan (UDP)* have been considered in relation to the proposal design:

- **Policy SP1:** Spatial Principles
- **Policy CC1**: Primary Economic Development Focus: City Centre and Fringe
- **Policy CC8**: Change and Renewal
- **Policy CC9**: Design and Heritage
- **Policy EC8**: Central Manchester
- **Policy EN1**: Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas
- **Policy EN3**: Heritage
- **Policy DC18.1**: Conservation Areas
- **Policy DC19.1**: Listed Buildings

National Policy

2.12 The *National Planning Policy Framework* sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied.

2.13 Section 6 relates to "***Building a strong, competitive economy***" and states that decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and take account of local business needs.

2.14 Section 12 relates to "***Achieving well-designed places***" and states that decisions should ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character and history, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change. It adds that where the design of a development accords with clear expectations in plan policies, design should not be used by the decision-maker as a valid reason to object to development.

3.0 Design Proposal and Process

3.1 As discussed above, the existing windows are over 25 years old, have reached the end of their natural life and are now suffering from significant issues.

3.2 The windows were originally white uPVC but have been recoated in grey in 2016. The coatings only have a 5-year design life and recoating will give a poor appearance and presents a maintenance liability. It is therefore not possible to refurbish the windows.

3.3 It is proposed to replace the deteriorating windows with higher quality double-glazed aluminium windows which will appear very similar to existing. Each window unit will have a single opener and a fixed casement as shown on the plans. The proposed RAL colour is the same as existing, being RAL7012 (Basalt Grey).

3.4 Justification for the replacement is as follows:

- Aluminium is a much higher quality installation than uPVC and the windows will appear very similar albeit there will be a single opener and a fixed casement per unit as shown.
- The uPVC windows are original to the building and despite previously having tilt and turn openers, were fixed closed in 2016 as part of a revised ventilation strategy where mechanical ventilation was introduced. The proposed windows will add back the ability to open these (bottom hung tilt only) to enhance ventilation given the desire for more air flow post-Covid.
- Windows will also have trickle vents to allow for flexibility in internal subdivision. Only a few of the existing windows have trickle vents.
- New windows will provide 1.8w/m2K U-value which is a better thermal performance than existing, providing a positive impact on energy performance and an improved internal environment for occupiers.

3.5 The proposed scheme accords with local and national planning policy, in particularly Policy CC9 (Design and Heritage) of the Core Strategy, by enhancing the standard of the appearance of the building, while preserving the Upper King Street Conservation Area and causing no harm to the adjacent Listed Building.

3.6 The improvements to the windows represent an initial stage as part of a wider strategy of the applicant to enhance the property to attract new occupiers.

4.0 Access

4.1 The current access arrangements are to be retained, with no change to the existing arrangement as a result of the proposals.

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 The replacement of the deteriorating windows is part of a wider strategy to enhance the building, yet the changes are relatively minor and will not present any harm to the Conservation Area and adjacent Listed Building.

5.2 Importantly, they will also help to improve ventilation and thermal performance for occupiers of the offices.

5.3 The building has no special interest in the historic significance of the Conservation Area, while the works represent an enhancement of the property with a design that is in keeping with the existing and in line with planning policy.