



Planning Statement

The Washhouse Bar
19-23 Shudehill,
Manchester

Iceni Projects Limited
on behalf of



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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of The Washhouse Manchester Ltd (the ‘Applicant’) to support a planning application for a part retrospective change of use of no. 19-23 Shudehill. The description of development is as follows:

Part retrospective change of use of the ground floor of no. 19 from a café/restaurant/fast-food takeaway (Use Class E) to a bar (Sui Generis) and expansion of premises through a change of use of the first and second floor of no.19 and the first floor of no 21-23 Shudehill from an office (Use Class E) to a bar (Sui Generis).

- 1.2 The purpose of this statement is to identify and address the main planning issues associated with the proposed development, demonstrating how the proposal is acceptable in the context of Manchester City Council’s (the “Council”) Development Plan and other material planning considerations.

- 1.3 The statement is structured as follows:

- Section 2 describes the application site and its surroundings, and outlines the planning history of the site;
- Section 3 describes the proposed development;
- Section 4 identifies the planning policies relevant to the determination of the application;
- Section 5 assesses the proposal against the key planning considerations; and
- Section 6 concludes that planning permission should be granted.

- 1.4 This Planning Statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying technical documentation:

- Application forms and land ownership certificates.
- LXA-WHM-000 Location Plan.
- LXA-WHM-001 Existing Plan.
- LXA-WHM-101 Proposed Planning Layout.
- LXA-WHM-102 Proposed Licensing Plan.

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- LXA-WHM-103 Proposed Lift Option Plan.
 - Supporting statement from Loxley Estates regarding marketing efforts to date.
 - 2015 Crime Impact Statement, prepared by Greater Manchester Police.
 - Management & Operations Plan, provided by the Applicant.
 - Noise Survey, prepared by ADC Acoustics – to follow.
 - Photos of the site showing location of bins, security shutters and internal layout.

2. SITE & SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The application site is known as 'The Washhouse' and is located at the ground floor of no. 19 Shudehill within Manchester City Centre. No. 19 is comprised of a narrow three-storey brick building located between two retail units along Shudehill, an active, busy frontage opposite the Manchester Arndale and associated NCP car park. The proposed extension into building no. 21-23 adjoins no. 19 and consists of a four-storey brick building with a newsagents and barbers on the ground floor and vacant office space above. The extension of The Washhouse into the first and second floor of no.19 and the first floor of no.21-23 seeks to utilise this vacant office space.
- 2.2 It is understood that surrounding the application site there may be a few residential flats however most of the Shudehill frontage consists of retail and food and drink premises. Shudehill generally acts as the defining boundary between the city centre retail core and the Northern Quarter area, containing an eclectic mix of shops, bars and restaurants. There is a loading bay area situated in front of no. 17 Shudehill, and road markings indicating no parking is permitted in front of no. 19 Shudehill.
- 2.3 To the rear of Shudehill, the premises backs onto Well Street, a narrow service street where waste bins are stored and ventilation and extraction plant is fixed onto the rear of the buildings.

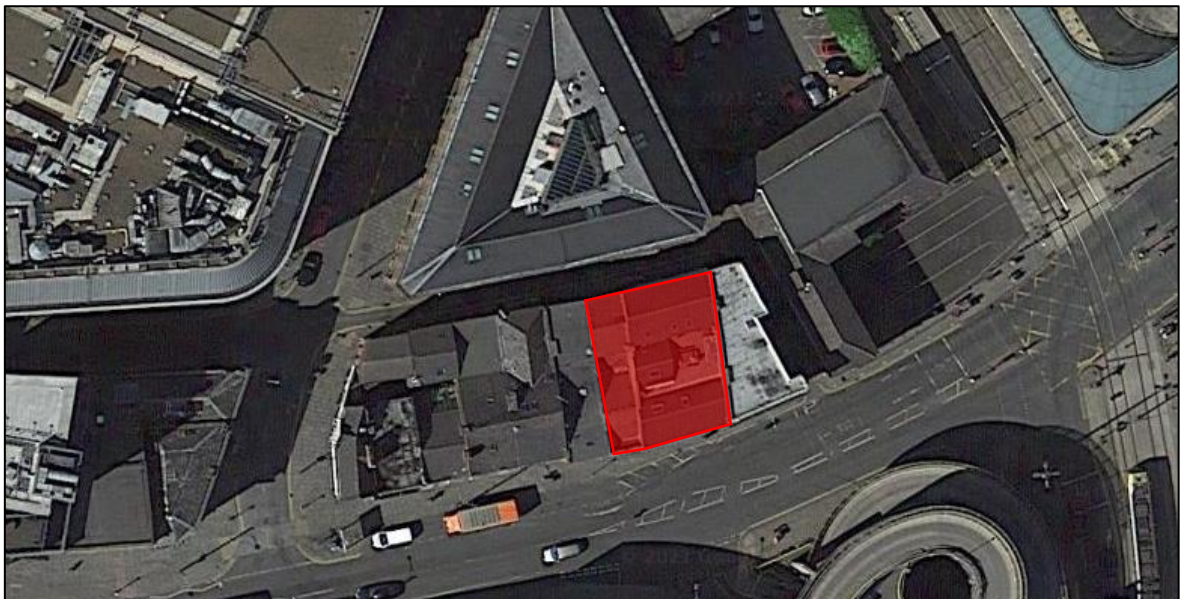


Figure 1 Aerial view of the site, highlighted in red.

Planning History

- 2.4 It is our understanding that the following planning applications have been submitted at no. 19-23 Shudehill based on a search of Manchester City Council's planning database:

Application reference no.	Description of Development	Status
No. 19 Shudehill		
108370/FO/2015	Use of the property (ground floor) as a cocktail bar (use class A4)	Expired- application remained invalid. 2015
037993	Change of use from ground floor retail shop to reception area for offices above	Approved December 1990
036262	Construction of new shop frontage incorporating access to first floor office accommodation	Approved May 1990
No. 21-23 Shudehill		
090671/FU/2009/C1	Change of use of vacant 1st floor office to D1 use (medical consultants)	Approved November 2009
F05343	Change of use of the premises to the manufacturing and wholesaling of fabrics.	Approved September 1976

- 2.5 Based on the details contained within the application that was submitted in 2015 but never validated, we understand that the ground floor of no.19 was being used as a café, sandwich bar and fast-food takeaway. That planning application was submitted by the current Applicant's solicitors; however, it was never followed through and progressed to determination, unbeknown to the Applicant.
- 2.6 Considering this, the Applicant is now seeking to rectify this error and submit a part retrospective change of use application for the existing Washhouse premises to formalise the use of the site as a bar, alongside the proposed expansion at the upper floors of no.19 and no. 21-23.

3. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The Washhouse – a ‘secret’ concept bar

- 3.1 No. 19 Shudehill is currently operated as a ‘concept’ ‘secret’ cocktail bar by The Washhouse Ltd, who began trading in 2015. Styled as a laundrette on the ground floor, including washing machines and tumble dryers, patrons have to pre-book to gain entry to the bar and are only permitted to enter upon permission by the staff.
- 3.2 Once inside, patrons are presented with a seated table service and there is no option for vertical drinking. The bar offers a unique experience focussed on cocktails and conversation, with low background music creating a calm but enjoyable atmosphere.
- 3.3 The success of the Washhouse follows earlier success by the owners at The Laundrette in Chorlton, a similarly themed concept bar. Since opening, the Washhouse has gained 557 Google reviews and averages 4.7/5 stars, becoming a popular attraction for locals and tourists alike due to its quirky theme. The bar is also rated as the #1 bar on TripAdvisor in Greater Manchester, a title which they have held for over 2 years.
- 3.4 As the Applicant has become aware that the current site does not have planning permission for its use, they are seeking to rectify this whilst also applying for permission to expand the premises. As such, the proposal for the change of use at no. 19-23 Shudehill includes the following:

Retrospective works:

- Change of use of the ground floor of no.19 Shudehill to a bar (Sui Generis).
- Erection of signage to the front elevation advertising ‘Washhouse’.

Proposed works:

- Change of use of the first and second floor of no. 19 Shudehill to a bar (Sui Generis).
- Change of use of first floor of no.21-23 Shudehill to a bar (Sui Generis).

- 3.5 The existing premises at no.19 will be connected to the adjoining building by the removal of an internal wall.

3.6 The proposals create a number of benefits at this site, and the bar's continued operation since 2015 is a testament to its popularity and management and operations. The benefits can be summarised as follows:

- Supporting 7 jobs in hospitality, with a further 20 jobs expected to be created by the proposed extension into no.19 and 21-23.
- Retaining an attractive, active frontage along Shudehill which is well maintained and adds to the vibrancy of the Northern Quarter district.
- Supporting the leisure and night time economy, including supporting the city as a tourist destination.
- Utilising vacant city centre floorspace, supported by the site freeholder, Loxley Estates.

3.7 The proposal's compliance with local and national planning policy is assessed in the following section.

4. POLICY & LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

4.1 This section provides an overview of the Development Plan and other material considerations relevant to the consideration of these proposals, as required by Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended).

4.2 In the context of this application, planning policy operates at three levels:

- **National** | Central Government produces guidance in the form of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) (“NPPF”) and the supporting National Planning Practice Guidance (“PPG”).
- **Regional** | Draft Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (2019) (“GMSF”), prepared by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (“GMCA”). This document does not contain policy applicable to this site.
- **Local** | Manchester Core Strategy (July 2012) and saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) for the City of Manchester (1995) – these policy documents comprise the Development Plan (“DP”).

National policy

4.3 The revised National Planning Policy Framework (“NPPF”), published in February 2019, sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

4.4 Paragraph 11 states that “Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision-taking this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay”.

4.5 In addition, paragraph 38 notes that local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way, working proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

4.6 Additional relevant sections of the NPPF are detailed below when discussing the key planning considerations.

The Development Plan

4.7 Based on the Council's Interactive Proposals Map, the site is designated as within the city centre boundary but sits outside of the city centre primary shopping area. The site is within the Shudehill Conservation Area but is not a listed building.

4.8 The relevant policies within the Local Development Plan include:

- Core Strategy Policy SP1 – Spatial Principles;
- Core Strategy Policy C 1 – Centre Hierarchy;
- Core Strategy Policy EC1 – Employment & Economic Growth in Manchester;
- Core strategy Policy EC2 – Existing Employment Space;
- Core Strategy Policy CC1 – Primary Economic Development Focus: City Centre and Fringe;
- Core Strategy Policy CC 4 – Visitors - Tourism, Culture and Leisure;
- Core Strategy Policy CC5 – Transport;
- Core Strategy Policy EN19 – Waste;
- Core Strategy Policy T2 – Accessible Areas of Opportunity and Needs;
- Core Strategy Policy DM1 – Development Management;
- Core Strategy Policy C 10 – Leisure and the Evening Economy
- UDP Policy DC10 - Food & Drink Uses
- UDP Policy DC26 – Development & Noise

Other material considerations

4.9 Other policy documents / guidance notes considered during the design of the proposal include:

- Waste Storage and Collection Guidance for New Developments (July 2016);
- The Guide to Development in Manchester Supplementary Planning Document and Planning Guidance (2007); and
- Secure by Design Guidance v2 (March 2019).

5. KEY PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 This section assesses the proposal, highlighting the key planning considerations relevant to the determination of the application by taking each element of the scheme in turn:

- Principle of the change of use;
- Disabled Access provision;
- Noise impact;
- Refuse storage and collection;
- Crime impact;
- Management & Operations.

Principle of the proposal

5.2 Prior to being acquired by The Washhouse, the ground floor of no. 19 Shudehill was being used as a sandwich bar/café/fast food restaurant, although it's unclear as to whether it had consent for this. Prior to that, it was being used as a retail premises, or a reception area for the offices on the upper floors – it is unclear. The first-floor offices have been vacant for two years, and the second floor became vacant in November 2020. In addition, the first floor of no. 21-23 Shudehill is currently vacant office space, with the previous tenants vacating in June 2020.

5.3 It is noted that Core Strategy Policy EC 2 (Existing Employment Space) advocates for the protection of employment space and notes that alternative uses will only be supported on sites allocated accordingly, or if it can be demonstrated that: The existing use is un-viable in terms of business operations, building age and format; The existing use is incompatible with adjacent uses; The existing use is unsuitable for employment having had regard to the Manchester/Salford - Trafford SFRA; or On balance, proposals are able to offer greater benefits in terms of the Core Strategy's vision and spatial objectives than the existing use.

5.4 In this regard, we would highlight the fact that the existing Washhouse premises at no.19 has been operating successfully for 6 years on the ground floor of a former café/restaurant/fast-food takeaway, and therefore Policy EC2 is only applicable to the proposed extension into the office space on the upper floors which constitutes 'employment space'. With regards to this proposed extension into the upper floors of no. 19 and 21-23, the Applicant has been able to provide a supporting letter from Loxley Estates (the freeholder) which confirms that marketing efforts by both W T Gunson and Avison Young were unsuccessful:

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- The first floor of no. 19 was marketed for 24 months and in that time, received 0 offers or expressions of interest.
 - The second floor of no.19 only became vacant in November 2020 and as such, The Washhouse expressed an interest in acquiring the site soon after, so it was only marketed for 4 months, although again, did not receive any offers or expressions of interest.
 - The first floor of no.21-23 was marketed for 9 months (June 2020 to February 2021) and in that time, received 0 offers or expressions of interest.

5.5 When considering this policy, we would therefore argue that the expansion of an existing business can be seen to offer greater benefits than the site's previous use as an unlawful fast-food takeaway/café and upper floor office space, parts of which were vacant for a significant period of time.

5.6 It should also be noted that whilst Policy EC2 does relate to the protection of employment sites, its focus is on the protection of strategic employment land, particularly industrial uses, and in this regard, a change of use from offices (in part) to a bar, i.e. one main town centre use to another, should not warrant the same level of protection. The supporting text to Policy EC2 indicates that the intention of this policy is to mainly protect the loss of employment sites to residential uses.

5.7 Considering the success of the business to date, we consider that the Council should support the expansion of the operation which in turn, supports the maintenance of a strong and varied night time economy in the city centre. The continued operation and expansion of the business is in accordance with Core Strategy Policy C10 which states that new development and redevelopment that supports the evening economy, contributes to the vitality of centres and supports a balanced and socially inclusive evening/night-time economy will be permitted. In considering cumulative impact, residential amenity and balance of uses in the city centre, the proposal is able to accord with the policy requirements. The site's impact on neighbouring amenity is discussed further below with regards to noise mitigation, operations, crime impact and waste management.

Disabled Access Provision

5.8 Previous correspondence from the Council regarding the 2015 planning application (ref. 108370/FO/2015) indicates that it was requested that the existing step at the front of the property be lowered, and level access is to be provided through the main entrance. The Applicant can confirm that the step will be lowered prior to the bar re-opening.

5.9 In addition, when considering whether full disabled access can be achieved through the rest of the building, the Applicant's instructed structural engineer has provided a plan and accompanying notes which demonstrates that provision of a lift is unfeasible. Due to the level changes and narrow width

of the building footprint, a lift would only provide disabled users with access to a small proportion of the site which would not provide a sufficient benefit to those users or be viable for the business, which would lose too many covers in place of the lift.

Noise Impact

- 5.10 A noise impact assessment will be completed in support of the application and is expected to be submitted in due course. The instructed acoustician has liaised with Sue Jones (Environmental Protection Officer) to confirm and agree the noise survey methodology and criteria, which includes an assessment of the air conditioning unit (installed before The Washhouse occupied the premises). The proposal will therefore comply with UDP Policy DC26 – Development & Noise.
- 5.11 We can also confirm that no ventilation or extraction equipment (which may generate additional noise) is required, as the bar does not serve food. The Applicant is willing to accept a condition that ensures that no cooking takes place without subsequent agreement of the method of fume extraction and securing of any relevant additional permission.

Refuse storage and collection

- 5.12 At present, the Washhouse uses the Manchester City Council approved waste collection company, B&M waste services. In accordance with the Council's street licence team, the current bins are stored on Well Street, the narrow service road to the rear of the property, which is consistent with the approach taken by neighbouring properties. The bins are therefore out of sight from public view.
- 5.13 At present, The Washhouse has the following bins within its ownership:
- 1 x cardboard 360ltr bin.
 - 1 x glass 360ltr bin.
 - 1 x general waste 660ltr bin.
- 5.14 It is proposed that the number of bins will remain the same however the frequency of waste collections will increase each week in order to facilitate the expansion of the premises.

Crime Impact

- 5.15 When submitting the earlier 2015 application which remained invalid, the Applicant did instruct the preparation of a Crime Impact Statement by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) Secured by Design Team. This previous report confirmed that GMP did not recommend any design changes and that they would ultimately support the application for a change of use at the ground floor of no.19. We

have resubmitted this report for reference. In addition, the Applicant is able to confirm the following crime prevention measures are in operation:

- Both front and rear exits are fitted with security shutters.
- CCTV is installed on every floor, and on the front and rear of the building.
- An alarm system is in place across the whole building.
- Door safe registered security are employed as per The Washhouse's licence conditions.

5.16 To date, The Washhouse has been able to operate with little to no crime concerns and have a good working relationship with neighbouring occupiers, the street licensing team and the police.

Management & Operations

5.17 A supporting operations management plan has been provided by the Applicant which confirms the proposed opening hours (12noon till 3am Daily) in accordance with their license agreement, as well as measures to reduce noise impact, the potential for crime and managing smokers and loiterers. It should be noted that the premises is only open until 3am on Fridays and Saturdays however providing a 3am closing time across the week will allow additional flexibility should it be needed, going some way to allowing The Washhouse to recoup lost trade due to the pandemic.

5.18 The existing premises has operated from this location for 6 years and to date has proved adept at managing patrons to ensure the impact on the surroundings in terms of noise, litter and appearance are limited.

5.19 The plans submitted in support of the application also confirm that the proposal meets all fire safety regulations- fire exits are marked on the plans.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of The Washhouse Manchester Ltd (the ‘Applicant’) to support a planning application for a part retrospective change of use of no. 19-23 Shudehill. The description of development is as follows:

Part retrospective change of use of the ground floor of no. 19 from a café/restaurant/fast-food takeaway (Use Class E) to a bar (Sui Generis) and expansion of premises through a change of use of the first and second floor of no.19 and the first floor of no 21-23 Shudehill from an office (Use Class E) to a bar (Sui Generis).

- 6.2 The planning benefits of granting permission for this proposal are:

- Supporting 7 jobs in hospitality, with 20 additional jobs expected to be created by the proposed extension into no.21-23.
- Retaining an attractive, active frontage along Shudehill which is well maintained and adds to the vibrancy of the Northern Quarter district.
- Supporting the leisure and night time economy, including supporting the city as a tourist destination.
- Utilising vacant city centre floorspace, supported by the site freeholder, Loxley Estates.

- 6.3 The continued successful operation of the site to date demonstrates that its continued use and expansion should be supported by the Council. The proposal accords with Core Strategy Policy C10; supporting the night time economy, and Core Strategy Policy CC4, supporting the city centre offering for tourists and visitors. The proposal also accords with the NPPF which advocates approving sustainable development proposals without delay.

- 6.4 It is evident that Manchester City Centre’s recovery from Coronavirus and the impact of national lockdowns and regional tier restrictions will be reliant on bringing forward schemes that revitalise and attract people back into the city centre. In this regard, we trust that the significant benefits of this proposal will be recognised, particularly The Washhouse’s position as #1 bar in Greater Manchester on TripAdvisor, and the application will therefore be approved without delay.