

Retrospective planning application for retention of pillars and canopy structure to the side of an existing side extension at 1 Meldon Road, Longsight, Manchester M13 0TZ .



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1. Site and Surroundings

- 1.1 The site comprises an existing retail unit situated on the corner of Birchfields Road and Meldon Road, Longsight. The property is set back from both roads, in particular on the Birchfields Road frontage, there is a low wall adjacent to the pavement which forms the curtilage of the site. Along the pavement there are a number of trees.
- 1.2 To the north of the site is a row of residential properties comprising two pairs of semi-detached houses and two detached properties. To the south of the site is Meldon Road with a retail unit sitting opposite. To the east of the property are other commercial properties which front onto Meldon Road. To the west there are residential properties fronting onto Birchfields Road which face the site.
- 1.3 Planning permission was recently granted for a single storey side extension to the existing retail shop (Reference 118825/FO/2018) which has been implemented.

2. The proposal

- 2.1 Planning permission was granted for a single storey extension to the existing retail unit. This application seeks retrospective permission for a further extension consisting of a number of pillars and frame which form an open air canopy structure and which extends off the existing single storey extension. The proposal fronts onto Birchfields Road. In front of the proposal there is a low wall, adjacent to the highway, which would be retained. The proposal will include a landscaped hedge along the boundary with Birchfields Road. Overall the structure is of lightweight construction and appears as a subservient structure to the host building and the approved extension. This is a property feature and is part of the landscaping of Meldon Road. There is no access from the internal of the building.
- 2.2 The pillared area is located to the side of the previously approved side extension. The approved extension created one unit consisting of a retail unit at the front with office facilities to the rear. The existing floorspace for the retail unit was approximately 40 square metres and the extension added another 32.8 square metres providing a total of 72.8 square metres. The enclosed canopy structure comprises a floor area of xxx

3. Development Plan policies

National Planning Policy Framework

- 3.1 Paragraph 91 states that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which amongst other things
 - b) are safe and accessible, so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion – for example through the use of clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas.
- 3.2 Paragraph 92 states that to provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should amongst other things d) ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community; and
- 3.3 Paragraph 95 states that planning policies and decisions should promote public safety and take into account wider security and defence requirements by:

a) anticipating and addressing possible malicious threats and natural hazards, especially in locations where large numbers of people are expected to congregate. This includes appropriate and proportionate steps that can be taken to reduce vulnerability, increase resilience and ensure public safety and security; and

3.4 Paragraph 127 states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

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.

Manchester Core Strategy (CS)

3.5 The site is located within Central Manchester Regeneration Area. Paragraph 2.64 of the CS states that scope for physical change within Central Manchester is limited, restricted to redevelopment or refurbishment of existing areas and new development on a relatively small number of 'brownfield' sites. This will lead to a slower, more gradual change than is possible elsewhere in the city. It sets out a number of challenges for the area. These are as follows:

- High levels of worklessness
- Deprivation concentrated by neighbourhood, rather than whole wards
- Limited housing choice in some areas
- Limited scope for physical change
- Congestion along key arterial route into the City Centre

3.6 Policy C5 refers to Central Manchester District Centres-Hulme, Longsight and Rusholme. Although the site is not located within Longsight local centre. The policy seeks the improvement to the quality of the environment in Rusholme and Longsight is a priority to help retain and attract shoppers and visitors.

4. Material considerations

- 4.1 The site comprises a frontage onto Meldon Road with a side frontage onto Birchfields Road. To the side of the property there is a significant area of land which the applicant has partially developed. Planning permission was granted for a side extension to create further retail accommodation. The plan below shows the side elevation facing onto Birchfields Road and the front elevation showing a projection of 2.5 metres from the side of the host building. The distance from the approved extension to the boundary wall with Birchfields Road is about 3 metres



- 4.2 The applicant has constructed a further addition to the approved extension comprising a series of pillars with a horizontal frame above which is attached to the extension. The structure is open to the elements with a number of openings facing onto Birchfields Road and an opening at either end of the structure, as well being open above. The structure projects about 1.8 metres from the side of the extension leaving a gap of about 1.2 metres to the boundary wall with Birchfields Road. The front part of the pillars are rendered in grey to match the existing building and the pillars towards the rear have been covered in artificial greenery. The floor area is to be turfed.
- 4.3 The Council have served an enforcement notice on the applicant (ref ENF/1373/17) to remove the canopy structure, however this application seeks retrospective permission to retain the structure. The applicant wishes to retain the structure for two main reasons. Firstly, without the structure people were parking vehicles between the approved extension and the boundary wall. This structure has reduced this gap to about 1.2 metres which has now prevented people using this area as an unofficial car parking area. Secondly youths would gather in this area creating problems of anti-social behaviour. By erecting the canopy and effectively creating a levels difference between the floor of the canopy and the ground level of the area between the structure and the boundary wall, this makes it less attractive for people to congregate there and means the shop and its extension attain a reasonable level of security.
- 4.4 The applicant also intends to finish the development by placing artificial grass on the base of the canopy structure and landscape the area between the structure and the boundary wall with planting a hedge. This will further provide a less attractive area for people to congregate at the site and provide a soft roadside boundary. The applicant is agreeable to the imposition of a landscaping implementation scheme. The Planning Framework makes many references to crime and disorder and it is considered the proposal complies with these relevant policies set out above.
- 4.5 Regarding the Core Strategy, the plan states that the challenges facing the Central Manchester Regeneration Areas, which includes the application site, are high levels of worklessness and

limited scope for physical change. The proposal would result in physical change to a building at the entrance to a small shopping area, which would be of benefit to the local area.

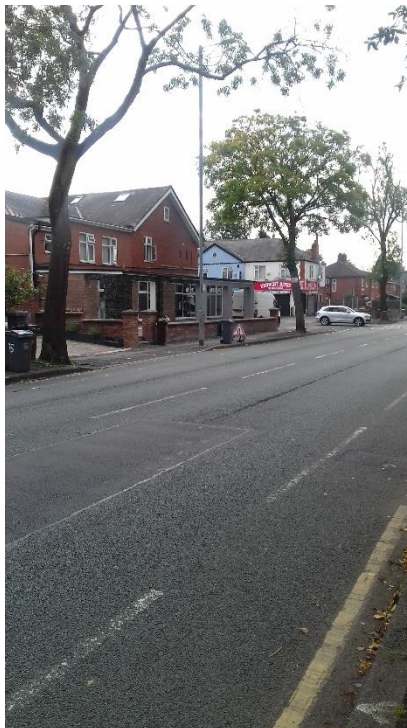
- 4.6 Policy C5 of the Core Strategy seeks to improve the environment in Longsight and it is considered the proposal would lift the immediate area to the wider benefit of the area. Overall the proposal is considered to accord with Policy C5 and the Core Strategy in the round.
- 4.7 Previously, the Council considered the proposal would breach the building line along Birchfields Road. Although the proposal would project beyond the side elevation of the host building and front onto Birchfields Road, the applicant would dispute the site is situated in a long-established building line. As the plan below shows the site forms part of a short frontage comprising six dwellings and the site consisting of five building blocks. The applicant therefore contends the frontage does not form an established building line.



- 4.8 Notwithstanding the lack of an established building frontage, there are no long-distance views of the site and therefore the proposal would not be particularly visible. When viewed from the south or north along Birchfields Road, the trees along the highway and the orientation of the road does not provide significant long views of the site. From the south the photograph below shows that the dwellings to the north of the site act as a backdrop to the structure. The structure is modest in size and height and is not prominent when viewed in the context with the approved extension and is not an incongruous feature in the street scene given it is set back from the road frontage.



- 4.9 When viewed from the north the presence of mature roadside trees softens the impact of the proposal. The proposal includes the provision of a new hedge which will further soften the proposal. The proposal will not be harmful to the street scene because of its modest size, its open nature in that the approved extension can still be viewed, its location set back behind the wall fronting the highway and existing and proposed landscaped features. Overall from both directions the proposal would not be particularly visible and would not be harmful to the relatively mixed character of the area.



- 4.10 Previously the side elevation of the host building, fronting onto Birchfields Road was a bland frontage with little architectural merit. It comprised of a different brickwork, rollers shutter doors and an advert on the upper floor. The previously approved extension provided a lightweight modern structure with a number of windows which would gave the Birchfields Road frontage a degree of uniformity and significantly enhanced the visual appearance of the area. The proposed canopy structure complements the existing extension and further enhances the character of the area.
- 4.11 The site is located at the entrance to the small commercial area comprising Meldon Road. The proposal would enhance the entrance to this small centre and provide an attractive frontage and improve the area's vitality.
- 4.12 Opposite the site are residential properties which would face the proposal on Birchfields Road. The proposal has no impact on the living conditions of these neighbouring residents.
- 4.13 Overall the proposal would not be harmful to the local centre situated around Meldon Road and the character of the area. The proposal is an attractive lightweight structure which would complement and provide a subordinate element to the host building and the approved extension. Furthermore, the proposal complies with the Council's Core Strategy proposals and the Framework. Accordingly, the Council is requested to approve the proposal.