GL Hearn
Part of Capita Real Estate

Planning and Listed Building Consent Statement

On behalf of OCM Luxembourg Manchester Aparthotel SARL

The Atrium Hotel
74 Princess Street,
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Planning Statement is submitted on behalf of OCM Luxembourg Manchester Aparthotel SARL ('the applicant') to support a full Planning and Listed Building Consent application for the refurbishment and alteration of the former Atrium Hotel ('the Site') to increase the number of bedrooms to 160 (from 116) and upgrade the building more generally.

1.2 SACO, on behalf of the applicant, will operate the aparthotel under its "Locke" brand.

1.3 The description of development is as follows:

"Internal and external alterations and refurbishment to create 160 aparthotel rooms (Class C1), ancillary gym, bar and workspace, and the extension of A3 units at ground and basement level, and replacement plant at roof level.

Central House: Internal and external alterations throughout to create additional aparthotel rooms (Class C1) and ancillary bar (Planning and Listed Building Consent).

Johnson House: Change of use of basement nightclub (sui generis) of Johnson House to create additional aparthotel rooms (Class C1), ancillary gym and back of house areas. Provision of ancillary workspace at ground floor. Remedial works to external facades of the building including creation of a new access on Beaver Street and replacement plant at roof level.

Dominion House: Change of use of Class C1 floorspace at ground and basement levels to create additional Class A3 floorspace. Remedial works to external facades of the building including alterations to the Princess Street and Whitworth Street entrances, and provision of escape stairs."

1.4 An aparthotel by definition is a Class C1 Use where rooms are laid out to provide more space and comfort for guest staying for an extended period of time. As outlined below, SACO has extensive experience of developing and operating aparthotels, and the Locke brand is specifically targeted at business travellers in particular (though not exclusively) with the creative industries and TMT sectors in mind ('the new corporates').

1.5 The Site consists of a hotel formerly known as The Atrium which closed for refurbishment this year. The Site comprises four separate but linked buildings known as Central House, Dominion House and Johnson House. Central House is Grade II Listed whereas the other buildings are considered by Manchester City Council ('MCC') as 'non-designated heritage assets', and as such, are of historic significance. The Site is also within the Whitworth Street Conservation Area.

1.6 The Site has an extensive planning history and significantly in 1990 planning permission was granted for its use as a hotel (Class C1). Over time other commercial uses including café/restaurant

(Class A3) floorspace and a nightclub (Sui Generis) have also been permitted and added to the building.

1.7 The proposed development involves the continued operation of the building under Class C1 (as an aparthotel) and Class A3 (restaurant) but seeks to upgrade and rebrand the accommodation, creating a building that is accessible to guests and the wider public.

1.8 The building is in disrepair and its refurbishment will have a positive impact on the character and appearance of the heritage assets, including the Conservation Area, enhancing their significance.

1.9 The heritage significance of the Site has been a primary consideration in the development of the proposals, and a key part of the brief has been to restore and refurbish important features of the building where possible, and to enable the public to enjoy the building's history through improved access to its functions.

Operator Profile

1.10 SACO was established in 1997 and is one of the UK's most established multi-model aparthotel operators with an extensive network of properties around the world. SACO is fully owned and funded by Oaktree Capital. Currently, SACO has some 800 serviced rooms in operation in the UK, with access to 35,000 apartments globally.

1.11 SACO targets the corporate extended stay market via a traditional serviced apartment offering. This strategy involves securing the accounts of large corporations, with current contracts including PWC, Deloitte, Shell and BMW. Alongside the traditional corporations that are already SACO clients, the business is seeking to obtain contracts with the "New Corporates" (typically aligned with the creative industries and TMT sectors) which are well established in Manchester and becoming increasingly prevalent.

1.12 In order to cater to the needs of the New Corporates, SACO has launched a new brand called "Locke" which is designed with the ideals of the new corporates in mind. The brand is more design led, offering good quality accommodation and value for money in the best locations. Businesses often prefer aparthotels when their staff are required to stay 'on location' for extended periods of time because they offer better value for money and more flexible terms of occupation than traditional housing. Indeed aparthotels are preferred to traditional hotels for extended stays because they are able to offer a more comfortable and personalised living environment which is highly sought after by staff. The aparthotels also provide a more cost effective alternative to renting traditional housing.

1.13 In this context, the aim of the Locke brand is to provide an environment for guests which enables them to feel at home in the apartments, and which connects them to the amenities provided by the location. As such, the Locke apartments are delivered alongside a high quality food and beverage offer within the same building which assists in enhancing the on-site customer experience, whilst also providing the public with additional amenities. For instance, Locke has a cultural programme which is designed to entertain, enlighten and bring the local and traveller community together in creative ways – a clear benefit to those in the TMT and creative industries, particularly international workers. Locke achieves this environment by offering on-site weekly round table sessions ranging from tech meet ups with talks hosted by industry leaders & entrepreneurs, to gin tasting and lifestyle based events (i.e. mindfulness, music or cooking).

1.14 Locke living goes further than providing suitable aparthotel accommodation, incorporating facilities such as "Locke Labs" (ancillary workspace) which are design led creative meeting spaces as proposed in this instance. The labs are designed to foster creativity and improve productivity.

1.15 The proposed aparthotel typology, to be operated under the Locke brand, is proving very successful in tapping into the needs of the New Corporates in other locations including Cannon St and Leman St (London) and across the UK including in (Edinburgh). The proposals at The Atrium are expected to be highly sought after, addressing a need for such accommodation in Manchester.

Report Structure

1.16 Section 2 of this Planning Statement sets out the description of the Site, including relevant planning history. Section 3 describes the detail of the development, including an overview of pre-application discussions held to date which have influenced the design. Section 4 outlines the relevant policy against which the development should be considered, whilst Section 5 provides the planning assessment. Section 6 provides the summary of key findings and the conclusion.

Planning Application Supporting Documents

1.17 The application is accompanied by a suite of supporting documents, the scope and extent of which has been agreed with Officers. This Statement should be read in conjunction with the other technical assessments submitted.

1.18 In addition to this Planning Statement, the Planning and Listed Building Consent application is accompanied by the following supporting documentation:

- Application Form, Certificates and Notices;
- Heritage Assessment;
- Existing and proposed plans, elevations, sections and details;
- Design and Access Statement;
- Access Statement;

- Acoustic Strategy Report;
- Plant and Ventilation Strategies;
- Transport Statement;
- Servicing and Delivery Plan;
- Draft Travel Plan; and
- Waste Strategy.

1.19 Please see the accompanying 'Schedule of Documents' for the full list of submission documents.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION AND CONTEXT

Site Details and Location

2.1 The Site is prominently positioned in the heart of Manchester on the corner of Princess Street and Whitworth Street, within the Whitworth Street Conservation Area. It is bound by Rochdale Canal to the north, Princess Street to the east, Whitworth Street to the south and Beaver Street to the west.

2.2 The Site encompasses four buildings interconnected through the ground floor. The four buildings include Dominion left and right fronting onto Whitworth Street, Johnson House to the northwest fronting onto Beaver Street, and Central House fronting onto Princess Street and the canal. The buildings are 6 storeys.

2.3 Central House is a Grade II Listed Building, whereas the other buildings are 'non-designated heritage assets'.

2.4 The Site was converted into a hotel use (Class C1) in 1991 (see application 038786 below) and currently comprises 116 rooms with an average room size in excess of 42 sqm. Other commercial uses including a nightclub in the basement of Johnson House and Class A3 units (Dominion House) have also been added over time (see planning history for details).

2.5 The Site is identified in **Figure 1** below.

Figure 1: Aerial view of site (outlined in red)



2.6 The existing hotel accommodation is laid out as suites/studios and broadly occupies ground to sixth floor (excluding ground and basement floor of Dominion House and the basement level of Johnson House).

2.7 At basement and ground floor level the building has significant vacant commercial floor space including two vacant A3 units (within Dominion House) and an area formerly used as a nightclub (Johnson House). Each of these units can be accessed separately from the street and through the hotel. Central House also includes a disused swimming pool and Jacuzzi at basement level.

2.8 The entire lower ground floor within buildings Dominion left and right was also formerly in use as restaurants (Class A3). The access to this space is located at ground floor level on the corner of Beaver Street and Whitworth Street (Dominion left).

2.9 Central House includes a disused swimming pool and Jacuzzi at lower ground floor and is set out as hotel accommodation at the ground and upper floors.

2.10 The basement and lower ground floor areas are in serious disrepair and are, in part, below the level of the adjacent canal. Notably at lower ground floor within Johnson House and Central House there are windows looking out onto the tow path of the canal.

Surrounding Context

2.11 The surrounding area consists of mixed uses, predominately comprising residential buildings, many with commercial uses at ground floor.

2.12 The Site is within 20 metres of Canal Street, a popular area characterised by bars, restaurants and clubs.

2.13 There are two buildings directly to the north of the site on the opposite side of Rochdale canal. The building fronting Princess Street is occupied by offices and the other building is an Electricity Substation.

2.14 A residential building is located to the south of the Site which includes a bar at ground floor level. The building directly to the west is a multi-storey car park.

2.15 Opposite the Atrium (to the east) is a vacant site that has been granted planning permission for development to provide apartments and a hotel in addition to commercial uses at ground floor level (application 110346/FO/2015/C2). It is understood that this development is now under construction.

Relevant planning history

2.16 The Site has been subject to a number of planning applications and significant alteration since the 1990s. the relevant planning history is outlined below:

- Application 034031 (Entire building): Conversion of existing office and warehouse block to 73 flats, 5 shop units and an extension to licensed restaurant and public house in basement area - Approved 09/06/89;
- 034030 (Entire building): Listed building consent for the conversion of an existing office and warehouse block into 73 flats, 5 shop units and extension to licensed restaurant and public house in basement area - Approved 09/06/89;
- 035925 (Johnson House): Alterations to Johnson House including removal of chimney and gable stack on Beaver Street elevation, construction of slate roof extension and continuous dormers to 5th floor level - Approved 23/02/90;
- 035927 (Central House): Insertion of new dormer windows to 4th floor flats - Approved 23/02/90;
- 036683 (Entire building): Change of use to hotel and serviced suites including leisure centre with pool and gymnasium - Approved 22/06/90;
- 038786 (Entire building): Change of use from part hotel (80%) / part serviced accommodation, with leisure centre with pool and gym to hotel with leisure centre with pool and gym - Approved 26/04/91;
- 032618 (48-50, Whitworth Street, Dominion House): Change of use of basement into a licensed restaurant - Approved 23/11/98;
- 055766/FU/CITY3/98 (Johnson House): Change of use from vacant premises to office accommodation - Approved 16/03/99;
- 060059/LO/CITY3/00: LISTED BUILDING CONSENT Internal alterations - Approved 20/11/00.
- 062301/FO/CITY3/01 (Dominion House): Change of use of basement area of leisure club to form coffee lounge - Approved 03/08/01;
- 062303/FU/CITY3/01 (Dominion House): Change of use of basement area from pub to restaurant - Approved 03/08/01;
- 067476/FO/CITY3/03 (Dominion right): Change of use from Class A1 (retail) to Class A3 (restaurant) including fume extract equipment to rear of building - Approved 03/07/03;
- 073127/FO/2004/C3 (Johnson House): Change of use of basement unit to bar/nightclub (sui generis - in no Use Class) including internal fire escape to Princess Street - Approved 18/05/05;
- 077633/JO/2005/C3 (Johnson House): Variation of condition 4 attached to approved application - Approved 11/01/06; and
- 073127/FO/2004/C3 (Johnson House): Extend the operating hours of the bar/night club to 9.00pm to 3.00am Monday to Sunday - Approved 11/01/06.

2.17 From the above history it is concluded that the Site has planning permission for a C1 Use, and it has traded as a hotel since the 1990s. Evidently the Site has been subject to a number of planning applications since the 1990s which have sought to introduce additional uses, namely A3 and a nightclub (sui generis).

2.18 Specifically, the Site comprises lawful A3 Use at ground floor and basement level within Dominion (left and right). These uses were approved by applications 032618, 062303/FU/CITY3/01 and

067476/FO/CITY3/03). With regard to the nightclub at basement level (sui generis) within Johnson House, this also benefits from planning permission (application 073127/FO/2004/C3).

2.19 The commercial uses have been vacant for many years whereas the hotel was closed in the summer of 2017 for the refurbishment subject to this current application.

3 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3.1 The proposed description of development is:

"Internal and external alterations and refurbishment to create 160 aparthotel rooms (Class C1), ancillary gym, bar and workspace, and the extension of A3 units at ground and basement level, and replacement plant at roof level.

Central House: Internal and external alterations throughout to create additional aparthotel rooms (Class C1) and ancillary bar (Planning and Listed Building Consent).

Johnson House: Change of use of basement nightclub (sui generis) of Johnson House to create additional aparthotel rooms (Class C1), ancillary gym and back of house areas. Provision of ancillary workspace at ground floor. Remedial works to external facades of the building including amendments to the Beaver Street access and replacement plant at roof level.

Dominion House: Change of use of Class C1 floorspace at ground and basement levels to create additional Class A3 floorspace. Remedial works to external facades of the building including creation of a new access on Beaver Street and replacement plant at roof level."

3.2 As outlined, the proposals primarily seek the refurbishment of an existing hotel (comprising suites – many of which are oversized) to facilitate the creation of 160 aparthotel rooms. The building will continue to operate as Class C1.

3.3 The internal refurbishment works to Johnson and Dominion House (where already in C1 Use), including the creation of additional bedrooms and ancillary uses does not require planning permission. As such, planning permission is only required for the creation of new C1 accommodation where a change of use is required i.e. within the basement of Johnson House. This was confirmed with MCC through pre-application discussions.

3.4 The existing A3 units are to be extended by circa 300 sqm (GIA) through the reconfiguration of existing hotel floorspace in Dominion House (back of house, circulation space and rooms). Planning permission is therefore sought for the change of use of C1 floorspace to A3 floorspace.

3.5 The A3 units are to be continue to operate independent of the aparthotel, though there will be an inherent relationship between the two functions. A third party operator has been secured for the A3 units and the proposed design is therefore brought forward to meet occupier requirements.

3.6 The other interventions that require planning permission include the new front entrance to the Atrium including installation of a spiral staircase for escape purposes, a new entrance at Beaver St, the creation of a new entrance to the basement level ancillary bar from Princess Street (Central

House) and replacement plant at roof level. The improvement of the Beaver Street entrance is to enliven the rear of the building, bringing activity to the street and to improve natural surveillance. Further, the reinstatement of this entrance will allow access though the building as would have originally been the case – thus providing a heritage benefit.

3.7 Listed Building Consent is sought for the works to Central House, as outlined below and described in full with the Heritage Assessment and Design and Access Statement. The proposed external works are to be kept to a minimum, focussing on remedial works and minor repairs. Internally, the refurbishment is to be extensive, bringing SACO's brand standards to bear on the development and revealing the building's heritage significance where feasible.

3.8 As discussed with officers through pre-application meetings, the intention is to make the most notable interventions in the public areas of the building, revealing its heritage character and significance for the public to enjoy.

3.9 It is proposed that the aparthotel will operate 24/7 whereas the A3 units will operate 0630 – 0000.

3.10 Specifically the proposed development comprises:

Basement

- The addition of 10 aparthotel rooms to be located within the northern end of Johnson and Central House (partly including floor space formerly used as nightclub);
- Change of use of the remaining nightclub floor space to a gym and yoga room, and back of house functions ancillary to the hotel;
- A reduction in A3 floor space (Dominion House). The basement restaurant will be open to both guests and the public, improving the amenities of the local area;
- Creation of hotel bar in former Central House pool area, which can be accessed from Princess Street and through the aparthotel. The existing pool will be removed.

Ground floor

- The loss of 4 hotel rooms within Dominion House in order to provide circa 280 sq. m (GIA) of additional A3 space. The restaurant will be open to both aparthotel guests and the public. The primary access for both guests and the public is through the atrium space – drawing people from Princess Street into the building;
- The addition of 6 aparthotel rooms to be located within the northern end of Johnson House;
- An additional bedroom in Central House;
- Creation of new reception area/bar. The bar is primarily for guests though the public could also access it;
- Creation of ancillary workspace for guests, located in Johnson House. The workspace comprises 'touch down' spaces, flexible workspace and also rooms which can be used for lone working or as meeting space. The intention is to create a space for guests to work and facilitates co-working and knowledge sharing.

Levels 1 – 3

- The addition of 7 aparthotel rooms on each floor (totalling 21) as follows:
  - 3 in Johnson House;
  - 2 in Central House; and
  - 2 in Dominion House.

Level 4

- The addition of 5 aparthotel rooms as follows:
  - 1 in Johnson House;
  - 2 in Central House; and
  - 2 in Dominion House.

Level 5

- The addition of 5 aparthotel rooms in Johnson House.

Level 6

- The addition of 1 aparthotel room in Johnson House.

3.11 Table 1 below outlines the changes to floor areas.

Table 1: The Atrium Existing and Proposed Floorspace

	Existing	Proposed	Existing (GIA)	Proposed (GIA)
Hotel rooms	116	160	4947.8	5380.7
Hotel floorspace	-	-	8154.7	7567.7
A3 space	-	-	644.8	944.4
Nightclub space	-	-	482.4	N/A

Listed Building Consent

3.12 The full details of works requiring Listed Building Consent are set out in the Heritage Assessment and Design and Access Statement. In summary though, the works are as follows:

- Complete refurbishment of Central House including the creation of additional bedrooms;
- Replacement of all kitchenettes and bathrooms (non-original);
- Replacement of doors and architraves (non-original);
- Refurbishment of windows including (in part) removal of internal boarding;
- Removal of suspended ceilings, ducts, wiring and boarding to basement;
- Repairs to plant and services;
- New external door from Princess St to Central House basement hotel bar;
- Art removal and replacement of atrium structure;

- Remedial works to windows (and replacement where necessary);
- Remedial works to the façade;
- Remedial works to rainwater goods (and replacement where necessary); and
- Removal of basement swimming pool and installation of ancillary bar.

Pre Application Discussions

3.13 The proposed development outlined above is submitted following pre application meetings with MCC. Discussions have been positive and the application is therefore submitted with the support of officers. The planning application has fully considered the comments received to date and the submission documents seek to provide the additional information requested.

3.14 The applicant is awaiting confirmation from officers that further strip out works to the upper floors of Central House can take place to assist in the finalisation of the proposals for the bedrooms in this part of the building.

3.15 Pre-application meetings were held on the following dates:

- 9th February 2017;
- 2nd May 2017; and
- 23rd August 2017.

3.16 Officers also provided written advice by email to assist in design development between the meetings.

3.17 A summary of the key points discussed in the meetings are outlined below:

9th February 2017: Informal Meeting

- In principle, the Council is supportive of the refurbishment of the site. It was acknowledged that the building is 'tired' and in need of an uplift. There is a lot of development activity locally and an upgraded hotel would assist with the regeneration of the area;
- The Council agreed to the increase in the number of hotel rooms achieved through refurbishment works and confirmed planning permission is not required for such works;
- The introduction of new café/restaurants would be supported;
- The introduction of ancillary workspace for the benefit of guests was supported; and
- The location of plant equipment and mechanical and electrical systems (M&E) should be considered carefully;

2nd May 2017: Pre-application Meeting

- Upper floors of Dominion and Johnson House – internal works of refurbishment/increasing bedrooms do not require planning permission – these works could commence;
- Extension of A3 units – requires planning permission and is supported;

- Change of use of nightclub to hotel and ancillary leisure space – proposals supported;
- Central House - some strip out works may be agreed without listed building consent, though all works involved in refurbishment will need listed building consent; and
- Central House – change of use of basement to hotel rooms – listed building consent and planning permission required. Proposal supported.
- Level changes – it was noted that levels change throughout the building. In respect of the A3 units the application will needs to include an access strategy for disabled users;
- Ventilation strategy – for the A3 units, the application should include a ventilation strategy indicating location of plant, risers etc. Precise detail of plant etc can be secured by condition; and
- A photographic schedule of strip out works within the basement and upper floors of Central House should be submitted for agreement prior to commencement.

23rd August 2017 – Pre Application meeting

- Beaver Street entrance – encouraged to remove the modern addition on the external to reveal the age and significance of the loading bay;
- Plan/elevation to be submitted showing the lighting and CCTV to be rationalised/removed as part of the development;
- Windows to Central House (basement) – removal of internal boarding supported but needs LBC;
- Basement – full detail of the works in the basement to Central House required;
- Need to be clear on full scope of works to the existing pool area;
- MCC would like the columns in the basement to be revealed;
- Where ceilings are to be raised, existing and proposed sections are to be provided showing relationship to windows and full detail of the proposed interventions
- In rooms facing Princess Street in Central House, encouraged to investigate raising the ceiling levels and un-boarding the windows to better reveal the actual heights of the rooms from outside.
- MCC requesting that the basement is reorganised to put gym and yoga etc. facilities against external walls where the internal activity can be seen in the street

3.18 Overall, the feedback and advice received has been positive and has been fully considered in this application submission.

4 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

4.1 This section sets out the planning policy framework against which the proposed development should be assessed.

4.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) states that planning applications for development should be determined in accordance with the Statutory Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

4.3 For the purposes of this application, the Development Plan comprises the following:

- Manchester Core Strategy;
- Proposals Map; and
- Saved policies from the Unitary Development Plan.

4.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (2012) (NPPF) sets out the overarching planning guidance to which all Development Plan documents should comply. As such, the NPPF is a material consideration of considerable weight.

National Planning Policy

4.5 The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. This is an important material consideration.

4.6 The Framework does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. Proposed development that accords with an up-to-date Local Plan should be approved and proposed development that conflicts should be refused unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.

4.7 At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking (paragraph 14). For decision-taking this means:

- Approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and
- Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
- Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or Specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted

4.8 Paragraph 7 outlines the three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. These dimensions give rise to the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles:

- an economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;
- a social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and
- an environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy

4.9 Within the overarching roles that the planning system ought to play, paragraph 17 details a set of core land-use planning principles which should underpin both plan-making and decision-taking. There are 12 core principles and include (amongst others) the requirement that planning should:

"Conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance", Proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs."; and *"not simply be about scrutiny, but instead a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives".*

4.10 In the section 'Delivering Sustainable Development', Paragraph 18 states that the Government is committed to building a strong competitive economy and securing economic growth in order to create jobs and prosperity. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system and planning policies.

4.11 Paragraph 21 states that investment in business should not be over-burdened by the combined requirements of planning policy expectations, and paragraph 23 states the importance that the needs for retail, leisure and other town centre uses should be met in full.

4.12 Paragraph 56 of the NPPF sets out that the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment given that it is a key aspect of sustainable development. High quality and inclusive design are required; however, Paragraph 61 states that inclusive design goes beyond aesthetic considerations and should also address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment.

4.13 Paragraph 64 identifies that great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which help raise the standard of design in the area, and Paragraph 60 identifies that it is proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness, however decisions should not try to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and should not stifle innovation or originality.

4.14 Paragraph 70 states that to deliver the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services that a community needs, planning policies and decisions should, inter alia, plan positively for the provision and use of shared space and community facilities and local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments.

4.15 As outlined within Section 2, with regard to ensuring the vitality of Town Centres, planning policies should be positive, promote competitive town centre environments and set out policies for the management and growth of centres over the plan period.

4.16 With regard to decision-taking, Paragraph 187 of the NPPF states that Local Planning Authorities should look for solutions rather than problems, and decision-takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible. Local planning authorities should work proactively with applicants to secure developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area.

Built Heritage

4.17 The NPPF is the Government's current national guidance regarding development within the historic environment. It is a material consideration that must be taken into account in planning decisions and, in this respect, it includes a clear policy framework for local planning authorities and decision makers.

4.18 With regard to built heritage, Paragraph 126 states that Local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. In doing so, they should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance. In developing this strategy, local planning authorities should take into account:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
- opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

4.19 The following paragraphs from the NPPF are key.

4.20 Paragraph 131 requires local planning authorities to take account of the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

4.21 Paragraph 132 applies specifically to designated heritage assets such as Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas. It states that great weight should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets and it propagates a proportionate approach (i.e. the more important the asset, the greater the weight attached to its conservation).

4.22 Paragraph 133 deals with substantial harm to, or total loss of, significance of a designated heritage asset. Paragraph 134 deals with less than substantial harm and notes that any such harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. In the first instance it is considered that the proposed development would not lead to any harm to the significance of the heritage assets, and therefore paragraph 134 should not be applied. Nonetheless, if it were to be applied, the substantial public benefits of the scheme would undoubtedly outweigh any perceived harm. Heritage protection and the conservation of heritage assets are recognised as a public benefit.

4.23 Paragraph 137 deals with the setting of heritage assets and it states that applications that would preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to or better reveal the significance of the asset should be treated favourably.

4.24 Finally, it is worth noting the definition of "conservation" (for heritage policy) in Annex 2 of the Framework:

"The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance."

4.25 The importance and relevance of this definition is that it does not suggest conservation to be the same as preservation. Indeed, what sets conservation apart is the emphasis on proactively maintaining and managing change and not a reactive approach to resisting change.

Local Planning Policy

Site Allocation

4.26 The adopted Proposals Map (Figure 2) identifies the Site as being:

- Within a Conservation Area;
- Within the City Centre Boundary; and
- 500m from primary shopping frontage

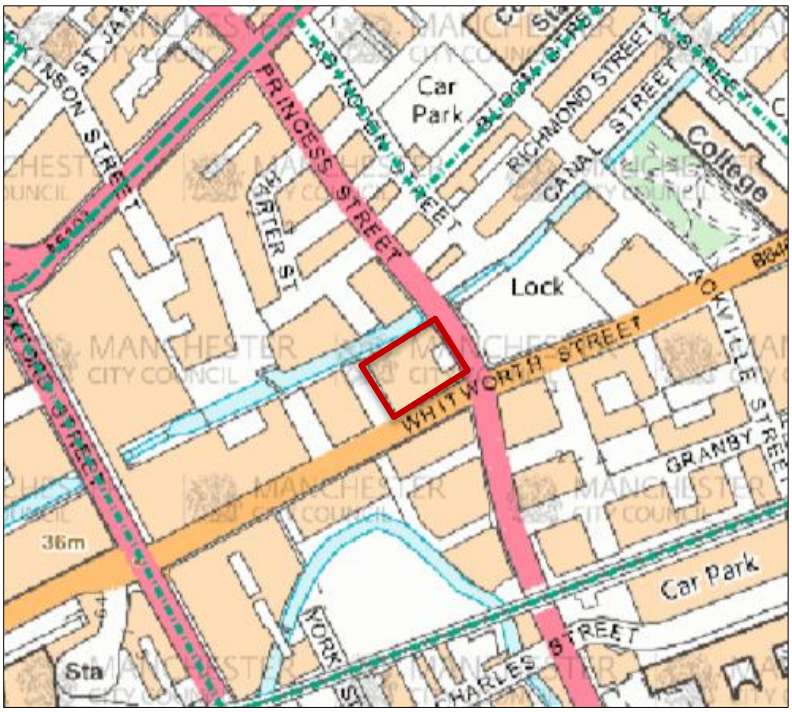


Figure 2: Proposals Map extract

Core Strategy

4.27 Policy CC4 (Visitors - Tourism, Culture and Leisure) states that *"The City Centre will be the focus for culture and leisure in the City Region. Proposals to improve the appearance, use and accessibility of all cultural and visitor attractions and associated facilities will be supported. New hotel development which contributes to the quality of the City Centre hotel offer will be supported".*

4.28 Policy CC5 (Transport) states that *"The Transport Strategy for Manchester City Centre will be delivered to ensure that transport is managed in a way which supports the projected growth of the City Centre. Proposals will be supported that improve pedestrian safety, improve air quality and increase the scope for accessible public realm improvements. The Council will seek to ensure that development includes adequate parking provision for cars and bicycles".*

4.29 Policy CC 7 (Mixed Use Development) states that *"the City Centre presents the most viable opportunities for mixed-use development, and in general these will be promoted as a means of using land as efficiently as possible"* and that *"Active ground floor uses (shops, food and drink and leisure) will be appropriate in locations which have an established public function, or as part of a development which will create such an environment".*

4.30 Policy CC 9 (Design and Heritage) states that *"The Council will support high density and mixed use development in the City Centre, but developers must recognise the specific design challenges that*

must be overcome to ensure complementarity of function and form. Development in Manchester City Centre should preserve or enhance the heritage assets that have been identified, including listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled ancient monuments".

4.31 Policy CC 10 (A Place for Everyone) states that *"The City Centre will develop as a location which appeals to a wide range of residents and visitors. Development which promotes this objective will be supported, particularly through:*

- *Uses which increase the diversity of activity in the City Centre, with an emphasis on family-oriented activity; and,*
- *High standards of accessibility to buildings and across spaces in the City Centre*".

4.32 Policy C 10 (Leisure and the Evening Economy) states that *"development that supports the evening economy, contributes to the vitality of district centres and supports a balanced and socially inclusive evening/night-time economy will be permitted, subject to the following considerations:*

- *Cumulative impact – in areas where there is already a concentration of bars (A4), hot food takeaways (A5) and other night-time uses which are detrimental to the character or vitality and viability of the centre, there will be a presumption against further facilities.*
- *Residential amenity – the proposed use should not create an unacceptable impact on neighbouring uses in terms of noise, traffic and disturbance.*
- *Balance - new uses in Manchester centres should support both the day-time and evening/night-time economies whilst not undermining the role of the primary shopping area."*

4.33 Policy EN1 (Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas) states that *"Developers will be expected to consider the City's heritage and continue the rich pattern of activity in the core area. While there will be opportunities to create landmark buildings, developments should also contribute positively to the experience of all at street level".*

4.34 Policy EN3 (Heritage) states that *"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 conservation areas. Proposals which enable the re-use of heritage assets will be encouraged where they are considered consistent with the significance of the heritage asset".*

4.35 Policy EN19 (Waste) states that the Council will *"require all developers to demonstrate the proposal's consistency with the principles of the waste hierarchy (prevention, reduction, re-use, recycling/composting, energy recovery, final disposal)*" and *"require all developers to submit a waste management plan to demonstrate how both construction and demolition waste will be minimised and recycled on site wherever possible and how the sustainable waste management needs of the end user will be met".*

4.36 Policy T2 (Accessible areas of opportunity and need) states that *"The Council will actively manage the pattern of development to ensure that new development: - Is located to ensure good access to the City's main economic drivers, including the Regional Centre, the Oxford Road Universities and Hospitals and the Airport and to ensure good national and international connections Is easily accessible by walking, cycling and public transport; connecting residents to jobs, centres, health, leisure, open space and educational opportunities".*

4.37 Furthermore, Economy objective SO2 supports *"a significant further improvement of the City's economic performance and spread the benefits of this growth across the City to reduce economic, environmental and social disparities and to help create inclusive sustainable communities".*

Saved Unitary Development Plan Policies

4.38 Policy DC12 (Commercial Uses above Shopping Frontages) states that *"The Council will normally accept the principle of developments of this kind in the City Centre, in industrial and commercial areas, in district shopping centres, in local shopping parades and in main road locations. Developments of this kind will normally be permitted subject to:*

a. *their being within the general locations mentioned above;*
b. *their not being in a primarily residential street;*
c. *their not involving the loss of good quality residential accommodation.*

Where having regard to the preceding policies, the Council considers the proposed development to be acceptable in principle; conditions may be imposed in order to protect the amenity of nearby residents. These conditions may, amongst other things, include limitation on the hours of use and the need to deal satisfactorily with noise".

4.39 Policy DC18 (Conservation Areas) states that *"The Council will give particularly careful consideration to development proposals within Conservation Areas.*

a. 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;*
iii. *the desirability of retaining existing features, such as boundary walls, gardens, trees, (including street trees);*
iv. *the effect of signs and advertisements;*
v. *any further guidance on specific areas which has been approved by the Council.*

b. The Council will not normally grant outline planning permission for development within Conservation Areas.

c. Consent to demolish a building in a conservation area will be granted only where it can be shown that it is wholly beyond repair, incapable of reasonably beneficial use, or where its removal or replacement would benefit the appearance of character of the area.

d. Where demolition is to be followed by redevelopment, demolition will be permitted only where there are approved detailed plans for that redevelopment and where the Council has been furnished with evidence that the development will be undertaken.

e. Development proposals adjacent to Conservation Areas will be granted only where it can be shown that they will not harm the appearance or character of the area. This will include the protection of views into and out of Conservation Areas".

4.40 Policy DC19.1 (Listed Buildings) states that *"In determining applications for listed building consent or planning applications for development involving or having an impact on buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, the Council will have regard to the desirability of securing the retention, restoration, maintenance and continued use of such buildings and to protecting their general setting. In giving effect to this policy, the Council will:*

- *not permit a change of use of a listed building, where it would have a detrimental effect on the character or appearance of the building;*
- *not permit any external or internal alteration or addition to a Listed building where, in its opinion, there would be an adverse effect on its architectural or historic character;*
- *seek to preserve and enhance the settings of listed buildings by appropriate control over the design of new development in their vicinity and control over the use of adjacent land,*
- *permit demolition only where there are approved detailed plans for redevelopment and where there is evidence of a firm building contract;*
- *not permit alterations to a listed building which would prevent the future use of any part of the building".*

4.41 Policy DC10.1 (Food and Drink) states that *"In determining planning applications for developments involving the sale of food or drink for consumption on the premises, the Council will have regard to:*

- *the general location of the proposed development, including any reference to the area in other the effect on the amenity of neighbouring residents;*
- *the availability of safe and convenient arrangements for car parking and servicing;*
- *ease of access for all, including disabled people;*
- *the storage and collection of refuse and litter.*

The Council will normally accept the principle of developments of this kind in the City Centre."

5 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 Having regard to the key planning policies outlined in Section 4, the key planning considerations are:

- Principle of the proposed development;
- Design and Heritage;
- Transportation and Highways; and
- Amenity; and
- Sustainability.

5.2 Each of these matters is dealt with in turn below.

Principle of the proposed development

The aparthotel - C1 Use

5.3 The Site is in lawful C1 Use as a hotel, now closed for refurbishment. The hotel is currently laid out with large suites (some are in excess of 40 sq m GIA) and provides some 116 bedrooms. The hotel also has a redundant swimming pool at basement level within Central House.

5.4 The proposed development seeks to increase the number of bedrooms to 160, in part, by reconfiguring internal space to make more efficient use of the building. The proposed use of the building is to remain as C1 though the accommodation will comprise an aparthotel.

5.5 An aparthotel by definition is a Class C1 Use where rooms are laid out to provide more space and comfort for guest staying for an extended period of time. As outlined above, SACO has extensive experience of developing and operating aparthotels, and the Locke brand is specifically targeted at business travellers in particular (though not exclusively) with the creative industries and TMT sectors in mind. The average length of stay for guests is typically between 10 and 20 nights (depending upon the location).

5.6 As the Site is already in lawful C1 Use, and there are no restrictive conditions on the original planning permission for the hotel (app ref: 038786) the principle of increasing the number of bedrooms in the building through internal reconfigurations is acceptable and does not require planning permission. Within Central House, the works require Listed Building Consent, as now applied for.

5.7 In respect of the additional rooms created by the change of use of the former nightclub (it has been disused for many years), relevant planning policies apply (see CC4 in particular). As outlined within Annex 2 of the NPPF, hotels (and aparthotels) are considered a ‘town centre use’ and should be directed to such locations in the first instance. Evidently the nightclub forms part of a building in an

existing hotel use in the City Centre, and hotel accommodation is acceptable in principle in this location.

5.8 Furthermore, Core Strategy Policy CC4 supports hotel development which contributes to the quality of the City Centre hotel offer. The proposed development is for an aparthotel which is a distinct offer to a traditional hotel. Such accommodation is a relatively new concept in the UK market and is undersupplied in Manchester. As such, the development has the benefit of broadening the choice of visitor accommodation in the City, in accordance with Policy CC4.

5.9 Furthermore, in terms of the quality of the offer, the proposed development is design-led and aims to reveal the heritage significance of the building. The historic character of the building will enable the proposed aparthotel to be distinct in style from other accommodation and will offer a unique experience to visitors to the City.

5.10 The aparthotel will be operated by SACO under the 'Locke' brand which targets business travellers in the first instance, and particularly those in the creative industries and TMT sectors. The existing Locke aparthotels in Edinburgh, London and Europe are trading very strongly which reflects the gap in the market which the product fills.

5.11 There is no policy restriction preventing the loss of the nightclub and given the Site's existing C1 Use it is considered that the increase in aparthotel rooms is in accordance with planning policy CC4 and the thrust of the policies set out in the NPPF which direct such land uses to City Centre locations.

Ancillary uses

5.12 The ancillary uses comprise a hotel bar located at basement level within Central House and a bar, reception and co-working space at ground floor. The mix of uses at ground floor assist in creating activity at street level in accordance with Policy CC7.

5.13 A hotel bar is to be located at basement level within the Listed Central House and will replace the existing vacant swimming pool. The bar will be accessible to both guests and the public, with access either through the aparthotel or from Princess Street.

5.14 This swimming pool is ancillary to the existing C1 Use, as will be the proposed bar. As such, no formal change of use is required, nonetheless, such a use is considered acceptable in principle (subject to Listed Building Consent for the related works).

5.15 The workspace area includes both communal work space and rooms which can be used for private working or as meeting space. The intention is to create a space for guests to 'touch down' and, to

facilitate co-working and knowledge sharing. Such space is important to the target market i.e. business travellers, particularly in the creative and TMT sectors.

5.16 At ground floor level, occupying the atrium space is to be a new central reception area and bar. Again the bar is ancillary to the aparthotel, primarily for the guests but also open to the public.

5.17 The uses outlined above are all ancillary to the principal C1 Use. The ancillary uses proposed are integral to the long-term attractiveness, success and commercial viability of the development. The ambition for the building is to establish itself as a destination for both visitors to Manchester and local residents alike. This accords with Policy CC4 and CC 10, where the latter states that development which promotes the City Centre as a location which appeals to a wide range of residents and visitors will be supported.

Increased A3 floorspace

5.18 The proposal includes 300 sq m increase in Class A3 floorspace through the reconfiguration of hotel floorspace at ground floor level in Dominion House. The loss of the hotel floorspace in Dominion House is offset by the increase in C1 floorspace resulting from the change of use of the nightclub to C1 Use, at basement level in Johnson House.

5.19 The increased A3 floorspace will comprise restaurants at basement and ground floor levels. Each of these units will be accessible internally from within the central atrium space and externally from street level via accesses on Whitworth Street and Princess Street.

5.20 For clarity, the proposals seek to extend the existing A3 units at ground floor, not add a new A3 unit to the Site. In this context, the principle of an A3 Use has already been established at the site.

5.21 As outlined within Annex 2 of the NPPF A3 Use (restaurant) is defined as a main 'town centre use' which should be directed to such locations in the first instance. The Site is located within the City Centre and proposals are to extend existing A3 units. In this context, such a proposed use should be considered acceptable in principle in accordance with Policy CC7, C10 and DC10.1.

5.22 It is central to the Locke brand that A3 Uses are located on site to cater for guests, and to draw people to the Site, supporting its commercial viability in the long term. The emphasis of the restaurant is to provide guests an alternative to cooking in the kitchenettes provided within the rooms, and in accordance with the general ethos of the Locke brand, the restaurants are to be modern, design-led and with a focus on the quality of ingredients to meet guest expectations.

5.22 Although there is existing A3 Use floorspace within the building, this has been vacant for some time. The reoccupation of the vacant A3 units and increased A3 floorspace will enhance the

attractiveness of this area whilst also creating an active frontage during both the daytime and evening, adding activity and therefore enhancing the vitality and viability of this area.

5.22 The proposal is therefore in accordance with Policy C 10 (Leisure and the Evening Economy), which states that *"development that supports the evening economy, contributes to the vitality of district centres and supports a balanced and socially inclusive evening/night-time economy will be permitted".* Further, as above, the creation of active street frontages is also supported (Policy CC7).

5.23 In respect of other policy requirements set out in Policy C10, these are considered below:

Cumulative impact

- it is not considered that the Site is in a location that suffers from an 'over concentration' of A3 Uses. To the contrary, an increase in such uses is considered to be a benefit to the local area. The A3 units have been in lawful use at the Site for many years and current proposals seek to refurbish and improve such units, in turn improving amenities locally;

Residential amenity

- the proposed use has been established at the Site for many years and has not had a detrimental impact on residential amenity. The application seeks a modest extension to the units along with their refurbishment. Given the units have existed for a number of years without issue, their extension should be considered acceptable. Should it be required, opening hours, hours of delivery and other matters could be controlled through planning conditions;

Balance

- The application seeks a modest extension to the units along with their refurbishment. Given the units have existed for a number of years without issue, their extension should be considered acceptable. The increase in unit size would not compete with the primary shopping area. As an existing use, the development would not unbalance the mix of uses locally, to the contrary, it is considered that the refurbished and extended units would strengthen the offer locally.

5.24 For the reasons outlined, the increased A3 floorspace is therefore considered acceptable in principle and in accordance with Policy C10.

5.25 In terms of Policy DC10.1, the following is relevant:

- As with the existing arrangement, no car parking is provided to serve the A3 units or the proposed extension. As a City Centre site, well served by public transport, the provision of car parking is not required;
- In terms of waste storage, servicing and deliveries, the existing A3 units on Site have operated without issue and the increase in unit size does not give rise to any harmful impacts. Notwithstanding a Servicing and Deliveries Plan is submitted to give details on how the units will be serviced in future, providing the Council further comfort that the units can operate without detriment to highway safety and residential amenity. Further a Waste Management Plan is submitted to demonstrate that the Site can operate without harm following the increase in A3 provision; and
- Access to the units is to be primarily through the central atrium space where level access is provided. Secondary access points are also provided on Princess Street and Whitworth Street. Given the building's heritage significance the ability to alter the building through the provision of

lifts or additional stairs is limited and as such an access consultant has been instructed to advise on accessibility. An Access Statement is submitted as part of the application which confirms the proposals are acceptable.

5.26 Having regard to the above, it is concluded that the development is in full accordance with Policy DC10.1.

Design and Heritage

5.27 The Site comprises a Grade II Listed Building (Central House) and other non-designated heritage assets located within the Whitworth Street Conservation Area. In this context, the guidance set out at part 12 of the NPPF and the policies of the Development Plan, as set out in Section 4 of this Statement and in detail within the Heritage Assessment, are important.

5.28 The detailed description and justification of the design is set out within the Design and Access Statement and Heritage Assessment but the key conclusions are provided below.

5.29 The proposals seek consent for the modernisation of The Atrium to become a new aparthotel. The works are as summarised in Section 3 of this Statement and in the Heritage Assessment.

5.30 The main element of the scheme is the creation of additional rooms by subdividing larger existing rooms. In addition, new apartments will be formed in the ground floor of the unlisted Johnson House, in an area which faces onto the canal. Some additional apartments will be formed in the adjacent basement of the Grade II-listed Central House; these, too have windows facing onto the canal.

5.31 At basement level in Central House the area currently occupied by the swimming pool will be converted to a bar with access from an existing entrance door and staircase from Princess Street.

5.32 The A3 unit within the basement of Dominion House will extended to ground floor level. New bedrooms will be created within the former leisure suite. This has been stripped out to reveal the original structure and the new partitions will run in line with beams revealing the original cast iron columns where possible.

5.33 A new soffit detail will be designed to allow for the full exposure and restoration of the basement windows, with the brick work to external walls restored. This design concept will also be used in new rooms to the basement of Johnson, some upper floor rooms to Johnson and potentially in Dominion.

5.34 The existing lobby along with former offices and staff lobby within Johnson House will become a large open space with reception, café bar and networking/co-working area. A walkway through will connect to a new entrance to Beaver Street. The entrance will additionally provide a connection to

the adjacent NCP car park for customers. The opening will be a metal lattice framework similar to the front entrance with glazed inner doors.

5.35 The existing barrel vault to the Atrium is to be altered removing the glazed half dome and creating a vertical glazed window to the gable with a radial pattern of glazing bars, in semi-circular form. The existing curved signage will be removed along with the profiled metal cladding which surrounds the escape stair to Dominion House and plant area which served the former restaurants. The existing flues and ducts which rise sheer up the face of Dominion will be removed with new extraction for the retail units located internally discharging through discreet roof vents to the inwards facing roof slope.

5.36 The new fire escape stair will take a curved form, which will be a reduction in terms of bulk to the existing structure. The area formerly occupied with air conditioning units and plant will be re-incorporated into the Atrium space, exposing part of the once concealed atrium facing elevation to Dominion House.

5.37 The existing light fittings, heaters and service runs suspended from the existing Atrium structure will be moved and the metal work painted in a light grey blue, to lessen the visual impact of the metal work and give prominence to the elevations of the surrounding buildings. The existing modern doors to Central House, within the Atrium will be removed and replaced with a panelled door, with design replicating an original door to a late Victorian warehouse building within the Conservation Area. New paving will run throughout the space out onto the front forecourt, similar in nature to cobblestones, with inserts of porcelain and timber mats. The existing modern doors to the front entrance will be replaced with a steel door with expansive glazing.

5.38 At the front entrance the existing bulky canopy structure will be removed and a new independent contemporary screen/awning introduced. Constructed from open metalwork, the structure takes the form of an open lattice, inspired by the former industrial setting, with similarities to the rhythm and spacing to the larger windows to Johnson House. The sculptural form is clearly a modern intervention sitting independently of the flanking buildings.

5.39 The existing doors within all of the buildings are entirely modern; all doors are to be replaced both to corridors and within the apartments. Existing 21st century kitchens and bathrooms are to be replaced in every room. The entire building rewired, with new plumbing and radiators.

5.40 The main guest entrance will be via the Princess Street entrance, which is level with the pavement. The new entrance to Beaver Street has stepped access, but designed in accordance with Part M of the building regulations for the ambulant disabled. The stepped access into Central House

precludes the provision of wheelchair accessible rooms, these will therefore be provided within Johnson House. Retail units will be accessible from the Atrium with a lift to the basement.

Justification of the Proposals

5.41 The proposed scheme of refurbishment work has been carefully considered in terms of impact upon the Grade II Listed Building, the adjoining buildings, the street and wider Conservation Area setting. The exterior of all of the buildings has been neglected from a number of years, the insipid interiors to both the communal areas and private rooms are dated and do not respond to the robust character of the heritage assets.

5.42 The reworking of the Atrium structure, designs for the front entrance and new rear entrance to Beaver Street are a clearly modern, yet contextual interventions to the Grade II listed and unlisted blocks. The creation of a new entrance to Beaver Street, will help to bring pedestrian movement back into an area, which currently suffers from a high level of anti-social behaviour, reducing damage and graffiti to the buildings. The removal of 1990's timber decorative boarding and remnants of signage, in conjunction with localised repairs to the fabric will greatly improve the appearance of the buildings on all frontages.

5.43 Internally, the removal of insensitive later fabric to the basement in Central House and the incorporation of the warehouse structure and fabric into the new rooms is to be warmly welcomed in historic building terms, as is the restoration of the interior to a number of rooms within the unlisted blocks.

5.44 The proposals for the main Atrium space see the removal of redundant plant, insensitive screening and the remodelling/redesign of the now dated glass and steel atrium structure. The elevation to Dominion will be brought back into the public realm and the ground floor to Central House will be greatly improved with the addition of traditionally detailed doors.

5.45 The introduction of a cohesive flooring scheme running from the exterior into the lobby will recreate a feeling of the once open Galbraith Street. The light grey blue paint scheme to the Atrium metal work, will allow the upper elevations to the buildings to regain their dominance when viewed from within the lobby.

5.46 The refurbishment of the upper floors within all the buildings will cause no harm to any historic fabric currently concealed behind the existing hotel fit out. Mechanical and electrical services and replacement plant will run within existing voids. Damage caused by leaks from the existing kitchens and bathrooms will be repaired and the fabric made good. The new plant at roof level, will lie within an existing plant area concealed from the public realm by the main roof structures, thus protecting external views of the building.

Impact of proposed development

5.47 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is the legislative basis for decision making on applications that relate to the historic environment. Section 66 of the Act imposes a statutory duty upon local planning authorities to consider the impact of proposals upon Listed Buildings and their setting and to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the special architectural or historic interest of Listed Buildings.

5.48 As a minimum, therefore, the impact of development on the Listed Building should be neutral to not engage the presumption within the Act against the grant of consent.

5.49 The proposal to remove unsightly accretions to the elevations, improve access arrangements and refurbish the building would enhance both the special historic and architectural interest of the Listed Building and therefore the presumption against the grant of consent outlined in the Act is not engaged.

5.50 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has crystallised previous policy approaches to the historic environment and has given strong emphasis to the need to 'weigh up' the pros and cons of a proposal to alter the historic environment. In accordance with paragraph 131 of the NPPF, the significance of the Listed Building would be enhanced by the works proposed. In developing the proposals, and in line with paragraph 137, weight has been given to the opportunity to better reveal the significance of the Listed Building through the removal of later detracting features and the works of general repair and restoration proposed. As a consequence the proposals would not cause harm to the heritage asset (the Grade II Listed Building) and, the tests outlined in paragraphs 133 and 134 of the NPPF which relate to the extent of 'public benefits' required to balance any potential 'harm' caused are not engaged. Notwithstanding, it is helpful to consider the public benefits of the scheme.

5.51 Public benefits which follow from development could be anything that delivers economic, social or environmental progress as described in the National Planning Policy Framework (Paragraph 7). Public benefits should flow from the proposed development. They should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large and should not just be a private benefit. However, benefits do not always have to be visible or accessible to the public in order to be genuine public benefits.

5.52 In this instance, the fundamental and foremost benefit of the scheme is the provision of additional hotel accommodation along with the restoration and repair of the buildings. An increased and more efficient use of the site overall will not only deliver an improved visitor experience, for customers with all levels of mobility but help to deliver delivering planning aspirations to increase employment activities in this area.

5.53 Additional heritage benefits include:

- Restoration of missing or currently concealed historic elements, so that the robust nature of the buildings is more readily perceived by residents and visitors alike;
- Protection and repair of the remaining historic fabric in both the Listed Building and the non-designated buildings;
- Removal of detracting later fabric internally so that more of the original fabric is perceived;
- The reworking of the modern atrium space with a more appropriate 'warehouse style' aesthetic would also enhance the setting of the heritage assets and contribute towards the character and appearance of the Conservation Area; and
- Creating active street frontages at ground level will enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Conclusion

5.54 The proposed scheme would have a beneficial impact upon the original listed warehouse building and the non-designated buildings which also form the complex thereby maintaining the 'optimum viable use' of the heritage assets. The scheme responds positively to both national and local heritage policies and would enhance the significance of the Listed Building and adjacent undesignated buildings, the setting of neighbouring Listed Buildings and the character and appearance of the Whitworth Street Conservation Area.

5.55 In accordance with the statutory duties outlined in The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the special architectural and historic interest of the Listed Building would be preserved and indeed enhanced by the proposed works. It is not considered that the proposals would result in any harm to the Listed Building, and that any perceived harm could only be considered to be very much 'less than substantial' in accordance with the terminology of the NPPF.

5.56 The benefits offered by the scheme would outweigh any perceived harm resulting from the proposals, in accordance with paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework, and the proposals may be considered the type of sustainable development in favour of which the NPPF establishes a strong presumption. The proposals would accord with relevant national and local policy and are therefore considered to be acceptable in heritage terms.

5.57 Having regard to the above, the development is also considered to be in accordance with Policy CC9 (Design and Heritage), Policy EN1 (Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas), Policy EN3 (Heritage) and Policy DC18.1 (Conservation Areas).

Transportation and Highways

5.58 Policy T2 (Accessible areas of opportunity and need) supports development that is well located to ensure good access to the City's main economic drivers, and is easily accessible by walking, cycling and public transport. Policy CC10 further requires development to be highly accessible.

5.59 To support the development and to demonstrate that the increase in bedrooms to 160 and size of A3 units does not have a detrimental impact on transportation and highways, a Transport Statement has been submitted.

5.60 As per the existing arrangement on site, there is no off-street or on-street vehicle parking proposed as part of the scheme. As such the scheme is "car free". there is currently no provision for coach parking or dedicated taxi bays. Given the modest uplift in rooms and the Site's highly accessible location, it is proposed to continue this arrangement in future. Furthermore, SACO confirm that there is no requirement for coach parking as coach parties are not accepted by the business and bookings are from individuals, couples and families rather than large groups. The Transport Statement submitted as part of the application provides support for this proposed arrangement.

5.61 In terms of servicing, the site was previously subject to servicing traffic for the former 116 aparthotel units and existing A3 floorspace. Vehicles serviced the site from Beaver Street as well as a dedicated bay on Princess Street.

5.62 Despite the minor uplift in room numbers increased A3 floorspace, servicing traffic is expected to be steady with a similar style operation to that previously run at the site. Servicing will be undertaken efficiently as it will be controlled by SACO who have nationwide experience and are adept at controlling delivery numbers and maximising efficiency. In addition a Delivery & Servicing Plan is proposed, which can be conditioned, which will regulate servicing.

5.63 It is considered that the proposed development is consistent with national and local transport policies and guidance (Policies T1, T2 and T3). The site is located within an area which has a range of existing local facilities and an abundance of sustainable travel choices. The proposed scheme will encourage the use of sustainable modes of travel.

5.64 Further details of Transport related matters can be found within the accompanying Transport Statement.

Amenity

5.65 The proposed scheme has been prepared and designed with consideration for the potential impact on the amenity of neighbouring residents and surrounding commercial occupiers, in accordance with Policies C 10 and DC 10.1 and DC 12. A good standard of amenity will be maintained.

5.66 The scheme ensures that any impacts resulting from the development are kept to a minimum. Notably, the development does not introduce new uses to the Site, only intensify those already in existence.

5.67 Although vacant, the loss of the nightclub use will reduce the potential for harmful amenity impacts and this is a benefit of the scheme.

5.68 The aparthotel use is more closely aligned to a residential use than a traditional hotel and is less intensive in terms of guest arrivals and departures due to longer stays. The aparthotel is also primarily aimed at business tourists whereby the risk of amenity impacts are lessened compared to, for example, a budget hotel aimed at short stay weekend guests. Guests will be carefully managed by SACO and as such the development is considered to have no undue impact upon residential amenity, nor wider amenities, and should be considered acceptable.

Sustainable Development

5.69 The overarching policy objective of the NPPF is securing sustainable development and growth. Paragraph 6 of the NPPF highlights that the policies in paragraphs 18 – 219, when taken as a whole, constitute the Government's view of what sustainable development means in practice.

5.70 The NPPF at paragraph 7 indicates that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. An assessment of the application proposals against the three dimensions of sustainable development as defined in the NPPF is provided below.

Economic

5.71 In accordance with Section 1 (Building a strong and competitive economy) of the NPPF, the proposals would refurbish the existing building to provide a high-quality 160 bed aparthotel whilst also re-establishing an A3 use presence and creating a basement hotel bar which can be accessed from street level.

5.72 This would have multiple benefits including assisting in helping to build a strong economy by creating employment during the construction phase and once operational. SACO has confirmed that once operational, some 34 jobs will be supported by the aparthotel element, with further jobs supported in the A3 units.

5.73 The Homes and Communities Agency Employment Density Guide (2015) indicates that some 63 jobs could be supported by the proposed A3 units.

5.74 The development will therefore deliver benefits in accordance with Core Strategy Spatial Objective SO2 (Economy) which supports a *'significant further improvement of the City's economic performance'*. Policy CC8 (Change and renewal) also states that "*Developments which make significant contributions to the City Centre's role in terms of employment",* such as this, will be supported.

5.75 The hotel operator SACO focuses on both the large corporate blue chip organisations and increasingly the 'New Corporates' of technology based entrepreneurship. SACO's Locke brand caters to the needs of the high growth and increasingly creative sector, ensuring that serviced accommodation caters for a range of demands through a design-led environment, amenity, engagement and location.

5.76 Locke living goes further than providing suitable aparthotels, incorporating facilities such as "Locke Labs" which are design led creative meeting spaces. The labs are designed to foster creativity and improve productivity. This is the intention for the workspace to be provided as part of the development.

5.77 Though difficult to quantify, it is well reported that it is such informal meetings and knowledge sharing, whether at an event or through sharing workspace, that helps drive the knowledge economy. The Locke brand is alive to this and seeks to provide the right environment to foster such relationships and therefore growth.

5.78 Having regard to the above, the proposed development should serve to support businesses and economic growth within the City and provide amenities for the surrounding residential and working population.

Social

5.79 The proposal would also enhance the vitality of the surrounding area as it would develop a prominent site in need of restoration and adding to the activity levels around Whitworth and Princess Street in accordance with Section 2 (Ensuring the vitality of town centres) of the NPPF.

5.80 In accordance with Core Strategy Policy CC4 (Visitors, tourist, culture and leisure), the provision of a new aparthotel at the site, which is centrally located and close to major tourist attractions, would further enhance the attraction of this location and would further support Manchester as a major visitor destination. It is considered therefore that the proposal would contribute to the continued regeneration of the City Centre, thus providing wider social benefits.

5.81 The development also seeks to create a building that is more accessible to the public, creating spaces that guests, as well as the public, can enjoy. The heritage significance of the building is to be better revealed by the development and the public will be given the opportunity to enjoy historic significance of the building once more.

5.82 The proposed would therefore contribute to a high quality and accessible built environment that would reflect the community's needs whilst supporting its social and cultural well-being.

Environmental

5.83 The proposed development would have a positive impact on the Site's heritage credentials in addition to the character appearance of Whitworth Street Conservation Area.

5.84 The development also includes the replace of plant and in so doing improves the energy efficiency and overall sustainability of the aparthotel.

5.85 Finally, as a mixed use development, the use of the Site is maximised and is therefore in accordance with the thrust of policies within the NPPF and Policy CC7.

6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

6.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared to support a full Planning and Listed Building Consent application for the refurbishment and alteration of the former Atrium Hotel to increase the number of bedrooms to 160 (from 116) and upgrade the building more generally.

6.2 SACO, on behalf of the applicant, will operate the aparthotel under its "Locke" brand which is designed with the ideals of the 'new corporates' in mind. Specifically, the brand is design led, offering good quality accommodation and value for money in the best locations.

6.3 The aim of the Locke brand is to provide an environment for guests which enables them to feel at home in the apartments, and which connects them to the amenities provided by the location. As such, the Locke apartments are delivered alongside a high quality food and beverage offer within the same building which assists in enhancing the on-site customer experience, whilst also providing the public with additional amenities.

6.4 The Site comprises a Grade II Listed Building (Central House) and other non-designated heritage assets (Johnson and Dominion Houses) and is located within the Whitworth Street Conservation Area. As such, the development has been proposed having due regard to the Site's heritage significance.

6.5 The increase in rooms is primarily achieved through the internal reconfiguration of the building. Six rooms are created along with ancillary uses including a gym are created through the change of use of a nightclub in the basement of Johnson House. Given the Site's existing C1 Use and its location in the City Centre, the principle of additional C1 accommodation is considered acceptable in principle and in accordance with the thrust of policies in the NPPF and Policy CC4.

6.6 The proposed development also seeks to increase the amount of A3 floorspace by 300 sq m by extending existing units. Given such a use is already well established on the Site, and further that such uses are supported in the City Centre, it is concluded that this aspect of the development is acceptable and in accordance with Policies CC7, CC10 and DC10.1.

6.7 Of weight in the consideration of the proposed application is the Site's heritage significance. In considering the impacts of the development (both good and bad) it is necessary to consider the heritage and public benefits of the proposals.

6.8 The most clear benefit of the scheme is the restoration and repair of the heritage assets and the provision of a mix of uses that enable the public to enjoy the historic character of the buildings.

6.9 Additional benefits include:

- Restoration of missing or currently concealed historic elements, so that the robust nature of the buildings is more readily perceived by residents and visitors alike;
- Protection and repair of the remaining historic fabric in both the Listed Building and the non-designated buildings;
- Removal of detracting later fabric internally so that more of the original fabric is perceived;
- The reworking of the modern atrium space with a more appropriate 'warehouse style' aesthetic would also enhance the setting of the heritage assets and contribute towards the character and appearance of the Conservation Area;
- Creation of active street frontages at ground level will enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area;
- The creation of some 34 jobs in the aparthotel and a further 63 in the A3 units; and
- A development that broadens the City's visitor accommodation offer, creating a unique building targeted at business travellers.

6.10 In this context, it is concluded that the proposed scheme would have a beneficial impact upon the original listed warehouse building and the non-designated buildings which also form the complex thereby maintaining the 'optimum viable use' of the heritage assets.

6.11 The scheme responds positively to both national and local heritage policies and would enhance the significance of the Listed Building and adjacent undesignated buildings, the setting of neighbouring Listed Buildings and the character and appearance of the Whitworth Street Conservation Area.

6.12 In the first instance it is considered that the proposed development would not lead to any harm to the significance of the heritage assets, and therefore paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework should not be applied. Nonetheless, if it were to be applied, the substantial public benefits of the scheme would undoubtedly outweigh any perceived harm in our view.

6.13 In respect of transportation and highways, and impacts on amenity this Statement has demonstrated that the proposals accord with the requirements of the Development Plan and are considered acceptable in this regard.

6.14 Finally, this Statement has considered the development in the context of the presumption of sustainable development. It has been demonstrated that the development provides benefits in terms of social, economic and environmental aspects and should therefore be considered sustainable development.

6.15 It is strongly considered that the proposed scheme fully accords with the development plan and therefore under the guidance of Paragraph 14 of the NPPF, should be approved without delay.