BIDWELLS

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Date: 06/07/17

Head of Planning
Manchester City Council
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Dear Sir/Madam

PROPOSED USE OF THE HIGHWAY FORECOURT TO PLACE 5 TABLES & 15 CHAIRS AT THE SLUG & LETTUCE PUBLIC HOUSE, 64-66 DEANSGATE, MANCHESTER, M3 2EN

We enclose an application for full planning permission for the above proposed development, along with the requisite fee for £495.00.

The application proposes use of an area of forecourt highway land fronting Deansgate, either side of the entrance doors into the public house, for the placing of 5 tables and 15 chairs, in order to provide a modest outside seating area for al fresco dining and drinking in association with the existing public house. The area of highway land affected measures 2.16m x 15.95m and would contain 5 tables and 15 chairs as shown on the accompanying plans.

A minimum pavement width of at least 1.81m to 2.16m (together with a further 2.06m width of time-restricted loading bay) will be retained at all times for the safe passage of pedestrians walking by. Therefore, the free-flow of pedestrian traffic and cyclists will not be materially affected. The retained clear pavement width can accommodate a combination of wheelchair users, prams and other pedestrians without detriment to safety.

The tables and chairs will be placed in a defined area that abuts the building's Deansgate façade, either side of the entrance doors, which will enable the operators to retain the existing ease of flow of customers entering and exiting the building. A detailed site layout plan has been submitted, along with details of the proposed tables and chairs. 12 moveable demarcation planters are also included to delineate and manage the full extent of the proposed external seating areas. As these contain the Slug & Lettuce logo, this planning application is also accompanied by an associated advertisement consent application.

Use of this outside area will add vitality and character to the locality and will enhance customer choice.

The Slug & Lettuce PH is owned and operated by Town and City Pub Company (formerly part of the Mitchells & Butler Group) and is a premium brand that appeals to a wide age range of customers.

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Town and City Pub Company takes great care to ensure that their operations are run in a carefully controlled and considerate manner. A copy of the company's Pavement Licence Management Plan for al fresco areas is included with the supporting planning application documents.

Town and City Pub Company has also produced a policy document on smoking to assist company staff to manage smoking areas and reduce the risk of exposure to second-hand smoke. The company's policy is to ensure that the 2007 smoking regulations are strictly adhered to and to ensure that any smoking takes place in authorised, designated areas only.

In addition to the use of this part of the highway forecourt as an al fresco dining area, the proposed use also affords the operators to designate an easily identifiable smoking area for customers, which can be easily and effectively monitored, supervised and managed. In the absence of a specific, identified area for smokers, customers wishing to smoke may spill out into the wider pavement area and there is a potential for the free-flow of passing pedestrians to be impeded. It is widely accepted in the industry that customers will remain in a designated area and will not spill out beyond that area. The proposed area of forecourt highway for placing of tables and chairs will provide a designated and easily managed area for any smokers.

The defined area enables the licensee to exercise proper control over customers' behaviour and to observe, monitor and manage any activity. Danger to customers, pedestrians and road users is minimised, pedestrian footways are maintained, and the impact upon other occupiers and visitors to the area is reduced. Added to this are the benefits of public scrutiny and appraisal of such a proposed area through planning, street trading and licensing regimes. The behaviour of customers is generally much better when in a properly defined area, even when this area is busy. This does not relate merely to consideration of noise and disturbance, but also encompasses aspects such as road safety and litter.

If planning permission is not granted for the proposed designated outside area, those customers wishing to consume drink and/or to smoke outside the premises accumulate within Deansgate and in the absence of a specific, identified and controlled area, these customers spread out into the wider pavement area and there is far greater potential for the free flow of passing pedestrians to be impeded. The proposed area of forecourt highway for the placing of tables and chairs will provide a designated and easily managed area for any customers wishing to drink or smoke outside the premises. The provision of a manageable and designated area actually controls the behaviour of customers as there is a feeling of the outside area being a formal part of the licensed premises.

In summary, the provision of outside tables and chairs at this site will reduce the potential impact of noise and disturbance to neighbouring properties and will reduce the potential for any impact on the free flow of pedestrian movement in the area.

As is required by Manchester City Council, the applicant has consulted with Greater Manchester Police Design For Security and a copy of their pre-planning consultation dated 07/04/2017 is included with the planning application supporting documents. Greater Manchester Police has no major issues with the proposed external seating area, but made some recommendations. These included that the external seating area benefit from external lighting; CCTV cameras; one entry/exit point with suitable barriers to demarcate the area; the use of round back chairs; and the use of 'Chelsea' property hooks for customers' bags and belongings. These recommendations have been included by the applicant in the proposed layout (which forms the basis of this planning application). Furthermore, Greater Manchester Police recommended that there be a clear pavement width of a minimum of 1 metre between the external seating area and the kerb. The applicant confirms their agreement to all of these recommendations, which are incorporated into the application proposals. The CCTV system will be managed, operated and maintained as Greater Manchester Police recommend.

If you have concerns over the potential impact of the proposed development, perhaps a trial period would be appropriate in this case, in the form of a temporary planning permission, which will allow the proposal to be monitored and assessed. On the basis that those concerned are in the best position to monitor the trial period it would be straightforward to assess any impact. Nevertheless, the applicant has been operating this external customer seating area for several years, without any issue being raised and the only reason that they are now applying formally for planning permission is because the new pavement licence process requires them to demonstrate that planning is in place. It is therefore considered that applicant has already demonstrated that they have effectively managed and courteously operated this external customer seating area, without any detriment to the local area.

In the above circumstances, it is hoped that officers can support the modest development proposed. If you need any clarification of the proposal or require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

Bidwells LLP

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