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By Planning Portal

14 October 2011

Our ref. CB/JL/03710005

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Dear Sir/Madam

4TH and 7th FLOOR, ST JAMES BUILDING, OXFORD STREET, MANCHESTER – LISTED BUILDING APPLICATION

We write on behalf of the General Medical Council (GMC) to enclose a Listed Building application for the subdivision and reconfiguration of floorspace on the 4th and 7th floors of the St James Building, Oxford Street, Manchester.

Please find enclosed three copies of the following documents:

- Application Form and Certificates, duly signed and completed;
- Site Location Plan at a scale of 1:1250 (Drawing number: 371004/01);
- 4th Floor Existing and Proposed Floor Plans (Drawing numbers: 05-042011-08-15 – 05-042011-09-02);
- 7th Floor Existing and Proposed Floor Plans (Drawing numbers: 201109-CUR-SJB07-01 - 201109-PRP-SJB07-03)
- 4th Floor Proposed Internal Elevations/Sections (Drawing numbers: A-04-001 – A-04-002 – A-04-003);
- 7th Floor Proposed Internal Elevations/Sections (Drawing numbers: A-04-004 – A-04-005); and
- Internal Wall Details (Drawing numbers: A-22-100 – A-22-101).

In addition to setting out the general details of the application, this letter also comprises the requisite Design and Access Statement and PPS5 Justification.

This application does not require an application fee as the proposals are solely for listed building consent.

The Proposal

As the Council are aware, the General Medical Council (GMC) have been a longstanding tenant in the St James Building and the current proposals are made in order to facilitate a small expansion of the GMC's occupation of the building, and to rationalise and partially reconfigure the use of their existing premises.

The application seeks listed building consent to subdivide floorspace on the 4th floor of St James's Building, comprising the whole of Wing B and part of Wing

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E. The intention of such alterations is to create additional office and ancillary floorspace. In addition, the proposals for the 7th floor entail the reconfiguration of space within Wings A, E and F. This again seeks to create an additional office and ancillary space, as well as a more varied range of hearing room facilities.

More specifically, alterations to the 4th floor consist of the erection of several partitions in Wing B to create five new hearing rooms (four small and one large). In Wing E partitions would be removed to extend the Panelists Room and provide space for a corridor to a new area of floorspace to be used by the GMC (currently vacant). This would involve the relocation of the original short-hand writing room and lawyers' room. These rooms would be replaced in the new, currently vacant, area of the Wing, along with a new large hearing room. These changes would involve the removal of existing partitions and the erection of new ones in different locations. The proposed changes to the 4th floor can be viewed on drawing reference: 05-042011-09-02.

On the 7th floor, the existing partitions in Wing A, which form two large hearing rooms, would be removed to free space for an open planned office area. In Wing E, office space would be consolidated to provide a larger common room for staff. Finally, partitions that form an existing hearing room in Wing F would be removed to enable the expansion of the adjacent office space. All proposed changes to the 7th floor can be viewed on drawing reference: 201109-PRP-SJB07-03.

The proposed partitions would be full height and comprise solid plasterboard so as to provide sound attenuation and privacy. They would be fixed to the existing concrete soffits and structural floor slabs and attached to the main building at the existing concrete columns (where applicable) as illustrated in Drawing No A-22-100. It is worth noting that a minimum number of partitions are to be attached to the buildings original concrete columns.

In order to provide data and electrical cables to the proposed hearing rooms (e.g. within Wing B of the 4th floor), a small ply floating floor would be fitted to increase the current floor height by 25mm. Drawing number: A-04-001 illustrates how the floor would be raised. The floating floor would not need to be attached to the perimeter of the existing floor, rather, would be placed upon the existing floor, but would enable the applicant to insert a 25mm × 150mm wide steel trunking between the perimeter and centre of each hearing room.

To ensure continued DDA compliance, the new floating floor would have a gradiated edge within each hearing room.

The proposed alterations detailed above are required to improve the layout of GMC's new and existing floorspace in order to suit their operational needs, as well as meet increasing demand for additional hearing facilities in their Manchester office.

Relevant Planning History

The GMC has previously sought listed building consent for internal alterations and works to other floors; a schedule of relevant previous applications and details of when they were consented is set out below:

Application Ref:	Description of Works	Consent Granted
076000/LO/2005/C3	Internal alterations to 7th floor comprising installation of partitions and raised floor and replacement of suspended ceiling.	20 July 2005
080538/LO/2006/C3	Installation of three air conditioning units and alterations to and installation of internal partitions to the 5th and 6th floor.	18 October 2006
083848/LO/2007	Installation of new partitions on the 2nd floor (F Wing)	20 July 2007
090608/LO/2009/C2	Insertions of new partitions on the fourth floor within Wing C and part of Wing E, to provide two new hearing rooms and adjacent witness rooms	2 September 2009
092738/LO/2010/C2	Insertion of new partitions on the fourth floor within wing D and part of wing E, to provide three new hearing rooms and ancillary rooms.	17 May 2010
093241/LO/2010/C2	Alteration to partitions within wing E on the 7th floor.	06 July 2010

Consent has previously been granted on behalf of the GMC for similar works on floors 4 and 7. The proposed works are very similar to those previously consented and therefore the principle of acceptability of such works to this building has already been established.

Supporting Statement and PPS5 Justification

In accordance with the guidance contained in Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (March 2010), the information set out below provides a PPS5 justification to demonstrate the acceptability of the proposed works at St James Building.

<u>The Existing Character of the 4th and 7th Floor</u>

The 4th Floor of St James Building comprises a mixture of office space and meeting rooms used by tenants within the building. Wings C, D and part of Wing E are currently occupied by the GMC. They are mainly used for hearing room facilities and lawyers' office space. Part of Wing E, to which this proposal relates, is currently vacant. To view the 4th floors existing layout see drawing number: 05-042011-08-15.

The proposal seeks to erect and remove several partitions in Wings B and E in order to provide additional hearing rooms and office space. This would involve

the GMC extending their operations to the currently vacant floorspace within Wing E. Overall the proposal would maintain the original uses in this floor and extend similar activity to unused floorspace.

The GMC utilise the majority of floorspace on the 7th floor. Similarly to the 4th floor, Wings A, E and F on the 7th floor are used for office space, hearing room facilities and ancillary uses.

The proposal involves the removal of partitions in each of these wings to free space and create a more open planned environment, complimenting the overall sense of space within the building.

PPS5 Justification and Design and Access Statement

PPS5 now forms the main national level guidance on heritage after superseding PPG15 on the 23 March 2010. The proposal accords with this guidance, as well as local Policy DC19.1, which seeks to retain and enhance architectural merit and character of listed buildings.

In heritage terms, the proposal fully accords with the adopted UDP Policy DC19.1. This seeks to retain and enhance listed buildings, and where alterations are proposed, ensure that they are necessary, desirable and do not adversely affect the building.

Local policy reiterates the guidance of PPS5, which seeks to protect and enhance listed buildings, through enabling them to be actively reused.

As listed buildings are all different, each case is to be considered on its merits, with authorities encouraged to give special regard to the desirability of preserving any listed building or its setting, and any features of architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

PPS5 rightly identifies that the best way of securing the upkeep of listed buildings is through their continued use. As such, a pragmatic approach is required, with PPS5 acknowledging that, if the uses are to be viable and to survive, they would often necessitate some form of adaptation. This is the case in the current proposal as the GMC need to expand some office space and hearing facilities in order to meet increasing demand in their Manchester office.

The building is a Grade II Listed commercial building built by Clegg, Fryer and Penman in 1912. It is an attractive building, but is not particularly rare or of specific interest or intrinsic value, other than as part of the wider frontage to Oxford Street. Nevertheless, it is a building of architectural and historic merit, and therefore the proposal seeks to minimise physical intervention, by not altering its external façade, which is the main feature that renders the building's notoriety.

The interior of the Wings on the 4th and 7th floors are similar in character and relatively unremarkable, not least as they form later extensions to the building.

The proposed works comply with the policies contained within PPS5 as they maintain the character and appearance of the building when viewed from inside and outside. The alterations proposed are internal and seek to minimise the impact on the original fabric of the building. For example, when partitions connect with the buildings original concrete columns they would fix onto their (structural) mid-point to maintain the column as a common feature, which sets the proportions of the room. Cross-sections show how partitions would be fixed in drawing number: A-22-100.

Materials have been selected to reflect the confidential nature of the GMC's operations. As such, all partition walls would be full height from the existing floor level to the existing ceiling, and the proposed partitions between the hearing rooms would comprise double acoustic plasterboard with acoustic matting in the cavity to improve the soundproofing.

The proposal would in fact reinstate some of the original character of particular suites within the building. For example, by removing partitions in Wing A on the 7th floor and opening up the remaining area, the Wing would reproduce its original structural form, drawing attention to the traditional concrete columns and the window sills. Emphasising some of the buildings original features in this way would help create a sense of place.

With regard to Policy HE6, sufficient information is provided to demonstrate that the proposed works are only minor in nature and would in fact have a positive impact on the character and appearance both floors.

When considering whether or not proposals are suitable for a heritage site, Policy HE7 requires that the Council take into consideration the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of a heritage asset. It also requires them to assess the positive contribution the conservation of a heritage asset can make to the establishment and maintenance of sustainable communities and economic vitality.

The proposed works would continue to make a positive contribution to the character and local distinctiveness to the building. At the same time it represents the GMC's continued commitment to utilise the building, supports its physical maintenance and thus, ensure its longevity.

Access to the 4th floor would be enhanced by the extension of floorspace in Wing E as the new facilities lie in close proximity to the central lift system in Wing B. Access to Wing B would remain as existing.

All access to wings on the 7th floor would remain as existing, despite the reconfiguration of floorspace.

Internal access within the wings affected by the proposal would be designed to incorporate disabled access. For instance, each of the hearing rooms, office and ancillary spaces would be fully DDA compliant.

Summary

The proposed works are minor in nature, wholly appropriate and compliant with

national planning policy.

The GMC require the proposed internal alterations in order to improve the layout of their new and existing floorspace to suit their operational needs, as well as meet increasing demand for additional facilities in their Manchester office.

The proposals impact on the original fabric of the building would be minimised by attaching new partitions to the existing soffit and slabs, and to existing concrete columns in a sensitive manner. In terms of the proposed floating floor, this would be placed over the existing floor, to provide cable and wiring to new hearing rooms, without any detriment to existing features.

We trust that with this letter and enclosures, you have the necessary information to register and approve the application under delegated powers. However, should you have any queries or require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely

James Litherland

Enc: As noted above, including the following drawings:

Site Location Plan: Drawing 371004/01 4th Floor Existing and Proposed Floor Plans: Drawing 05-042011-08-15 – 05-042011-09-02 7th Floor Existing and Proposed Floor Plans: Drawing 201109-CUR-SJB07-01 - 201109-PRP-SJB07-03 4th Floor Internal Elevations/Sections: Drawing A-04-001 – A-04-001 – A-04-003 7th Floor Internal Elevations/Sections: Drawing A-04-004 – A-04-005 Internal Wall Details: Drawing A-22-100 – A-22-101

cc: General Medical Council