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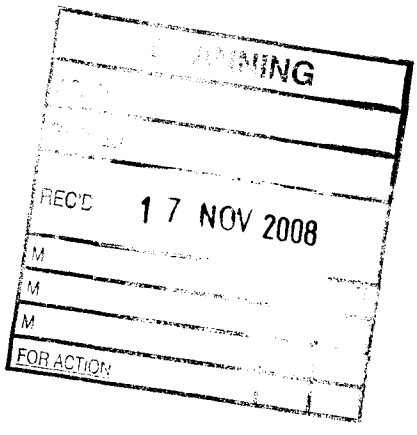

City Centre Team
Planning Department
Manchester City Council
PO BOX 463,
Town Hall Extension,
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M60 3NY

Our ref: MORM2003

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Dear Sir / Madam

PROPOSED ALTERATIONS TO ELEVATIONS AT ST JOHN'S HOUSE, QUEEN STREET, MANCHESTER, M2 5JB

Please find enclosed a full planning application for alterations to the external elevations of St John's House, Deansgate. The alterations comprise the construction of a new entrance facility on the Queen Street elevation and the re-painting of metallic panels on the Deansgate, Lloyd Street and Queen Street elevations.

The application is submitted on behalf of our client Aviva Investors Pension Fund and comprises the following documents:

- Planning application form - 3 copies
- Site Location Plan (P2709-100)– 3 copies
- Existing Elevation (P2709-102 Rev A) – 3 copies
- Existing Ground Floor Plan (P2709-101 A) – 3 copies
- Proposed Elevations and Ground Floor Plan(P2709-200 Rev C) – 3 copies
- A cheque made payable to Manchester City Council for the sum of £170.00 to cover the planning application fee.

1. Site Description

St John's House is situated to the east side of Deansgate, between Lloyd St and Queen Street. It comprises two separately constructed buildings: No. 133 Deansgate (1958) and Nos. 2-10 Queen Street (1973). The buildings are located within the Albert Square Conservation Area and adjacent to the Deansgate Conservation Area. The buildings are not listed although there are listed buildings including Rylands Library and Elliott House located nearby.

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No.133 Deansgate is set back from the building line with a ground floor single storey projection containing retail and café businesses. The building stands to 7 storey's in height and is clad in pale grey concrete resembling Portland stone. The upper floors are used as offices.

The building is considered to be of modest architectural quality. The fact that the upper floors of the building are 'set back' means that it relates poorly to the prevailing building line on the east side of Deansgate. However, the scale of the building does relate well to its neighbours and does not dominate the adjacent Grade II Listed Elliott House. The left return of the building on which the proposed extension would be sited can be seen in views south although these are partly screened by trees.

Overall, the building is considered to make a neutral contribution to the character of the conservation area.

Nos 2-10 Queen Street were constructed in the 1970's and this seven storey building is faced in dark brown brickwork with horizontal banding. Again, the building is used as offices. Due to its siting to the rear of No.133 Deansgate, the building is not prominent although it can be seen in some views across the plaza in front of Centurion House. It is considered to have little architectural merit and could be said to have a generally negative impact on the conservation areas.

2. Conservation and Townscape Context

There are important views in both directions along Deansgate that encompass several listed buildings including John Rylands Library (Grade 1 Listed) and narrow framed views along side streets that include the Tower of the Grade 1 Listed Town Hall. The views along this part of Deansgate are not homogenous due to the wide range of building dates and construction which results in a diverse range of scale, materials, building forms and architectural treatment.

Nearby buildings range in height from three to four storey 19th Century Buildings such as Elliott House to Centurion House which stands to 12 storeys . Building materials range from stone and brick for 19th Century buildings to glass for recent developments such as the RBS building at Spinningfields. In longer range views along Deansgate recent tall buildings such as the Hilton Tower to the south and Number One Deansgate provide landmarks.

3. The Proposed Development

This planning application seeks full planning permission for external alterations to St John's House. The proposed alterations comprise:

Queen Street

The existing rotating door entrance and canopy will be removed and replaced by a new 'entrance pod'. The 'pod' will be constructed from frameless glazing with etched manifestations. It will project 1 metre metre from the existing elevation and have an overall height of 2.7 metres. It will have a footprint of 4.29sqm.

A travertine stone surround will be applied to the existing building façade to 'frame' the new entrance.

Deansgate, Queen Street, Lloyd Street
The existing metal panels will be re-painted will be repainted anthracite grey (RAL Colour 7016)

These proposed works are part of a wider package of initiatives being pursued by the building's owners in order to refresh its image and maintain / improve its position within the market place. The other works will include the provision of cycle storage facilities (see separate planning application) and cleaning of the buildings facades. An application for advertisement consent for new building signage will also be made in the near future.

4. Planning Policy

The application falls to be considered against the provisions of Planning Policy Guidance Note 15, the adopted Manchester Unitary Development Plan (UDP), the Albert Square Conservation Area Guidelines and the Manchester Design Guide SPD.

The site has no specific allocation in the adopted UDP. It is however located within RC20 Area 24 (Princess Street / Moseley Street/Peter Street/ Deansgate/John Dalton Street which is identified as an area containing office uses.

The general thrust of prevailing planning policy is that developments within and adjacent to Conservation Areas should either preserve or enhance their character and appearance. The Albert Square Conservation Area Guidelines confirms that the key issues are protecting the Town Hall and ensuring a high standard of contextual design. The importance of active ground floor uses and building to the back edge of pavement is highlighted.

The UDP and associated Manchester Design Guide SPD reiterate the need for high quality design which is respectful of its context and relates well to the public realm.

5. Key Issues

The key issues for consideration in the determination of the application will be as follows: quality of design, relationship to public realm and impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

The proposed development is considered to be acceptable having regard to these considerations and compliant with prevailing planning policy for the following reasons:

- The proposed new entrance pod is of a contemporary, light-weight and transparent design which will compliment the architectural design of the host building;

- The degree of projection from the host building is limited. It will not extend beyond the existing building line and will project no further than the existing revolving doors;
- The height of the entrance pod will be similar to the existing openings in the Queen Street elevation;
- The entrance pod will not obscure views of Listed Buildings or affect their setting;
- Views of the street-scene from the manned reception desk will be maintained therefore retaining the existing level of informal surveillance;
- The entrance pod will improve the legibility of the building. That is, the existing entrance is somewhat hidden from view when approaching from Deansgate and difficult to find, particularly for first time visitors;
- The design of the entrance pod will be similar to that constructed at Starbucks, Centurion House, Deansgate. It will therefore introduce a common architectural language between the neighbouring buildings. The simple glass structure will also compliment the architectural language of Spinningfields.
- Repainting of the metal panels will improve generally the appearance of the building

Finally, it should be noted that the external and internal features of the entrance pod will comply with Approved Document M (Building Regulations 2000). Level access to the building will be retained and the entrance door widths will be of a sensor operated sliding door design thereby allowing for wheelchair user access. This will represent a material improvement on the existing situation in that the revolving door design precludes use by the mobility impaired. All necessary signage and handrails will be installed as necessary in accordance with Approved Documents.

6. Other Issues

The proposed development comprises only minor alterations to the existing building elevations and will have no impact on the existing and approved **waste management** arrangements at the site.

7. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing it may be concluded that the proposed development represents a limited extension to the existing building. It is of a simple contemporary design and of an appropriate scale. It will make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the streetscene and improve the buildings legibility.

In the circumstances the support of the Council is requested.

I trust that the additional information contained in the application package is sufficient for you to validate and determine the application. I look forward to receiving written confirmation of validation at your earliest opportunity.

Please do call if you have any questions

Yours sincerely

Greg Dickson

cc – Client