Design & Access Statement

Location: 58-60 Higher Ardwick, Manchester, M12 6DA

Proposal: Change of use of existing commercial units from B8 to B2

Date: May 2012

Introduction

This design and access statement has been submitted to support a change of use planning application of an existing commercial unit, located on Higher Ardwick, from B1 (offices) and B8 (storage and distribution) to B1 (offices) and B2 (general industry).

No external alterations or additions are proposed as part of this application.

Site Analysis

The proposal site is situated on Higher Ardwick approximately 1 mile to the South East of the city centre. Higher Ardwick is just off the intersection between the A6 Stockport Road and the A57 Hyde Road, which are both main arterial routes to and from the city centre. The Mancunian Way is within half a mile from the proposal site.

The proposal site is located in an industrial area, which has a mix of different uses ranging from B1, B2 and B8, there are also some 'cash & carry' units along Harkness Street, which runs just South to the site.

Next door to the proposal site along Higher Ardwick, to the West boundary, there is a B2 unit, Dolhpin Knitwear, which manufactures knitwear from the site; to the East boundary along Higher Ardwick there is another large unit, which we believe to be under the B1/B8 use class.

Across from the road from the site, there is the Power league 5-A-Side football centre, this site on approximately up over 1 hectare. The to East of the Power league centre, there is a pallet storage and distribution. Further east there are additional large commercial units, incorporating B1/B2 and B8 use class.

The main train line, running into Manchester Piccadilly is only a short distance away from the proposal site; with the Ardwick Train Station, a few minutes walk.

Existing Premises

The existing premises for the B2 use, which we are proposing to relocate to the proposal site is located a short distance away from the proposal site. The vehicular access to the existing premises is also of Higher Ardwick. The site is noted with a blue line boundary in the Site Location Plan, drawing number, NK.242.00.

The current premises located at KTS House, 49 Devonshire Street; due to the layout and the design of the existing premises, the business operations are spread over a number of different areas. There is a single storey unit, which has little or no acoustic and thermal insulation; then there is additional operations taking place at the ground level of the old Victorian Mill, which due to its structure and layout, causes inefficiencies in the running operations; there is some storage at the fifth floor level of the same Victorian Mill, which again is causes a lot of wasted times and cost in moving the raw material to and from this location; there is also some additional storage in containers located in the car park area.

The existing premises have reached its capacity for any further expansion of the business operations. The applicant has been approached by large retailers like Tesco and Next, who are interested in their products, but to be able to accommodate the large quantities in short space of time such retailers will demand, the applicant will need a better and more efficient facility. The applicant currently employs 50 people working full time, however it has been noted that a large percentage of time is lost to moving raw material and finished products around the factory, rather than producing the goods.

The existing premise also has very limited showroom space for the goods to be displayed; this again does not help to entice any new customers.

New Premises

The site for the proposed new B2 use, is a detached single storey industrial unit, with two storey offices along the front elevation. The main structure of the unit is steel portal frame, there is an insulated metal pitched roof, which has a number of skylights, allowing for natural light. The elevations are a masonry construction, block-work / brickwork insulated cavity walls. The original property has been extended with a two storey extension which incorporates warehouse, office and studio space.

Loading to the property is via a drive in roller shutter door from the yard to the new extension, which then leads onto the warehouse area.

There are also 27 car parking spaces (including 2 accessible spaces), available for staff and visitors.

The total GIA area of the existing premises is 3,121 sq.m. which breaks down in to 1,553 sq.m. B1 office accommodation and 1,568 sq.m. B8 storage and distribution accommodation.

The building benefits from energy efficient lighting; the warehouse areas are heated via ceiling mounted gas warm air blowers; the office accommodation is heated by gas central heating.

The applicant is proposing to move the current operations of the knitwear factory from 49 Devonshire Street, to the new location at 58-60 Higher Ardwick, should the change of use for B2 use be granted, then the existing factory will be closed and all operations will take place in the new premises.

The applicant intend to keep the B1 office use as it currently stand, and the proposal is for the B8 use to be granted a change of use consent to B2, for the knitwear factory.

Socio-Economic Benefits

Due to the large open plan layout of the property, the applicant will be able to configure the factory operations so that they run substantially more efficiently than they currently do. The raw materials will be located in close proximity to the first stage of the process; all processes which follow another will be located adjacently.

The new premises will also give the applicant's showroom space that would allow them to showcase these to prospective customers. The entrance to the new premises is also more welcoming and has a very professional aesthetic, with a double height space above the reception. This will show the applicant's business in a much more favourable way.

The applicant will also be looking to increase the number of full time positions at the new premises by 40 persons, giving an 80% increase in employment. This will allow him to take orders from retailers such as Tesco and Next.

As the new premises is a modern commercial unit, with better thermal performance and better acoustic performance, this will allow the applicant to reduce the energy consumption in the new premises, for the same operations currently being undertaken at the existing premises.

The building has also been empty for around 12 months, the property has been marketed by MCR Properties, to either by or let at very favourable rent, but unfortunately they have not seen any demand for a unit this size for storage and distribution.

Highways and Traffic

The site currently benefits from a B8 use, allowing for the premises to be used for storage and distribution. The site has adequate facility within the front yard for a 25m long wheel base truck to enter and leave the site in a forward gear.

The proposed B2 use will reduce the traffic, both in terms of the size of the vehicles and the frequency to the site, as it will be used mainly for manufacturing knitwear.

Utilities Statement

There is currently gas, electric and water, available on site; the proposed use will not require any additional power, the existing phase 3 electric supply will be adequate for the proposed operations for the knitwear factory.

Site Waste Management Plan

We are intending on providing 10 1100 litre euro-bins, 4 bins will be used for general waste; 4 bins will be used for fabric and cotton recycling; 1 bin will be used for paper and cardboard recycling and the remaining bin will be used for plastic and aluminium recycling.

All the bins will be stored in the secured rear yard, please refer to proposed plan showing the location of the bins. Both the refuse and the recycling bins will be collected by private contractors, who will collect the bins from within the rear yard, to where the bins will be moved on collection days. The bins will be collected at least once a week, with the facility that if an extra collection is required this can be done by ringing the contractor.

Accessibility

The existing premises has good level access to the main entrance; there is an accessible WC on the ground floor and there are also 2 accessible car parking spaces available in the car park.

Where ever possible the change of use of the premises will comply with all applicable parts of the Approved Document M and take on board the recommendations of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).