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Our ref: J018511/sxe-dgb-101
Your ref:

Chief Executive's Regeneration Division
Manchester City Council
The Town Hall
PO Box 463
Manchester
M60 3NY

GL HEARN

Dear Sir/Madam

Planning Application by Tesco Stores Ltd
Aurora Building, 55 Princess Street, Manchester, M2 4EW
Change of use of ground floor unit from office (B1) to shop (A1) and installation of new customer entrance with overhead signage frame.

Please find enclosed a planning application on behalf of our clients, Tesco Stores Ltd, which seeks permission for the change of use of the ground floor of 55 Princess Street, Manchester, in addition to the installation of a new customer entrance with overhead signage frame.

As submitted on-line the planning application comprises:

- Planning application form and ownership certificate;
- Design and Access Statement contained within this letter;
- Site location plan (3221.L100);
- Existing elevations (3221.L201);
- Proposed elevations (3221.L202);
- Proposed ground floor layout plan (3221.L1004);
- A cheque for the sum of £335 in respect of the requisite planning application fee to be sent separately in the post.

There are two associated planning applications submitted by Tesco Stores Ltd which propose the installation of an ATM to the front elevation, and the installation of air conditioning and condenser units to the roof of the building.

The Site

The application site occupies a central location within Manchester City Centre and is positioned on the east side of Princess Street, approximately 50 metres north of its junction with Cooper Street. It is sited within the Albert Square Conservation Area and located opposite the Grade 1 listed Town Hall building. The site comprises the vacant ground floor of 55 Princess Street, a recently constructed seven storey office building of contemporary design. Surrounding ground floor uses on Princess Street include shops (A1) and restaurants (A3) to the west, and an employment agency (A2) and public house (A4) to the east. To the rear of the site lies Kennedy Street which comprises primarily business (B1) uses. Construction work is currently underway to redevelop a 0.16 hectare site on Kennedy Street which will form a nine storey building containing an A1/A3 unit at ground floor level with offices (B1) above.

The Proposal

It is proposed to change the use of the existing ground floor unit from Use Class B1 to A1 and install new automatic bi-parting customer entrance doors to the Princess Street elevation. This will permit the premises to operate as a convenience store, operated by Tesco Stores Ltd, and bring into use a currently vacant ground floor unit which occupies a prominent city centre location. Above the new entrance a linear Brise Soleil signage frame is proposed (it is envisaged that the design details of this signage can be dealt with under a separate advertisement consent application).

Planning Policy Considerations

The application site lies within Area 7, 'The Financial Core', of Manchester City Centre, as defined within Part 2 of the Adopted Manchester Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 1995. The planning framework for the city centre is established through detailed 'Small Area Proposals' which guide development at a neighbourhood level, and generic policies which apply to development in the city centre as a whole.

At a detailed level, the Small Area Proposals for The Financial Core seek to sustain and enhance the area's existing role as the business hub of Manchester City Centre. Whilst particular encouragement is given to the further refurbishment of buildings for office use, support is also given for the introduction of more active ground floor uses;

"Where appropriate opportunities arise, a more lively and interesting street scene will be sought by, for example, the introduction of an active ground floor use"

Policy RC10 'Shopping' seeks to ensure that new shopping development within the City Centre is limited to a scale appropriate to consolidating the role of the central shopping area (areas 3, 6 and 9) and will normally be required to be located within or adjacent to the central shopping area. However, an exception is made for certain proposals, such as;

"Proposals for small-scale shopping facilities serving the daily needs of people living or working in or visiting a particular locality"

A principal objective of the adopted Manchester Unitary Development Plan (1995) is to enhance the city centre environment, wherein the site is located. Accordingly, a key Council aim, as outlined in the text accompanying Policy S1.1, is to ensure that the city centre shopping environment is clean, safe, attractive and accessible to all. Similarly, Policy E3.6 states that the Council will promote environmental improvements in the city centre, and Policy E3.8 makes a commitment to preserving and enhancing the appearance of the city's conservation areas. With more specific reference to the proposed works, Policy DC14.1 requires that new shop front proposals are in keeping with the character of the existing building and adjoining buildings, and that they allow access for people whose mobility is impaired.

In conjunction with the policies of the UDP, the *Guide to Development in Manchester – Supplementary Planning Document and Planning Guidance (SPD)* seeks to ensure that new development delivers high standards of design and layout. The Guide expands on existing UDP policy with respect to the design of development and forms a key part of the formal planning process in Manchester, setting the context within which Design and Access Statements should be written and assessed.

The document explains that quality will be sought in the smaller scale detail of new development including new shop fronts and signage, and it continues that commercial buildings should be

designed to contribute to the city centre's vitality and viability. In relation to development in conservation areas, it emphasises the advice in Policy E3.8 by making it clear that proposals should maintain or enhance the character of the conservation area. Finally, it recognises the importance of inclusive design by requiring that new development maximises access for the mobility impaired by ensuring compliance with the standards detailed in the Council's *Design for Access 2 Manual.*

The Principle of Retail Development

Whilst the site is beyond the central shopping area, it is located in an adjacent sub-area wherein Policy RC10 accepts in principle proposals for small-scale shopping facilities serving the daily needs of people living, working or visiting a particular locality. Accordingly the proposed store is intended to function as a small convenience outlet meeting the day-to-day needs of those working in or visiting that part of the city centre, together with some trade deriving from the local walk-in catchment population.

The proposed A1 use will serve to sustain and enhance the sub-area's role by maintaining levels of activity in The Financial Core and by contributing to general levels of vitality and viability within the within the city centre but without detriment to the role of the central shopping area. It is therefore considered that the proposed development is in accordance with the applicable retail policies set out within the adopted UDP.

Design and Access Statement

Design Statement

The existing building, which has only recently been completed, stands seven storeys in height and is of a contemporary, linear design. The Princess Street frontage is fully glazed and enclosed within a bold, grey-green steel frame. Natural stone complements glazed panels on the Kennedy Street elevation where an original stone frontage has been retained and incorporated into the new build elements.

The proposed works relate solely to the front elevation of the ground floor of 55 Princess Street and comprise the removal of two glazed panels and the installation of new glazed automatic bi-parting customer entrance doors. Above the new entrance a linear Brise Soleil signage frame is proposed.

The works to the front elevation, involving the provision of new entrance doors and a frame to accommodate signage, have been designed to respect the existing detailing to the upper storeys of 55 Princess Street and the proportions of the building as a whole. It is therefore considered that the resultant visual impact of the works will be minimal, preserving the appearance of this part of the Albert Square Conservation Area.

Overall, the installation of a customer entrance, which will enable the introduction of a retail use to the building, will contribute to the creation of an active, attractive frontage within the existing street scene. Moreover, it will bring a prominent but currently vacant unit back into use, enhancing the vitality and viability of Princess Street and generally helping to further improve the city centre environment.

It is therefore clear that the proposal is fully in accordance with the relevant shop front design policy of the UDP, namely Policy DC14.1, and complements the city centre shopping and environment policies (S1.1, E3.6 and E3.8) as well as the advice contained in the *Guide to Development in Manchester SPD.*

Access Statement

Tesco Stores Ltd is keen to ensure that the proposed works, in association with the installation of the ATM, are fully compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. The width of the proposed customer entrance and the provision of level access from the existing footpath on Princess Street will enable ease of use for all customers and employees, including those with reduced mobility. Indeed, it is considered that the proposed works will offer a more inclusive environment in access terms than is currently afforded by the existing entrance to the ground floor unit.

With regard to wider access issues, the application site is considered to be within a highly sustainable location in terms of pedestrian access. The site is situated within the heart of Manchester City Centre which is served by a significant number of public transport modes, travelling along a variety of routes, into and out of the city.

It is envisaged that servicing of the unit will take place via Princess Street. This road, and many others in the vicinity, are characterised by A1, A2, A3 and A4 uses, the majority of which require the frequent delivery of goods. All such deliveries are currently accommodated by goods vehicles pulling in briefly on the existing highway, and are not considered to be unduly obstructive to vehicular movement.

The proposal therefore complies with the relevant access considerations in Policy S1.1 of the UDP together with the applicable access requirements outlined in the *Guide to Development in Manchester SPD* and *Design for Access 2 Manual.*

Conclusion

The application, which relates to 55 Princess, Manchester, seeks permission for the change of use of the ground floor unit from Use Class B1 to A1, in addition to the installation of a new customer entrance with overhead signage frame. This will permit the premises to operate as a convenience store, of a scale appropriate within the Financial Core, and will bring into use a currently vacant ground floor unit which occupies a prominent city centre location.

It is considered that the proposed works are fully in accordance with the relevant shopping, design and access policies outlined in the adopted Manchester Unitary Development Plan and also comply with the design and access principles outlined in the *Development in Manchester SPD* and *Design for Access 2 Manual.*

Planning permission should therefore be granted for the development proposed.

In light of the above, I trust that you have sufficient information to favourably determine the application. However, if you require any further details, please do not hesitate to contact me. In the meantime, I await your receipt for the planning application fee and confirmation of registration.

Yours faithfully

Daniel Brown DipTP MRTPI
Planner
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