King Sturge

PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE 15 JUSTIFICATION STATEMENT

PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE ERECTION OF A CANOPY AND ASSOCIATED SIGNAGE

THE TRIANGLE MANCHESTER

AUGUST 2008



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PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE 15
JUSTIFICATION STATEMENT
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG15) Justification Statement has been prepared on behalf of our client, and owners, Norwich Union Trust to support a planning application for the erection a canopy at the main entrance of The Triangle at Hanging Ditch/Exchange Square.

1.2 This statement has been prepared in accordance with National and Local Planning Policy to describe why the proposed works are desirable and necessary and to provide Manchester City Council with the full information to assess the rationale for the erection of a canopy and signage at the application site and the impacts of what is proposed for the site on the character and appearance of the listed building and the conservation area.

1.3 This PPG15 Justification Statement accompanies the listed building application, as such the appendices, figures and plans noted should be cross referenced with the listed building application. A separate planning application and advertisement application for signage associated with the main entrance canopy are also provided in association with this application.

2 THE PROPERTY AND HISTORY

2.1 Built in 1903, the Corn & Produce Exchange handled regional trading in agricultural produce. The building's vast hall had tiered side offices and was dominated by a central glass dome. In World War II the building suffered heavy bombing but many of its features survived including its entrances, decorated with bronze and wrought ironwork. In the 1980s it was used as a market offering New Age and 'alternative' products. In 1996 the Corn Exchange was damaged in the IRA bombing of Manchester's city centre. The Grade II listed facade was restored and in 2000 the building re-opened as The Triangle, a state-of-the-art shopping mall. In front of The Triangle is the new Exchange Square, home of the world's largest Marks and Spencer store. Full listing details of the building are provided in Appendix G.

2.2 The application site is also located within the Cathedral Conservation Area. Within the Cathedral Conservation Area the theme of environmental improvement and the enhancement of the character of the Conservation Area will be pursued.

3 THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

3.1 The Triangle is an important listed building, located in the new retail heart of Manchester City Centre. The Triangle shopping centre features unique brands which include, Adidas Originals, CK Underwear and Storm. A decline in the number of people visiting the centre and the lack of pull to the shopping centre has led to a serious decline in lettings in the last couple of years.

3.2 The trading position at the Triangle continues to deteriorate despite having successfully attracted into the Centre Aspecto, Y-3, Zizzi and Tampopo prior to Christmas 2007.

3.3 In 2008, the Triangle has managed to attract only one retailer, Harpoon Louie's. Against those successes are a number of concerning trends.

3.4 Out of a total number of 36 units:-

- There are 7 vacant units that have never been occupied or been vacant for over 12 months.
- 1 additional unit (Calvin Klein underwear) has recently vacated and 1 other is a short term letting
- Units are on the market by way of lease assignment.
- Occupiers, including Adidas Originals, have served their break clause and will be vacating shortly.
- Other occupiers are either wishing to vacate, downsize or are in financial difficulties.

3.5 Correspondingly approximately 40% of the units in the Centre could be vacant by February 2009. More detail on the units concerned is highlighted in appendix A.

3.6 The main factors leading to this deteriorating trading position are as follows:-

- The impact of the Arndale extension.
- The availability of retail space in Spinningfield which is targeting higher end retailers similar to the target market for the Triangle.
- The Triangle is perceived by potential retailers as being too quiet with insufficient footfall. As a result it is only the outward facing units on Exchange Square that continue to be popular.

3.7 The Triangle centre has an urgent need to increase footfall through the scheme if it has any chance of long term survival. The Centre Management team have used a substantial marketing budget to hold events within the Triangle such as fashion shows, together with advertising on the television and trams. However, the Centre Management has struggled to increase shopper's awareness of the Triangle and the retail offer within it. The one area in which we are convinced a lot more needs to be done relates to attracting shoppers into the centre itself via the main and side entrances. At present it is easy for visitors to Manchester to not even realise that the Triangle is a shopping centre. Furthermore, the current main entrance to the Triangle blends in with the retail facades and shops struggle to identify that there is an entrance to the central area when approaching from Cathedral Walks, Commercial Street, the Arndale Centre, Next and the Printworks. There is an urgent need for a focal point to draw attention to the existing entrance and to the two secondary accesses into Jigsaw and off Fennell Street.

3.8 Consequently, it is important to rebrand the Triangle to reposition it as a niche shopping location with a different market to the Arndale Centre and Market. At present it is not clear to many visitors to Manchester that the Triangle is a shopping centre. This rebranding therefore includes changes to the exterior of the building to:

- Attract shoppers into the building as a specialist retail destination;
- Make it clear that it is a shopping centre;
- Emphasise the entrances into the building which are not currently immediately obvious.

3.9 These external changes are just one part of a rebranding and marketing exercise to reposition The Triangle and increase lettings and footfall. The Triangle Management Team has put in place a robust marketing campaign and television advertising.

4 PRE-APPLICATION DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Extensive pre-application discussions have taken place with both Richard Llewellyn and David Roscoe in the Planning Department who have provided advice on the evolving scheme to ensure it complements the building's architectural qualities, protects the building's listing but also maximising the required impact of the proposal to ultimately attract shoppers into the centre.

4.2 A synopsis of the design options discussed with the City Council to date in order to demonstrate our client's willingness to reach a mutually agreeable scheme is provided below (for full details refer to Appendix B). In summary, the following points are emphasised:-

- The scheme has now been significantly amended to overcome previous objections. There is now agreement to the window canopies, form and general positioning. Early concerns regarding the design of the window canopies specifically relating to rainwater run-off have been rectified through designing the canopies downwards towards the ground to allow easy rainwater run-off.
- The scheme has been substantially 'toned down' with regard to our clients desire to make a much more prominent 'statement' through signage and banners. The scheme therefore predominantly reflects that sought by the planning officers in order to minimise impact on the listed building.

4.3 A planning application, listed building application and advertisement application in connection to the above has now been submitted in relation to signage above Cathedral Street/Hanging Ditch and Fennel Street and for the window canopies above shop frontages.

- The current impasse relates only to the means of supporting the entrance canopy and in that respect, we have been unable to find a structural solution which allows the canopy to be supported from the building rather than on two slender columns.
- In that regard we have 'come to the end of the road' in terms of further amendments in circumstances where we consider it is absolutely essential to

find a way to emphasise that the Triangle is a distinctive shopping location in its own right and to direct shoppers into the building. Many of the advertising features from earlier schemes have been stripped away, consequently the entrance feature is of prime importance in the objective of turning round the fortunes of this important building and retailing centre.

4.4 As you are aware, we have pursued the option of a cantilevered canopy which was the preferred design solution of Morley as well as the Council. However, as set out in the letter from Faber Maunsell (refer to appendix C), this has not proved possible for a number of reasons which in summary are as follows:-

- The canopy needs to have a self weight to resist wind uplift and needs to be substantial enough to resist snow loadings.
- As a result the three tie cables originally shown would need to be increased to eight. The massing of the stonework above the canopy location is such that the plates to fix the rods to the stonework would need to be 350mm x 350mm.
- The steel beams above the entrance to the building to which the cantilever canopy would need to be fixed, would be subject to significant torsion moments. The beams were not designed to accommodate these forces.
- In view of these constraints, Faber Maunsell do not consider any size of cantilever canopy can be supported on this building structure.

4.5 It is for these reasons that alternative means of support have been investigated with Faber's recommending a pair of posts to the front of the canopy which would eliminate the need for the rods and remove the torsion moment on the existing beams.

4.6 It was suggested by Richard Llewellyn that a more light weight canopy be explored. However it was found that is not possible due to the wind uplift forces and a lighter weight canopy structure would necessitate more substantial tie rods back to the structure as detailed above and would be unable to accommodate the snow loadings.

4.7 We have also asked Faber's to consider another suggestion forwarded by Richard Llewellyn which would consist of a frame within the main entrance. Initial assessments have concluded that in order to provide a canopy with an internal framework, it would be necessary to use the support of the existing steel beams and the stonework above,

using the masonry below the first floor windows. This would have the following implications:

- There are likely to be sections of the masonry to the listed building that require cutting out and altering to support the framework to the canopy.
- The canopy will need to be raised by about 1metre to above the cornicing and the resultant height, including the increased height of the lettering, will obscure the ornate stonework to the colonnade/façade.
- The supporting struts will be visible though the 1st floor windows which would necessitate obscured glazing being installed and internal boxing.
- Internal services may need removing/relocating.
- Methods of installation will be much more complicated, involving on site fabrication, increased scaffolding, both internally and at street level for longer periods.
- Construction costs, which will already be substantial, are likely to increase by at least 20%.
- The alternative location of the canopy will be higher than the proposed retail canopies, which will detract from and reduce the overall aesthetics of the proposals.

4.8 As seen from the above, the implementation of a frame within the main entrance to support the canopy will have a considerable impact on the listed building which will include sections of masonry to the listed building to be cut out and the canopy to be raised approximately 1 metre above the cornicing, obscuring ornate stonework to the façade.

4.9 Considering all options and alternatives therefore the incorporation of pillars remains the only viable option in providing a canopy to the main entrance of the building which compliments the appearance of the listed building whilst minimising any negative impact to the façade.

4.10 In considering impact to the public realm the planning department at MCC considered the incorporation of pillars to be a backwards step in terms of pedestrian movement within Exchange Square. This point has been raised with the Highways and Public Realm Departments at Manchester City Council, who considered the design and

visited the site. The Public Realm department concluded that the proposal would produce no negative impact or hindrance to the public realm and highways; consequently they have no objections in principle to the proposal (Appendix D).

4.11 It is therefore considered that the proposed canopy represents the best and only viable option in terms of impact to the façade of the listed building and public realm. As such we would ask you and your colleagues to reconsider your views on the proposed entrance canopy with the two proposed supporting posts. This proposal is considered further below.

5 THE PROPOSAL

Main Canopy

5.1 Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the main canopy. It is considered that the main canopy has been designed to complement the listed building, whilst unobtrusive to the public realm and the façade of the listed building. The main canopy represents a forward step when compared to a previous canopy design permitted at The Triangle (refer to Figure 2, Appendix F).

5.2 The main canopy is supported by two pillars and is attached to the building via the underside of the existing 1st floor compound triple beam using appropriate mechanical fixings (additional information regarding structural sections refer to appendix E). The proposed canopy will be 8800mm in width and will extend a total of 4650mm from the external wall of the triangle to the end of the glazing (drawing number 1249-001 and 1249-002). Overhead glazing will incorporate appropriate safety glass and will be 17.5mm clear spider glass. Additionally the Crossmember will incorporate a drainage gutter which will collect water from the main canopy glazing and divert water through the support legs to ground level (drawing number 1249-003).

5.3 The canopy will incorporate lasercut 'fretwork' detailing consisting of powder coated steel plate (refer to drawing number 1249-002). The columns supporting the main canopy would be only 244mm at their widest and would be positioned some 3m into the square from the front face of the building behind the existing low level bollards (refer to drawing number 1249-002). The pillars will consist of powder coated steel.

5.4 Importantly, the proposed columns will stand approximately 2118mm from the end of the window canopy to the service road which runs directly in front of The Triangle on Exchange Square (drawing number 1249-002). Therefore, it is considered that the proposed columns would not interfere with the main expanse of Exchange Square and would still allow for unimpeded pedestrian movement around the edge of the Triangle Building.

5.5 To avoid impeding pedestrian movement, existing lighting columns at the front entrance of The Triangle can be removed, with lighting being installed in the canopy columns. The maintenance and cost of the lighting in the columns will be the responsibility of the owners of The Triangle and an agreement to ensure this could be made through a Section 106.

5.6 The existing steel structure to the front of The Triangle will also be removed as part of any planning permission granted, allowing views of The Triangle to be unimpeded and pedestrian access throughout Exchange Square to be free flowing.

5.7 As there is the possibility that people will take cover and smoke under the canopy, it is proposed to install smoking bins outside the entrance of The Triangle so people can dispose of cigarettes safely and responsibly, this will continue uniformity within the public realm (Appendix D).

Signage

5.8 The main advertisement has been incorporated into the main canopy design on Exchange Square. As seen in drawing number 1249-001 and 1249-002, the signage lettering 'triangle' is to be created from orange opaque UV stable ABS/Acrylic and made waterproof. Around the lettering rim there will be a brushed effect aluminium edging. The signage will be held in place by signage framework constructed from powder coated steel. Signage lettering 'shopping' will be of a similar design however lettering will be created from white opaque UV stable ABS/Acrylic.

5.9 Signage at the Hanging Ditch/Exchange Square entrance will have LED lighting to the internal of each letter. The exact luminosity will be provided by the signage contractor, additionally this detail can be conditioned within possible planning permission.

5.10 As seen from the photo montage (refer to Figure 1) the signage has been designed to complement the listed building. The frame has been designed so as to be unobtrusive to the building to reduce impact to the façade of the listed building.

6 PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

6.1 PPG15 provides the principle statement of government policy for the identification and protection of historic buildings, conservation area and other elements of the historic elements.

6.2 Local authorities are required to pay specific attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the listed building and conservation area. However PPG15 notes that the historic environment is of particular importance for tourism and leisure, and the Government policy encourages the growth and development of tourism in response to the market so long as this is compatible with proper long-term conservation.

6.3 In considering the above, the following specific PPG15 considerations have been addressed in this Justification Statement.

6.4 Paragraph 3.13 of PPG15 states,

'Many listed buildings can sustain some degree of sensitive alteration or extension to accommodate continuing or new uses. Indeed, cumulative changes reflecting the history of use and ownership are themselves an aspect of the special interest of some buildings, and the merit of some new alterations or additions, especially where they are generated within a secure and committed long-term ownership, should not be discounted.'

6.5 With regards specifically to advertisement control within conservation areas, PPG15 within Paragraph 4.32 states,

'Outdoor advertising is essential to commercial activity in a free and diverse economy and the success of local businesses will usually help owners and tenants of commercial premises to maintain buildings in good repair and attractive appearance'.

6.6 In examining paragraph 3.13 and 4.32, it is considered that the erection of the main canopy and signage represents a design which is sensitive whilst reflecting the modern use of the building as a shopping centre. The main advertisement has been

incorporated into the main canopy design on Exchange Square. As seen in drawing number 1249-001 and 1249-002, the signage lettering 'triangle' is to be created from orange opaque UV stable ABS/Acrylic and made waterproof. Around the lettering rim there will be a brushed effect aluminium edging. The signage will be held in place by signage framework constructed from powder coated steel. Signage lettering 'shopping' will be of a similar design however lettering will be created from white opaque UV stable ABS/Acrylic.

6.7 The main canopy is supported by two pillars and is attached to the building via the underside of the existing 1st floor compound triple beam using appropriate mechanical fixings (additional information regarding structural sections refer to appendix E). Consequently, there will be no negative impact to the façade of the building.

6.8 As noted in PPG15 outdoor advertising is essential to commercial activity. It is considered that through the erection of the main canopy and associated signage within the conservation area represents an essential need to advertise The Triangle as a shopping centre to the passing public. It is considered that through the erection of the main canopy on the external façade of the building commercial activity can be increased through raising the passing public's awareness of the shopping centre. Through increasing activity in the shopping centre niche and diverse commercial premises can continue to operate against deteriorating market and trading conditions, securing the commercial success of businesses and increasing lettings.

7 CONCLUSIONS

7.1 This statement has been prepared in accordance with National and Local Planning Policy to describe why the proposed works are desirable and necessary and to provide Manchester City Council with the full information to assess the rationale for the erection of a main canopy and signage at the application site and the impacts of what is proposed for the site on the character and appearance of the listed building and the conservation area.

7.2 It is considered that a sympathetic design which brings minimal impact to the façade of the listed building through its means of fixings, have allowed the proposed works to accord with national planning policy advice given within PPG15.

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