18-20 FOUNTAIN STREET, MANCHESTER

Bruntwood Estates Beta Portfolio Ltd

GROUND FLOOR
RE-CLADDING WORKS

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

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Introduction

1. This Design and Access Statement is prepared in support of the planning application for the external ground floor alterations to 18-20 Fountain Street, Manchester, and addresses the design aspects of the proposals and its access.

2. This statement should be read in conjunction with the following drawings:

L(00)001	location plan
L(10)001	existing ground floor plan
L(10)002	existing elevations (sheet 1 of 2)
L(10)003	existing elevations (sheet 2 of 2)
L(20)001	proposed ground floor plan
L(20)002	proposed elevations (sheet 1 of 2)
L(20)003	proposed elevations (sheet 2 of 2)

Proposal

3. The proposal involves new shop-fronts to the ground floor of 18-20 Fountain Street, a new entrance door to the office entrance on Marble Street and the re-cladding of the walls either side of the office entrance.

4. In addition the proposal involves a change of use to the ground floor as the existing use is unclear, retail unit A having previously been used as a job centre that was linked to the upper floors, and retail unit B as a restaurant that closed several years ago. The proposed use is as follows:
    - Ground floor A2 (financial and professional services), which will also allow for A1 (shops).
    - First and second floors B1 (business), to allow the floors to be let as offices.

Site and Surroundings

5. 18-20 Fountain Street is a three storey building on Fountain Street, consisting of two retail units on the ground floor and office space on the first and second floors. The property is attached to its neighbour Lowry House, on Marble Street, as it was originally built as part of the same development, but it is now a separate property.

6. The site is within the Upper King Street Conservation Area, but is on the periphery, on the northeastern boundary. The historic buildings within the area are noted for their grandeur and variety, with the predominant theme consisting of traditional materials, with the ground floor forming a base, upper floors a middle and a top floor often within mansard roofs forming a top layer. In contrast 18-20 Fountain Street is a more modern building, and although adding to the variety of the area, and being a product of its age, it is considered not to be an equal to the historic buildings.

7. The existing building is exposed on three sides, with elevations on Fountain Street, Marble Street and Phoenix Street. Access to the ground floor retail units is off Fountain Street, which benefits from a large pavement area immediately in front of the property. The entrance to the upper office floors is off Marble Street. Phoenix Street is largely a service road for the neighbouring properties, and leads to a service yard at the rear of the adjacent Lowry House, a yard to which one of the retail units has access.

8. The site is on the periphery of the main Market Street shopping area, with almost all adjacent buildings containing retail outlets on the ground floor.

Consultation

9. As the property is within a conservation area, the policies relating to conservation areas are considered to be the most relevant.

10. It is understood the proposals have been presented to the planners, and no objections were raised.

11. As the proposals predominantly relate to re-cladding works within a retail area it was not considered necessary to involve members of the local community with pre-application matters.

Evaluation

12. The existing shop-fronts are now redundant as the existing retail units are currently empty. The two existing shop-fronts are also different, and it is considered there is scope for re-cladding these in order to bring a more unified appearance to the elevations. There would also be an opportunity to reorganise the signage.

13. The existing office/upper floors entrance is set back from Marble Street and it is thus considered that in conjunction with re-cladding the shop-fronts, there is scope to improve the appearance and prominence of the entrance.

Design – Use

14. The building is presently unoccupied. The last use was as a job centre/ offices to the ground floor unit A and the two upper floors, with ground floor unit B being used as a restaurant several years ago. The proposals are intended to revitalise the building in order to attract tenants, with the ground floor used for retail, use class A2 (which will also allow for A1 use) and the upper floors as offices, use class B1.

Design – Amount

15. New shop-font glazing to the Marble Street/Fountain Street retail unit (unit A) is to following the building perimeter, rather than copy the existing glazing, which is recessed in places. As a result there is a small increase of nominal 7.8 sq.m. in floor area to the unit.

16. Similarly the new shop-front glazing to the Phoenix Street/Fountain Street retail unit (unit B) is to follow the building perimeter, resulting in a nominal 5.5 sq.m. increase in floor area.

17. The entrance door to the office is to be brought forward to give it more prominence, resulting in a nominal 2 sq.m. increase in floor area.

Design – Layout

18. There are no changes proposed to the basic layout of the building, however internal partitions are removed at ground floor level to make the retail units empty shells ready for tenants' fit out.

Design – Scale and Massing

19. There are no changes proposed to the massing of the building – the proposals involve the re-cladding of the ground floor shop-fronts and the office entrance.

Design – External Appearance

20. It is proposed that the new shop-fronts are simply glazed with floor to ceiling glass panels, with a frame to the perimeter and silicone joints to vertical glass-to-glass junctions. New automatic glass doors are proposed to both retail units. Glazing is to be contained between the existing columns and beams, allowing the existing building's structure to become more clearly defined. Existing columns and beam cladding is to be retained, to be repaired as necessary. A retail signage zone is to be allocated at the top of the glass panels, set behind the glass. Signage is to be by tenants. The final panel on Phoenix Street is to be in brickwork to match existing. A wall-mounted light on a PIR sensor is to be added to the existing adjacent brickwork panel, to illuminate the small paved area in front of the panel.

21. To the office entrance, a new automatic door is to be inserted forward of the existing opening, with a glass roof over, above the new floor area. Either side of the door new rendered walls, with a paint finish, are proposed, in order to define the entrance area and lead office works and visitors to the entrance from the street. New signage is proposed, to be in stainless steel lettering. New lighting is to be incorporated into the rendered walls, consisting of external floor washers at low level.

Design – Landscaping

22. It is proposed that where the tarmac area in front of the building, along Fountain Street, is disturbed when fitting the new retail unit entrance doors and shop fronts, then this is made good with new tarmac to match the existing.

23. It is proposed the paved area in front of the office entrance is re-paved in York stone flags to match the adjacent new public realm works, with a new grey slate path leading to the office entrance.

Access

24. The proposals are essentially for re-cladding works. However as new entrance doors are proposed to both retail units these entrances are to become level access entrances, suitable for all.

25. The office entrance is to receive a new entrance door. The existing approach is via a paved area, which is slightly ramped. This area is to be re-paved and the existing ramped approach maintained.

26. Access for emergency vehicles and refuse collections will remain as existing.

Conclusion

27. The proposals are largely concerned with improving an existing building, and in so doing enhance its surrounds. The new shop-fronts are to have a clean and modern look, which sit within the existing columns and beams, and are of high quality and in keeping with the character of the existing property.

28. The proposals have no detrimental affect on the immediate area and leave the conservation area's character and appearance unharmed.

29. Existing access arrangements are enhanced.

30. The proposed works are compliant with current planning policy.

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