Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners

Planning Design Economics

Manchester City Council
Planning, Chief Executive's Department
PO Box 463,
Town Hall Extension
Manchester
M60 3NY

14 Regent's Wharf
All Saints Street
London N1 9RL

T 020 7837 4477
F 020 7837 2277

london@nlpplanning.com
www.nlpplanning.com

Date 19 February 2010
Our ref 40727/NG/SPe/956163v1
Your ref

Dear Sir

Unit C, Queens Road Retail Park, Manchester: Planning Application for Installation of Mezzanine Floorspace

On behalf of our clients, DSG International Plc, please find enclosed a full planning application for the installation of a mezzanine floor of 1,864 sq m (gross) within the above unit. The additional floorspace is part of the Company's strategy to introduce the new Megastore format into the unit.

The application comprises the requisite numbers of the following documents.

1 Completed application form and relevant ownership certificate;
2 Design and Access Statement;
3 Site Location Plan (drawing no: MA40727/01);
4 Ground Floor as Existing (drawing no: MANCHESTER-1612-COO);
5 Ground Floor as Proposed (drawing no: MANCHESTER-1612-CO2);
6 Mezzanine Floor as Proposed (drawing no: MANCHESTER-1612-CO3);

The application is accompanied by:

- A Retail Statement by Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners; and
- A Transport Statement by Savell Bird & Axon.

We also enclose a cheque for the planning application fee of £340. This is on the basis that the planning application proposal falls within Schedule 1, Category 9 of the Town and Country Planning (Fees for Application and Deemed Applications) (Amendment) as the application proposal is defined as *"the carrying out of any operation not coming within any of the above categories"* and the floorspace created (i.e. site area) is less than 0.2 hectares. This approach is consistent with the accompanying DCLG Circular 04/2008 (Planning Related Fees) which states (para. 48) *"if a mezzanine floor of 200 sq m or more is to be created within a building in use for retail, that will*

amount to Category 9 development". The Circular continues by stating (para. 48) that if "*one or more mezzanine storeys are to be inserted, the floor area of the mezzanine would be the 'site area' for fee purposes; the existing floors and the footprint of the whole building are not relevant to this calculation*".

Summary of Application Proposal

As part of their nationwide programme DSGi wish to undertake internal modification works and install a mezzanine sales floor within their store at the above location (only the latter element falls within the scope of planning control). The existing store has a sales area on the ground floor of 1,580 sq m. It is proposed to increase the ground floor sales area to 1,953 sq m and install a mezzanine floor with a sales area of 1,289 sq m. The total sales area proposed is 3,242 sq. m (an increase of 1,662 sq m net).

Planning Analysis

The relevant planning policy, retail and transportation issues arising from the application proposal are assessed fully within the accompanying Retail Statement prepared by NLP and Transport Statement prepared by Savell Bird and Axon and we do not seek to repeat them here.

Based on the Currys format, DSGi has launched an extensive programme of refurbishment which will focus on the introduction of the new Megastore format in a number of key locations across the UK. Manchester (Cheetham Hill) has been identified as one of these key locations reflecting the strength of the City as a shopping destination.

The Retail Statement assesses the level of additional floorspace sought against the relevant PPS4 policy tests and concludes that the application proposal meets a requirement by the applicant to improve this retail facility and better serve its customers. The Manchester UDP, policies S2.3 and CC18, allow the expansion of retail uses at the Queens Road Retail Park. The proposal will give rise to a relatively modest increase in the turnover of the existing store and most of the trade will be diverted from other similar retail warehouse operators in surrounding retail parks. With regards to the sequential approach, we have explored the scope for disaggregation, but in practical terms it would not be viable for the additional floorspace to be provided on a separate site to the existing store given that it will be used to improve the shopping experience for customers, provide additional circulation and display areas and broaden the range of goods sold within existing goods categories. Despite this, we have assessed sequentially preferable sites in Cheetham Hill and no site has a realistic prospect of accommodating a unit of the size required. Furthermore Manchester City Centre already accommodates a Currys Digital Store at the Arndale Centre. Accordingly the Retail Statement concludes that the application proposal complies with all the relevant planning policy guidance and there are no material considerations that indicate that planning permission should not be granted.

The Transport Statement concludes that the proposed development would be highly accessible by non-car travel modes of walking, cycling and public transport and the location would facilitate diverted and linked trips. Further to this, the provision of the mezzanine floor would not result in a material increase in traffic and the car park would continue to operate with sufficient spare capacity to accommodate peak demand.

Sustainability

This proposal represents a sustainable development, promoting the more efficient use of the existing building in an accessible location without the creation of any additional external floorspace. The more efficient use of land is supported by national planning policy, PPS1.

The construction of the mezzanine floor will utilise a minimal amount of energy. Currys confirm that low energy lighting will be used and all mechanical and electrical installations will be provided in accordance with the latest standards and regulations. In addition to this, DSGi is committed to sustainable development. This is demonstrated, inter alia, by:

a The use of 100% recycled plastic in their carrier bags

b The recycling of more than 700,000 products annually

c Actively working with the Carbon Trust to cut Carbon emissions

d Working with the charity, Waterwise to promote efficiency in appliances.

e All products sold at Currys have a lengthy replacement cycle whilst the vast majority of white goods sold by the applicants have an 'A' rating

f Free recycling service for customers' existing appliances

More details on the company's environmental policies are attached to the Retail Statement.

A further significant benefit of this proposed development would be the creation of additional jobs and the recently published PPS4 emphasises the importance that should be attached to this benefit. Specifically, DSG anticipate that around 70 additional jobs will be created within the store by providing an enhanced shopping experience and greater customer care and service.

We trust you have sufficient information to determine the application and we shall contact you shortly to discuss this. In the meantime, should you have any queries in respect of the above, please contact Sarah Perryman or myself.

Yours sincerely

Neil Goldsmith
Director

Encs.

cc. Laurence Rose - DSGi