DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT TO ACCOMPANY A PLANNING APPLICATION FOR CHANGE OF USE TO COFFEE BAR AT 9 OAK STREET, MANCHESTER FOR MR HAIDER

PREPARED BY

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JUNE 2009

THE PROPOSAL

The application site comprises commercial premises within the heart of the Northern Quarter of the City. The proposal seeks consent for a change of use to form a coffee bar. The premises would be open from 9am to 5pm.

PLANNING POLICY

PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT 6: PLANNING FOR TOWN CENTRES

One of the key objectives is to promote economic growth and encourage investment creating additional employment. Paragraph 2.22 states that a diversity of uses in centres makes an important contribution to their vitality and viability. Different but complementary uses, during the ay and in the evening can reinforce each other, making town centres more attractive to residents and shoppers.

THE MANCHESTER UDP

Policy RC3 seeks to encourage compatible mixed uses throughout the area. The reasoned justification explains that a great variety of uses is one of the major characteristics of the city centre. The plans proposal for mixed uses aims to ensure that every opportunity is available for such a positive mix of activity to become an even more characteristic part of the City Centre than it is at present.

Policy DC10.1 is a criteria based policy for proposals relating to the sale of food or drink. Consideration will be given to:

- The general location of the proposed development
- The effect on the amenity of neighbouring residents

- The availability of safe and convenient parking

- Ease of access for all including disabled people

- The storage and collection of refuse and litter

MAIN ISSUE

The main issue to be considered in the determination of this application is whether the proposed use is acceptable in the area, having regard to the Policies of the UDP.

APPRAISAL

The application site comprises a corner unit at the junction of Edge Street with Oak Street. On the opposite side of Edge Street are commercial premises (a gallery and children's clothing shop); to the East on the opposite side of Oak Street are apartments and there is a bookshop with what appears to be offices above at the adjacent premises on Oak Street. The broader frontage along Edge Street is characterised by a series of smaller commercial units some of which have a run down appearance. The area sits within the Northern Quarter which is a Conservation Area and World Heritage Site.

Although a side street situated away from the hustle and bustle of activity in the main shopping centre, there is considerable pedestrian footfall along Edge Street and the surrounding Streets. This is probably what has led to demand for a range of bars and cafes in the area. The proposal would add to this vitality and would be more consistent with the surrounding uses than the subsisting warehouse and showroom use. The latter has been empty for

many years and in its present condition contributes nothing to the vitality or viability of the area.

There are also residential premises nearby, most notably in the form of the apartments recently approved on the upper floors of the building (081693/FO/2006), and also on the opposite side of Oak Street. However, the nature of a coffee bar use is entirely different to a hot food takeaway insofar as they do not tend to draw passing traffic with resultant noise form car doors slamming etc. This is all the more the case with the application site as Edge Street is quietly trafficked and the dominant trade drawn for the nearby bars as well as this premises would be from pedestrians. This is especially the case as there is limited on street parking in the vicinity.

In relation to odours, the plans do not incorporate an extraction flue as the only heated food will be paninis, sandwiches and the like, heated in a small grill. There is thus no need for extraction equipment of the type normally found in cafes and hot food takeaways.

In terms of residential amenity generally, whilst there will be some activity in and out of the premises, given the nature of the use proposed and the suggested opening hours, both of which can be secured by condition, it is considered that the proposal strikes a reasonable balance between the living conditions of residents and the broader economic contribution the proposal would bring to the city centre. Moreover, residents living in such mixed areas cannot reasonably expect to enjoy the same level of peace and quiet as those residing in purely residential estates.

The layout, amount and scale of the development are dictated by the available floorspace and layout of the existing premises. There is no opportunity for landscaping as the application premises stands hard up to the footway on both frontages. In terms of detailed design, there are no external changes to the elevations. The proposal would thus leave the character and

appearance of the Conservation Area unchanged. PPG 15: Planning and the Historic Environment states that the requirement to preserve or enhance the character of Conservation Areas can be achieved by proposals which have a neutral, as opposed to a positive impact.

In terms of accessibility, the site is close to the heart of the city with its multiplicity of public transport routes but either way, we maintain that the majority of customers to the premises will be drawn from the surrounding residential areas or alternatively, will be shoppers carrying out multi function trips.

In terms of access for the disabled, the entrance incorporates a level threshold and is wide enough to facilitate access by wheelchair users. The premises also incorporates a disabled wc as close as possible to the entrance.

In relation to waste disposal, the approved plans for the apartments incorporate a bin store area at ground floor and there is adequate space therein to accommodate the bins associated with the proposal. There is no reason to believe that there would be problems with litter (say as in the case of some hot food takeaways), but if necessary, a condition could be imposed requiring the provision of a litter bin.

CONCLUSION

This is a well conceived application which will be complementary to the existing range of uses in the area and would not prove harmful to the living conditions of nearby residents. It will bolster the vitality and viability of the Northern Quarter in a small, but nonetheless significant way. It would thus comply with the relevant policies of the UDP and accordingly, we invite you to approve the application subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions.