King Sturge

SUPPORTING PLANNING STATEMENT

ADVERTISEMENT PLANNING APPLICATION

THE TRIANGLE
MANCHESTER

AUGUST 2008



King Sturge LLP
One Piccadilly Gardens
Manchester
M1 1RG

ADVERTISMENT
PLANNING APPLICATION
THE TRIANGLE

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FIGURE 1

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Supporting Planning Statement is submitted for the erection of illuminated signage above the main canopy at the main entrance of The Triangle at Hanging Ditch/Exchange Square.

1.2 As part of this planning application please find enclosed a cheque for £95 which is the statutory fee for this application. Additionally there are three copies of the following drawings and the following documents in support of the proposal:

- Site location plan – site edged red (Scale 1:1250)
- Site location plan – site edged red (Scale 1:1250)
- Drawing Number 1249-101 – Exchange Square Entrance Existing
- Drawing Number 1249-001 – Proposed Exchange Square Entrance Front Entrance
- Drawing Number 1249-002 – Proposed Exchange Square Entrance Side Elevation
- Drawing Number 1249-003 – Proposed Exchange Square Entrance Plan
- Appendix A – Floor Plan
- Appendix B – Design Options Discussed with Manchester City Council
- Appendix C – Planning History
- Figure 1 – Photo Montage

1.3 A separate listed building application and full planning application is submitted in association with this advertisement application.

2 THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

2.1 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.

2.2 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.

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

2.4 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.

2.5 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.

2.6 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.

2.7 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.

2.8 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.

2.9 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.

3 PRE-APPLICATION DISCUSSIONS

3.1 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.

3.2 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.

3.3 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 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.

3.4 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, 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.

3.5 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.

3.6 The signage to which this advertisement application relates is to be attached to the canopy to highlight and increase the prominence of the front entrance.

4 THE PROPOSAL

4.1 As stated above Manchester City Council's feedback has been very important in the preparation of the scheme. Original comments received included the appropriateness of a sympathetic design in relation to building entrances and canopies to shop-fronts. These points have been addressed with a more sympathetic design and extra details including the means of fixings which are sympathetic to the façade of the listed building.

Signage

4.2 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.

4.3 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.

4.4 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.

5 PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

5.1 When determining any planning application, the relevant authorities are under a statutory obligation as imposed by section 54a of the Town and Country Planning Act, repeated in section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, to make their determination in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

5.2 In this instance the relevant development plan is the City of Manchester Unitary Development Plan (UDP) adopted June 1995, read together with the North West Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). Although not adopted the public consultation for the Secretary of State's proposed changes to the North West Submitted Draft RSS commenced between 20 March and 23 May 2008.

5.3 Other material consideration will include Planning Policy Guidance notes/Planning Policy Statements issued by central government.

National Policy

5.4 It is important to take into consideration advice contained in national guidance regarding town centres set out in Planning Policy Statement 6 'Planning for Town Centres'. Paragraph 1.3 within PPS6 states that,

'The Government's key objective for town centres is to promote their vitality and viability by:

- ***Planning for the growth and development of existing centres; and***
- ***Promoting and enhancing existing centre, by focusing development in such centres and encouraging a wide range of services in a good environment, accessible to all.'***

5.5 In considering PPS6, it is considered that through the implementation of the canopy at the main entrance to The Triangle the vitality and viability of the shopping centre can be increased, through attracting the passing public. In increasing the vitaility and viability of The Triangle this existing shopping facility will be protected against

increasingly hard market and trading conditions together with competition from other shopping areas including the Arndale and retail space at Spinningfields.

5.6 As The Triangle is a listed building it is also important to consider Planning Policy Guidance 15 (PPG15) 'Planning and the Historic Environment'. 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.'

5.7 It is considered that the erection of a canopy at the main entrance represents a design which is sensitive whilst reflecting the modern use of the building as a shopping centre. The impact of the listed building will be considered in more detail within the associated and supporting listed building application.

5.8 With regards specifically to advertisement control within conservation areas, PPG15 states that,

'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'.

5.9 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 and associated signage the buildings 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.

Regional Policy

5.10 Regional Policy in the form of the North West Regional Spatial Strategy is an important consideration. Within the Draft North West RSS Policy W5 'Retail Development' states,

'Plans and strategies should promote retail investment where it assists in the regeneration and economic growth of the North West's town centres and city centres'. Policy W5 continues to state, ***'Retail development that supports entrepreneurship, particularly increasing the number of independent retailers, should be supported'***.

5.11 In relation to Policy W5 it is considered that through rebranding, The Triangle can be repositioned as a niche shopping location with a different retail focus to the Arndale Centre and Spinningfields. Through external changes including the erection of the main canopy and associated signage, it is considered that the passing public will be attracted into the centre through being alerted to a prominent entrance which indicates the function of the building. As such it is considered that footfall will increase as well as awareness of current retailers within The Triangle who at present, do not have outward facing units on Exchange Square. In increasing the footfall additional independent and niche retailers can also be attracted to the Triangle.

Local Policy

5.12 The City of Manchester Unitary Development Plan (UDP) was adopted in July 1995 and remains the statutory planning policy document against which all development proposals are considered. The UDP has been altered several times but these alterations are not relevant to this current proposal.

5.13 Within the UDP the site is allocated within Policy RC20-01 (Area 1 Victoria Station/Cathedral). Policy RC20_01 states,

'This is an important area of considerable character. It occupies a prominent position which is both an accessible gateway location and close to the Arndale Centre and the shopping and office activities in the Market Place area...a major part of the area is covered by the Cathedral Conservation Area whose principal

components are the Cathedral itself, Chethams School, the Corn Exchange and the high townscape quality of certain surrounding streets.'

5.14 Policy RC20_01 does not specifically refer to the application site however it confirms that the area in which The Triangle is located is in a prominent position in terms of its gateway location which is close to the Arndale Centre and shopping activities. In taking full advantage of this 'gateway' location, it is considered that through the rebranding of The Triangle footfall and awareness of the shopping centre can be increased.

5.15 Within the Manchester UDP the proposal is also allocated within a Conservation Area (Policy DC18.1). Policy DC18.1 states that the council will seek to preserve and enhance the character of its designated conservation areas by carefully considering issues including the effects of signs and advertisements and the effect of major changes to the appearance of existing buildings.

5.16 In considering Policy DC18.1 it is considered that the proposal will not result in a 'major change' to the appearance of the existing building. However it will reflect the modern use of the building as a shopping centre whilst preseving the character of the conservation area.

5.17 As The Triangle is a listed building Policy DC19.1 is relevant to take into consideration. Policy DC19.1 states,

'In determining applications for listed building consent or planning applications for development involving or having an impact on buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, the Council will have regard to the desirability of securing the retention, restoration, maintenance and continued use of such buildings and to protecting their general setting. In giving effect to this policy, the Council will:

b. not permit a change of use of a listed building, where it would have a detrimental effect on the character or appearance of the building;

c. not permit any external or internal alteration or addition to a Listed building where, in its opinion, there would be an adverse effect on its architectural or historic character.'

5.18 In considering advertisements, Policy DC14 'Shop Fronts and Related Signs' is important to take into consideration. Policy DC14 states that the Advertisement Regulations require that applications for shop signs be considered only in the interests of amenity and public safety. In determining such applications and specifically in determining the proposed application consent, the council will adopt the following policies in relation to the interests of amenity:

a) ***signs should not normally be positioned other than at fascia level;***
b) ***signs should respect the architectural form of buildings and shop frontages;***
c) ***where no obvious fascia level exists, signs above shopfronts should be in keeping with the scale of the frontage of the building and in particular should not fill the gap between ground floor shop windows and first floor windows;***

5.19 In relation to the interests of public safety policy DC14 states:

d) ***any sign which is detrimental to the safety of pedestrians or motorists will be refused.***

5.20 It is considered that the proposed signage complies with policies DC19.1 and DC14. The main signage will be positioned on the main canopy and will consist of individual lettering attached to a signage framework constructed from powder coated steel (drawing number 1249-001 and 1249-002). The proposed signage will not detract from the existing character of the building and will serve to enhance the status of the shopping centre and conservation area.

OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

5.21 Manchester City Council has commenced preparation of its Local Development Framework (LDF) which will eventually supersede the UDP as policy framework for the District. As part of the LDF preparation the Council has already adopted a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) entitled Guide to Development in Manchester (adopted April, 2007). With regard to the city centre the SPD sets standards relating to the environmental and physical quality of existing buildings and streets and the requirements and considerations developers and applicant's should have when considering new developments.

5.22 Of particular importance paragraph 2.9 states,

'The design of shop fronts...and signage should contribute to the character, identity, individuality and accessibility of local centres. These elements play a major role in creating the sense of place and image of the area. Whilst it is important for people to be able to identify specific shops and services, the design of shop fronts and signage should relate to and harmonise with the character of the area within which the building is located. Local centres must be accessible to ensure inclusiveness, and entrances to shops, services and facilities, and new or improved public realm works should be designed with this in mind'.

5.23 The SPD highlights the fact that the design of shop fronts can be used positively to enhance the legibility in new developments and if appropriately located and designed can be particularly helpful for visitors and users of large complex schemes. In this respect it is considered that a focal point will be introduced through the erection of signage, which will draw attention to the Hanging Ditch/Exchange Square main entrance, heightening the public's awareness of the buildings use as a shopping centre.

5.24 Additionally, it is also noted that the Council, through the SPD, will seek quality in the smaller scale detail in the alteration of existing buildings, as it is often these smaller elements that determine the appearance and character of an area. Building fronts and associated signage are elements which influence the visual appearance of the City Centre and their detailed design will be important in enhancing the quality of the environment. In response to this element of the SPD, the application has taken into consideration the small scale detail in the alteration of the existing building through pre-application discussions with MCC planners which have resulted in the design changing to incorporate concerns (refer to Appendix B). Although there is currently an impasse regarding the canopy and columns, it is considered that the associated signage attached to the main canopy is of a high quality design and appearance and is an improvement on the existing signage at the main entrance.

6 PLANNING HISTORY

6.1 There is a detailed history of submitted applications concerning the Triangle. Relevant planning applications are listed in Appendix C.

6.2 The most relevant application to take into consideration relates to the refurbishment and external alterations to corn exchange in association with the re-use of the building to provide a mix of food and drink, retail and night-club uses (basement, ground and first floors) and office use on the upper floors which was granted planning permission in July 1998. This permission allows flexibility in active uses within the Shopping Centre.

6.3 Other applications granted and listed in Appendix C mainly relate to signage and associated external and internal works. In this respect it is important to note that all existing signage will be taken down and replaced by the current proposal.

7 CONCLUSIONS

7.1 This planning application seeks planning permission for the erection of signage above the entrance at Hanging Ditch/Exchange Square.

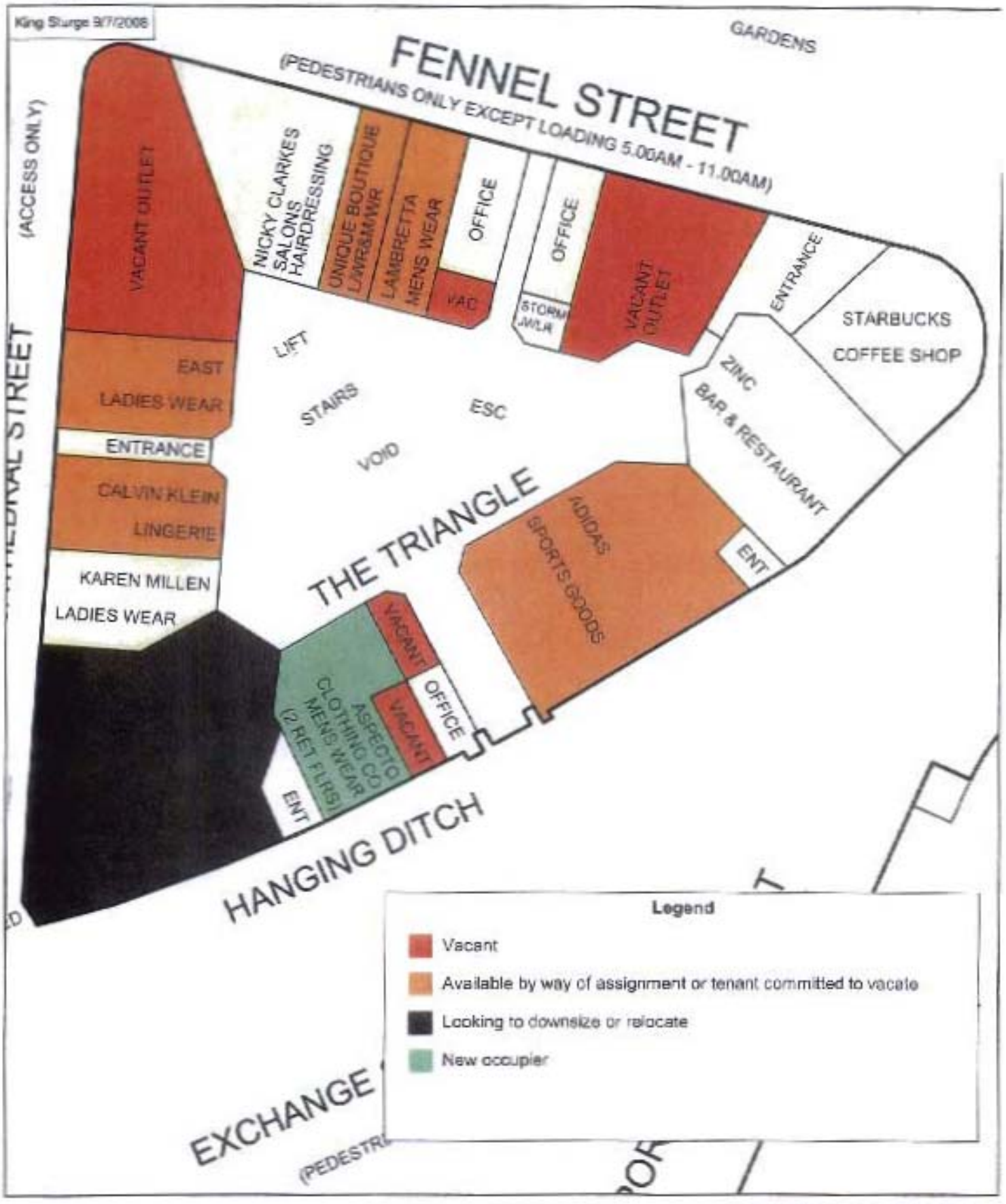
7.2 The Triangle centre has an urgent need to increase footfall through the scheme if it has any chance of long term survival. In conclusion therefore, it is both argued and considered that the rebranding of the Triangle will reposition it as a niche shopping location with a different market to the Arndale Centre and will consequently increase footfall in the shopping centre. Specifically signage proposed will make the main entrance to The Triangle more visible to the passing public.

7.3 In recognition to the numerous designs submitted to the Council regarding the signage, it is considered that the proposed scheme presented in this application not only satisfies our clients demands but also the Council's requirements in terms of visual impact and protection of a listed building.

APPENDIX A

goad

Manchester Central

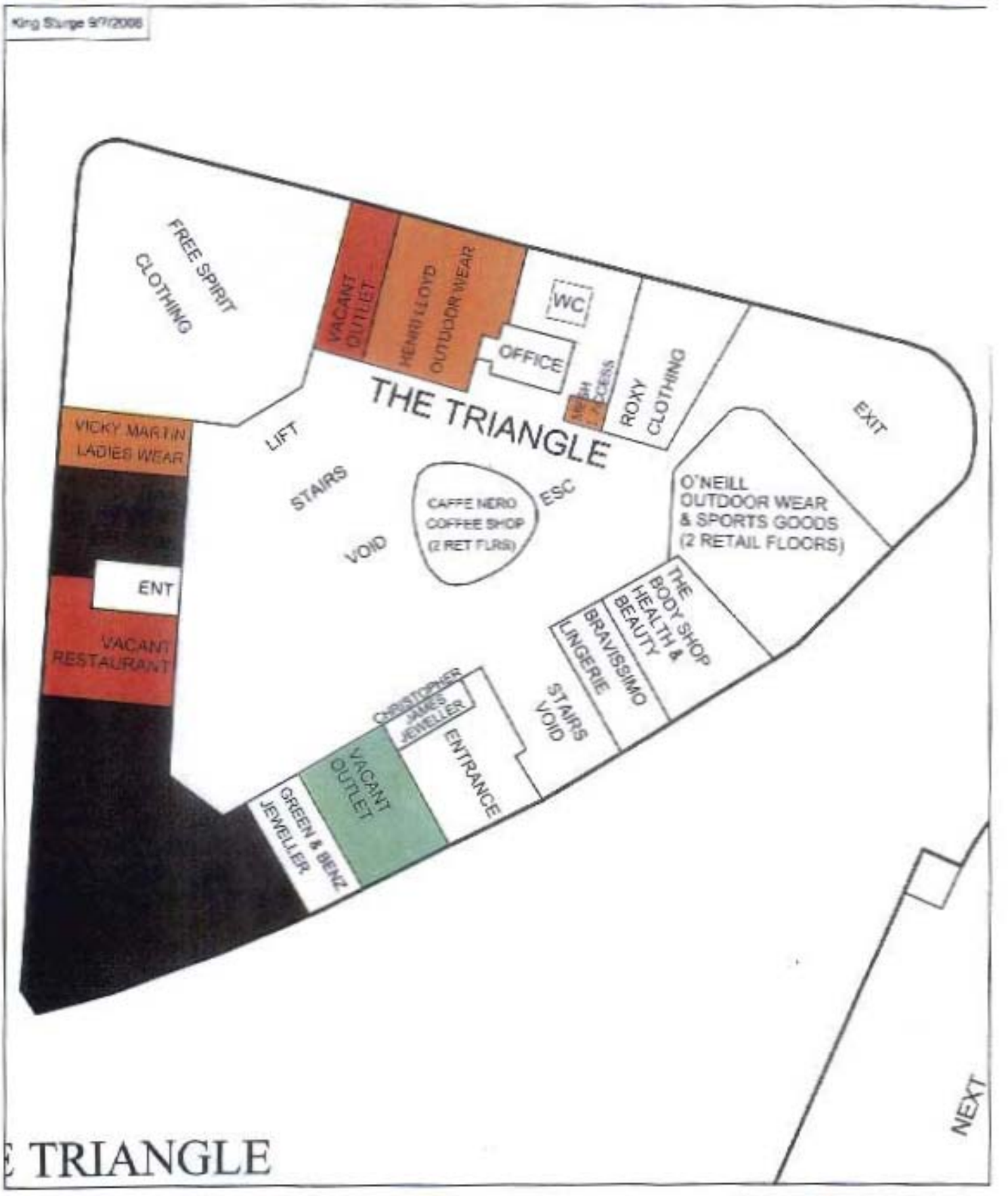


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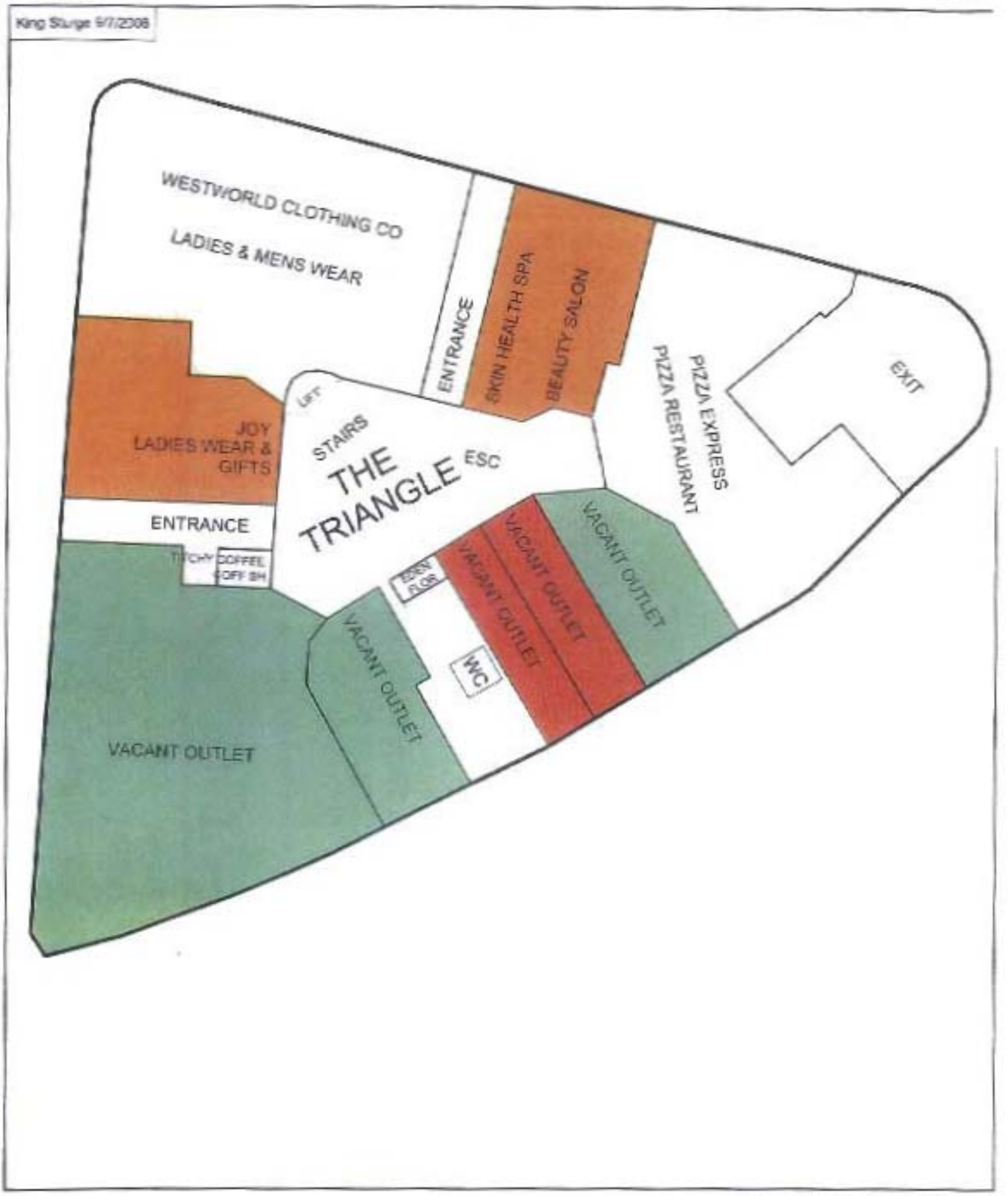
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APPENDIX B

SCHEME 1

Triangle Shopping Centre

Design Concepts
January 2007

triangle
Shopping Centre

navyblue
design group









navyblue
design group









navyblue
design group





navyblue
design group



tria

navyblue
design group



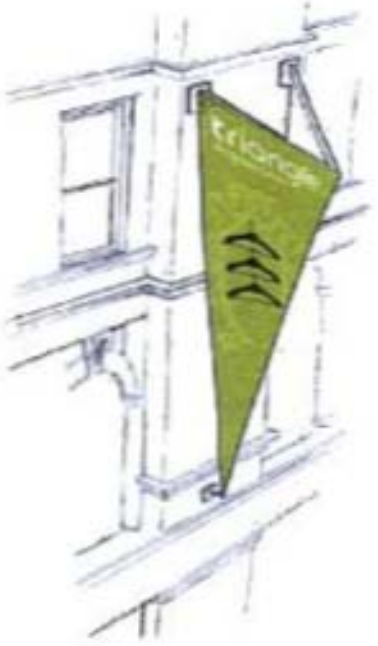




navyblue
design group





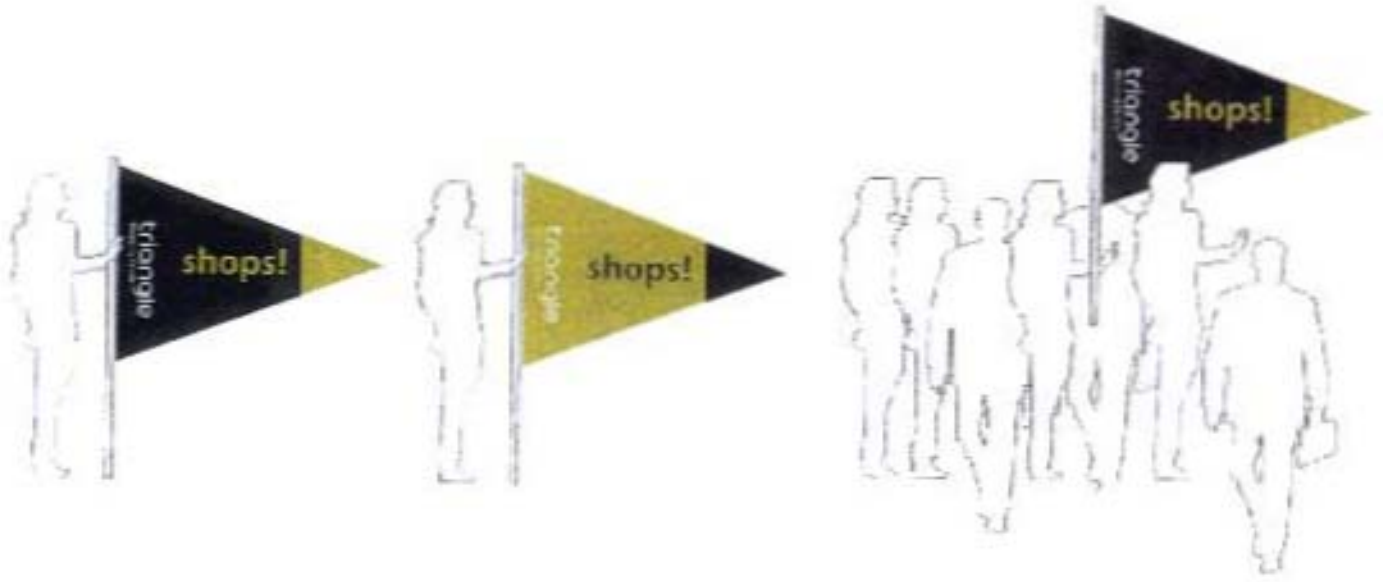




navyblue
design group



design group



design group


triangle
triangle
triangle


triangle
Shopping Centre
triangle
EXCHANGE
SQUARE


triangle