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Development at Hilton Street, Tariff Street and Brewer Street

Manchester M1 2EF

Historic built environment statement

Planning Policy Guidance 15 justification



January 2008

KM Heritage

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1.0 Summary

The development site detracts from the character and appearance of the Stevenson Square Conservation Area and the setting of the immediately adjacent listed buildings.

The proposed development, in contrast, would preserve and enhance both the conservation area and the setting of the listed building by replacing the present situation on the site with well-designed contemporary commercial buildings. The scheme would have economic and social benefits, as well as significantly improving environmental quality in the area.

The character and appearance of the conservation area in this location is somewhat fragmented. This, and the nature of the listed buildings to the north of the site, create a situation where a new building using traditional materials in a contemporary fashion would be a positive benefit to the built environment of the area.

No 51 Hilton Street is an unremarkable and much altered remnant of previous building on the site. Its removal would not harm the overall character and appearance of the conservation area – indeed the building, along with the vacant site, detracts from that character and appearance

The proposals are consistent with national policy and guidance contained in Planning Policy Guidance 15 and with the Manchester City Council's polices on the historic built environment.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 This report has been prepared KMHeritage on the instruction of GP Investments Ltd. It relates to a development on a site at the junction of Tariff Street and Brewer Street, Manchester.

Purpose

2.2 The purpose of the report is to demonstrate that proposals for the site are consistent with national and local policies relating to the historic built environment.

2.3 This report should be read in conjunction with the scheme drawings and Design and Access Statement prepared by q2 Architects.

Organisation

2.4 This introduction is followed by a brief description of the site and its context. There is then a brief outline in Section 4 of the proposals, followed by a description of national and local policy and guidance. Section 6 assesses the proposal against that policy and guidance. There are a number of appendices.

Author

2.5 The author of this report is Kevin Murphy B.Arch MUBC RIBA IHBC. He was an Inspector of Historic Buildings in the London Region of English Heritage and dealt with a range of major projects involving listed buildings and conservation areas in London. Prior to this, he had been a conservation officer with the London Borough of Southwark, and Head of Conservation and Design at Hackney Council between 1997 and 1999. He trained and worked as an architect, and has a specialist qualification in urban and building conservation.

3.0 The site and its context

The area

3.1 The area to the north east of Piccadilly, known as the Northern Quarter, was largely open fields until the late 18th century. Most of the land between what is now Piccadilly Gardens and Ancoats lane was owned by Sir Ashton Lever of Alkrington, who, in the manner of landowners on the edge of small British 18th century cities at this time, sold off parcels of land on building leases from 1770 onwards. Some buildings, including 50-62 Port Street, survive (albeit altered) from this period.

3.2 The area was envisaged as residential, but from the start was the location of a number of businesses. However, the character of the area is now largely that of 19th century industry and commerce, with many late 19th and early 20th century textile warehouses, offices and other commercial buildings surviving.

The site

3.3 The urban block where the site is located had been created by the four surrounding streets by 1848. Historical mapping shows that behind the line of Georgian houses on Port Street, small plots extended down Hilton Street and Brewer Street. The edge to Hilton Street has always been a firmer edge to the site, with looser built form on Brewer Street.

3.4 No. 51 Hilton Street appears to have been initially connected to a property in Brewer Street until the early 20th century, and the chimney remaining on the site is shown on an 1892 Ordnance Survey map. The property then seems to have been linked to an adjacent property at the corner of Brewer Street and Tariff Street up to the 1930s, but this connection was severed by the 1950s. The urban block has been eroded since the late 1970s by demolition on Brewer Street and Tariff Street.

3.5 The block has contained various uses: a 'machine manufactory', a public house, a cap factory initially; and then a glass warehouse which became a clothes workshop and was demolished in the 1970s, a quilt factory, a stable, and a printing works. No evidence of these uses remains.

Listed buildings

3.6 Nos. 50 to 62 Port Street were listed Grade II in 1988, and date form the early period of the area's development. Nos. 45, 47 and 47A Hilton Street were listed Grade II in 1994. Directly south of the site, on the southern side of Tariff Street opposite, is Nos. 16-18 Tariff Street, listed Grade II in 2000. Nearby, the former Rochdale Canal Warehouse was re-graded at II* in 1994, following its initial listing in 1974.

Conservation area

3.7 The site is in the Stevenson Square Conservation Area, designated in February 1987, and extended in December of the same year. The area is bounded by Oldham Street, Great Ancoats Street, Spear Street, Houldsworth Street, Lever Street, Faraday Street, Brewer Street, China Lane, Hilton Street, the rear of Back China Lane, Dale Street, Lena Street, and Piccadilly.

4.0 The proposals

4.1 The proposed scheme is described in the drawings and Design and Access Statement prepared by q2 Architects. Briefly, it is proposed to erect a new building on part of the block facing Hilton Street, Tariff Street and Brewer Street. This building would provide small-scale office units intended for occupation by new and small independent businesses, in addition to those that already exist within other buildings in the block. The scheme requires the removal of No. 51 Hilton Street.

4.2 Eleven units are proposed. They would be three storeys high, approximately five metres wide and self-contained, each having direct access from the street.

4.3 The design of the development is confidently and unashamedly contemporary. However, in the choice of materials – masonry, timber – and in the overall massing and form, the development refers to its context and the character of buildings around it. There is, in the design of the new buildings, a strong reference to the metal and glass aesthetic of Manchester's 19th and early 20th century industrial buildings.

4.4 The street elevations would be largely glazed, within a metal framing system. The masonry framework for this would be brick, with entrances marked out by timber panelling. The courtyard created by the development would be landscaped. There would be no car parking.

5.0 The policy context

Listed buildings

5.1 There are a number of listed buildings which are near the site, and which have settings that may be affected by the proposed development. Section 1 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 imposes a duty on the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport to compile or approve lists of buildings of special architectural or historic interest. Buildings are listed Grade I, II* or II. Local authorities are required, in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

5.2 At Paragraph 2.14, Planning Policy Guidance 15 says that 'the design of new buildings intended to stand alongside historic buildings needs very careful consideration. In general it is better that old buildings are not set apart, but are woven into the fabric of the living and working community. This can be done, provided that the new buildings are carefully designed to respect their setting, follow fundamental architectural principles of scale, height, massing and alignment, and use appropriate materials. This does not mean that new buildings have to copy their older neighbours in detail: some of the most interesting streets in our towns and villages include a variety of building styles, materials, and forms of construction, of many different periods, but together forming a harmonious group'.

5.3 Paragraph 2.16 of Planning Policy Guidance 15 states: 'Sections 16 and 66 of the [the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990] require authorities considering applications for planning permission or listed building consent for works which affect a listed building to have special regard to certain matters, including the

desirability of preserving the setting of the building. The setting is often an essential part of the building's character, especially if a garden or grounds have been laid out to complement its design or function'.

5.4 Paragraph 2.17 of Planning Policy Guidance 15 includes the following guidance: 'The setting of individual listed buildings very often owes its character to the harmony produced by a particular grouping of buildings (not necessarily all of great individual merit) and to the quality of the spaces created between them. Such areas require careful appraisal when proposals for development are under consideration, even if the redevelopment would only replace a building which is neither itself listed nor immediately adjacent to a listed building. Where a listed building forms an important visual element in a street, it would probably be right to regard any development in the street as being within the setting of the building. A proposed high or bulky building might also affect the setting of a listed building some distance away, or alter views of a historic skyline.'

5.5 As would be expected, Manchester City's Unitary Development Plan (the Manchester Plan) echoes Planning Policy Guidance 15 in terms of the historic built environment. The Environmental Improvement & Protection Policy E2.7 states that 'the Council wishes to ensure that buildings and areas of special architectural or historic interest are retained, maintained and, where necessary, restored'. Policy DC19.1 deals with the setting of listed buildings: 'The Council will...seek to preserve and enhance the settings of listed buildings by appropriate control over the design of new development in their vicinity, control over the use of adjacent land, and where appropriate, by the preservation of trees and landscape features.

5.6 Section 7.4 of BS 7913:1998 'Guide to the principles of the conservation of historic buildings' says 'it is [also] frequently necessary for new buildings to be erected within historic settlements or conservation areas. In some

circumstances, for example when there is an obvious or identifiable gap in a larger formal or informal composition, such new work may be positively desirable on broad architectural grounds; in other circumstances it is less desirable, but necessary'.

5.7 Paragraph 7.4.6 deals with 'criteria for new buildings in historic settings', and includes:

- Such buildings should be designed for a long life and soundly constructed of durable materials chosen to suit their context. They should be so planned that they are capable of alteration and adaptation in response to changing needs in the future.

- New buildings should be designed with due regard to their site and surroundings using materials that will weather and age well and settle into their place in the townscape.

5.8 The BS concludes this advice by saying: There can be no simple prescription for good architecture beyond the Vitruvian precepts of ` commodity, firmness and delight'. Good new buildings in historic settings should not merely be fashionable or photogenic, but should stand the test of time. Mere conformity to restrictive formulae or the dressing of modern structures in traditional guises may fail to produce architecture of good repute. Consistency and continuity can, on the other hand, be as important within a group of buildings as within a single building and, as with alterations, new buildings should not draw attention to themselves disproportionately'.

Conservation areas

5.9 Paragraph 4.2 of Planning Policy Guidance 15 states: 'It is the quality and interest of areas, rather than that of individual buildings, which should be the prime consideration in identifying conservation areas'. It goes on to say: '...our experience of a historic area depends on much more than the quality of individual buildings - on

the historic layout of property boundaries and thoroughfares; on a particular 'mix' of uses; on characteristic materials; on appropriate scaling and detailing of contemporary buildings; on the quality of advertisements, shop fronts, street furniture and hard and soft surfaces; on vistas along streets and between buildings; and on the extent to which traffic intrudes and limits pedestrian use of spaces between buildings'.

5.10 Paragraph 4.3 refers to the statutory duty of local planning authorities to review their areas, and that 'it is important that conservation areas are seen to justify their status and that the concept is not devalued by the designation of areas lacking any special interest. Authorities should seek to establish consistent local standards for their designations and should periodically review existing conservation areas and their boundaries against those standards: cancellation of designation should be considered where an area or part of an area is no longer considered to possess the special interest which led to its original designation'.

5.11 Paragraph 4.14 of Planning Policy Guidance 15 states: 'The desirability of preserving or enhancing the area should also, in the Secretary of State's view, be a material consideration in the planning authority's handling of development proposals which are outside the conservation area but would affect its setting, or views into or out of the area'.

5.12 Paragraph 4.17 of Planning Policy Guidance 15 points out that 'many conservation areas include gap sites, or buildings that make no positive contribution to, or indeed detract from, the character or appearance of the area; their replacement should be a stimulus to imaginative, high quality design, and seen as an opportunity to enhance the area. What is important is not that new buildings should directly imitate earlier styles, but that they should be designed with respect for their context, as part of a larger whole which has a well-established character and appearance of its own.

5.13 Paragraphs 4.19 and 4.20 deal with the interpretation by the courts of the requirement for proposed development to 'preserve' or 'enhance' the character and appearance of a conservation area. Paragraph 4.20 makes it clear that 'whilst the character and appearance of conservation areas should always be given full weight in planning decisions, the objective of preservation can be achieved either by development which makes a positive contribution to an area's character or appearance, or by development which leaves character and appearance unharmed'.

5.14 Paragraph 4.26 reminds local authorities that they 'are required to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area in question; and, as with listed building controls, this should be the prime consideration in determining a consent application'. This is qualified: 'In the case of conservation area controls, however, account should clearly be taken of the part played in the architectural or historic interest of the area by the building for which demolition is proposed, and in particular of the wider effects of demolition on the building's surroundings and on the conservation area as a whole'.

5.15 Paragraph 4.27 is the key piece of guidance in Planning Policy Guidance 15 regarding demolitions in conservation areas: 'The general presumption should be in favour of retaining buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area. The Secretary of State expects that proposals to demolish such buildings should be assessed against the same broad criteria as proposals to demolish listed buildings [paragraphs 3.16-3.19 of Planning Policy Guidance 15]. In less clear-cut cases - for instance, where a building makes little or no such contribution - the local planning authority will need to have full information about what is proposed for the site after demolition. Consent for demolition should not be given unless there are acceptable and detailed plans for any redevelopment'.

5.16 The Manchester Plan's Environmental Improvement & Protection Policy E3.8 states that 'the Council wishes to enhance the appearance of Conservation Areas and will, where appropriate, designate further areas'.

5.17 Policy DC18.1 deals with conservation area matters in detail. It states:

a. The Council will seek to preserve and enhance the character of its designated conservation areas by carefully considering the following issues:

i) The relationship of new structures to neighbouring buildings and spaces;

ii) The effect of major changes to the appearance of existing buildings;

iii) The desirability of retaining existing features, such as boundary walls, gardens, trees, (including street trees);

iv) The effect of signs and advertisements;

v) Any further guidance on specific areas which has been approved by the Council.

b. The Council will not normally grant outline planning permission for development within Conservation Areas.

c. Consent to demolish a building in a conservation area will be granted only where it can be shown that it is wholly beyond repair, incapable of reasonably beneficial use, or where its removal or replacement would benefit the appearance of character of the area.

d. Where demolition is to be followed by redevelopment, demolition will be permitted only where there are approved detailed plans for that redevelopment and where the Council has been furnished with evidence that the development will be undertaken.

e. Development proposals adjacent to Conservation Areas will be granted only where it can be shown that they will not harm the appearance or character of the area. This will include the protection of views into and out of Conservation Areas.

5.18 The English Heritage/CABE guidance 'Building in Context' expands on PPG15 to give further guidance on the design of new development which affects the historic environment. It sets out good practice guidance on the design of new development in historic areas. The guidance explains the importance of basing designs on thorough analysis of the context, and warns against the application of simple formulae such as 'fitting in' or 'contrasting the new with the old'. It advises that successful projects will:

- Relate well to the geography and history of the place and the lie of the land;
- Sit happily in the pattern of existing development and routes through and around it;
- Respect important views;
- Respect the scale of neighbouring buildings;
- Use materials and building methods which are as high in quality as those used in existing buildings; and
- Create new views and juxtapositions that add to the variety and texture of the setting.

5.19 The guidance contains a number of case studies and draw a number of specific conclusions from them:

- The best buildings result from a creative dialogue between the architect, client, local planning authority and others; pre-application discussions are essential;

- The local planning authority and other consultees can insist on good architecture and help to achieve it;
- Difficult sites should generate good architecture, and are not an excuse for not achieving it;
- With skill and care, it is possible to accommodate large modern uses within the grain of historic settings;
- High environmental standards can help generate good architecture;
- Sensitivity to context and the use of traditional materials are not incompatible with contemporary architecture;
- Good design does not stop at the front door, but extends into public areas beyond the building;
- High-density housing does not necessarily involve building high or disrupting the urban grain and it can be commercially highly successful;
- Successful architecture can be produced either by following historic precedents closely, by adapting them or by contrasting with them;
- In a diverse context a contemporary building may be less visually intrusive than one making a failed attempt to follow historic precedents.

6.0 The impact of the proposed scheme

The contribution of the site to the conservation area

6.1 The site in its present condition detracts from the character and appearance of the Stevenson Square Conservation Area and the setting of nearby listed buildings. It is a typical situation found in many central urban areas in the process of regeneration following many decades of decline and physical impoverishment. The proposed scheme would reverse this situation and enhance the conservation area with a carefully designed and architecturally interesting development. It would similarly enhance nearby listed buildings by removing from their setting an ugly cleared site.

No. 51 Hilton Street

6.2 No. 51 Hilton Street is clearly a very humble and unremarkable without any particular architectural merit, nor is it a singular or distinctive local feature. It is an old brick, pitched roof building, and is the least of the buildings on the block. It is not distinguished by any particular stylistic or technical interest, nor does its plainness or lack of adornment give it any kind of vernacular charm or quality. It has been considerably and insensitively altered internally and externally.

6.3 When considered against unlisted buildings elsewhere in the conservation area, No. 51 Hilton Street could hardly be said – particularly given the changes that have occurred to it – to make any meaningful contribution to the character and appearance of the overall conservation area. That it is old and had an industrial use does not by itself create the degree of 'contribution' required to justify any kind of argument for its retention.

6.4 The building, in its present condition, actually detracts from the character and appearance of the conservation area along with the vacant site and the ugly single-storey shed on Brewer Street. The front has a recent shop front,

and fascia, and the entrance appears to have been altered, a decorative surround probably being removed in the process. The doorway now contains a steel roller shutter. One of the three upper floor windows has been replaced. The southern façade is a mix of variously sized bricked-up openings. The eastern (rear) wall is clearly the internal face of a wall to a building now demolished.

6.5 The chimney attached to the rear elevation is a fragment of an unremarkable and previously larger structure that may have been an element of another building. It has been sand blasted (removing the fired surface of the brick) and crudely re-pointed in a hard cement render.

6.6 Given the lack of quality in the building and the lack of contribution that it makes to the character and appearance of the conservation area, it is appropriate for the building to make way for a suitable new development.

The impact upon the character and appearance of the conservation area

6.7 The character of the Stevenson Square Conservation Area principally that of 19th century commercial expansion. While the grid of streets and some surviving buildings permit the Georgian origins of the area to be perceived, the buildings of the area - in scale, material, style and use - are characteristic of that period of the later 19th and early 20th centuries, when new building technology was pressed into service in creating factories and workshops. The commercial buildings that characterise this area were bracingly and ostentatiously forward-looking for their time, and that, when they were built, they very much represented the character of their time and their builders.

6.8 The proposed development will be in this spirit, and consistent with the general character and appearance of the conservation area. The design of the proposed buildings is unashamedly modern, as many of the older buildings were when they were built.

6.9 However, this urban block is characterised by a relatively small plot sixe and a modest scale of building to Port Street and Hilton Street. Unlike the larger plots and buildings in the vicinity, new development in this location needs to respect this scale and density. The scheme thus respects the two and three storey scale of the block rather than increase its overall height. Similarly, the scheme uses materials - glass, metal, brick – that are common in buildings throughout the conservation area.

6.10 The scheme in no way harms the Stevenson Square Conservation Area: rather it positively enhances it.

The impact upon the listed buildings

6.11 In terms of the site, the key impact that must be addressed is that upon the Grade II listed buildings at 50-62 Port Street, and at 45, 47 and 47a Hilton Street. The development, by virtue of its siting and orientation, could not be said to significantly affect any other listed buildings

6.12 The new development will nonetheless affect the setting of these buildings. It does this *without* harming their special architectural and historic interest by:

- Being consistent in scale, form and massing with the rest of the block formed by the listed buildings and the unlisted building at No. 49;
- Being designed to the highest architectural standards and thus providing an improved context for the listed buildings.
- By reflecting in this design the essential characteristics of Victorian industrial architecture: the creation of workspace with large amounts of light, using up-to-date building technology.

6.13 The impact is thus a modest and positive one, and the listed buildings can be expected to benefit in the long term from the regenerative effect of the development.

Planning Policy Guidance 15

6.14 In terms of Planning Policy Guidance 15, the proposed development is certainly 'woven into the fabric of the ... community' and is 'carefully designed to respect their setting, follow fundamental architectural principles of scale, height, massing and alignment' as required by Paragraph 2.14. It enhances the setting of the listed buildings by repairing the urban fabric, going further than the requirement in Paragraph 2.16 to 'preserve' the setting.

6.15 The present situation on the site is one of those referred to in Paragraph 4.17 when it refers to 'gap sites, or buildings that make no positive contribution to, or indeed detract from, the character or appearance of the area'. The new development certainly would be an example of the type of 'imaginative, high quality design' that the paragraph refers to. The proposed scheme could not possibly be considered to harm the conservation area. Indeed, it could not simply be considered to 'preserve' the conservation area. It unquestionably enhances the character and appearance of the conservation area, and is thus consistent with the objectives of Planning Policy Guidance 15 in this respect.

6.16 How does the proposal to demolish No. 51 Hilton Street measure against Planning Policy Guidance 15 guidance on demolition in conservation areas? The building does not make the 'positive contribution' to the character and appearance of the conservation area that is mentioned in Paragraph 4.27, and it is assumed that no other structure to be removed could possibly be considered as being significant.

6.17 Even if it were felt to make some kind of contribution, the proposal to demolish No. 51 can be assessed positively against the criteria for proposals to demolish listed buildings (in paragraphs 3.19 of Planning Policy Guidance 15). It is clear that the merits of removing the building greatly outweigh the merit of retaining it.

The Manchester Plan

6.18 There is no doubt that the proposed development satisfies Policy DC19.1 – the development clearly preserves and enhances the setting of the adjacent listed buildings, in filling an ugly cleared site with sensitively designed new development. In doing this, it also satisfies Policy E3.8 regarding the enhancement of 'the appearance of Conservation Areas'.

6.19 In terms of Policy DC18.1, the scheme will preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Stevenson Square Conservation Area by:

- Being carefully related to neighbouring buildings in scale;
- Repairing the damaged urban block;
- Improve views within and from outside the conservation area;
- Remove the unsightly unlisted buildings from the site.

6.20 In addition, the scheme will help regenerate this part of Manchester by providing new employment space.

Other guidance

6.21 The scheme is consistent with BS 7913:1998 'Guide to the principles of the conservation of historic buildings', in that it will be 'designed with due regard to [its] site and surroundings using materials that will weather and age well and settle into [its] place in the townscape'. Similarly, it reflects the guidance of 'Building in Context' concerning important views, the pattern of existing development, the scale of neighbouring buildings, high quality materials, the urban grain and using traditional material in a contemporary fashion.

Appendix A: Location



Current Ordnance Survey



Aerial photograph

Appendix B: Historic maps



1848



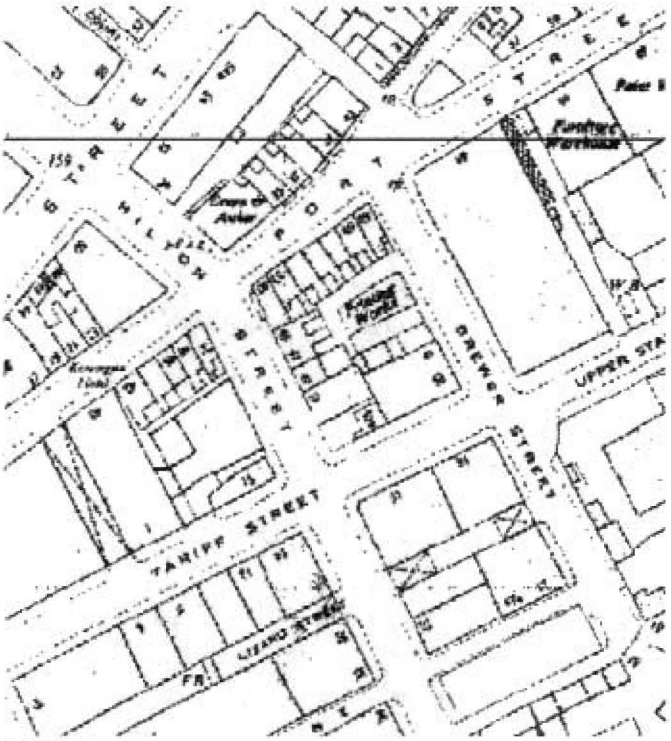
1892


HILTON
159
P.H.
BREWER
UPPER STAN
TARIFF STREET
LIZARD STREET

1908


NEWTON
HILTON
P.H.
PORT
STREET
BREWER
UPPER ST
TARIFF STREET
LIZARD STREET

1920s



1950s



1970s

Appendix C: Photographs























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