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DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

For

PROPOSED CHANGE OF USE TO A5 HOT FOOD TAKE AWAY UNIT WITH NEW SHOP FRONT & ASSOCIATED SIGNAGE

May 2008
AMENDED AUGUST 2008

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Introduction

The proposals are to change the use of part of the upper ground floor (street level on Oxford Street) of the Samaritans building on 72-74 Oxford Street, Manchester into use class A5 Hot Food Takeaway. The proposals also include a new shop front with illuminated signage above and the introduction of extraction, ventilation and air conditioning equipment to the rear elevation.

The building has a total of four floors of which only two levels are facing Oxford Street, the upper ground & first floor. To the rear on James Leigh Street the site drops almost two levels where you will find steps from the pavement leading down to the basement and up to the lower ground level.

The Samaritans presently own & occupy the entire building but due to financial reasons wish to let part of the building to a tenant to generate additional income. Having consulted property agents they have come to the conclusion that the best source of income would be to let only the upper ground level for Hot Food Takeaway use. Being an entertainment district and with so many public houses adjacent to the site, initial research has shown that a fast food takeaway will be welcomed at this location. The division of the building will have no impact on the level of service provided by the Samaritans as they have ample space on the other three levels to accommodate any loss from the upper ground level.

The Samaritans chose the current applicant through a careful process in which prospective tenants where interviewed to determine their suitability and prove a track record in similar type of business.

Size

The site is approximately 85 sq m's and the Gross Internal floor area is approx 285 sq m. The change of use only relates to 45 sq m of the upper ground floor.

Design Proposals

The upper ground level will be split into two sections, one for the Hot Food unit and the second for the Samaritans entrance and circulation space. The A5 use will be restricted to this floor but the tenants will have access via the communal lift to the lower ground level lobby from where they can take out the refuse to James Leigh Street.

The existing Oxford Street façade is divided horizontally by a projecting stone feature which also forms the cill of first floor windows. The area above this is of probable Georgian origin as can be seen by the brickwork and treatment above first floor windows. The area below this stone course was formed about 25 years ago with inappropriate window types, door positions and brickwork detailing all as per the photograph below.

The photograph below shows the building occupied by Barretts of Manchester, a music shop. It is thought that the photograph was taken in the late 1970s/early 1980s.

The building is not listed and does not form part of a Conservation Area.

The new façade proposal removes the whole of the structure below the stone course replacing it with a combination of brickwork and glazed apertures. The proposed brick will match the existing brick above the stone course and will be in the same vertical plane. The apertures which will contain doors and windows will be set back 225mm from the face of the brickwork and the frames will be set behind the brick in reveals.

New illuminated signage will be introduced for both the Samaritans and the new A5 use.

The new signage is in compliance with Manchester City Councils guidelines for the city centre area. All new letters will be individual characters which protrude out from the main façade material and will have static illumination.



Existing street scene



Previous shop front

Access

There will be level access in to and around the A5 unit. There is a very small step up to enter the Samaritans entrance door due to the gradient of the pavement. To alleviate the problem there will be an assistance button next to the door for any disabled visitors who require help to enter the building. Once inside, a member of staff will help the visitor to the lift area in the communal lobby. There is no possible level access to exit the rear of the building.

Security & Nuisance

Pre consultation advice from Greater Manchester Police highlighted concerns with the potential of nuisance and crime at late hours. The attached supporting acoustic report shows that the levels of noise generated from the new A5 unit will be lower than or be completely drowned out by the existing noise levels at street level.

Upon completion of this project a CCTV system will be installed all around the building which will allow for remote monitoring and also have a personal panic attack facility.

Refuse

There are two existing 1100 litre Euro bins outside the rear of the building on James Leigh Street. The Samaritans do not currently use both of these so one will be allocated for the A5 unit which will be collected by a private contractor twice or if need be three times a week. All the public houses in the vicinity have a similar arrangement on James Leigh Street. The Samaritans have agreed to this arrangement as they do not generate enough refuse to fill both of the existing bins.



Rear refuse area and stairs to both upper and lower levels

Air-conditioning, Extraction and Ventilation

Air-conditioning outdoor units will be restricted to the rear elevation which is seen as the most appropriate location. Extraction from the A5 use will involve an extraction hood over the cooking ranges which will be ducted to an external flush louvered extract grille as shown on the rear elevation. Specialist advice has been taken and with the fitting of carbon filters 95% of odours will be excluded, with little or no impact in this location. It is confirmed that future mechanical and electrical plant will not exceed the limits stipulated in the Noise Assessment Report.

A photograph below shows existing extraction, ventilation and air-conditioning equipment on the application buildings and other adjacent buildings. Clearly the equipment that is proposed will have no detrimental impact on this rear area which has virtually become a service area.



Existing Air-conditioning and ventilation equipment on the application

building and other adjacent buildings.

Summary

We believe the proposals are an acceptable form of use and development in the city centre and the proposed new shop front and signage is of a high quality design that will enhance the street scene. The new frontage will not result in a loss of any original features of the building.

All of the concerns raised with noise, nuisance and security have been addressed and can further be implemented by imposing conditions attached to any approval.

Supporting statement by the Samaritans

Although the Samaritans have a national presence, each individual branch is a separate registered charity and therefore responsible for its own funding. For several years the Manchester branch has been experiencing a substantial funding deficit caused by a substantial drop in legacies and donations due mainly to the increasing competition in the charity sector.

The trustees have found some alternative sources of income and have cut services and costs to the minimum. The Samaritans deliver listening services through telephone, face-to-face, email and texting contacts on a 24/7 basis. Because of this there is very little else the branch can do without reducing the quality of the service below an acceptable minimum. The consequence of running a deficit is that our cash resources will run out shortly.

However the branch does own the building. In consultation with a professional property agent the Trustees were involved in substantial investigation into the options of selling and moving, renting, sale and leaseback etc. of the existing building. The conclusion reached was that none of these options would leave us with sufficient net additional income to eliminate the ongoing deficit.

In addition, to be at all viable, any new location for the branch would have to be outside the city centre. If the branch is not centrally located, this would make access by people wanting to make a personal call for our services much more difficult and similarly undermine our ability to recruit the (160+) volunteers needed to give the 24/7 coverage

The only viable option that will raise the necessary regular annual income is to rent out part of the existing building. In order to obtain sufficient income to substantially solve our funding deficit the use needs to be A5.

The trustees believe that this is the only solution that would help to

- eliminate our funding crisis
- enable the charity to build up the minimum reserves required by the charity commissioners
- enable the branch to bring its services up to the level which we feel is necessary to meet the needs of people in Manchester suffering from emotional distress and/or feeling suicidal