Application for Full Planning Permission

Proposed Entrance Extension

100 Barbirolli Square

Manchester

M2 3AB





1.0 Introduction

Application

This Design and Access statement has been prepared on behalf of the owners of no. 100 Barbirolli Square in support of proposals to extend the existing entrance to the building.

Proposals for alteration and enhancement of the external Plaza and lower ground floor vacant bar unit, which form the backdrop to Barbirolli Square are the subject of separate Planning applications, to be submitted shortly.

The purpose of this statement is to explain the design approach towards the application, which has evolved following discussions with the planning department at Manchester City Council and with consideration to the Manchester Core Strategy Development Plan Document, adopted in July 2012, against which the proposal will be assessed. Consideration is also given, where relevant, to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The application proposal is part of the applicant's overall programme of works to update the building and to respond to the identified needs of occupiers.

The Site

Nos. 100 and 101 Barbirolli Square form a pair of high quality, multi storey office buildings. They are located in the heart of the City Centre, within the Civic Quarter, an area occupied by civic and commercial buildings including the Town Hall, Central Library, Manchester Central and the new business district at St Peter's Square.

The Barbirolli Square buildings are part of the attractive and unique setting of Bridgewater Hall and the canal basin. The entrances to No. 101 Barbirolli Square and Bridgewater Hall face Lower Mosley Street. The application site is set back from the street, with elevated views over the canal basin.

The space available in the existing entrance foyer does not provide the flexibility required by current users of the building and being set deeply with the site, the principal entrance to the building lacks definition and is not readily visible from the street.

The objective of the application proposal is twofold; to create a new entrance foyer and designated waiting area, and to rejuvenate and enhance the sense of arrival for visitors to and users of the building.

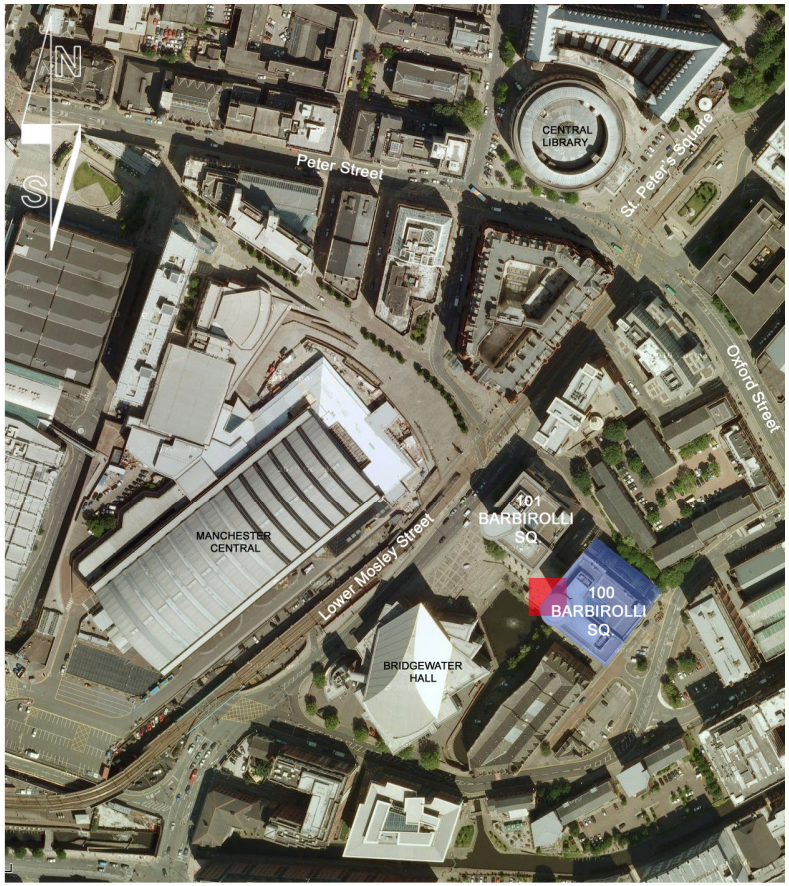

Fig 1. Site Location

Consultation

The application follows initial pre-application discussion with the Planning Officer. In response to an early sketch proposal, the Officer summarised:

- The Barbirolli Square buildings have a natural relationship with Bridgewater Hall and the canal basin. The quiet setting offers something different in the city centre, therefore any proposal would need to be sensitive to make the best of the tranquillity of the setting.

- Nos. 100 and 101 are good modern buildings, which were designed to be read as a pair, with shared design details. Improvements should be simple and uncluttered and the original design concept should be retained.

- The proposed entrance enclosure should be reduced in scale and it should be predominantly glazed in order to retain existing vistas across the site and retain the balance between the two buildings.

The application scheme now submitted incorporates the advice and suggestions provided by the Officer and the changes made to the proposal are explained in section 2.0 of this statement.

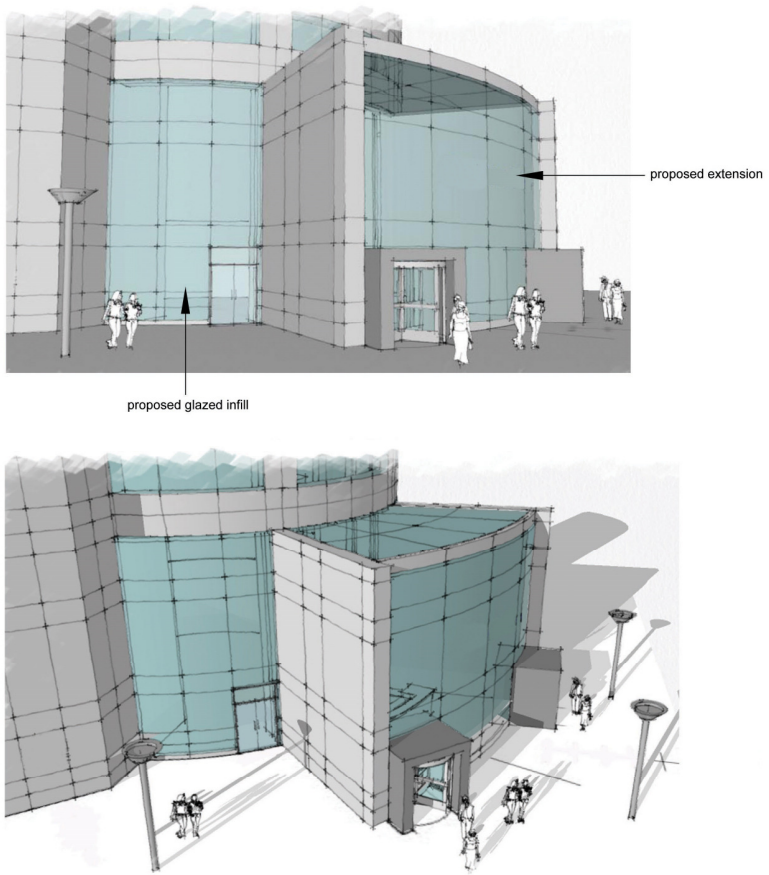

Fig 2. Initial Sketch Proposal

2.0 Design Statement

Use and Amount

The proposal is for an extension to the existing office entrance on a well established commercial site. The Barbirolli Square buildings are occupied by high profile legal practices, financial and professional service businesses. By enhancing the facilities to meet changing business requirements, the applicants intend to maintain the long term viability and vitality of the building. The building provides eight storeys of office accommodation with a central atrium. The floor plates range in size from 764sqm to 1609sqm, with an overall net internal area of 12,560msq. There is an additional existing three levels of basement car parking.

In response to the initial sketch proposal, the Planning Officer recommended that the extent to which the extension projects into the Plaza should be reduced. Accordingly, the height and footprint of the extension has been reduced. The proposed new entrance would result in an increase in the footprint, at ground floor level, of 72msq (50% of which is formed by enclosing the space between existing columns).

The existing and proposed plans of the entrance to the building are shown opposite.

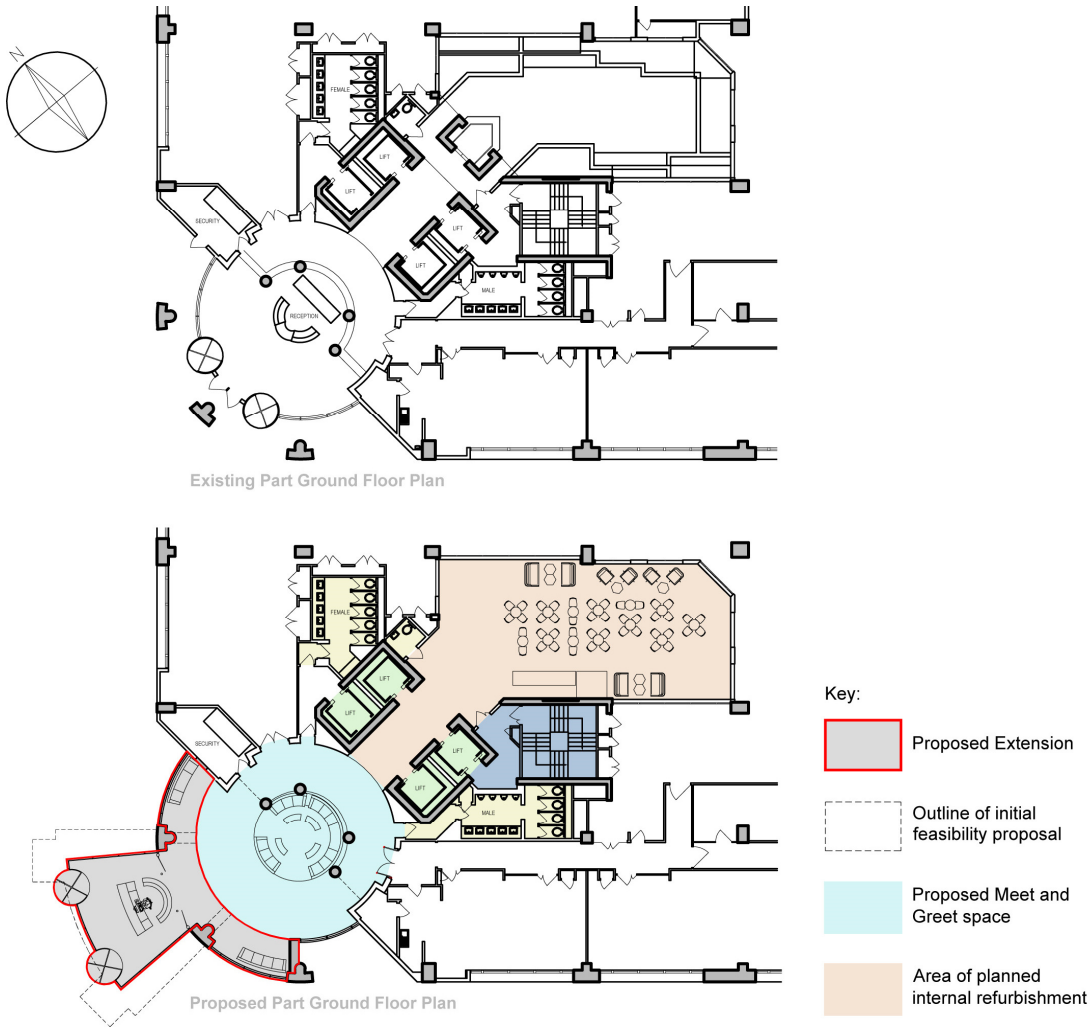

Fig 3. Plans

Layout

The layout of the current entrance foyer does not provide sufficient space or flexibility for a designated meet and greet / waiting area to be formed, capable of serving the multiple business uses in the building. In addition, there is currently no formal security gate arrangement.

The proposed layout provides a new double height introductory reception area with security access control gates, which lead through to the new waiting area, creating a more logical route through the building. The layout provides the flexibility now required of a contemporary workplace.

Appearance

The prevailing design principle is to create a simple but striking point of reference, to provide a principal entrance with a more defined visual presence to reflect the standing of the professional building users.

In response to the initial concept proposal, which included sections of stone cladding, the Planning Officer advised that incorporating solidity into the design may unduly offset the balance between the two Barbirolli Square buildings and may also conceal details of the original design. In addition, the Officer thought that the overall scale of the entrance enclosure should be reduced.

This feedback has been incorporated into the application now submitted, as follows:

- The previously proposed sections of stone walling have been removed. The extension is now formed entirely with frameless structural glazing. It is considered that this solution will ensure that the original architectural detailing of the building remains visible and the wider open views across the Plaza are retained.

- The height of the proposed extension has been reduced by approximately 3m, whilst still forming an impressive double height atrium space.

- The proposed extension follows the architectural language of the original design concept. For example, the front elevation incorporates curved glass which follows the line of the current entrance and existing curved glazing above. In addition, the proposed double height extension is visually tied to the character of the existing building. The proposal adjoins the existing building below a curved band of granite cladding, thus replicating the same detail found further above the same façade.

In our view, the proposal sensitively enhances the profile of the entrance whilst respecting the simple and tranquil waterside character of the setting.

Appearance Continued……

The combined effect of the application proposal and the improvements to the Plaza and former bar unit (subject to separate Planning Applications), will work to provide a seamless link between the office environment and the quiet open space, unique to this part of the City.

The design is therefore considered to be in accordance with guidance set out by Policy CC 9 of the Core Strategy that *the design of new buildings should be of the highest standard in terms of appearance and function….and contribute to a coherent and integrated physical environment.*



Fig 4. Existing view from Lower Mosley Street towards the application site



Fig 5. Visualisation illustrating the proposed extension now submitted and the provisional landscaping scheme (to be submitted separately)

3.0 Summary

This Statement has demonstrated how the design approach for the application scheme has evolved in response to planning policy and pre-submission discussion with the Planning Officer at the Council.

Our view is that the use of a logical, design-led approach to layout, form, material and detail has led to proposals that will assist in rejuvenating Barbirolli Square. The high quality contemporary design would enhance the profile and appearance of the entrance to meet today's business requirements.