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Supporting Statement

Manchester Creative Studio School

Application for the Variation of Condition 5

Planning Application ref 104439/FO/2013/N1

Prepared for Manchester Creative Trust
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April 2014

CLIENT:	Manchester Creative Trust
PROJECT NAME:	Manchester Creative Studio
IBI REFERENCE:	6748
VERSION:	1.0
ORIGINATOR:	UK
REVIEWER:	SP

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1 Introduction

1.1 This statement is written in support of a Section 73 application for the variation of conditions related to the planning permission for the Change of use from Use Class B8 to Use Class D1 (education and training) with ancillary offices (Use Class B1) together with associated works including extension to south west corner of building to create new student entrance and elevational alterations to include new vehicle loading bay and windows (planning application reference 104439/FO/2013/N1, at 16 Blossom Street, Ancoats, Manchester, M4 5AW).

1.2 This application relates to condition 5, which currently reads:

Condition 5, Hours of Use:

"The premises shall not be open outside the following hours:

8.00 to 18.00 Monday to Friday

(no opening on weekends or bank holidays)"

2 Background

Origin of Condition

2.1 A planning application was submitted on 6 December 2013 for the proposed Manchester Creative Studio School. The planning application form stated opening hours from 8.00 to 18.00 Monday to Friday.

2.2 The planning application was approved on 24 February 2014.

2.3 The Environment Health department at Manchester City Council were consulted on the application and made the following comment:

"Conditions relating to hours of operation, acoustic insulation of the premises, acoustic insulation of any external plant, refuse storage and collection, and delivery/servicing hours should be applied to any approval granted".

2.4 Condition 5 was therefore applied to the planning permission. The Decision Notice justified this condition as being " in the 'interests of residential amenity in order to reduce noise and general disturbance in accordance with saved policy DC26 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester and policies SP1 and DM1 of the Core Strategy".

Site Context

2.5 The site an existing vacant Victorian warehouse: Ghulam House, located in a block between Blossom Street, Henry Street and Gun Street in Ancoats.



Site context

3 Issues with Condition 5 Wording

3.1 The wording in the Condition 5 is considered inflexible and requires clarity:

- The condition refers to the school being 'open' but does not clarify whether this allows staff to attend the building outside the hours it is open to students. It also does not include scope for additional occasional events, parents evenings, governor's meetings, community usage of the school out of hours etc.

- In particular, the vocational nature of the training provided means that experts from industry will regularly lead masterclasses. These will have to be held on Saturdays due to the unavailability of these experts during the working week.

- Condition 5 presents a potential conflict with Condition 4 which requires deliveries, servicing and collections, including waste collections, not to take place outside the following hours:

  7:30 to 20.00, Monday to Saturday.

  This means that members of staff will need to be on site outside of the hours specified in condition 5 to handle these deliveries.

3.2 Generally the wording of the Condition 5 conflicts with the normal opening patterns of a typical school. Amending the condition to provide greater clarity is therefore necessary.

3.3 The current condition wording has presented difficulties with the Education Funding Authority and their assessment of risk on the project. This could affect the funding of the School and its viability as a project. It is therefore a priority to amend the condition wording.

3.4 This issue is also impacting on the construction programme. It is therefore important for the Trust to ensure that a revised condition wording is approved as soon as possible.

4 Requirements

4.1 A revised condition wording is required to provide the clarity need to address risk; and to enable the intended functioning of the school and deliver an implementable planning permission.

4.2 In particular, the revised condition wording needs to address the following requirements.

Staff on-site

4.3 The core opening hours of the school will be 08.00 to 18.00 as stated in the condition currently. However, staff will typically be on site beyond these hours each day when there are classes: preparing lessons and working after lessons.

4.4 There will also be small numbers of administrative and support staff on site for longer periods, for example those to handle deliveries, kitchen staff, on-site security and caretakers etc. This would generally not exceed 10 people on site at once in these hours.

Evening activity

4.5 There will be occasions when extended hours will be required in the evenings for certain events. These will include:

4.6 **Governors Meetings**: these will be up to 10 times per year. They will typically be attended by no more than 20 people and will finish by 20.30.

4.7 **Parents Evenings**: will be typically held 6 times a year. They would be typically be attended by students, teachers and parents. At each event we would expect up to 20 staff, 100 students and 150 parents. These events would finish by 20.30.

4.8 **Presentation Evenings**: will also typically be held 6 times a tear, to showcase students work, and present awards etc. These would typically involve up to 150 people. These events would finish by 21.00.

Saturday activity

4.9 An important part of the school's philosophy is its close association with industry and the vocational nature of the training. An important part of the educational offer will be Industry Masterclasses hosted by industry experts. Due to the working commitments of these experts during Monday to Friday these masterclasses will be held on Saturdays. They will typically classes totalling a maximum of 60 people on site at once, running from 10am to 5pm on Saturdays.

5 Proposed Condition Wording

5.1 In aim to create a more flexible wording with greater clarity, and to reflect typical school hours of use, it is proposed to reword Condition 5 as follows:

Normal school opening hours will be 8.00 to 18.00.

On days when the school is open, staff will be on site from 7.30 to 19.00 on Mondays to Fridays and from 9am to 6pm on Saturdays.

Extended evening and weekend openings, will be restricted to the following:

- **Up to 24 Monday to Friday evening events per year to finish no later than 21.00**
- **Up to 24 times a year on Saturdays between the hours of 10.00 and 17.00.**

Outside of normal opening hours a limited number of staff may be on site for administrative and maintenance duties.

Any changes to the above hours should be agreed in writing with the local planning authority.

6 Justification and Management

Noise Impact

6.1 It is acknowledged that condition 5 has been imposed in order to protect interests of residential amenity in order to reduce noise and general disturbance. However the Acoustic Design Report, submitted with the application has established that there will be not be significant impacts on residential amenity. It is also important to consider the reasonable operation of the school in order to deliver a planning permission that enables this use.

6.2 The submitted Acoustic Design Report suggest a number of technical sound isolation solutions which will be implemented to reduce an external and internal noise from a school. Therefore, it is unlikely that a school will cause noise or disturbance to surrounding environment.

Surrounding Uses

6.3 The proposed works will bring a redundant and unused building back into active use and support and encourage development of the Media and Creative Industries in Ancoats through training, work placements and business support. t will serve as a school for 14 to 19 year old pupils, providing them with high quality training and access to employment in the Creative and Media Industries. In addition the Manchester Creative Studio will be a creative regional centre of excellence working closely with local employers and partnering with local Creative and Media firms to both place students and provide support and start up assistance.

6.4 It is important to consider the nature of the surrounding area, which is characterised by a mixed use environment with several businesses that open in the evening and weekends on a regular basis.

6.5 There is a large mixed use development of 166 no 1,2 and 3 bed apartments with retail, currently being developed to the immediate south and south-east of the site. This incorporates both new build and refurbishment of the warehouse building neighbouring Ghulam House to create 40 new apartments with retail on the ground floor. Existing hard standing to the south-east and bounding Ghulam House forms part of this residential development with approval for surface car parking for 8 cars and 2 motorbikes. The adjacent elevated ground floor of Ghulam House is currently blank and there is no proposal to incorporate windows to this floor where it adjoins the surface car park. The Acoustic Design Report has considered the proximity to these apartments.



Left: apartments under construction adjacent to Ghulam House; Right: employment use on Blossom Street opposite the site.

6.6 The South West elevation to Ghulam House is set back from the line of the adjacent warehouse building fronting Gunn St, being approx 14 meters from back of Gunn St pavement and approx 20 meters from the opposite facing elevation of the proposed new residential tower development.

6.7 On the opposite side of Henry Street is a large multi-storey car park. There is a small business operating on the opposite side of Blossom Street, and a small surface car park. There is a small language school on Jersey Street. A row of retail units front Great Ancoats Street.

6.8 There are a number of non residential uses located in close proximity to the site. Halle's rehearsal space in the former St Peters church is located on 40 Blossom Street, and will be in use until 21.00 in the evening. Opposite the proposed development there is the IcePlant, consisting partially-let of business units. There are other office and business units on Blossom Street.



Left: Halle St Peters and business units; Right: multi-storey car park on Henry Street



Blossom Street entrance and route to Great Ancoats Street

Access and Egress

6.9 As explained in the original submission the School will have two entrances: a visitor entrance on Henry Street and a student entrance on Blossom Street. During evening and weekend use only the Blossom Street entrance will be used. This is located on the opposite side of the building to the new apartments. People will be leaving from this entrance on foot and will be away from the site, mostly to Great Ancoats Street, in less than two minutes.

Conclusions

6.10 The surrounding uses reflect the mixed use nature of Ancoats, which has always been reflected in both its history and in Manchester City Council's aspirations for the area. The proposed Creative School fits well within this mix. The surrounding uses include many activities that are open in evenings and weekends and the School activity in these hours is not considered to significantly change the character of the area. With the exception of the residential apartments, the surrounding uses are not particularly sensitive to noise and disturbance.

6.11 The impacts to the adjacent residential use have already been considered as part of the planning application. An acoustic report has informed the preparation of effective mitigation and a separate condition exists to deal with this matter. Residents moving into this area will be expecting noise and activity from several surrounding uses, not least from traffic noise from the nearby presence of Great Ancoats Street. The School will not significantly increase these noise and activity levels.

6.12 In conclusion therefore, the proposed variation of condition 5 will not have significant negative implications on the amenity of the surrounding area.

7 Planning Policy Response

7.1 This section refers to the policies stated within MCC's justification for Condition 5 and explains how the proposed revised condition wording still demonstrates compliance with these policies.

7.2 The Unitary Development Plan Policy **DC26.2** states that *new noise-sensitive developments (including large-scale changes of use of existing land or buildings), such as housing, schools, hospitals or similar activities, will be permitted subject to their not being in locations which would expose them to high noise levels from existing uses or operations, unless the effects of the noise can realistically be reduced. In giving effect to this policy, the Council will take account both of noise exposure at the time of receiving a planning application and of any increase that may reasonably be expected in the foreseeable future.*

Response

7.3 The development meets UDP policy **DC26.2** requirements to realistically reduce effects of the noise. Paragraph 6.9 of an Acoustic Design Report states that when further details of the plant are known, a noise level limit at 3m for each item can be set in order to achieve the required 42dBLAeq at the nearest residential. Additionally the report provides clear technical guidance to reduce noise levels through closing windows, installing mechanical ventilation systems and secondary windows. Refer to an Acoustic Design Report for more details.

7.4 The Unitary Development Plan Policy **DC26.3** states that developments likely to result in unacceptably high levels of noise will not be permitted:

a. in residential areas;

b. near schools, hospitals, nursing homes and similar institutions;

c. near open land used frequently for recreational purposes.

Response

7.5 Although proposed development is located near the residential building, it will not produce unacceptably high levels of noise and it meets UDP policy **DC26.4** requirements. In paragraph 6.7 an Acoustic Design Report refers to an external impact of school on surrounding environment. It states that to comply with the requirements of Manchester City Council, externally mechanical services noise should be controlled to at least 5dB below the lowest measured background noise level at the nearest affected building.

7.6 It is acknowledged in an Acoustic Design Report that residential units are being constructed directly adjacent to the building. On the understanding that the external walls to the two buildings are not directly coupled and assuming a solid masonry external wall to the school building, the anticipated sound insulation performance between the adjacent buildings will be at least 60dbDw which will be appropriate for all normal teaching activities. Please refer to the Acoustic Design Report for more details.

7.7 The Unitary Development Plan Policy **DC26.4** requires the applicant to provide an assessment of the likely impact and of the measures he proposes to deal satisfactorily with it. Such measures might include the following: a) engineering solutions, including reduction of noise at source, improving sound insulation of sensitive buildings or screening by purpose-built barriers.

Response

7.8 Manchester Creative Studio School submitted an Acoustic Design Report as a supporting document to the planning application. the report has been prepared with reference to the Fairhurst Design Group drawing numbers 7236 02 - 10 to 17 & 20, all revision B, and the Northwest Construction Hub Framework agreement. As part of the assessment, noise surveys were undertaken to ascertain existing ambient and background noise levels in the area. A full measurement procedure is provided in the Acoustic Design Report.

7.9 The report suggest appropriate guidance based on Building Bulletin 93'Acoustic Design of Schools' (BB93) and 8233:1999 'Sound insulation and noise reduction for buildings - Code of Practice', presents the results of external noise measurements and provides an assessment of the construction of the main building elements required to achieve the suggested criteria. for more details refer to an Acoustic Design Report.

7.10 The Unitary Development Plan Policy **DC26.5** states that *the Council will control noise levels by requiring, where necessary, high levels of noise insulation in new development as well as noise barriers where this is appropriate.*

Response

7.11 The Manchester Creative Studio School aims to implement all the technical requirements reported in the Acoustic Design Report. The document indicates in paragraph 4.1 that *external noise reduction will be achieved by closing windows and providing alternative means of ventilation*. In addition to this, paragraph 4.3 states that *consideration could be given to installing secondary windows and incorporating a 'hit and miss' window opening i.e. the outer glazing opens at the top of the window and the inner glazing opens at the bottom.* The document states that it should be possible to control noise levels to 40dBL_{Aeq} using this method, which is in line with a reasonable' standard in BS8233 and policy DC26.5 requirements. Refer to an Acoustic Design Report for more details.

7.12 The Manchester LDF Core Strategy Policy **SP1** outlines the key spatial principles which will guide the strategic development of Manchester to 2027. One of the core Development Principles state that the development in all parts of the City should make a positive contribution to neighbourhoods of choice including:

- *Creating well designed places that enhance or create character;*
- *Making positive contribution to the health, safety and wellbeing of residents*
- *Considering the needs of all members of the community regardless of age, gender, disability, sexuality, religion, culture, ethnicity or income;*
- *Protect and enhance the built and natural environment*
- *Minimise emissions, ensure efficient use of natural resources and reuse previously developed land wherever possible.*
- *Improve access to jobs, services, education and open space by being located to reduce the need to travel and provide good access to sustainable transport provision.*

Response

7.13 The Manchester Creative Studio School meets policy requirements to make positive contributions to the health, safety and wellbeing of residents. Currently unused and redundant building space will be brought back into use to support and encourage the Media and Creative Industries in Ancoats. The development will provide teaching facilities for a

total of circa 300 pupils split into 4 year groups and cater for pupils from 14 to 19 years of age with the focus on a career in the Creative Industries. The school will be a creative centre of regional excellence working closely with local employers and the regions major commercial players to create the next generation of creative minds. The school will offer students a rigorous academic programme with the opportunity to engage with a vocational curriculum, work with real businesses and experience work placements in the Creative and Media Industry. Bringing this building back to use will create a more lively and inviting atmosphere in the area.

Also, the school is sustainably located within 10 minutes walk from Piccadilly bus, train and tram stations and meets policy requirements to improve access to jobs, services and education. For more details please refer to the Design Access Statement.

7.14 The Manchester LDF Core Strategy Policy **DM1** states that all development should have regard to several specific issues for which more detailed guidance may be given within a supplementary planning document. The following points have relevance to Condition 5:

- *Impact on the surrounding areas in terms of the design, scale and appearance of the proposed development. Development should have regard to the character of the surrounding area.*
- *Effects on amenity, including privacy, light, noise, vibration, air quality, odours, litter, vermin, birds, road safety and traffic generation. This could also include proposals which would be sensitive to existing environmental conditions, such as noise.*
- *Community safety and crime prevention.*

Response

7.15 The Manchester Creative Studio School meets the relevant policy requirements. Proposed works take regard to the character of the surrounding area. It aims to reopen the original ground floor windows to Blossom St and Henry St and create a new small student entrance lobby extension on the hard standing bounded by Blossom St to provide a dedicated, secure student entrance with refuse storage at back of pavement. Noise impact on surrounding environment has also been acknowledged and measures will be applied to minimise it. For more details refer to the Acoustic Design Report. The school also meets policy requirement to make building fully accessible to disabled people, it will provide DDA access to address level differences between the external pavement and elevated ground floor. For more details refer to the Design Access Statement.