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Proposed New Entrance
1 St James' Square, Manchester

Design & Access Statement
392 PD 6001 (-)

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Contents

1.0 Context

2.0 Development Objectives

3.0 Design Response

1.0 CONTEXT

The site is located on St James' Square between John Dalton Street and South King Street in Manchester city centre and is within the St Ann's Square Conservation Area.

The existing building is a five storey office block of brick and render with stone features including a continuous expressed string course separating the ground and upper floors and with stone walling around the main entrance. The top two floors are set back from the main facade and partially enclosed within the roof space.

The building has recently undergone a comprehensive refurbishment to all common areas and office suites including new flooring, furniture and interior design and new exposed services installations.

The subject of this application is the ground floor suite only.

2.0 DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

The ground floor suite is currently accessed from the main building reception area and the proposed scheme is for the creation of a new independent entrance to serve this unit directly from the street.

The intention is to provide this new entrance with minimum disruption to the existing facade and to retain the primacy of the existing main entrance.

3.0 DESIGN RESPONSE

Various options for the location and design of the new entrance were explored and access from St James' Square was ultimately considered the most appropriate location due to the wider pavement width available in comparison with a South King Street location.

The external staircase serving the basement area limits the possibility of access to half the St James' Square elevation and so the window openings between this and the main building entrance have been identified as the preferred location.

Whilst the simplest solution would be to extend an existing window opening down to floor level to create a doorway, these openings are slightly too narrow to provide comfortable double door access and too wide to accommodate a single door leaf whilst keeping a fenestration pattern that is sympathetic to the existing.

Consequently, the proposed solution is to remove brickwork from the pier between the existing windows in order to reduce the overall width of the pier and increase the width of the openings by an additional 120mm.

In order to retain a balanced appearance to the pair, these modifications affect both openings with one becoming a new glazed double door and the other becoming a fixed glazed panel.

The resultant pier width of 440mm retains the brickwork setting out without any cut bricks and allows the existing structural column behind to be retained unaltered. The brickwork to the head of the opening would also be removed and replaced with stone to match the adjacent window heads, again retaining a balanced elevation to the pair of openings.