Our Ref: 25038/SH/mym
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20 February 2025

Manchester City Council
Planning
PO Box 532
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Dear Sir/Madam,

PLANNING AND ADVERTISEMENT CONSENT APPLICATION – UNIT DD, 1 CROSS STREET, ARNDALE SHOPPING CENTRE, MANCHESTER M1 1WR

We have been instructed by our client, Hotel Chocolat, to submit the enclosed planning and advertisement consent application for alterations to the exterior of the premises alongside the display of signage to accommodate Hotel Chocolat's occupation of the premises. The application has been submitted online via the Planning Portal (ref: PP-13764293) and the requisite fee of £458, including the £70 admin fee, has been paid online.

In accordance with national and local validation requirements, the following documents have been submitted with the application:

- Completed Planning and Advertisement Consent Application Forms;
- Completed CIL Form 1;
- Planning Statement (included within this letter);
- Biodiversity Net Gain Statement (included within this letter);
- Site Location and Block Plans;
- Existing and Proposed Elevations; and,
- Signage Details.

Site Description

The application site comprises a currently vacant ground floor retail unit located on Cross Street within the Arndale Shopping Centre. The most recent occupant was Halifax bank (Class E use).

Recent works in the immediate area include the two neighbouring units either side of the application site, with a Joe & the Juice restaurant receiving approval to start their works in 2024 and Hop Vietnamese restaurant opening in 2024 too.

Figure 1. Existing façade of unit

Sandwiched between these two new restaurant units, the retail & café operations of Hotel Chocolat provide a complimentary use, consistent with the established Class E use of the premises. Their occupation would further activate the ground floor frontage along this important thoroughfare in Manchester.

Planning History

The available planning history and information available via the Manchester online planning search identified the following applications:

- The previous occupier of the unit was Halifax. Due to lack of available documents online, the exact date of when the bank took occupation is unknown, however an application for the *"Installation of an automatic telling machine"* was approved 19 August 1985 (ref: 025089).
- Subsequent planning and advertisement consent applications were approved following this, with the most recent permissions relevant to the Halifax unit approved 24 January 2013 via advertisement consent for the new fascia and new projecting sign (100830/AO/2012/C1).
- The neighbouring unit, 5 Cross Street, was approved in December 2024 for the installation of a new shopfront (ref: 141242/FO/2024) and associated adverts (ref: 41243/AO/2024) to accommodate Joe & The Juice.
- The other adjoining unit at 26 Market Street was also recently granted advertisement consent (140981/AO/2024) and planning permission (139404/FO/2024) in 2024 the allow Hop Vietnamese to occupy the premises.

Application Proposals

The following external alterations are proposed to allow Hotel Chocolat's occupation. Alterations to the main façade include new double entrance doors with manifestations to be placed across the entire glazing of the unit. A new window glazing profile consisting of aged copper faces and soffits is proposed on the lefthand side of the shopfront, with 3mm thick window cladding in plaster finish to be installed on the outside of the glazing. The existing ventilation grille will also be resprayed to ensure a more visually cohesive retail unit, with the fascia panel over the shopfront to be refinished and repainted.

Advertisements

- 1no. 'Hotel Chocolat' fascia sign
    - 862mm x 3750mm
    - Internally illuminated

    - 3D lettering

- 1no. ‘Signage Zone’

    - 1089mm x 1497mm
    - Proposed signage area

- 1no. fascia sign

    - 1156mm x 3570mm
    - ‘Hotel Chocolat’ 3D lettering
    - ‘Velvetiser Café’ brass lettering
    - Internally illuminated

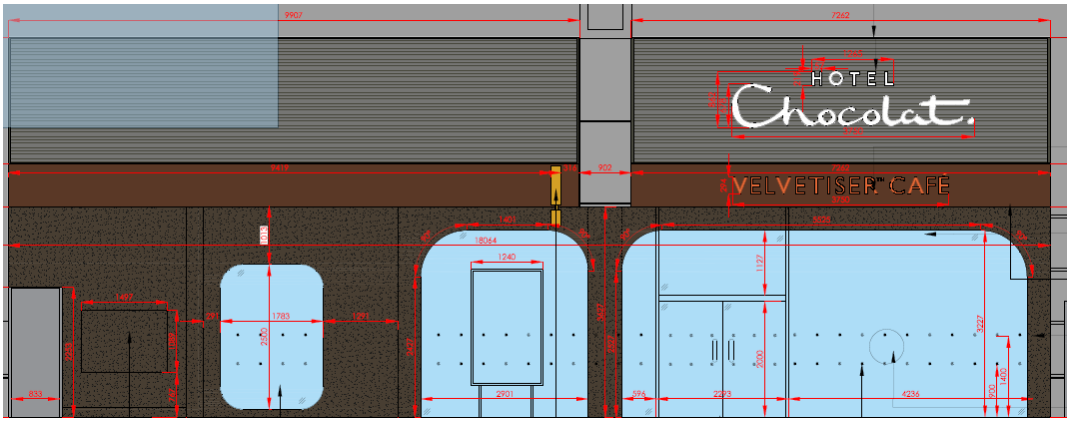
- 1no. projecting sign

    - 1031mm x 1400mm
    - Internally illuminated

- 1no. Signage Zone

    - 2253mm x 1497mm

Figure 2. Proposed shopfront & advert works



Together, the planning and advert proposals seek to refresh the currently vacant unit to provide a high quality, contemporary exterior.

Relevant Planning Policy

The statutory Development Plan in Manchester comprises the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan 2022 to 2039 (2024), Manchester Core Strategy and Proposals Map (2012), and Extant Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (1995, saved 2012). Material considerations relevant to the application include the National Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024) and Local Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance such as the Guide to Development in Manchester SPD (2007) and Shopfront and Signage Design Guide (2024). These have been considered in the formation of the proposals.

The Manchester Core Strategy and Proposals Map (2012) designates this site as located within the City Centre, the City Centre Primary Shopping Centre, and the Regional Centre.

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

The NPPF provides the overarching planning policy guidance for development across England. It states:

> ***"The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, including the provision of homes, commercial development, and supporting infrastructure in a sustainable manner. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."***

Paragraph 85 states that planning decisions should help to create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.

Paragraph 131 outlines that good design is one of the fundamental factors in ensuring sustainable development and contributes to creating:

> ***"Better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities."***

Furthermore, **Paragraph 135** sets out that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development. Similarly, development should create places that maintain a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

Regarding advertisements, **Paragraph 141** states that signage should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, accounting for the cumulative impacts.

Manchester Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2012)

Regarding development within the Regional Centre, **Policy SP1** *'Spatial Principles'* states that this area will be a focus for economic and commercial development, and retail, leisure and cultural activity. Furthermore, development is expected to create well-designed places that enhance or create character and protect and enhance the built and natural environment.

Policy EC3 *'The Regional Centre'* sets out how development within the Regional Centre that generates commercial development is encouraged.

Policy DM1 *'Development Management'* states that all development should have regard for appropriate siting, layout, scale, form, massing, materials and detail and be sensitive to the appearance and character of the surrounding area

Extant Unitary Development Plan

The Core Strategy replaced the UDP, but some policies remain and are relevant to this proposal.

When determining applications relating to shopfronts and signage, **Policy DC14.1** *'Shopfronts and Related Signs'* states that proposals should ensure minimal impact to the host building and its surroundings.

Policy DC15.2 *'Advertisements, Hoardings and Posters'* sets out how the display of signage should not harm the character of the host building nor its surroundings and how all signage should be sited, scaled and located appropriately to ensure an unobtrusive scheme that does not negatively impact neighbouring properties.

Shopfront and Signage Design Guide (2024)

This Supplementary Planning Document provides guidance on the principles and standards of shopfront and signage design throughout Manchester. Signage is expected to integrate within the setting of its host building and the wider streetscene to ensure an uncluttered façade that promotes positive change within the wider context of the City.

Planning Considerations

Planning permission and advertisement consent is sought for minor external alterations, as well as display of associated signage, to allow for the ingoing occupant, Hotel Chocolat, to facilitate retail and café operations from the currently vacant commercial unit. The considerations relevant to the proposals, are therefore the principle and design of the proposed development, as well as any implication on surrounding amenity.

The application site comprises a currently vacant commercial unit located along the primary shopping street, Cross Street, within the Arndale Shopping Centre. The shopfront is in a semi-dilapidated state and is unsightly in the street scene. Together, the proposed works to the shopfront seek to revitalise this currently vacant commercial unit through a series of external alterations.

The package of works will completely alter the exterior of the unit, with new double entrance doors seeking to match the new window glazing profile of the façade. The glazing arrangement is consistent with neighbouring units, realigned to the front of the unit avoiding the angled recess currently present, which is out of character with other units in the vicinity. Further, specific design features for Hotel Chocolat including portal windows, planting and curved window details will give the unit a refreshed and high-quality appearance. Further manifestation details and a removable vinyl decorative lettering to be applied internally will also be placed onto the glazing to assist the visually impaired. Other proposed works, include the respraying of the existing ventilation grille across the façade, with the fascia panel and other exposed elements to also be refinished and repainted in a coordinated colour range will tie together all elements of the shopfront creating a cohesive façade. Noting the adjacent permissions for other restaurant operators' works the alterations proposed will undoubtedly complement the building and streetscene, in accordance with the identified policies.

The proposed signage seeks the necessary advertisements to facilitate the ingoing retail and café operations of Hotel Chocolat and have been carefully designed to ensure a similar scheme to the surrounding retail and restaurant units. The range of advertisements is limited, suited to the scale and appearance of the unit's façade. And, again, noting the adjacent permissions, is consistent with the established pattern of development already approved.

With regard to amenity, the shopfront alterations and signage will complement the surrounding area. It is therefore considered the design, scale and siting of the proposed signage (and indeed the external alterations) would not appear disproportionately large or incongruent, or overly bright, ultimately keeping with the scale, appearance, illumination method of the established and emerging advertising within the immediate surroundings of the unit. Thus, it is considered no adverse visual or safety impacts will result from the proposals, in accordance with the relevant policies set out in the NPPF, Manchester Core Strategy, Unitary Development Plan and Shopfront and Signage Design Guide.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

There is no (0sqm) existing habitat or biodiversity value at the site, it is an enclosed restaurant and will continue to be used as such. It is, therefore, exempt from BNG calculations and, as such, BNG requires no further consideration.

Conclusions

Overall, the application proposals seek to transform the currently vacant unit through a series of necessary external alterations, and the display of advertisements, to facilitate Hotel Chocolat's occupation. Given the evolving commercial context of the area, it is considered that the package of external alterations and proposed signage scheme should be considered appropriate.

I therefore trust that the information enclosed is sufficient to allow the applications to be validated, and subsequently allows planning permission and advertisement consent to be granted. Should you require any further information in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

SAM HARPER
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Enc.