

Basement Level of 19-21 George Street, Manchester, M1 4HE

Use of the ground floor as a restaurant and retention of the basement as a mini-market (Use Class E)

Design and Access Statement



Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared by LDM Group on behalf of Jason Zeng (The client) to accompany a Full Planning application for use of the basement as a self-contained restaurant and retention of the use of the ground floor as a mini-market (Use Class E) at the address of Basement Level of 19-21 George Street, Manchester, M1 4HE, alongside the heritage statement, accompanied with the application.

The purpose of this statement is to describe the design thinking behind the application and to explain how the applicant has considered the proposal and understands what is appropriate and feasible for the site in its local context.

Site Description

The site will extend to circa 407 m² and is to the northeast elevation of George Street, and adjacent to Charlotte Street to the left-hand side of the property.

The application site and its surroundings have the characteristics of a typical mixed retail/commercial and residential area with mixed-use commercial/residential units to the surrounding of the site. To the south of the site lies a live railway, some 500m away. Car parking provision is made available on-site to the side.

Proposed Development

The proposed development is the Use of the ground floor as a restaurant and retention of the basement as a mini-market (Use Class E). This will include internal layout changes and changes to the external doors only.

Design Statement:

The proposal is to maximise the building and site's potential and to add purpose to the building. Great transport routes into Manchester City Center and Oldham Town Centre via Buses and Trams every 7 minutes are both only a 5-minute walk away from the property.

Layout:

Internal changes to the layout will be made to accommodate the new self-contained restaurant area. All proposed internal walls will consist of stud partitioning, and new doors will be timber, with or without a steel core, to maintain consistency with the historic character of the building. Additionally, the proposed internal bin storage area will be designed to ensure there is no obstruction on the highway.

Scale:

The proposed will not be visible from the adjacent highways of George Street, and Charlotte Street.

Appearance:

The proposal has been carefully designed and sited to improve the surrounding area whilst minimising the effects.

Access

General Site Access

Access to the site remains via George Street at the front and an existing service bay at the rear. Both access points are retained, and no major alterations are proposed that would impact the site's accessibility from the public realm.

1. Ground Floor Access

Front Entrance (George Street):

There are no proposed changes to the ground floor access. The existing external shutter remains in place, and there is no door behind it. Access is maintained via the existing steps (approximately five steps), and this arrangement will continue to serve the ground floor unit as it currently does.

2. Basement Access

Main Access – Front Entrance (George Street):

A new external staircase is proposed from George Street, providing direct access to the basement unit. This access point has been chosen as the main entrance for the basement space, particularly for its intended retail use. It offers a more practical and visible solution for customers and significantly reduces the number of steps compared to the existing internal arrangement. While not fully accessible (e.g., no ramp or lift), this approach is considered the most suitable and efficient option within the physical and heritage constraints of the building.

Secondary Access – Rear Entrance (Service Bay):

The rear access point, currently used for deliveries, has been assessed as a potential secondary entrance to the basement. Although not fully level, this access could provide an alternative entry point, potentially for those with limited mobility. Installation of a lift or stairs was explored but is not viable due to significant physical constraints and conservation restrictions. Nevertheless, the rear entrance may offer some flexibility for future accessibility improvements, provided heritage constraints are respected.

3. Lift Access Considerations

Several options were reviewed to provide lift access to the basement level. These included:

- The internal lift within the building (unavailable due to lease restrictions).
- Adapting existing openings (not viable due to space, structure, and cost).
- Creating a new opening from the loading bay (ruled out due to significant level changes and impact on the listed fabric).

Given these constraints, lift access is not a feasible option at present. However, the property owner is open to considering future upgrades, such as restoring the existing disused lift, should conditions allow.

4. Summary

The access strategy for this site balances practicality with conservation requirements. The front basement entrance offers the most suitable and improved access for general use and retail customers, while the rear service entrance could serve as a secondary or assisted access point. Full accessibility cannot be achieved due to the building's Grade II listed status and physical constraints, but the proposals represent a proportionate and well-considered improvement on the current arrangement.

Photographic evidence:

To further support this assessment, photographs of the three existing openings that were reviewed have been included in Appendix A. These images illustrate the physical constraints and existing conditions that prevent lift installation at these locations.

Based on the analysis above, none of the existing access points or openings can be adapted for lift access due to structural and site constraints. The option to create a new opening to the loading bay is unavailable due to significant level differences. As a result, lift access to the basement is not a viable option within the constraints of this development.

Impact on Neighbouring Amenity:

Impact on Neighbouring Amenity, the proposed works will have no adverse effect on the neighbouring amenities. The design of the proposal has been carefully considered through its material and detail to ensure that it will not create a negative impact.

Appendix A - Photographs of the three existing openings

