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45-47 Thomas Street – Cover Letter



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Submitted via Planning Portal Reference: PP-13515352

Dear Sir / Madam,

45-47 Thomas Street, Manchester - Change of use from a photography studio (Use Class E) to a mixed-use venue (Sui Generis) which includes a bar, record shop, music and event space, co-working area and studio space. Installation of new front door and additional air conditioning unit (with relocation of two existing units) and emergency access stair to rear elevation.

Introduction

We write on behalf of our client, Morpark Ltd, to apply for formal planning permission for the change of use of 45-47 Thomas Street, Manchester.

The proposed description of development is:

Change of use from a photography studio (Use Class E) to a mixed-use venue (Sui Generis) which includes a bar, record shop, music and event space, co-working area and studio space. Installation of new front door and additional air conditioning unit (with relocation of two existing units) and emergency access stair to rear elevation.

Application Documents

The application consists of the following documents:

- Application Forms and Ownership Certificates
- Site Location Plan
- Existing Drawings (including plans, cross sections and elevations)
- Proposed Drawings (including plans, cross sections and elevations)
- Operator's Statement – Prepared by Morpark Ltd
- Waste Pro Forma
- Design & Access Statement
- Heritage Statement
- Noise Impact Assessment (inc Technical Specification of Proposed Plant)
- Crime Impact Statement

The requisite application fee has been paid via the Planning Portal (PP-13515352).



The Application Site

The application building is located on the east side of Thomas Street within the Northern Quarter area of Manchester City Centre. The area forms a unique commercial retail hub, with a high number of buildings in varying independent Class E café and restaurant uses, as well as a large number of properties in drinking establishment uses being present within the surrounding area.

The building, which comprises 45-47 Thomas Street is currently not in use but was last used as a photography studio. The building is relatively modern, but has been designed to reflect the dominant materiality, form and scale of the surrounding buildings, comprising three storeys with a flat brick primary elevation, with glazed commercial units to the ground floor and four windows to each of the first and second floors. Level access into the building is available from the main entrance of the building from Thomas Street.

The building is adjoined on both sides by commercial bar type uses. The closest residential building to the site is considered to be Bollin House which is a five-storey residential block located on Edge Street to the north of the site (circa 20m away).

The site is located in the Smithfield Conservation Area. The building is not listed but there is a cluster of Grade II listed buildings opposite at 44-46 Thomas Street and 7 Kelvin Street. Heritage is discussed further below and in the Heritage Statement that accompanies the application.

The site is in a highly accessible location within the Northern Quarter of Manchester City Centre. The area is well served by various methods of public transport including buses, trains and the Metrolink. The site can be easily accessed on foot, whilst there are Sheffield Stands for securing bikes located on the pavement at the junctions of Tib Street and Church Street and Oldham Street and Church Street. With regards to car parking, the multi-storey car park on Church Street and at the Arndale Shopping Centre are within walking distance, whilst on street pay and display spaces are also available in the locality.

Manchester City Council's City Centre Strategic Plan (2015-18) confirms that status of the Northern Quarter as a unique area of the Manchester's city centre and its importance to Manchester's economy and identity. It goes on to state explain that the area is characterised by its distinctive architecture, red brick alleys and converted grand warehouses. The atmospheric neighbourhood runs adjacent to the mainstream presence of Market Street and the Piccadilly area, yet the concentration of independent retail and leisure outlets in the area, and the hotbed of cultural production and consumption, set it apart.

The Plan confirms that this non-mainstream offer is important for any global city and gives the Northern Quarter a unique identity within both the city and, to some extent, the UK. The area attracts a high number of visitors, providing an important contribution to the economy of the city centre.

The proposed use of 45-47 Thomas Street by the applicants will further strengthen this special and unique identity.

The Applicants

The applicants are Harris and Brad, who met in Manchester 13 years ago through their love for Manchester's vibrant music and hospitality scene. They both already have successful businesses in the Northern Quarter.

Harris has been a key driver of success for the award-winning companies Common&Co, Zecol / Mission Mars and Zanna Hospitality Group. He has gained a great understanding of the Northern Quarter and Thomas Street, managing and overseeing operations at Trof NQ, Evelyn's / Daisy, Public, Common, Nell's Pizza and Port Street Beer House. His leadership has ensured these establishments remain profitable and consistently perform at the highest level.

Brad has been a pivotal figure in the area since opening Whiskey Jar 12 years ago, taking an empty shell in a listed building and transforming it into one of the northern quarter's longest running bars. He also ran the highly

successful Alabama's brunch restaurant, taking it to the number 1 position on Tripadvisor for restaurants in Manchester, further showcasing his expertise and influence in the local hospitality scene.

The Proposals

The application seeks a change of use from a photography studio (Use Class E) to a mixed use venue (Sui Generis) which includes a bar, record shop, music and event space, co-working area and studio space. Installation of new front door and additional air conditioning unit to rear.

The change of use comprises a mix of the following three elements across the three floors of the building:

Ground Floor

The ground floor will operate as a music focused bar and coffee shop with a retail element consisting of a record and book shop, both will be independent retailers from the local area brought in on 3 month residencies. This will allow for local traders to foster a lively and creative environment where people can socialise with friends and make new connections. We will offer a curated selection of craft beer, wine, and cocktails at accessible prices, ensuring excellent value for our guests.

First Floor

The first floor will serve as a versatile space. During the day, it will host yoga and wellness classes, art and craft tutorials, and other community-supporting projects. In the evening, it will transform into a vibrant events venue, providing a platform for local artists to showcase their talents. This space will be an engaging creative hub for both the local community and visitors to enjoy. This floor is proposed to be a versatile space designed to appeal not only to creative groups but also to community organisations, small businesses, and individual entrepreneurs. This space will be well-suited for a range of activities, from hosting meetings and events to conducting classes, offering a functional and inviting atmosphere that adapts to the needs of diverse users.

Second Floor

The second floor will be transformed into a dynamic coworking space, offering hot desking, meeting rooms, and podcast studios. This addition is a much-needed resource in the heart of the Northern Quarter, designed to meet demand while remaining accessible through competitive pricing.

The office element will serve as a base for employees and guests of the organisation to work in an office environment.

The applicant's goal is to employ a team of 12 staff members, who will operate on the ground and first floors, including four managers and keyholders. Guests utilising the second floor will be self-catered, using the equipment provided.

There will be no food cooked on the premises.

Hours of operation

The proposed hours of operation for each floor are as follows:

Ground Floor

- Monday 8am-1am (serving alcohol from 10am)
- Tuesday 8am-1am (serving alcohol from 10am)
- Wednesday 8am-1am (serving alcohol from 10am)
- Thursday 8am-2am (serving alcohol from 10am)
- Friday 8am-3am (serving alcohol from 10am)
- Saturday 8am-3am (serving alcohol from 10am)
- Sunday 8am-1am (serving alcohol from 10am)

First Floor

- Monday 8am-5pm as a studio, 7:30pm - 1am as a venue (serving alcohol from 10am)
- Tuesday 8am-5pm as a studio, 7:30pm - 1am as a venue (serving alcohol from 10am)
- Wednesday 8am-5pm as a studio, 7:30pm - 1am as a venue (serving alcohol from 10am)
- Thursday 8am-5pm as a studio, 7:30pm - 2am as a venue (serving alcohol from 10am)
- Friday 8am-5pm as a studio, 7:30pm - 3am as a venue (serving alcohol from 10am)
- Saturday 8am-5pm as a studio, 7:30pm - 3am as a venue (serving alcohol from 10am)
- Sunday 8am-5pm as a studio, 7:30pm - 1am as a venue (serving alcohol from 10am)

Second Floor

- Monday 8am - 6:30pm (no alcohol sales)
- Tuesday 8am - 6:30pm (no alcohol sales)
- Wednesday 8am - 6:30pm (no alcohol sales)
- Thursday 8am - 6:30pm (no alcohol sales)
- Friday 8am - 6:30pm (no alcohol sales)
- Saturday 8am - 6:30pm (no alcohol sales)
- Sunday 8am - 6:30pm (no alcohol sales)

Please note, a separate application for a premises license has been submitted by the applicant.

Further details on the proposed use are provided in the Operators Statement prepared by the applicants.

External Alterations

The external alterations are limited to the following works. Further details are provided in the submitted Design & Access Statement and enclosed drawings.

Front Elevation

Alterations to the front elevation are limited to relocating the existing double doors and widening the current fire door. These changes are designed to maintain the aesthetic harmony with Thomas Street and align with the conservation area's character.

New laminated glazing will be installed in the existing openings as per the recommendation of the Crime Impact Statement and Noise Impact Assessment. Similarly, secondary glazing will be installed at the first floor level (again within the existing window openings).

Signage will be limited to a simple fascia sign comprising individual letters located above the new entrance doors (please refer to proposed plans showing signage zone).

The commercial uses on Thomas Street all benefit from an existing external pavement seating area which has been in place since 2020. At present, the seating area immediately in front of 45/47 Thomas Street is used and managed by the adjacent bars. Should this application be approved, this area will be used by patrons of the application site. As the seating area is existing it does not form part of this application.

Rear Elevation

A new steel emergency access staircase is proposed for the first floor at the rear elevation. This would only be used in the event of an emergency. As this elevation is not visible from any public vantage points it will have minimal visual impact.

Two existing air condition units will be repurposed and moved to accommodate the new steps and a third unit will be installed to supply heating and cooling to the second floor. A technical specification for the additional condenser unit has been provided (see appendix of the Noise Impact Assessment) and its noise impact is assessed as part of the submitted Noise Impact Assessment.

The rear elevation of the building where the condensers and staircase are to be located cannot be seen from any residential properties or the wider area.

As no food will be cooked on the premises there is no need for any external ventilation.

Waste, Servicing & Deliveries

Prior to collection, waste will be stored in the discrete rear yard of the premises, accessed from the rear of the ground floor. All waste will be stored in bags, separated by recyclable materials, and collected daily by their commercial waste company. At the end of the business day, the bags will be moved to the front of the building for collection by the waste management company between 08:00 am – 10:00am every day. Glass bottles will be dealt with the same way and our team will receive extensive training to ensure that noise associated with moving those bags is minimised.

The primary delivery day from suppliers will be Wednesday, with occasional small top-ups on other days if necessary. All deliveries will take place between 08:00 am - 20:00 pm Monday - Saturday and 10:00 am - 18:00 pm on Sunday and Bank Holidays. Deliveries will be made through the front of the building and directly transported to the ground-floor cellar. All empty beer kegs will be collected on designated delivery days.

Further details are provided in the submitted Design & Access Statement.

Planning Policy

Section 38(6) of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act requires that all planning applications are determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Development Plan for Manchester comprises the Core Strategy that was adopted on 11 July 2012 together with the saved policies from the Manchester UDP and the Proposals Map. The adopted Manchester Core Strategy sets out the City Council's Vision for Manchester to 2026.

The Strategy identifies the Site as falling within the 'City Centre'. Key policies relevant to the site are as follows:

Policy	Description
Policy SP1 Spatial Principles	Details the key spatial principles which will guide the strategic development of Manchester to 2027. The policy states that the Regional Centre of Manchester will be the focus for economic and commercial development, retail, leisure and cultural activity, alongside high quality city living.
Policy EC1 Employment and Economic Growth in Manchester	Priorities for ensuring continued economic growth include demonstrating that employment generating development has fully considered opportunities to provide jobs for local people, through construction or use; and ensuring the continued social, economic and environmental regeneration of the City.
Policy EC3 Regional Centre	States that within the development for employment generating uses including offices and other commercial development will be encouraged. Office developments will be appropriate providing that they are in locations which are well connected by sustainable transport to both the city centre and residential areas. Housing will also be an appropriate use within the Regional Centre, although this should complement the development of mixed use employment areas. Subject to site and location details, the Regional Centre will generally be a location where higher density residential development is appropriate.
Policy EN1	All development in Manchester will be expected to follow the seven principles of urban design (character, continuity and enclosure, public realm, ease of movement,

Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas	legibility, adaptability and diversity) and have regard to the strategic character area in which the development is located.
Policy CC1 Manchester City Centre	The city centre is a strategic economic location and focus of employment growth in the City and City Region. Within the city centre and the fringe, a variety of high quality accommodation types, sizes and foot-plates will be encouraged to boost investment by local, national and international businesses. The city centre and fringe will be considered a suitable location for the consideration of high density buildings and commercially led mixed use schemes. The policy states that “Developments which lead to the more intensive use of employment land (in terms of floorspace provided) will be supported”.
Policy CC4 Visitors – Tourism, Culture and Leisure	Policy CC4 posits a focus on the City Centre as a hub for culture and leisure in the City Region. As such, proposals which improve the appearance, use and accessibility of all cultural and visitor attractions and associated facilities will be supported.
Policy CC9 Design and Heritage	Development in Manchester City Centre should preserve or enhance the heritage assets that have been identified, including listed buildings and conservation areas. The Council will support high density and mixed use development in the City Centre, but developers must recognise the specific design challenges that must be overcome to ensure complementarity of function and form. New development must support the range of uses the Council expects in the City Centre and contribute to a coherent and integrated physical environment.
Policy CC10 A Place for Everyone	The City Centre will develop as a location which appeals to a wide range of residents and visitors. Development which promotes this objective will be supported, particularly through increasing the diversity of activity in the City Centre and high standards of accessibility to buildings and across spaces.
Policy DM1 Development Management	All development should have regard to the specific issues including effects on amenity such as noise, privacy, light, air quality, road safety and traffic generation; accessibility; community safety and crime prevention; vehicular access; and green infrastructure.

Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Saved Policies

The Unitary Development Plan (UDP) was superseded by the Core Strategy. However, a number of UDP policies have been ‘saved’. Extant policies contained within the UDP which are relevant to application are as follows:

Policy	Description
DC10.1 Food & Drink Uses	In determining planning applications for developments involving the sale of food or drink for consumption on the premises, or for hot food to be consumed off the premises (whether or not other activities, such as a nightclub, are included), the Council will have regard to: a. the general location of the proposed development, including any reference to the area in other policies in the Plan; b. the effect on the amenity of neighbouring residents; c. the availability of safe and convenient arrangements for car parking and servicing; d. ease of access for all, including disabled people; and e. the storage and collection of refuse and litter.

DC18.1 Conservation Areas	The Council will give particularly careful consideration to development proposals within Conservation Areas. a. The Council will seek to preserve and enhance the character of its designated conservation areas by carefully considering the following issues: i) the relationship of new structures to neighbouring buildings and spaces; ii) the effect of major changes to the appearance of existing buildings; iii) the desirability of retaining existing features, such as boundary walls, gardens, trees, (including street trees); iv) the effect of signs and advertisements; v) any further guidance on specific areas which has been approved by the Council. b. The Council will not normally grant outline planning permission for development within Conservation Areas. c. Consent to demolish a building in a conservation area will be granted only where it can be shown that it is wholly beyond repair, incapable of reasonably beneficial use, or where its removal or replacement would benefit the appearance of character of the area. d. Where demolition is to be followed by redevelopment, demolition will be permitted only where there are approved detailed plans for that redevelopment and where the Council has been furnished with evidence that the development will be undertaken. e. Development proposals adjacent to Conservation Areas will be granted only where it can be shown that they will not harm the appearance or character of the area. This will include the protection of views into and out of Conservation Areas.
Policy RC20 Area 4 'Swan Street/Shudehill/ Tib Street/Church Street'	City Centre Small Areas Policy

Places for Everyone (PfE) 2024

Places for Everyone is a long-term plan of nine Greater Manchester districts (Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan) for jobs, new homes, and sustainable growth. The Places for Everyone Plan took effect and became part of the statutory development plan for each of the nine PfE authorities on 21st March 2024.

Relevant PfE policies include:

- **Policy JP-Strat2: City Centre** - The City Centre will continue to provide the primary focus for business, retail, leisure, culture and tourism activity in Greater Manchester, but the increasingly important residential role of the City Centre will be expanded
- **Policy JP-P2: Heritage** – The plan seeks to will proactively manage and work with partners to positively conserve, sustain and enhance our historic environment and heritage assets and their settings. Particular consideration will be given to ensure that the significance of key elements of the historic environment which contribute to Greater Manchester's distinctive identity and sense of place are protected from harm. Development proposals affecting designated and non-designated heritage assets and/or their settings will be considered having regard to national planning policies.
- **Policy JP-P3: Cultural Facilities** – The Plan will proactively develop and support cultural businesses and attractions in our cities and towns through a range of measures, where appropriate, including:
 - Supporting the development of new cultural venues in town centres and places with good public transport connectivity and
 - Promoting new, or enhancing existing, locally distinct clusters of cultural facilities, especially where they can provide an anchor for local regeneration and town centre renewal.

Planning Overview

The application site lies within Manchester City Centre, where restaurants and cafés, and other evening economy commercial uses are considered to be acceptable in principle as part of supporting the vitality and vibrancy of the area. The growth of this type of use has been a key part of the attractiveness of the City Centre as a place to both live, visit and work. The proposal would be consistent with policies SP1, EC3, CC1, CC2 and C10 of the Core Strategy, and Places for Everyone Plan Policy JP-Strat2 by developing a vacant floor of a property in the heart of the City Centre. It would support the daytime and evening economy and contribute positively to the aspirations of further regenerating Manchester City Centre.

Heritage

The application site is located within the Smithfield Conservation Area. The Conservation Area spans from Market Street to Swan Street, with its eastern and western boundaries following Shudehill and Oldham Street. Thomas Street and the surrounding roads to the north and south, principally Edge Street and Turner Street are characterised by smaller scale Georgian buildings now in commercial and residential uses. The application site is a modern property constructed in a style similar to the historic weavers' cottages present within the Conservation Area.

The proposed alterations associated with this change of use are limited and fully sympathetic with the surroundings. The relocation and addition of 1 no. air conditioning units and the proposed flight of steps would be in a location that is not visible within the wider conservation area. The changes to the front elevation are minimal and comprise the installation of a new front door within the existing commercial shopfront.

The scheme will convert a currently vacant property into a vibrant and inclusive community hub enjoyed by locals and visitors alike. This proposal will uplift the street by improving on current bar concepts and offering more health wellness and work spaces for the community.

On this basis the proposal is considered to have positive impact on the appearance and character of the Smithfield Conservation Area in accordance with Core Strategy Policies SP1, CC9, EN1, EN3 and DM1, Saved Unitary Development Plan Policies DC18 and DC19, a Places for Everyone Plan Policy JP-P2, the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the relevant heritage related policies enshrined within chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) related to "*Conserving and enhancing the historic environment*".

Residential Amenity

The application site is situated in an area populated by a high number of properties in commercial uses as restaurants, cafes and drinking establishments. All of these establishments have similar opening hours to those proposed by this change of use. The proposal has also been accompanied by a Noise Impact Assessment which includes various measures that shall be installed on site to control the outbreak of noise from the façade and the proposed air conditioning units. These measures will be fully implemented.

Visual Amenity

As noted above, alterations to the front elevation are limited to relocating the existing double doors and widening the current fire door. These changes are designed to maintain the aesthetic harmony with Thomas Street and align with the conservation area's character. The external air conditioning unit to be installed would be located on the property's rear elevation. The elevation fronts out onto a concealed and partially covered service yard. Due to this area not being visible from public vantage points along Thomas Street and Edge Street it is considered that the installation of air conditioning units would have no impact on visual amenity.

Crime & Safety

A Crime Impact Statement (CIS) has been prepared by Greater Manchester Police (GMP). This confirms that GMP welcomes and supports the development. The statement confirms the proposals will result in a more intensive use of the building, greater levels of street activity and an increase in footfall to the area. Passive surveillance of the surrounding public realm will also be enhanced.

The CIS confirms that there are no significant issues to address from a crime prevention perspective. It recommends the premises should be covered by CCTV and that where possible any external doors, windows and glazing are certified to be burglary resistant. We can confirm, these recommendations will be implemented by the applicant.

Conclusions

This application seeks to change the use of the vacant 45-47 Thomas Street into a diverse city centre space, which comprises of a bar and record shop, event space (with live music and DJs), a space for yoga classes in the daytime, co-working space / hot desking, a podcast studio and business meeting rooms.

The aspiration is to create a high quality use which celebrates and enhances the unique location of the building in the heart of the Northern Quarter that will attract a diverse set of people to and already successful part of Manchester City Centre.

Based on the information submitted it is considered the use is acceptable and accords with Core Strategy Policies SP1, EC3, CC1, CC2, CC5, CC9, C10, EN1, EN3, EN19 and DM1, Saved Unitary Development Plan Policies DC10, DC18, DC19 and DC26, Places for Everyone Plan Policies JP-Strat2, JP-P2 and JP-P4, the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the National Planning Policy Framework..

The submitted information demonstrates how the proposed alterations and change of use can repurpose the currently vacant property into a vibrant and inclusive community hub for locals and visitors alike. The proposal will uplift the street by improving on current bar concepts and offering more health, wellness and work spaces for the community. The change of use will continue to fulfil the building's economic contribution to the City, in line with adopted planning and regeneration policy. The proposed development will contribute to the economic, social and environmental improvement of the site.

This use will enrich the cultural character of Thomas Street and the wider Northern Quarter, complement nearby bars and restaurants, and strengthen Thomas Street's role as a vibrant destination. It is in full accordance with Manchester City Council's Strategic City Centre Plan

We look forward to working with the local planning authority on the formal assessment of the planning application. We hope that you will share our view that the scheme will make a positive contribution to the local area.

We trust that the application is in order and look forward to receiving confirmation that it has been validated in due course. In the meantime, should you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact Jay Patel at these offices.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Savills", written in a cursive, stylized script.

Savills Planning
Savills (UK) Limited