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Our ref Towers Business Park

21st November 2024

Dear Sir/Madam

Soctscroft, Towers Business Park, Wilmslow Road, Didsbury, Manchester M20 2RY.

Full Planning Permission for External Alterations to Soctscroft, Towers Business Park.

Introduction

We write on behalf of our client KW Towers Ltd, seeking full planning permission for External Alterations to Scotscroft, Towers Business Park, Wilmslow Road, Didsbury, Manchester, M20 2RY.

In addition to this letter, the following documents are submitted in support of this application:

- Application Form and Certificates;
- Site Location Plan (2004_EX_110_OS MAP (002)); and
- Site Plan & Elevations (2004_EX_110_EXTERNAL PLANNING DRAWING REV C).

The application fee of £363.00 has been paid via the Planning Portal (ref: PP- 13545977).

Site Context

The application site comprises Scotscroft, Tower Business Park on Wilmslow Road, Manchester. Tower Business Park comprises of 9no. office buildings and associated car parking within landscaped parkland.

The site extends to approximately 2,776 sq m. The site is bound to the north by Honeywell House, to the east by Didsbury Cricket Club, to the west by Ocean House and Adamson House and to the south by associated car parking provision and soft landscaping.

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Access to the site is gained from Wilmslow Road to the north, which also acts as its northern boundary. A Grade II listed gate house is located within the north east corner of the site and to the south-east, outside of the site boundary, is the Grade II* Listed Building 'The Towers' (Shirley Institute), as seen on figure 1 below.

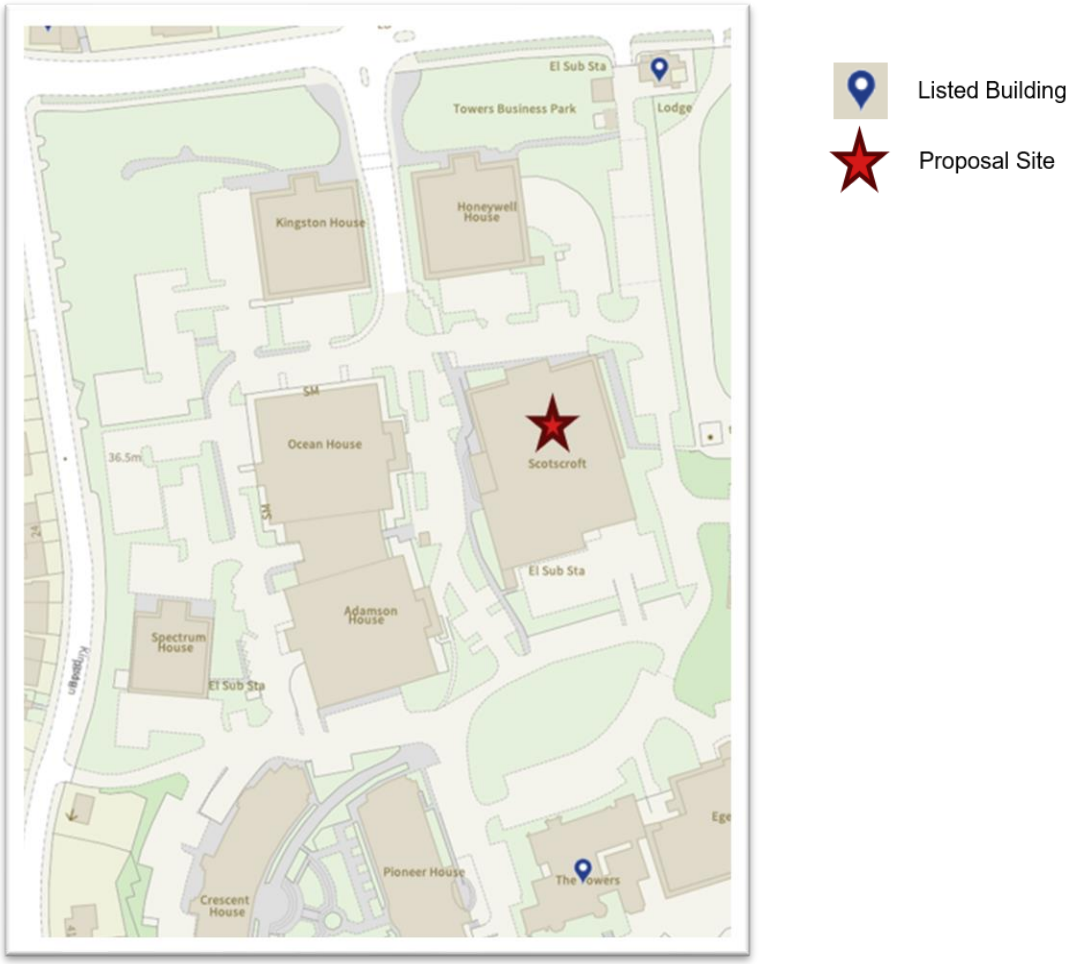


Figure 1: Site Heritage Context (Historic England, 2024)

Beyond the site, the surrounding area is characterised by residential development, particularly to the south. To the west is significant open green space and to the east is East Didsbury train station. Non-residential uses including hotels, pubs and restaurants, a primary school and a medical centre, are notable to the north although residential development is predominant.

The site is approximately 7km from Manchester City Centre. The site benefits from favourable transport links with adjacent roads acting as bus routes and East Didsbury train station being 330m from the site entrance. The site is also in close proximity to the A34, a major road in the highway network, and the M60.

Heritage Context

Towers Business Park is within the Didsbury St James Conservation Area, which was designated in 1970. The Conservation Area has the greatest concentration of Listed Buildings in Manchester outside of the City Centre. Centred upon the historical core of Didsbury, at the junction of Wilmslow Road and Stenner Lane, the settlement was once an agricultural hamlet with the oldest building, The Church of St. James, dating to 1620.

The industrial revolution fuelled the growth of Didsbury with wealthy businessmen choosing to settle in the area over the course of the 19th Century. The Grade II* Listed Shirley Institute, which is located at the southern edge of Towers Busines Park, dates to this era.

The Listed Buildings are evenly spread across the Conversation Area, although there is a cluster of Grade II Listed Buildings at The Grove, in the centre of the Conservation Area's boundary. Notable Listed Buildings include the aforementioned Shirley Institute and the Church of St James, as well as the Grade II Listed Fletcher Moss Art Gallery, the Grade II Listed Old Chapel Building at Didsbury Campus, and the Grade II Listed Didsbury Methodist Church of St Paul.

Towers Business Park is located in the south east corner of the Didsbury St James Conservation Area and is a well established modern development within the Conservation Area. The Grade II listed gate house and the Grade II* Listed Building 'The Towers' (Shirley Institute) are the only listed buildings in the vicinity of the Business Park, as seen on Figure 1 above.

The Business Park stands apart from the notable group of Garden listed Buildings at the grove, with Wilmslow Road acting as a natural boundary and is considered to provide little contribution to the conservation area or the listed buildings' setting.

Planning History

A planning history search has been undertaken via a desktop search of Manchester City Council's online public access page.

The most relevant permissions to this application are summarised in the below table.

Reference	Description of Development	Decision and Date
101468/FO/2013/S2	Erection of single storey building to form coffee shop (A1) including installation of canopy between Ocean House and Adamson House, erection of single storey parking deck over existing surface car park at Scotscroft House, removal of balconies to Kingston House and Honeyweel House including associated elevational alterations and hard and soft landscaping improvements and car parking reconfiguration including new lighting and seating to Wilmslow Road entrance, Pioneer House, Crescent House, Ocean House and Adamson House	Approved, Jul 2013
092783/FO/2010/S2	Installation of four external louvres to the south elevation	Approved, May 2010

Proposed Development

This application seeks planning consent for external alterations to the building façade that comprise:

- Proposed subtle treatment to provide a clear indication of the main entrance;
- A proposed replacement inward opening DDA compliant bean cafe door and glazed side panel (to replace the existing sliding door);
- An additional building name sign above the existing revolving door in white vinyl graphic;
- Proposed new frosted manifestation to bean cafe to glazed panels; and
- Proposed spray of the top section of the existing curtain wall treatment and the transoms and mullions, all to be sprayed in black.

Planning Policy Considerations

When determining any planning application, the relevant planning authorities are under a statutory obligation as imposed by Section 54A of the Town and Country Planning Act, repeated in section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, to make their determination in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Levelling Up and Regeneration

Act 2023 amended section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act to add that regard must be given to the National Development Management Policies (NDMPs) and that where there is a conflict between development plan policies and NDMPs, 'the conflict must be resolved in favour of the national development management policy'. As yet, NDMPs have not been published for consultation and have not been adopted.

The principal Development Plan documents against which planning applications for development in Manchester are considered, currently comprise the following:

- Manchester Core Strategy, adopted July 2012
- Unitary Development Plan 'Extant Policies', adopted July 1995
- The Addendum to the Manchester Core Strategy, adopted March 2024
- Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan, adopted March 2024

Other material considerations will include the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) issued by central government, emerging local policies, and guidance.

The Development Plan

According to the adopted Policy Map, the site is allocated as *'Economic Development'* (DB12a - UDP Area 15 Disdsbury) and also falls within the Didsbury St James Conservation Area and the South Manchester policy area. The site is previously developed and is in an area well established for industrial/ancillary office use and therefore the principal of the development has already been established on the site.

Economic Development

As aforementioned, the site is part of an Economic Development Area, Towers Business Park. Policy CB12a (of the extant UDP) sets out that Towers Business Park is a key area within Didsbury for Economic Development and:

> *'Further business development will be permitted'… 'expansion and/or redevelopment of existing major employment sites in the area, will have regard to the need to minimise detrimental impact upon environmental quality, the character of the area, residential amenity and traffic movements'. The policy reasoning goes on to explain that the 'The council wishes to allow existing acitives to develop but retain the high envioronmental quality which makes Didsbury an attractive place to live and work.'*

Additionally, Local Plan Policy EC 2 Exisitng Employment Space supports the retention and enhancement of existing employment sites. Similarly, Chapter 6, Paragraph 85 of the NPPF also sets out that:

> *'Planning policies and decisions should help 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.'*

The external alterations proposed as part of this application are minor in scale and will enable further business development at TBP, allowing local business to invest and adapt to their changing needs, whilst having regard to the surrounding character of the area. The proposal is therefore considered to compy with UDP Policy CB12a, Local Plan Policy EC 2, and NPPF Chapter 6, Paragraph 85.

Heritage & Conservation

The site is falls within the Didsbury St James Conservation Area. UDP Policy DC 18 states that:

> *'the* Council will seek to preserve and enhance the character of designated conservation areas by carefully considering…the relationship of new structures to neighbouring buildings and spaces; the effect of major changes to the appearance of existing buildings; the desirability of retaining existing features, such as boundary walls, gardens, trees, (including *street trees); the effect of signs and advertisements'.*

Local Plan Policy EN 3 also sets out that:

> *'New developments must be designed so as to support the Council in preserving or, where possible, enhancing the historic environment, the character, setting and accessibility of areas and buildings of acknowledged importance, including scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings, registered parks and gardens, conservation areas and archaeological remains.'*

Policy EN1 Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas states that:

> *'All development in Manchester will be expected to follow the seven principles of urban design, and have regard to the strategic character area in which the development is located.'*

Additionally, NPPF Chapter 16 outlines policy in respect of the historic environment. When considering potential impacts to heritage assets, Paragraph 212 explains that:

'Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.'

Paragraph's 213 and 214 elaborate on this stating that:

'Not all elements of a Conservation Area or World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance.' (p213) and that ' Local planning authorities should assess whether the benefits of a proposal for enabling development, which would otherwise conflict with planning policies but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset, outweigh the disbenefits of departing from those policies.' (p214).As aforementioned, the proposed works are considered minor in scale, form and layout and are not considered to be a material change to the current use of the site. The impacts of the proposed works on the heritagte context of the site and Didsbury St James Conservation Area are anticipated to be negligible. The external alterations are predominantly replacement works of existing features of the building. Consequently it is considered that the proposal is in accordance with UDP Policy DC 18, Local Plan Policy EN 1 and EN 3, and NPPF Paragraphs 212, 213 and 214.

Policy DC 19 Listed Buildings sets out that:

'in determining applications for listed building consent or planning applications for development involving or having an impact on buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, the Council will have regard to the desirability of securing the retention, restoration, maintenance and continued use of such buildings and to protecting their general setting.'

The site is considered to be of adequate distance from the Grade II listed gate house (in the north east corner of the site), and the Grade II Listed Building The Shirley Institute located south of the site, and is not anticipated to impact the setting of the 2no. listed buildings. As seen on Figure 1 above, the site and the Listed Gate House are separated by Honeywell House, associated soft landscaping, mature trees and access roads. Similarly, the propsal site and The Shirley Institute are separated by 2no. car parks, mature trees and soft landscaping. Consequently, the proposal is therefore considered to accord with UDP Policy DC 19.

Summary and Conclusions

The site is located in south east Disdbury. The site is located as an 'Economic Development' area and also falls within the Didsbury St James Conservation Area and policy areas South Manchester and UDP Area 15 Didsbury.

The proposal comprises the external alterations to Scotscroft, Towers Business Park including a replacement inward opening door to bean café, glazed side panels, an additional building name sign above the existing revolving door, new frosted manifestation, treatment to the existing curtain wall, transoms and mullions.

The proposal will enable the existing employment site to invest and adapt to their changing needs, whilst having regard to the surrounding heritage context. The proposal has been designed to be in keeping with the existing building and its surroundings and it is anticipated to have a negiligbe impact on the Didsbury St James Conservation Area and 2no. listed buildings.

It is considered that the development is therefore in line with national and local policy. It supports the economic function of Towers Business Park, and seeks to protect the setting of the Didsbury St James Conservation Area and Shirley institute. We therefore respectfully request that this application is supported and Planning Permission is granted.

Yours Faithfully,



Amy Murphy

Graduate Planner