

Planning

Growth & Development

Delegated officer report for planning application

Application no.	140057/LO/2024	
Date registered valid:	17 July 2024	
Proposal:	Listed building consent for internal alterations to fifth floor.	
Address:	5th Floor Bridgewater House, 58 - 60 Whitworth Street, Manchester, M1 6LT	
Ward(s):	Piccadilly	Ward
Applicant:	Victoria College of Arts and Design	
Agent (if any):	Miss Meghan Gleeson Zerum	
Case officer:	Max Tel: 0161 219 Email: maximillian.gibson@manchester.gov.uk	Gibson 6359
Recommendation:	Approve	
Date of recommendation:	08/10/2024	

Application details

Type of application: Listed Building Consent

Development type: Listed building alteration

Date of site visit:

Standard consultations:

Printed: 22 July 2024 Expired: 12 August 2024

Neighbour notifications

No neighbour notifications have been printed and sent.

Site notice

Posted: 22 July 2024 Expired: 12 August 2024

Press advert

Published: 30 July 2024 Expired: 20 August 2024

Departure from Development Plan: No

Environmental Statement: Not required

Description of site/building

The site relates to the Grade II Listed Bridgewater House, which is an office building. The building is bounded by the Palace Theatre, Whitworth Street, a multi storey car park and the Rochdale Canal. It is located in an area of Manchester City Centre that accommodates a large number of Grade II and Grade II* former warehouses that are now used as hotels, offices and residential accommodation. The site is also within the Whitworth Street Conservation Area. The building was built in 1912 as a shipping warehouse by Harry S. Fairhurst. It is ten storeys in height including a ground floor. It has a steel frame and is clad with Sandstone Ashlar and White Glazed Terracotta with a concealed roof and is in keeping with the typical construction techniques of the Georgian Period.

Listed building: Grade II

Conservation area: Whitworth Street Conservation Area 1985

Tree Preservation Order: N/A

Description of area

The area relates to Whitworth Street West, in an area historically known as Gaythorn, in the South-West of the City Centre. The character of the area comprises many different uses, including the Palace Theatre, shops, restaurants, hotels, residential accommodation, offices, takeaways and cafés.

Description of development

The development relates to the subdivision of the 5th floor to suit a new educational occupier. This would see a large number of glazed and solid partitions across the floorplate to create classrooms and offices.

Consultations & Notification Responses

Publicity - a notice was displayed on site informing passers-by of the development. An advert was placed in the local press advertising the works as those affecting a listed building. Letters were sent to surrounding occupiers notifying them of the development. No representations have been received as a result of this publicity.

Issues

The main policies that relate to this application are SP1 (Spatial Principles), EC1 (Employment and Economic Growth in Manchester), EC2 (Existing Employment Space), Policy CC1 (Primary Economic Development Focus : City Centre and Fringe), CC9 (Design and Heritage), CC10 (A Place for Everyone), EN3 (Heritage), T1 (Sustainable Transport) and DM1 (Development Management) of the Manchester Core Strategy (2012), DC18 (Conservation Areas), DC19 (Listed Buildings) and DC26 (Development and Noise) of the Unitary Development Plan for Manchester (1995), policy JP-P2 (Heritage) of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and Section 16 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment) of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Issues

The internal refurbishments to the fourth floor relate to the requirements of its new occupier, and educational organisation. Hence, the development would see the floorplate subdivided to create the necessary classrooms, offices and ancillary areas.

The upper floors of Bridgewater House would have originally been open plan for usage as warehousing. Hence it is considered that the introduction of subdivisions across the floorplate would result in a degree of less than substantial harm through a significant alteration to the building's historic arrangement, obscuring the legibility of its original proportions and impacting the appreciation of the building's special character and appearance.

Given the development would result in less than substantial harm, as per the requirements of paragraph 208 of the NPPF, the harm must be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

Evidence submitted in support of the application states that take up of open plan office space in the building is low, with other floors marketed without success for 12 months. Therefore, the building management company is seeking alternative uses that would allow these unused spaces back into a viable economic use.

To mitigate against the harm that would be created by the proposal, there would be a significant number of glazed partitions introduced across the floorplate. The majority of the new rooms would have an area of glazing onto the corridors, to allow some visibility across the floorplate and thus allowing the space to remain somewhat legible. These are not full height, stopping at 2100mm. On the two wings of the floor facing, on the sides facing into the internal courtyard, there would be glazing between rooms, which would further increase the legibility of the space in these areas. Full and final details of these partitions are to be agreed by condition.

The existing raised access floor would be retained, as this is required to maintain the existing access arrangements such as at lift thresholds. This ensures that the proposed modern floor treatments, mainly carpets, can be used without requiring bonding to any historic flooring. Whilst it would be optimal to expose historic flooring, on balance, the retention of existing level access arrangements is considered to be of greater importance pursuant to policy CC10 of the Manchester Core Strategy (2012).

The subdivision of the floorplate has been designed to maximise the glazing and allow for legibility of the space. Partitions would, for the most part, be run along the existing grid pattern of ceiling beams to avoid awkward interfaces with windows. Some partitions would abut historic iron columns, but have been designed to avoid any permanent fixings into these features, with partitions affixed to the slab ceiling and raised access floor. The existing MEP arrangements would be reutilised, with ducting passing through the new partitions. There are existing service trays that would be reutilised, avoiding the need for new fixings points into the ceiling.

Other Legislative Requirements

Equality Act 2010

Section 149 (Public Sector Equality Duty) of the Equality Act 2010 requires due regard to the need to: Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act and; Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The Equality Duty does not impose a legal requirement to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment. Compliance with the Equality Duty involves consciously thinking about the aims of the Equality Duty as part of the process of decision-making.

Human Rights Act 1998 considerations

This application needs to be considered against the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998. Under Article 6, the applicants (and those third parties, including local residents, who have made representations) have a right to a fair hearing and to this end the local planning authority must give full consideration to their comments.

Protocol 1 Article 1, and Article 8 where appropriate, confer(s) a right of respect for a person's home, other land and business assets. In taking account of all material considerations, including Council policy as set out in the Core Strategy and saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan, the Director of Planning, Building Control & Licensing has concluded that some rights conferred by these articles on the applicant(s)/objector(s)/resident(s) and other occupiers and owners of nearby land that might be affected may be interfered with but that that interference is in accordance with the law and justified by being in the public interest and on the basis of the planning merits of the development proposal. She believes that any restriction on these rights posed by the recommendation given is proportionate to the wider benefits of and that such a decision falls within the margin of discretion afforded to the Council under the Town and Country Planning Acts.

Recommendation: Approve

Article 35 Declaration

In assessing the merits of an application officers will seek to work with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner to seeking solutions to problems arising in relation to dealing with the application.

Condition(s) to be attached to decision for approval

1) The development must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason - Required to be imposed pursuant to Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

2) The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following drawings and documents:

-Supporting Information COVER LETTER, DESIGN AND HERITAGE received by the City Council, as Local Planning Authority, on 04/06/2024

-Drawing - Proposed FLOOR PLANS, INTERNAL ELEVATIONS AND MEP SERVICES received by the City Council, as Local Planning Authority, on 20 Sep 2024

Reason - To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans. Pursuant to policies SP1 and DM1 of the Core Strategy, saved policy DC19.1 and Sections 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

3) Notwithstanding the approved details, prior to the installation of any MEP services, full and final MEP specifications and details (including scaled cross sections, floor plans, ceiling plans and elevations of the location, appearance and method of installation) shall be submitted for approval in writing by the City Council as Local Planning Authority.

The approved details shall be implemented as part of the development and completed prior to first occupation of the development.

Reason - The proposed works affect a building which is included in the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest so careful attention to building work is required to protect the character and appearance of this building in accordance with saved policy DC19.1 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester and policies SP1, EN3 and DM1 of the Core Strategy.

4) Notwithstanding the details approved under condition 2, prior to the application of any of the internal finishes listed below, material samples shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the City Council, as Local Planning Authority. This shall include the provision of product specification, physical samples and scaled drawings as appropriate of the following:

- a) floor finishes
- b) paintwork
- c) glazing
- d) light fixtures
- e) plasterwork
- f) sanitary finishes
- g) floor finishes
- h) heating goods
- i) trunking

The approved materials shall be implemented in full as part of the development.

Reason - In the interests of visual amenity, and because the proposed works affect a building which is included in the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest so careful attention to building work is required to protect the character and appearance of this building in accordance with saved policy DC19.1; of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester and policies SP1, EN3 and DM1 of the Core Strategy

5) Glazing shall be installed in accordance with the approved detail (C.Typical Glazing Details A011.3 R2). The approved details shall be implemented as part of the development.

Reason - the proposed works affect a building which is included in the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest so careful attention to building work is required to

protect the character and appearance of this building in accordance with saved policy DC19.1; of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester and policies SP1, EN3 and DM1 of the Core Strategy.

Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified

Heritage & Urban Design

Appendix 2 – Planning constraints

Article 4 Direction - City Centre PD Restriction - Class B1(a) To C3

Article 4 Direction - Removal Of PD Rights Change Of Use From Class C3 To Class C4

Aircraft Safeguarding Zone - Aircraft Safeguarding Zone - All Exceeding 90M

Coal Authority - Development Low Risk - Name: DEVELOPMENT_LOW_RISK_AREA

Conservation Area - Whitworth Street Conservation Area 1985

Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -

Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -

Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Middle) -

Area Team Boundary - Name: CENTRAL