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Our Ref: EKPS/230804/KD

Submitted via the Planning Portal

15 August 2024

FAO: Emily Booth

Dear Emily

Application for Planning and Listed Building Consent – Rooftop Canopies, Great John Street Hotel, Great John Street, Manchester, M3 4FD

On behalf of our client, THG, we are pleased to confirm an application for Planning and Listed Building Consent in relation to the aforementioned property, has today been submitted via the Planning Portal (PP-12680823). The required application fee has been paid electronically via the Planning Portal.

The submission comprises:

- Completed Application Forms, Certificates and required fee;
- Architectural Plans prepared by EPR Architects (a full schedule is included in Appendix 1);
- Design and Access Statement prepared by EPR Architects; and
- Heritage Assessment prepared by Stephen Levrant Heritage Architecture.

Background

Site and Surroundings

The Site is located on the corner of Atherton Street and Great John Street, which falls within Manchester City Centre. The Site is located within the northern section of the Castlefield Conservation Area and is adjacent to the St John Street Conservation Area.

The building is Grade II listed , with the details of the listing noting the following:

> *'School, now college of further education. Late C19, altered. Stock brick with dressings of red brick and sandstone (flat roof concealed). Roughly T-shaped plan, formed by main block parallel to street and large rear wing of almost full width. Eclectic style with some C17 Renaissance features.*

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> *Three storeys and 5 bays (2 windows per bay), symmetrical, the centre bay slightly projected, with red brick pilasters (banded at top floor), moulded brick cornice interrupted in the centre, high parapet with banded piers and iron railings, interrupted in the centre by a rectangular upstand which has a blind keyed oculus under an open pediment. Pairs of tall casement cross-windows with small panes in the top lights, square-headed at ground floor, segmental-headed at 1st floor, and square-headed with segmental relieving arches at 2nd floor. Some of the piers of the parapet are chimneys. Flat roof which formerly served as school playground. Entrances at the sides of the rear. Sides and rear have less regular fenestration, including a gabled re-entrant in the centre of the rear wall which has large tripartite windows, that at top floor with a tympanum over the centre light. Interior not inspected.'*

The building was opened in 1912 as 'The Atherton Street County School' for the Manchester Education Committee. The school later became part of the Granada TV complex, in which time it was utilised for storage and set design purposes.

In 2005, it was converted into a boutique hotel, resulting in a number of alterations to the building, including both a Ground Floor Extension and a Roof Top Extension, in addition to a large number of internal alterations. The Hotel Operated successfully for a number of years until late 2019, following which it was purchased by THG who intend to refurbish the property, and deliver a high-quality, five-star luxury boutique hotel.

Planning History

On 18 December 2020, THG gained planning permission and Listed Building Consent (Ref. 126750/FO/2020, and 126751/LO/2020) for the following works at Great John Street Hotel:

Planning Permission 126750/FO/2020:

> *"Single storey, glazed ground floor extension; external lighting; replacement rooftop extension, with associated rooftop plant and other associated works"; and*

Listed Building Consent 126751/LO/2020:

> *"External works comprising a single storey, glazed ground floor extension; external lighting; replacement rooftop extension, with associated rooftop plant; associated internal refurbishment works; and other associated works"*

The approved development was implemented with the relevant conditions discharged and work starting on Site in March 2021, however these works were paused due to rising construction costs. THG have subsequently undertaken a comprehensive review of the proposals with a Hotel Operation / Management Company now on-board, with a view to re-starting the development.

As a result of this review, a number of changes have been proposed to the original scheme to ensure the Hotel, once completed, is able to provide a five star experience to guests and is operationally functional and viable. These changes to the original scheme have being progressed through the submission of amendment applications (comprising a S73 Application to the planning permission 139994/JO/2024 and a S19 application to the listed building consent 139980/JO/2024). These applications were approved by MCC on the 8 July 2024 and are herein after referred to as the 'existing consents'.

Notwithstanding, the review of the operation of the hotel has identified a requirement for canopies to the roof terrace of the hotel, to enable this area to be utilised and deliver revenue in less favourable weather conditions. The previous hotel operation had previously utilised both a fixed canopy to the previous rooftop extension, and a series of large substantial umbrellas (as shown in **Figure 1** overleaf), however, in line with the refurbishment of the hotel, and the provision of a five star experience, it is anticipated that the retractable canopy feature to the rooftop area will offer more appropriate protection from the elements and will be more aesthetically pleasing.



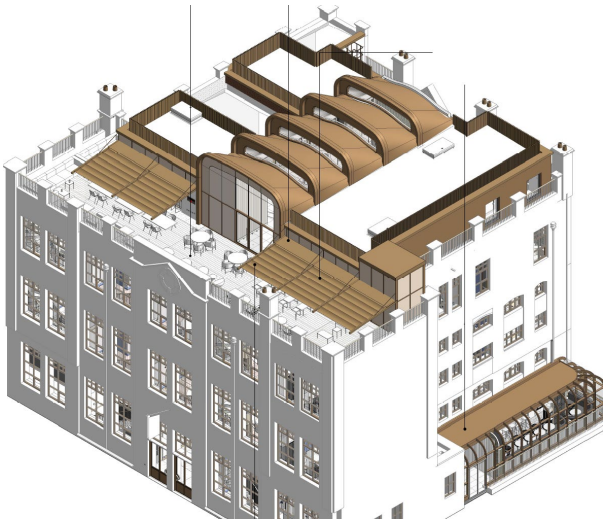
^Figure 1: Previous Hotel Operation (Taken from Google)

Scope of Application

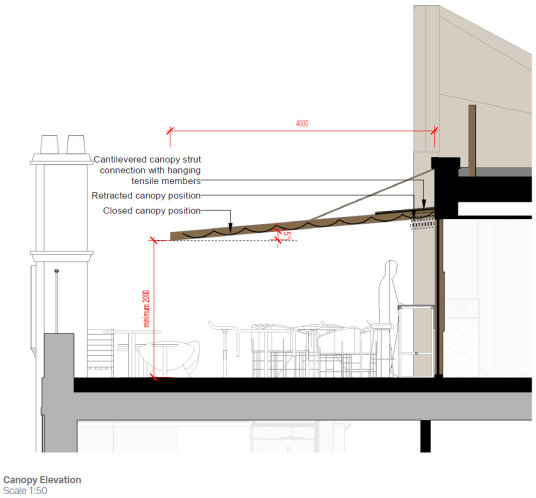
This application therefore seeks planning and listed building consent for:

> *"The installation of a retractable rooftop canopy."*

A suite of architectural plans and a Design and Access Statement has been prepared by EPR Architects and is submitted with the application, however details of the proposed retractable canopy and the basement works are included within **Figure 2 and Figure 3** below.



^ Figure 2 Proposed Canopy



^ Figure 3 Proposed Canopy

Relevant Policy Considerations

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning decisions to be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Manchester Core Strategy

The Manchester Core Strategy was adopted in July 2012 and is the key, overarching Development Plan Document ("DPD") within the Local Development Framework ("LDF"). The Core Strategy has replaced significant elements of the Manchester UDP as the document that sets out the long-term strategic policies for Manchester's future development.

The policies relevant to the Proposed Development are listed below:

- Policy CC4: Visitors, Tourism, Culture and Leisure

  Policy CC4 supports City Centre development which improves facilities for visitors. It states: *"The City Centre will be the focus for culture and leisure in the City Region. Proposals to improve the appearance, use and accessibility of all cultural and visitor attractions and associated facilities will be supported. The improvement of facilities for business visitors will also be supported."*

  Policy CC4 also focuses in on hotel development in the City Centre, stating: *"Hotels have become an increasingly important use across the City, and these will be particularly important in the City Centre. New hotel development which contributes to the quality of the City Centre hotel offer will be supported."*

- Policy CC9: Design and Heritage Design

  New buildings will need to be of the highest standard in terms of appearance and function. Development in Manchester City Centre should preserve or enhance the heritage assets that have been identified, including listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled ancient monuments. Developers must recognise the specific design challenges that must be overcome to ensure complementarity of function and form.

- Policy EN1: Design Principle and Strategic Character Areas

  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. The Site is located within the City Centre Character Area, where developers will be expected to consider the City's heritage and continue the rich pattern of activity in the core area. Wherever possible the opportunity should be realised to enhance existing and provide new areas of meaningful open space, and the maintenance and improvement of the City's permeability should be considered in all proposals.

- Policy EN3: Heritage

  Throughout the City, the Council will encourage development that complements and take advantage of the distinct historic and heritage features of its districts and neighbourhoods.

  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 listed buildings, registered parks and gardens, conservation areas and archaeological remains.

- Policy DM1: Development Management

  All developments should have regard to the following specific issues including: effects on amenity such as noise, light, air quality, road safety and traffic generation; accessibility; community safety and crime prevention; vehicular access; and green infrastructure.

Other material considerations relevant to the determination of this application include the Guide to Development in Manchester SPD, the City Centre Strategic Plan 2015-2018, the Places for Everyone Plan, the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Planning Appraisal

An assessment of the proposed development in the context of the most relevant Development Plan policies and other material considerations that have been identified is provided below.

Principle of Development

The proposed development would see the erection of a retractable canopy over the approved external seating area on the rooftop of the hotel. The rooftop area has been utilised as part of the hotel (as a restaurant, bar and function space) since 2011, and historically, moveable umbrellas have been utilised to weather-proof these areas.

As the proposal would not see any fundamental alteration to the use of the rooftop area, the principle of the use of the area has been established by the existing consent and is not for consideration as part of this application.

As such, as the proposed rooftop canopy does not alter the nature of the use of the site (including the rooftop areas), it is therefore considered that the proposal is acceptable in principle subject to the considerations as outlined below.

Residential Amenity

Given the location of the basement works, there would be no impact on residential amenity from the proposals and therefore these works are not considered any further within this section.

With regards to the retractable canopy, it is important to note that this application seeks consent for the erection of the canopy and not the siting of an external seating area, with the seating area already having been established by the historic use of the site and the subsequent existing consents for the refurbishment and replacement rooftop extension (139980/JO/2024, and 139994/JO/2024).

In line with this consent, the use of the rooftop external areas is controlled by Condition 9, with operating hours limited to between 07:00 – 22:30 Sunday to Thursday and 07.00 – 23.00 on Friday and Saturday. Amplified music is also not permitted.

With this in mind, and given the existing consent for the use of the rooftop, the location of the hotel within the City Centre, and the small stature and semi-permeable nature of the canopy proposed, it is considered that the development would have a negligible impact on neighbouring amenity and the proposed development is in accordance with Core Strategy Policy DM1, Saved Unitary Development Plan Policy DC26 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Design & Visual Amenity

The proposed canopy is a lightweight structure which protrudes from the new rooftop extension. The proposed materials consist of powder coated aluminium and fabric. The design is of a high quality and the canopy's lightweight appearance would be assured yet further by the retractable nature of its canvas roof. It is noted that the form and design of the canopy would also complement the rooftop extensions frontage and would not be visible in the streetscene.

Whilst the building is listed, and sits within the within the northern section of the Castlefield Conservation Area and is adjacent to the St John Street Conservation Area, the canopy would adjoin the new contemporary rooftop structure only (approved by the existing consents 139980/JO/2024, and 139994/JO/2024) and, as detailed within the townscape and visual assessment within the submitted Design and Access Statement, the canopy structure would be largely imperceptible from surrounding public vantage points in the street scene.

It is therefore concluded that the proposed development is of a high-quality design and would have an acceptable impact on visual amenity in accordance with Core Strategy Policies EN1 and DM1.

Impact upon Heritage Assets

Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that in considering whether to grant Listed Building Consent for any works the Local Planning Authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act relates to conservation areas and states *"In undertaking its role as a planning authority the Council should in respect to conservation areas pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area."*

As stated previously within this report, the application site lies within the northern section of the Castlefield Conservation Area and is adjacent to the St John Street Conservation Area, and the building itself is Grade II listed.

A Heritage Statement has been prepared by SLHA and is submitted with the application to ensure the proposed development is acceptable in heritage terms.

Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that in considering whether to grant Listed Building Consent for any works the Local Planning Authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act relates to conservation areas and states "In undertaking its role as a planning authority the Council should in respect to conservation areas pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area."

As stated previously within this report, the application site lies within the northern section of the Castlefield Conservation Area and is adjacent to the St John Street Conservation Area, and the building itself is Grade II listed.

A Heritage Statement has been prepared by SLHA and is submitted with the application to ensure the proposed development is acceptable in heritage terms.

In considering the proposed rooftop canopy, the Heritage Statement acknowledges that the proposed canopy will sit adjacent to the previously consented modern rooftop extension. It notes that the lack of vertical supports and their operable retraction allow for the lightweight canopies to be largely imperceptible from surrounding streets, which is aided by the narrow width of streets surrounding the building, the height of the building itself, and the set back level of the proposed canopy.

With regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest, the Heritage Statement notes that when the canopy is retracted, the character of the rooftop would remain open and could still be appreciated (in line with its historic interest as the former playground area associated with the school). The assessment concludes that the proposed canopies will therefore have a neutral impact on the character and appearance of the Castlefield Conservation Area, a neutral impact on the special interest of the Grade II listed Great John Street Hotel and no impact on St John Street Conservation Area or any surrounding heritage assets.

As such the proposal is considered to be in accordance with Core Strategy Policies CC9, EN1, EN3 and DM1, Saved Unitary Development Plan Policy DC18, Places for Everyone Plan Policy JP-P2, the National Planning Policy Framework and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Conclusions

With consideration to the assessment set out within this letter, it is concluded that the proposal would be acceptable with regard to residential amenity, visual amenity, and heritage matters. As a result, it is concluded that the proposed development wholly accords with the relevant local and national planning policy and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. On this basis we respectfully request that the application is approved without delay.

I trust the submitted information is sufficient and I look forward to receiving confirmation that the applications have been validated, however should you have any queries or require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me by email or telephone (0161 513 4284).

Yours sincerely,

K Daniels

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