

Operators Statement, The Vegetarian Society, 15 Jersey Street

The Vegetarian Society is a UK-based charity, originally formed in 1847 and operating from Manchester since 1848. We are a mission focused organisation, seeking to transform our food system for the benefit of people, animal, and the environment. We seek partnerships with the public sector, business, and communities, while delivering a number of engagement and policy campaigns, supported by a range of educational resources. Since 1968, we have been based just outside Altrincham, but we are now in the process of moving back into central Manchester, with our proposal for a new head office and teaching kitchen at Generation House, 15 Jersey Street, Ancoats.

Vision

For a kinder, healthier, and more sustainable future for every life on earth

Mission

By being the UK's leading voice for the vegetarian and vegan movement, we aim to inspire and support everyone to move towards a vegetarian and vegan lifestyle.

Our proposed new strategic long term aims are:

1. Changing Behaviour

Inspiring and supporting people to reduce their meat consumption and adopt vegetarian and vegan diets and lifestyles

2. Building Community

Supporting a mass movement of vegetarians and vegans, providing a voice for their collective ideas and desire for change

3. Driving Innovation

Championing the rapid development of alternatives to meat and other animal products

4. Expanding Choice

Transforming our food system, making vegetarian and vegan choices mainstream across society

1. *Explanation of how the Jersey Street site will be used, and the type of activities proposed*

15 Jersey Street will be the head office of The Vegetarian Society UK.

The address of the unit is 15 Jersey Street, Manchester, M4 6EZ.

The commercial unit will provide a multi-function space across two floors. A platform lift will be installed to provide access for all to the first floor. The lift will be installed external to the building (in the gap between different sections of the building) as shown on the proposed plan drawings and elevation drawings, however it will be accessed from inside the building on the ground floor and open out on to the landing on the first floor.

There are three main activities planned for the space:

1. To serve as a base for employees and guests of the organisation to work in an office environment. The majority of the space will be refurbished to create a safe, comfortable, and productive space for office work and meetings.
2. The permanent location of COOK!, The Vegetarian Society Cookery School. The cookery school offers a comprehensive range of culinary education and training programs designed to enhance cooking skills, knowledge, and techniques. These activities include: Hands-on Cooking Classes: Students actively participate in practical cooking sessions led by experienced instructors; Culinary Demonstrations: Accomplished chefs showcase their skills through live cooking demonstrations; Recipe Development; Culinary Theory and Knowledge: Alongside practical cooking sessions, the cookery schools provides theoretical instruction; Tasting events; Guest speaker events; the culinary industry to share their experiences and provide insights into professional cooking.
3. To provide a space for occasional workshops and mini-conferences, we currently envisage we could accommodate up to 50 people

2. *Employment details*

The Vegetarian Society currently employs 24 members of staff, which includes four salaried members of the cookery school, plus additional flexible-contract, and freelance staff.

3. *Details of types of courses offered/frequency*

Courses and classes include:

- Hands-on Cooking Classes: Students actively participate in practical cooking sessions led by experienced instructors; Culinary Demonstrations: Accomplished chefs showcase their skills through live cooking demonstrations; Recipe Development; Culinary Theory and Knowledge; Tasting events; Guest speaker events.
- Courses and classes run most weekends (daytime and evenings).
- Longer courses (3-5 days) run approx. 8 times per year.
- Community and bespoke sessions – ad hoc as funding permits, usually operating in the daytime on weekdays.

Attendee numbers:

- Hands-on cooking classes- up to 18 participants

- Culinary demonstrations, tasting events, and guest speaker events– up to 40 attendees
- Culinary Theory classes – up to 30 participants
- Community workshops- up to 25 attendees

For most classes we expect there to typically be 18 customers attending, as most sessions will be our paid for hands-on classes running throughout the week. Other classes with less attendees will be less frequent.

4. *Details of cooking facilities and how these would operate alongside the office use*

Training Kitchen and Preparation Areas

- 10 Cooking stations each equipped with work area, four-zone domestic induction hob, and electricity supply for small equipment
- Two x 5 grid convection ovens
- Refrigeration – a mix of upright refrigerators and upright freezers
- Under counter dishwasher

The cookery school training kitchen and preparation kitchen will be located on the first floor. Access to the cookery school will be granted through the main doors in the building on the ground floor, from where attendees will be guided towards the designated cookery school area via stairs or a platform lift.

There will be no deep frying or cooking of meat or fish. The majority of our teaching workshops are plant-based and employ food preparation, hob based and oven cooking, no different to food preparation and cooking in a domestic kitchen.

The teaching kitchen benefits from high ceilings and opening windows on both sides – top opening windows on the Henry Street side and traditional opening windows on the courtyard side. As such, no significant odour extraction plant or equipment is required for the proposed use. 6.no Ventilation units to allow air circulation are shown on the elevations. These units are similar to domestic air extraction fans. These will be located within two of the external walls – neither of which face on to the street. These units can move air in and out of the teaching kitchen – providing for circulation of air. A specification for these fans has been provided. Given their domestic nature, they will not result in any noise or odour related issues. The proposed ventilation grills on the external walls will be sprayed in a terracotta colour to blend with the existing brickwork.

In addition to this there will be an electric fume filtration canopy fitted above the 2 convection ovens to prevent any build up of odour from longer cooking times. This removes odour from the air before it is recirculated. It does not require externally venting.

The office space will be fitted out with a range of desks and informal seating.

We propose fitting out the unit in two stages

Stage 1 – staff will move into the building using the site as a working office, and we will proceed to fit out the office with desks and chairs

Stage 2 – installation of the teaching kitchen, ready for opening in October 2024

The fitting of the cookery school is expected to take place across 4-6 weeks August/September 2024.

Typical office staff hours will be anytime between 07.00 and 19.00 seven days a week, but staff may be required to work outside these hours by exception.

Level access is available into the building and this will be retained . A platform lift will be installed external to the building but access to and from the lift will be within the building on the ground and first floors. This will allow customers who mobility is impaired to have full access to the whole building. A specification for the lift is enclosed and the location is shown on the proposed plan and elevation drawings.

The building is located in a highly accessible location for public transport. Customers will be expected to use public transport to attend the school and we will make it clear to customers that parking is not available on the site. We are less than 10 minute walk from Piccadilly Gardens and associated bus services. We are a 15-minute walk from both Manchester Piccadilly Station and Victoria Station. Bus stops are available on Jersey Street itself. We intend to have some limited parking available for customers at the front of the site within our own curtilage, for cookery school customers who request parking, for instance those with mobility issues, or blue badge holders.

5. *How waste and servicing will take place – frequency and type of deliveries, where waste will be stored before collection and when and how it will be collected.*

A bin store will be erected in the rear courtyard at Generation House to house containers for residual waste and mixed waste recycling, the location is shown on the proposed plan drawing

The courtyard benefits from steel lockable gates and access to the bin store area itself will be via a separate lockable gate. The courtyard and bin store can be directly accessed from Cotton Street and the waste company will have the combination to the courtyard lock.

Once the teaching kitchen is operational five bins will be installed - all 240l wheelie bins. Two for residual, one for dry mixed recycling, one for glass and one for food waste. Each will be collected on a fortnightly basis by Fresh Start Waste Company. Please refer to the enclosed Waste Pro Forma for further details.

Food for use in the teaching kitchen, is ordered from high street supermarkets and delivered in vans typically employed for domestic supermarket food delivery. Typically deliveries are ordered once a week. The deliveries will be made via the main entrance and vans will be directed to park temporarily on Cotton Street for unloading. We anticipate unloading will take no longer than 10 minutes.

6. *Cycle storage*

Staff will be encouraged to use public transport when commuting to the office. We will have storage for up to five bikes inside the office underneath the stairwell, providing accessible and safe storage within the building

7. General times of operation (and of external space)

Cookery School – seven days a week

Staff on site between 8am-11.30pm.

Classes between 9am-10.30pm.

Office Working – five days a week (Monday to Friday)

Between 8am-7pm.

External Area (seven days a week)

Between 9am-10pm – for use by cookery school customers and staff, plus for occasional events.

7. External Courtyard Space

At the moment the external courtyard space is used as storage and carparking. We aim to tidy up this space and use it for an informal external break out area where staff, invited guests and attendees of the cookery school, can take breaks, and foster social interactions.

The area will be converted into an urban garden, dressed with plants and we will include some bench style tables, seating and cover to provide for use in all weathers. The area has lockable gates which will be closed during the day and secured at the end of each working day.