

Re: No. 6-12 Fountain Street, Manchester

This statement has been prepared to accompany an advertisement for advertisement consent and planning permission for signage and alterations at No. 6-12 Fountain Street. The building is not listed. It is in the Upper King Street Conservation Area. The nearest listed building is the former Debenhams Store on the corner of High Street and Market Street (listed at Grade II).

The key legislative test to consider is: -

- Whether the development preserves or enhances the special architectural or historic interest of the character or appearance of the conservation area

In assessing whether there is any harm, there are two aspects to consider for this site: -

1. Paragraph 206 states that “Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (in this case, the Upper King Street Conservation Area) (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.
2. Paragraph 208. advocates that “Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.” (the impact on this part of the conservation area)

No 6-12 Fountain Street is a four storey building, built c1880. It replaced Cleaveland Buildings on the Ordnance Survey Map of 1849, published 1851. It appears to have been built for commercial purposes. It appears to be of rectangular plan, in a Renaissance architectural style, sharing several architectural characteristics of other buildings in the street that were built between the 19th and early 20th century. The building’s architectural style is classically derived, with a rusticated ground floor, quoins that rise from ground floor to parapet, and the windows expressed in pairs with pediments to the outer windows. The ground floor is contemporary, with large, glazed openings. The building is one of several commercial buildings built at roughly the same time, and the street forms part of a tightly grained development pattern within a grid iron street pattern, a secondary street in terms of street hierarchy.

The building’s contribution to the conservation area:

- This is a commercial building that forms part of the established historic fabric of Fountain Street, where its ground and first floor have been detrimentally altered in the late 20th and early 21st century.
- The designed primary view is from Fountain Street but its location means that it is generally seen in kinetic views along the street, because of the narrow width of the street and the size of frontage.
- It is not understood to be the work of a particular architect or designer of regional or local note.
- It does not have landmark quality.
- It is not associated with a designed landscape, but with the incremental and rapid development of Manchester’s commercial core in the later 19th century onwards.
- It illustrates the development of the plot from the later 19th century onwards.
- It reflects other elements in the conservation area in age, style, materials form, or other characteristics.
- It contributes to the quality of recognisable spaces, in this case the spatial character of the plots within the conservation area.
- It is not known if it has historic associations with local people or past events.

Taken from Historic England Advice Note 1 (second Edition): Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management

The building (formerly operating as Pizza Hut) presently displays an oversized rustic timber fascia to all ground floor window apertures, which detracts from the building and its setting within this part of the conservation area. The fascia creates a squat and discordant frontage, which is at odds with the character of the frontage. The first floor has several painted and louvred shuttered windows which clearly detract from the property.

The proposal is for three no. new fully glazed shopfronts, new first floor windows and advertisements applied behind the shopfront's glazing to either side of the central entrance. There are many positive changes to the existing building. The plans have been discussed at pre-application stage with the Council, which is broadly supportive of the proposals.

The plans propose the following: -

- Painting the building. We understand that this can be done without planning permission under Schedule 2, Part 2, Class C of the GDPO 2015. If this is not the case, please direct to the policy. We can also point to other buildings that have been painted within the conservation area.
- The main sign to the façade will be in the middle and will be a 3D sign fixed onto the masonry that is a Backlit Channel Letter, powder coated in matt black with cool white (6000k) led back lighting through a 15mm acrylic. The Council confirmed that the fascia signage proposed is an improvement compared to that previously proposed.

There are a substantive number of examples of built up letter signs within the conservation area, particularly along the frontage to Market Street. There are signs on comparable buildings in terms of their historic value, albeit of different styles.

We confirm that the sign is to remain in the location it is currently proposed, details regarding its method of fixing to the building will have to be shown on scaled plans. The LPA request that fixing points are kept to a minimum and are situated in mortar rather than stonework. This is confirmed.

- A single hanging sign. We note that this is an historic building and that one would expect to see vertical hanging signage. The Council state that the projecting signage should be confined to fascia height, have a slim width of no more than 30mm and be confined to a single sign. The location and width of this has now been agreed upon and is like others in the area. Please refer to Shop front Signage - LED double sided projecting sign in powder coated stainless steel with fret cut illuminated face in cool white 6000k. Mounted using 200mm steel brackets powder coated to match. Please refer to plans and elevations for details.

We note that Policy DC14. Shop Fronts And Related Signs apply and we confirm that this complies with this policy. The proposals are in keeping with the character of the building and adjoining buildings, of adjoining shopfronts, where appropriate, and of the area within which the premises are located, including listed buildings within the vicinity.

We note that interpretation is down to the specifics of the building, site context and surrounding context. In this context, No. 6-12 Fountain Street is close to the junction of Fountain Street and Market Street. The issue is whether it preserves the character and appearance of this part of the conservation area, and the effect of the proposed advertisement on visual amenity.

The hanging signage is proportionate to the building façade of No's 6-12 Fountain Street. In terms of scale, size and massing this would not be an overwhelming feature, particularly when assessing views up Fountain Street to Market Street, where it will be seen within the context of hanging and linear signage. It would not be dominant, visually obtrusive or out of keeping with the street scene and townscape, in views travelling in this direction and from locations around the Market Street junction. It is the same proportions, scale and location as others in the street. Notably Black Sheep Café, a listed building on the junction of Fountain Street and Spring Gardens, which approved hanging sign is slightly thicker than the one proposed. It would preserve the character or appearance of the conservation area.

It should be noted that 'amenity' is not defined exhaustively within the Regulations, but relevant factors include the characteristics of the locality including any features of historic, architectural or cultural interest. The NPPF PPG advises that in assessing amenity, the local planning authority should consider whether the advertisement is in scale and in keeping with locally important scenic, historic, architectural or cultural features.



View of Fountain Street looking north.

- Glazed shopfront -The Council supports this. They state that new glazing would represent an improvement in the appearance of the property, subject to the glazing being recessed to give the property more visual interest, whilst also having visual harmony with the windows above. The proposed glazing will have the same recessed reveal to maintain this relationship, and will create an appropriate depth and shadow to enliven the frontage. The shopfront is to be positioned 100mm below the existing masonry. The resulting gap is to be sealed, finished with render on render board, and painted to match the building colour. The render and paintwork are consistent with the facade to maintain visual continuity.
- Frame-less windows for the bottom floor. Automatic doors using a seamless glass model. The glass panels include the logo. The Council has concerns over the front door which are proposed to be full height as shown on the plans, which in their view prevents the possibility of fascia

signage being located behind the glass. We note that there are several examples within the city centre where fully glazed high doors can be incorporated. The test is whether the proposal preserves the character and appearance of this part of the conservation area, and as can be seen from the many examples, this proposal is appropriate to both the building and the context in which it is located. Because the fascia is quite dominant horizontally, breaking down the door proportions and in effect creating a second 'glazed' fascia will result in an underwhelming entrance, making the proportions of the ground floor squat, diminishing the principal, centrally positioned entrance point. In this context, as an historic and classically derived building with strong architectural features, it is not considered to be an appropriate design solution.

- There will be up-lighting across 4 points of the front of the building at first floor level, which is replicated at ground floor level. There are two lighting types – the first floor is an adjustable projector, with cabling hidden at sill level. The ground floor lights are 6 no. wall mounted up/downlighters. We respectfully point out that Primark have many uplighters all around the building adjacent to the conservation area so any impact relating to our client's scheme is going to be much less.

There are existing uplighters on No. 6-12 Fountain Street. These are visible in Streetview in 2008. The uplighters proposed will allow for spot lights rather than diffused lighting, highlighting the voids in between the windows to create a series of regular light columns, which adds another aesthetic dimension at night time, and further amplifies the classically derived appearance of the building in a carefully controlled manner. It enhances its key architectural features and presence by distributing the light between narrow solid areas, as the windows are symmetrically balanced. The colour will illuminate the building in a manner that directs as much light as possible onto the façade without glare and light spill. The untidy electricals will be made good and removed, new will be hidden as identified above.

It is our client's preference that using a soft warm colour would allow for a good and sensitive contrast between day time and night time use, using a colour that is reflective of the warm and limited colour palette of nearby buildings within the conservation area, but appreciated within a night time economy as well as the daytime.

As the first floor is proposed to be light in colour, the reflectivity of the light will be stronger, and as such we feel that 4 uplighters will produce the necessary effect without it being overpowering. The colour of the upper floors will allow for a warm ambient colour temperature of the lamps used in the scheme and the spread is direct and does not dissipate the further it travels up the building.

Please refer to the lighting drawings, lighting scheme, and product datasheets, which expands on this.

- The ground floor door on the right will be retained in its initial position. It is a metal door painted to match the colour of the building. This is in accordance with the Council comments that this doorway should remain recessed. It is a fire exit.
- First floor windows: Our client is keen to improve the first floor elevation, which at present looks secondary in nature, and looks more appropriate to the rear of the building rather than the front. The present windows and their alteration deadens the frontage. First floor windows have been altered and are unsightly, painted with louvre grills inserted. The second and third floor windows are in uPVC, inserted at an unknown date, and not by our client. The proposal is to make the

first floor more active and more in keeping with the building. This will be achieved by removing damaged modern, painted casements windows with louvre grills. New double glazed, timber windows are to be inserted. They are to be one fixed pane, of which an example exists to the first floor. In this instance fully glazed apertures will create an active first floor and will harmonise with the ground floor and will be intermediary in design between ground and second floor. The proposal is a small and positive improvement to the existing appearance.

- All ducting and ventilation is to the rear of the building and will have no visual impact on the conservation area. Again, this is an improvement on the existing.

To conclude, we feel that these changes are relatively minor and will enhance this building. They are not considered to be harmful. The street is secondary in character, and it is vital that the signage is used as its purpose is intended, to draw people off Market Street.

The combined changes will preserve the character of the conservation area and will enhance the character of this building within this part of the conservation area. The weight to be attached to the cumulative effect should be balanced. This the scheme is in accordance with those in the NPPF, and should the Council find harm we would respectfully point out public benefits in the reuse of this dilapidated building. The proposals overall will better revealing the building's significance.

Planning assessment

The alteration and extension of the building is acceptable if legislative and policy tests are applied. Whilst there may be minor neutral heritage impacts, there are others that are positive, and the proposals are not harmful. There are also public benefits of the proposal both in the reuse of a vacant historic building and the sensitive proposed changes that illuminate and are respectful of historic features and the creation of active frontages will preserve and enhance this part of the conservation area in accordance with national and local policy.

Yours sincerely,

For and on behalf of Henderson Heritage Ltd,



For and on behalf of Henderson Heritage
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