

## Planning

## Growth & Development

### Delegated officer report for planning application

**Application no.** 139311/LO/2024

**Date registered valid:** 9 April 2024

**Proposal:** Listed building consent for refurbishment of lower ground floor offices

**Address:** John Owens Building, University Of Manchester, Oxford Road,  
Manchester, M13 9PL

**Ward(s):** Hulme Ward

**Applicant:** Mr Matt Ellmore University of Manchester

**Agent (if any):** Halliday Meecham

**Case officer:** Michael Pearson  
Tel: 0161 219 2735  
Email: michael.pearson@manchester.gov.uk

**Recommendation:** Approve

**Date of recommendation:** 03/06/2024

## Application details

**Type of application:** Listed Building Consent

**Development type:** Listed building alteration

**Date of site visit:**

### Standard consultations:

Printed: 12 April 2024      Expired: 3 May 2024

### Neighbour notifications

No neighbour notifications have been printed and sent.

### Site notice

Posted: 18 April 2024      Expired: 10 May 2024

### Press advert

Published: 23 April 2024      Expired: 7 May 2024

**Departure from Development Plan:** No

**Environmental Statement:** Not required

## Description of site/building

The application relates to the lower ground floor office space of the Grade II listed John Owens Building. The building dates from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and features a brilliantly ornate gothic revival façade completed in sandstone. Internally, the lower ground floor has been segregated into various office rooms that feature insensitive M&E services in the form of plastic dados and trays that detract from the significance of the space.

**Listed building:** Grade II\*

**Conservation area:** Not applicable

**Tree Preservation Order:** Not applicable

## Description of area

The application site sits at the heart of the University of Manchester Campus to the south of the City Centre. Neighbouring development which forms the historic core of the university is characterised by a high number of Grade II listed buildings in varying educational with ancillary offices uses (Class F1(a)). The Grade II\* Whitworth Building is located to the east of the site. Areas of green space in the form of the Old Quadrangle and Alan Gilbert Square lie to the east and south of the application site.

## Description of development

The application seeks listed building consent for the refurbishment of the site's lower ground floor offices. These works include the removal of unsympathetic power conduit units, trunking, dados and partitions. In their place more sympathetic metallic dado and trunking would be introduced in

a constrained capacity, with new data outlet WiFi units installed to improve internet access within the space. Where necessary old penetrations and decorative coving would be made good.

## **Planning History**

A high number of applications are on record for the application site, the most relevant of which are shown below:

139419/LO/2024 - Listed Building Consent for installation of new electrical equipment – Approved April 2024.

138001/LO/2023 - Listed Building Consent for the installation of Wi-fi equipment and associated works – Approved December 2023.

123751/LO/2019 - LISTED BUILDING CONSENT for internal alterations to facilitate the upgrading of existing doors, installation of new fire detection equipment and replacement of 2 no. automatic doors – Approved July 2019.

104704/LO/2014/C1 - LISTED BUILDING CONSENT Installation of Wi-Fi equipment throughout the John Owens building – Approved March 2014.

## **Consultations & Notification Responses**

Publicity: None received.

## **Policy**

The Manchester Core Strategy – Development Plan Document 2012-2027 (“the Core Strategy”) was adopted by the City Council on the 11th of July 2012:

- Policy SP1 – Spatial Principles
- Policy EC2 – Existing Employment Space
- Policy EC3 – The Regional Centre
- Policy CC1 – Primary Economic Development Focus: City Centre and Fringe
- Policy CC9 – Design and Heritage
- Policy EN3 – Heritage
- Policy DM1 – Development Management

Saved Unitary Development Plan for Manchester – The following saved UDP Policies are of relevance to this application:

- Policy DC19 – Listed Buildings

The Places for Everyone Plan – Joint Development Plan Document, for nine of the 10 boroughs which make up Greater Manchester adopted on 21st of March 2024:

- Policy JP-Strat2 – City Centre
- Policy JP-P2 – Heritage

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- Chapter 16 – Conserving the Historic Environment

## **Other Legislative Requirements**

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (LBCA Act) 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 66 of the LBCA Act requires the local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings. This requires more than a simple balancing exercise and considerable importance and weight should be given to the desirability of preserving the setting.

## **Issues**

### Impact upon the Heritage Asset

The application site is a Grade II\* listed building noted for its decorative façade and historic research function. The office space subject to the proposal features high ceilings, decorative columns and arches, as well as timber windows. As previously noted within this report however, the application site is also home to unsympathetic service housing in the form of plastic dados and trunking. Within the space high level metal conduits also feature which have punctured historic walls and coving, leaving an untidy finish which detracts from the significance of the listed building.

The proposed works seek to rationalise the services and improve the appearance of the lower ground floor offices by removing unsympathetic service housing and modern partitions. The works would see horizontal and vertical dados, a glazed partition and false ceilings removed. In their place more sympathetic metal conduits would be introduced in select locations at a high level.

An existing high level conduit that runs through rooms LG.10, LG.11 and LG.12 would be removed and repair works are proposed for where it has run through historic walls and coving. A repair methodology for such works has accompanied the submission, subject to a condition that would require the development to be carried out in accordance with said document, this element of the proposal is considered to be acceptable.

It is noted that some existing dados would be retained and that new metal conduits would be introduced. On balance however, the proposal would see the rationalisation of the services within this part of the John Owens Building which is considered to be a clear improvement in comparison to the existing arrangement, which in turn would see a small amount of public benefit achieved.

In light of the above, the proposal would meet the statutory test to preserve as put forward under Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and as such is in accordance with policies SP1, EC2, EC3, CC1, CC9, EN3 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy (2012), saved policy DC19.1 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester (1995), Places for Everyone Plan Policies JP-Strat2 and JP-P2 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

### Conclusion

In light of the above and subject to appropriate planning condition, the proposal has been found to be acceptable and have a minimal impact on the historical significance of the Grade II listed building in accordance with policies SP1, EC2, EC3, CC1, CC9, EN3 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy (2012), saved policy DC19.1 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester (1995), Places for Everyone Plan Policies JP-Strat2 and JP-P2, the National

Planning Policy Framework and Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. On this basis permission is recommended for approval.

### **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**

Officers have worked with the applicant/agent in a positive and proactive manner in determining this application by assessing the proposal against relevant planning policies and all material considerations, identifying matters of concern with the proposal and discussing those with the applicant/agent. In this instance negotiation has been able to successfully resolve the identified concerns and issues.

#### **Condition(s) to be attached to decision for approval OR Reasons for recommendation to refuse**

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:

- o 5668-HMA-JO-XX-DR-A-0001 Revision P01: John Owens Location Plan
- o 5668-HMA-JO-XX-DR-A-0002 Revision P01: John Owens Site Plan as Existing
- o 5668-HMA-JO-ZZ-DR-A-0102 Revision P11: John Owens B1 as Proposed (Received 30/05/2024)
- o 5668-HMA-JO-ZZ-DR-A-0103 Revision P02: John Owens B1 Ceilings (Received 30/05/2024)
- o 5668-HMA-JO-ZZ-DR-A-0104 Revision P01: John Owens B1 Room Elevations Sheet 1 (Received 30/05/2024)
- o 5668-HMA-JO-ZZ-DR-A-0105 Revision P01: John Owens B1 Room Elevations Sheet 2 (Received 30/05/2024)
- o 0406198-HLEA-01-B1-DR-U-001 Revision C02: MEP Reconfigurations John Owens Building (Received 31/05/2024)
- o 0406198-HLE-XX-XX-GA-E-708001 Revision v1.0: John Owens B1 Electrical Services Lighting Strategy
- o Small Plaster Cornice Repair Methodology (Prepared by Halestone; Received 01/06/2024)

Stamped as received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on 09/04/2024 unless stated otherwise.

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.

3) The development shall proceed in accordance with the submitted Small Plaster Cornice Repair Methodology (Prepared by Halestone; Received 01/06/2024).

Reason - In the interests of preserving and protecting the historic character and appearance of the listed building in accordance with policies CC9 and EN3 of the Core Strategy, saved policy DC19.1 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester and the National Planning Policy Framework.

## **Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified**

Heritage & Urban Design  
Historic England (North West)

## **Appendix 2 – Planning constraints**

Article 4 Direction - Removal Of PD Rights Change Of Use From Class C3 To Class C4  
Article 4 Direction - City Centre PD Restriction - Class B1(a) To C3  
Aircraft Safeguarding Zone - Aircraft Safeguarding Zone - All Exceeding 90M  
Coal Authority - Development Low Risk - Name: DEVELOPMENT\_LOW\_RISK\_AREA  
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -  
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -  
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -  
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Middle) -  
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Middle) -  
Area Team Boundary - Name: CENTRAL