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Vegetarian Society – Cover Letter



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Submitted via Planning Portal Reference : PP-13015557

Dear Sir / Madam,

The Vegetarian Society, Armitage House, 15 & 17-19 Jersey Street, Manchester

Change of use from Office (Use Class E) to a Vegetarian Cookery School and associated Office (Sui Generis)

Introduction

We write on behalf of our client The Vegetarian Society, to apply for formal planning permission for the change of use 15 & 17-19 Jersey Street, Manchester (known as Generation House). . .

The proposed description of development is:

Change of use from Office (Use Class E) to a vegetarian cookery school and associated office (Sui Generis).

Application Documents

The application consists of the following documents:

- Application Forms and Ownership Certificates
- Covering Letter – Savills
- Site Location Plan – Scale 1:1250
- Design and Operator's Statement – The Applicant (The Vegetarian Society)
- Existing Ground Floor Plan - 67627MCLS-02
- Existing First Floor Plan - 67627MCLS-03
- Proposed Ground-Floor 67627MCLS-06
- Proposed First-Floor 67627MCLS-05
- Cookery School Arrangement Plan CKP-24-0028-00C
- Proposed Fan Locations (A1) CKP-24-0028-01
- Systemair ES12W Wall Fan Systemair Specification
- Completed GD04_Waste_Storage_and_Collection_Guidance_for_New_Developments Pro Forma

A payment to cover the application fee of £462 and administration fee of £64 has been paid via the Planning Portal.

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Generation House

The application site is located on Jersey Steet. Cotton Street runs to the immediate north and Henry Street is immediately to the south. The building, which comprises 15 Jersey Street and nos 17-19 Jersey Street is presently in use as offices.

15 Jersey Street is double height a former substation building. It was constructed in the early 20th century with attractive features in the solid brick elevations. 17-19 Jersey Street comprises two storey former semi-detached cottages. They were constructed with brick elevations and double pitched, slate covered roofs. The two buildings are connected via a glazed link. Together, the buildings are known as Generation House.

The building benefits from rear courtyard that provides access, refuse storage, cycle storage and space for car parking associated with the existing office use (accessed from Cotton Street). There is also existing off street space for car parking immediately in front of the building along Jersey Street.

To the immediate south east of Generation House is a mixed-use development which is six storeys in height (McConnell Building). This comprises of a commercial restaurant space at ground floor level and residential apartments above. To the immediate north west of the site is another mixed-use development which is five storeys in height, the building comprises of a car park, a commercial restaurant space and residential apartments above (Fairburn Building).

The site located in the Ancoats Conservation Area. None of the buildings are Listed. The Ancoats area has been subject to significant regeneration in recent years, and the area now comprises a mix of residential and commercial uses.

The site is located in close proximity to Manchester City Centre. Both Piccadilly Gardens and Piccadilly Railway Station are located approximately 0.6 miles away (13 minutes' walk). Both offer excellent public transport connections through a variety of options across the North West and further afield.

Level access into the building is available from the main entrance of the building from Jersey Street.

Planning History

The key planning approvals in relation to the building, specifically the ground floor commercial area, are set out below.

LPA Reference	Description of Development	Status / Date
069200/FO/2003/N1	Conversion of vacant pair of semi-detached houses to office use (Class B1). Associated car parking to rear	Approved 2003
107370/FO/2014/N1	Refurbishment and change of use of 2 no. cottage dwellings (Use Class C3) and substation to Use Class B1 office accommodation, together with elevational alterations, new boundary treatment, 3 no. new parking spaces and associated works	Approved 2015

The Applicant

The applicant is The Vegetarian Society, a UK based charity formed in 1847, operating from Manchester since 1848. The organisation has been based outside Altrincham since 1968 but they now wish to relocate the head office and teaching kitchen into Manchester city centre. The accessible location and previous use(s) of building align with the requirements of The Vegetarian Society.

Proposals

The application seeks a change of use of Generation House from its current use as offices to a Sui Generis use comprising part office / part vegetarian cookery school.

Whilst the proposed office element required by The Vegetarian Society is in line with the existing use of the building (Class E Office), the addition of the cookery teaching element results in the overall use falling under a Sui Generis use and therefore a change of use is required.

There are change of use therefore comprises a mix of the following two elements:

1. **Office** - Relocation of The Vegetarian Society offices, providing office space for employees relocating from existing Altrincham offices
2. **Cookery School** - Relocation of The Vegetarian Society Cookery School from existing Altrincham location providing a teaching kitchen

Office Use

The office element will serve as a base for employees and guests of the organisation to work in an office environment. The existing space was last used as offices, so the transition of part of the area to an office space will ensure minimal intervention.

The Vegetarian Society currently employs 24 members of staff, including 4 salaried members of the cookery school plus additional flexible contract and freelance staff. All members of staff will be relocating to the new office space, following the closure of the Altrincham location.

- Office Working – open five days a week (Monday to Friday)
- Between 8am-7pm.

Cookery School Use

The cookery school element is part of The Vegetarian Society's existing offer, which they wish to continue with when they relocate to a new office space. The cookery school will operate in part of the building, alongside the offices and will offer educational classes which led by an instructor.

There are a number of strands to the cookery school, including teaching classes, workshops and demonstrations. The number of attendees will depend on the type of cooking class. The majority of classes will host 18 attendees, as most sessions will be paid for 'hands on' classes running throughout the week. Other classes with less attendees will be less frequent. Further information in relation to the type of classes, length and capacity is set out in the table below.

Cookery Class	Information
Hands on Cookery Class:	Courses and classes run most weekends (daytime and evenings).
Longer Courses	3-5 day courses, approximately 8 times a year
Community and Bespoke Sessions	Ad hoc as funding permits, usually operating in the daytime on weekdays.
Culinary Demonstrations, Tasting Events, Guest Speaker Events	
Culinary Theory Classes	

The classes will be infrequent and there will be a limit to the timings of the class – ensuring they take place in sociable hours and do not impact on residential amenity.

- Cookery School – open seven days a week
- Staff on site between 8am-11.30pm.
- Classes between 9am-10.30pm.

The change of use seeks to accommodate ten cooking stations which will be separated from the office area.

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.

Other than the installation of these fans, no other external alterations are sought as part of this application.

A bin store will be erected in the rear courtyard at Generation House to house containers for residual waste and mixed waste recycling. The courtyard benefits from steel lockable gates. 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.

Planning Policy

Section 38(6) of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act requires that all planning applications are determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Development Plan for Manchester comprises the Core Strategy that was adopted on 11 July 2012 together with the saved policies from the Manchester UDP and the Proposals Map. The adopted Manchester Core Strategy sets out the City Council's Vision for Manchester to 2026.

The Strategy identifies the Site as falling within the 'City Centre'. Key policies relevant to the site are as follows:

Policy	Description
Policy SP1 Spatial Principles	Details the key spatial principles which will guide the strategic development of Manchester to 2027. The policy states that the Regional Centre of Manchester will be the focus for economic and commercial development, retail, leisure and cultural activity, alongside high quality city living.
Policy EC1 Employment and Economic Growth in Manchester	Priorities for ensuring continued economic growth include demonstrating that employment generating development has fully considered opportunities to provide

	jobs for local people, through construction or use; and ensuring the continued social, economic and environmental regeneration of the City.
Policy EC2 Existing Employment Space	The Council will seek to retain and enhance existing employment space and sites.
Policy EC3 Regional Centre	States that within the development for employment generating uses including offices and other commercial development will be encouraged. Office developments will be appropriate providing that they are in locations which are well connected by sustainable transport to both the city centre and residential areas. Housing will also be an appropriate use within the Regional Centre, although this should complement the development of mixed use employment areas. Subject to site and location details, the Regional Centre will generally be a location where higher density residential development is appropriate.
Policy EN1 Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas	All development in Manchester will be expected to follow the seven principles of urban design (character, continuity and enclosure, public realm, ease of movement, legibility, adaptability and diversity) and have regard to the strategic character area in which the development is located.
Policy CC1 Manchester City Centre	The city centre is a strategic economic location and focus of employment growth in the City and City Region. Within the city centre and the fringe a variety of high quality accommodation types, sizes and foot-plates will be encouraged to boost investment by local, national and international businesses. The city centre and fringe will be considered a suitable location for the consideration of high density buildings and commercially led mixed use schemes. The policy states that “Developments which lead to the more intensive use of employment land (in terms of floorspace provided) will be supported”.
Policy CC4 Visitors – Tourism, Culture and Leisure	Policy CC4 posits a focus on the City Centre as a hub for culture and leisure in the City Region. As such, proposals which improve the appearance, use and accessibility of all cultural and visitor attractions and associated facilities will be supported.
Policy CC9 Design and Heritage	Development in Manchester City Centre should preserve or enhance the heritage assets that have been identified, including listed buildings and conservation areas. The Council will support high density and mixed use development in the City Centre, but developers must recognise the specific design challenges that must be overcome to ensure complementarity of function and form. New development must support the range of uses the Council expects in the City Centre and contribute to a coherent and integrated physical environment.
Policy CC10 A Place for Everyone	The City Centre will develop as a location which appeals to a wide range of residents and visitors. Development which promotes this objective will be supported, particularly through increasing the diversity of activity in the City Centre and high standards of accessibility to buildings and across spaces.

Policy DM1 Development Management	All development should have regard to the specific issues including: effects on amenity such as noise, privacy, light, air quality, road safety and traffic generation; accessibility; community safety and crime prevention; vehicular access; and, green infrastructure.
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Planning Context

Manchester City Centre is a strategic economic location and focus of employment growth in the City and City Region (as identified within Manchester's adopted Core Strategy, 2016). The Core Strategy confirms that in the City Centre and the fringe a variety of high quality accommodation types, sizes and foot-plates will be encouraged to boost investment by local, national and international businesses. The City Centre and fringe will be considered a suitable location for the consideration of high density buildings and commercially led mixed use schemes.

The proposed changes are considered to be acceptable and accord with the objectives of Core Strategy EC1 and EC3, in that they will seek to complement the initial proposed use for this part of the building – remaining in a commercial use, in line with previous uses for the building – office use and food and drink. However, the proposed cookery teaching element is less intense than a café or restaurant use would be, in that the use is infrequent and small scale, operating in line with more sociable hours.

Core Strategy Policy EC2 protects employment use unless it can be demonstrated that the existing use is unviable. However, in this case, we believe that this policy does not apply as the proposed use remains an employment generating use. This is demonstrated by the submitted Operators Statement which sets out the proposed use of the space:

As per the submitted plans, the majority of the space within the building (circa 70%) will remain in office use, with the remaining third used for teaching cookery (which again generates employment). As such, the loss of office space is not considered contrary to the aims of Policy EC2 of the Manchester Core Strategy.

Should the Society decide to vacate the space, it could easily be returned to an office type use again. Given the above, the existing vacant employment space in this case is not being lost to non-employment use.

Finally, given the minimal external alterations proposed, the proposed change of use would have no material impact on the character and appearance of the Ancoats Conservation Area.

Conclusion

This proposal seeks to change the use of Generation House to facilitate the Vegetarian Society occupying a city centre office space location, with teaching space for vegetarian cookery classes. The proposals create a high quality use which celebrates and enhances the unique details of the building.

The change of use will continue to fulfil the building's economic contribution to the City, in line with adopted planning and regeneration policy. The proposed development will contribute to the economic, social and environmental improvement of the site.

We look forward to working with the local planning authority on the formal assessment of the planning application. We hope that you will share our view that the scheme will make a positive contribution to the local area.

We trust that the application is in order and look forward to receiving confirmation that it has been validated in due course. In the meantime, should you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact Jay Patel at these offices.

Yours sincerely



Savills

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