

City Centre Planning Team
Manchester City Council
Floor 6 Town Hall Extension
Albert Square
P.O Box 532
Manchester
M6 2LA

18th May 2024

By Email only

Dear Sir / Madam,

FIFTH FLOOR OF BRIDGEWATER HOUSE, 58-60 WHITWORTH STREET, MANCHESTER, M1 6LT.

PLANNING APPLICATION SEEKING LISTED BUILDING CONSENT FOR INTERNAL ALTERATIONS TO FIFTH FLOOR OF AFOREMENTIONED BUILDING

COVER LETTER, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

On behalf of the applicant, Victoria College of Arts and Design, we hereby submit a planning application seeking listed building consent for internal alterations to the fifth floor in Bridgewater House, 58-60 Whitworth Street, Manchester, M1 6LT. This Planning Application has been submitted via the Planning Portal (Ref: PP-13080995) and contains the following:

- Application form;
- This supporting technical and heritage impact letter prepared by Zerum;
- Location Plan prepared by Creative Design and Construction Ltd;
- Existing and Proposed Drawings prepared by Creative Design and Construction Ltd; and,
- Materials and Photographs prepared by Creative Design and Construction Ltd.

The remainder of this letter provides further details on the application site and proposed development as well as assessing the proposal against relevant planning policy. This letter also acts as a Heritage Assessment for the proposed development.

The Applicant

The Applicant is associated with Elizabeth School of London ('ESL') which was founded in 2011 as an English language school and recruiter. They deliver high quality education ensuring excellent learning environments with the required facilities.

The broad aim is to offer further and higher education to local and international students, which includes helping and supporting our learners to gain relevant experience, skills and enhance their

abilities in order to achieve their career goals. They have schools in a number of locations across the UK including, London, Northampton and Leeds.

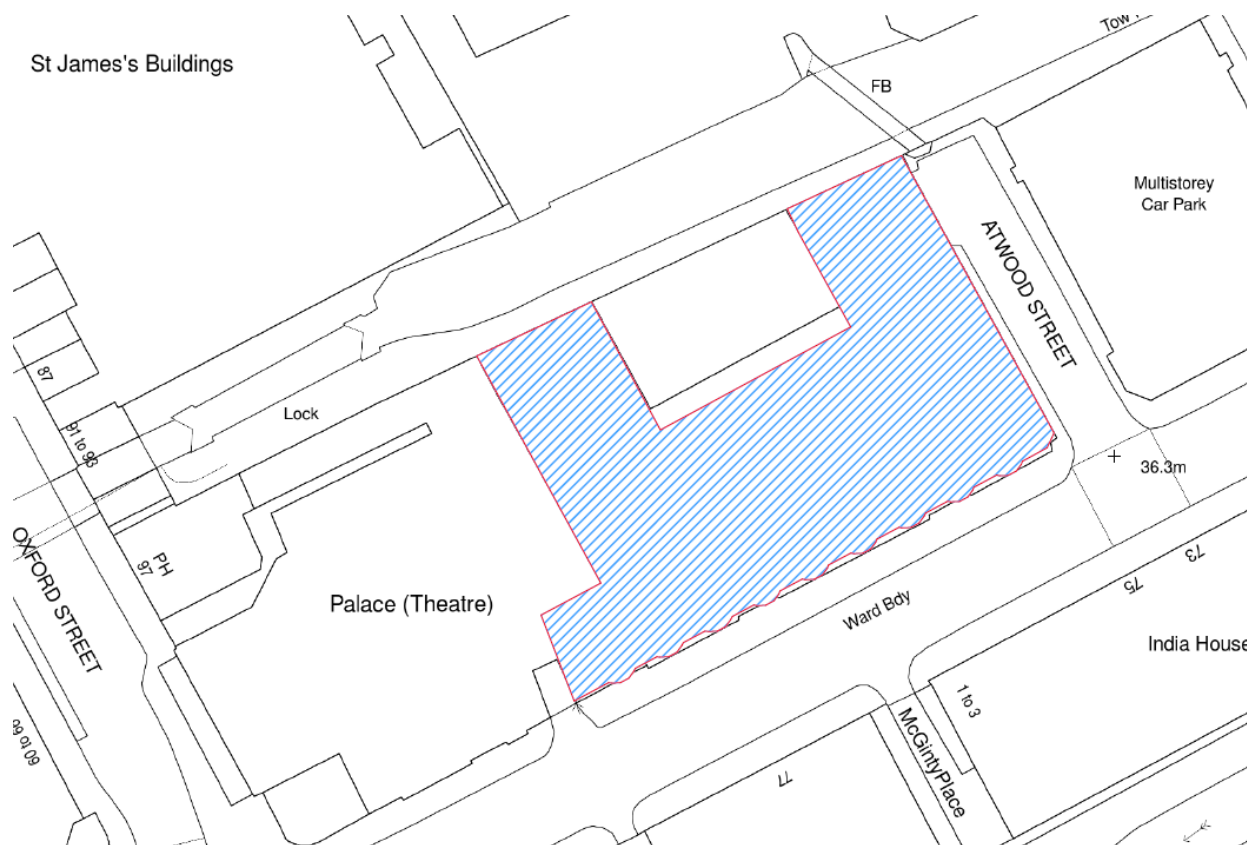
Due to the success and high subscription of students across the UK, the Applicant now wants to expand its services to Manchester and provide higher education to communities in Manchester city centre and Greater Manchester.

Site Description

The application site comprises the fifth floor of Bridgewater House, an 11-storey, Grade II Listed office building, located in Manchester city centre and within the administrative boundary of Manchester City Council ('MCC'). The fifth floor is 2189m² in size and is currently vacant and has been for approximately eighteen months.

Bridgewater House is bound by the Rochdale Canal Town Path to the north, Atwood Street to the east, Whitworth Street to the south and the Palace Theatre Manchester to the west. It is located in an area of Manchester City Centre that accommodates a large number of Grade II and Grade II* former warehouses that are now used as hotels, offices and residential accommodation. The site is also within the Whitworth Street Conservation Area.

Figure 1a shows the site red line boundary and **Figure 1b** shows the site location within the wider context (marked by red marker).



^ Figure 1a (Taken from submitted Location Plan)

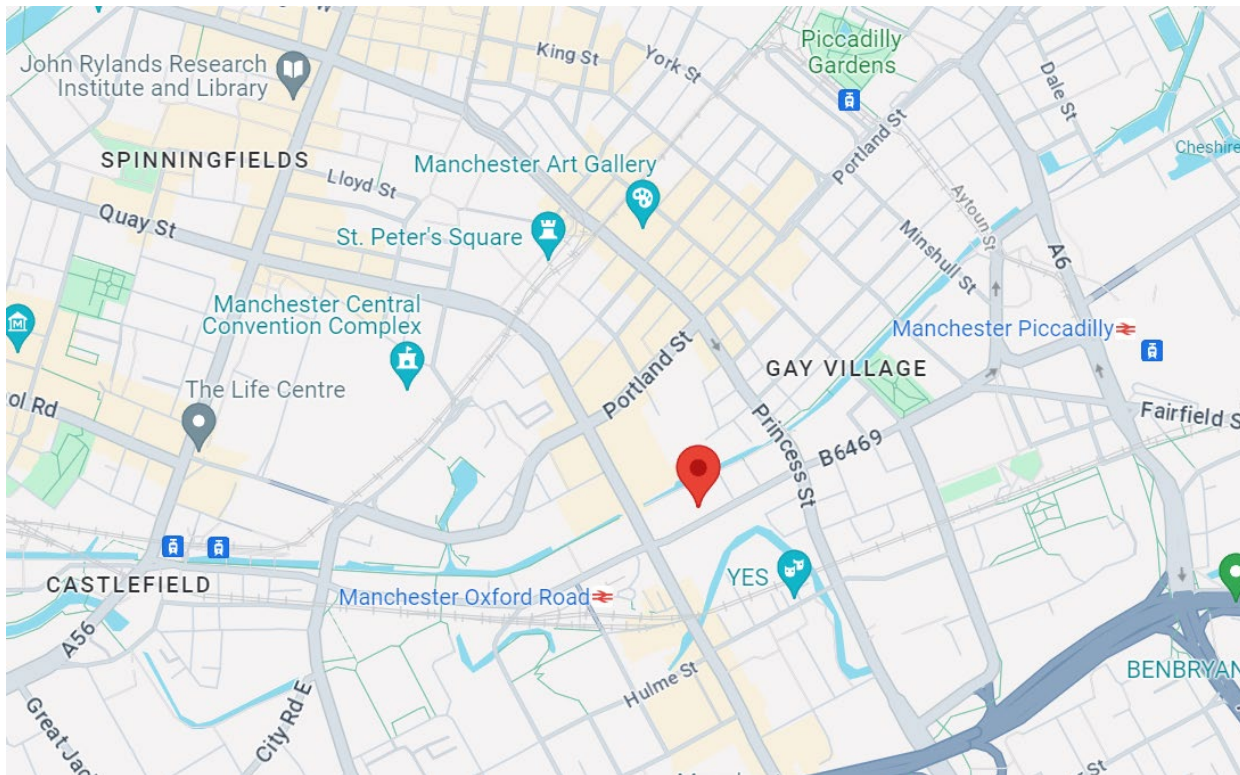


Figure 1b ^ (Taken from Google Maps- application site indicated by red marker.)

The main entrance to the property is located on Whitworth Street, providing pedestrian access only. There are no.20 car parking spaces provided within the basement of Whitworth Street.

Please note that these parking spaces are no available to future occupants of the fifth floor.

Accessibility

The site is sustainably located with Manchester Oxford Road Station and St Peter's Square, a key hub of the city with a Metrolink tram network, being located within a five minutes'.

There are a large number of local amenities also located within a five-minute walk of the site, including food and retail shops.

Designations

The property lies within Flood Zone 1, therefore has a medium probability of flooding.

MCC's development plan consists of the Manchester Core Strategy (2012) and the Saved Policies of the Manchester Unitary Development Plan (UDP, 1995). As per the Core Strategy, the site sits within the designated city centre. The site is also located within the designated regional centre.

Heritage Significance

According to Historic England, Bridgewater House building is Grade II Listed having been designated as a Heritage Asset by MCC in 1994.

The building was built in 1912 as a shipping warehouse by Harry S. Fairhurst. It is ten storeys in height including a ground floor. It has a steel frame and is clad with Sandstone Ashlar and White Glazed Terracotta with a concealed roof and is in keeping with the typical construction techniques of the Georgian Period.

Bridgewater House sits within the Whitworth Street Conservation Area which was designated by MCC in September 1974.

Planning History

There is an extensive planning history associated with the building with various applications for planning permission and listed building consent being submitted and approved for alterations and alternative uses.

The applications have enabled Bridgewater House to be reconfigured and re-presented to meet the needs of users. MCC have granted the internal fit out incorporating four high speed passenger lifts, VRF heating and cooling and full access raised floors.

The most recent and relevant application are set out in Table 1.1 below.

Application Ref	Description of Development	Decision and Date
136958/LO/2023	Listed Building Consent for internal and external alterations including installation of louvres to sixth floor, installation of suspended ceilings, raised floors and partitions together with installation of rooftop plant in association with office refurbishment. Full planning permission for the installation of 10 no. louvres to the 6th floor and additional external plant to the roof level of the Grade II Listed Bridgewater House.	Submitted 12 th May, awaiting decision.
136957/FO/2023	Elevational alterations including installation of louvres to sixth floor together with installation of rooftop plant in association with office refurbishment.	Submitted 12 th May, awaiting decision.
134350/LO/2022	Listed Building Consent for the refurbishment of 5th and 6th floor offices including reconfiguration of the lobby entrance doors from lift on 5th and 6th floor and the introduction of new glazed entrance doors.	Approved 9 th September 2022.

^ Table 1.1

Proposed Development

This application seeks a number of internal amendments to facilitate the Applicant in delivering an educational facility. The application proposes to remove a number of internal partition walls, to create the following internal room layout:

- 2no. Breakout area
- 3no. Studio
- 1no. Teachers room
- 2no. hybrid classrooms
- 7no. classrooms
- 3no. meeting room

- 1no. prayer room
- 1no. server room
- 1no. waiting room
- 2no. office
- 1no. marketing room
- 1no. library
- 1no. lab

No external alterations are proposed as part of this application. Further details on the proposed amendment can be found on the submitted drawings. The Materials and Photograph document contains information and detail on the specification of the walls to be inserted.

Please note a full planning application (Ref: PP-13076215) to change the use of the fifth floor from offices (Use Class E-g) to education (Use Class F1-a) has also been submitted in conjunction with this Listed Building Consent application.

The proposed learning facility aims to target those wanting to obtain professional accounting qualifications, such as Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA).

Planning Assessment

The National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') was published on 27th March 2012 and was recently updated in December 2023.

The NPPF states (paragraph 200) that when determining applications which impact heritage assets, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary.

The NPPF goes on to state (paragraph 196) when determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of: a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Paragraphs 205 to 214 of the NPPF set out guidance set out guidance for considering potential impacts and state that weight should be given to the asset's conservation and where there is a less than substantial harm, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including securing its optimum use.

In assessing the proposed alterations to the building against the requirements of the NPPF, the listed building description (list entry number 1270606) focuses on the external façade, specifically channelled rusticated piers, moulded frieze, prominent modillioned cornice and the canted bay windows.

Taking the above into account, it is clear there is less than substantial harm in removing several partition walls.

These additions will not impact on the external façade and as shown by the submitted photographs, the internal features of floor 5 have already been amended as part of planning

application ref. 134350/LO/2022. The application approved the internal reconfiguration of the lobby entrance doors from lift on 5th and 6th floor and the introduction of new glazed entrance doors. This amendments indicate that the floor does not contain historic features of significance hat can be impacted by this application proposals.

As such it is considered that the proposal would be in keeping with previous consents granted for alterations to the building and would therefore continue to be in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF.

Turning to the Development Plan, the adopted Development Plan for MCC comprises the Manchester Core Strategy (2012) ('MCS'); the Saved Policies of the Manchester Unitary Development Plan (UDP, 1995) and the Places for Everyone Plan 2024 (PfE).

As set out above, the property is a listed building and within a conservation area, therefore the relevant policies are set out below.

Policy CC 9 (Design and Heritage) states that 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.

Policy EN 3 (Heritage) states that the Council will encourage development that complements and takes advantage of the distinct historic and heritage features of its districts and neighbourhoods, including those of the City Centre.

Taking the above considerations into account it is considered the proposal complies with the requirements of the two policies and that there would be no detrimental impact on the wider conservation area. The proposed additions to the building are internal modern features that would be expected for an educational unit of this nature and would be in keeping with features currently in the building.

In view of the above it is considered the proposal is in accordance with the Development Plan and listed building consent can be granted for the proposed internal alterations to the building.

Summary

This planning application seeks listed building consent for internal alterations to the property to allow a currently vacant space to be occupied. The internal alterations propose the installation of several new partition walls, to form a number of classrooms and study rooms. There will be no detrimental impact on the setting of the listed building or the wider conservation area. The proposed works are therefore considered appropriate and acceptable in planning terms.

I trust that the above sets out the basis for the submission however if I can be of any further assistance then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Meghan Gleeson', written over a horizontal line.

Meghan Gleeson
Planner