



Installation of new shopfront, replacement windows and new signage

45 – 47 Thomas Street, Manchester, M4 1NA

June 2024

Design and Access Statement

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1. Introduction

The property is currently empty, the previous use as a photography studio ceased trading back in December 2023. The proposal is to subdivide the ground floor to provide two separate units that can be used as retail premises. Access to the retail unit would be by new entrance with level access via Thomas Street. The upper floors will be accessed with level access via an existing entrance on Thomas Street utilising an existing staircase. There will be a separate exit route to the rear of the property.

The building isn't on the listed building register but is located on the middle of a terrace block on Thomas Street near the Kelvin Street junction which is in the Smithfield conservation area.

The building consists of three storeys, previously home to the Thomas Street Studios which was used for photo shoots, office space and general storage.

The building was built in 1979, it is a red brick building with part pitched slate roof and part flat roof to the rear.

The ground floor has two entrance doors, one a single timber door with glazed panel in front of the staircase, the other is a UPVC double door with glazed panel into the main area. The rest of the shopfront has a stall riser with timber framed glazing above, to the front of the ground floor shopfront there are two roller shutters with a signage box above, there is currently one rear exit to the building.

The upper two floors both have four rectangular windows to the Thomas Street elevation respectively, there are no windows to the rear of the property.

For this application we are only concerned with the ground floor level and replacement windows to the upper floors.

2. Proposal

The proposal for the Ground floor level of 45 – 47 Thomas Street is to retain the use of this floor as Class A1 Retail. The ground floor will have a single retail unit, the unit will have a full landlord Cat A (Shell and Core) fit out which includes the essential infrastructure and finishes necessary for tenant occupancy.

Externally it is proposed to replace the shopfront within the building opening, there will be no structural works being carried to the Thomas Street elevation only a stall riser replacement, new ground floor windows and doors two of which will be reconfigured to suit the new proposed internal layout. There will also be new external security grilles, and signage to suit the new ground floor layout.

The upper floors will have eight new window replacements to the existing building openings.

3. Design

The Shopfront will have a new painted timber frame to house the new glazed doors and glazing with stall riser.

The new Security grilles will be fitted to the building envelope but will be reconfigured to suit the new door locations.

Signage will consist of three building numbers to highlight the ground floor unit and the upper floors. the signage box will be replaced with individual signage lettering fitted direct to the building

The upper floor eight windows will be replaced with new aluminium powder coated double glazed windows.

Internally the fitout will consist of new lighting, flooring, painted walls and ceilings, new kitchenettes to each floor, new WC's to each floor.

4. Access

The current access into the building is from Thomas Street, using street level access to the ground floor which will be retained for the new ground floor retail unit.

Due to the restrictions with the size and the structural layout of the existing building it would be unfeasible to install a lift for access to the upper floors and would in fact reduce the floor area on each floor to

such an extent as to render the proposal non-commercially viable as the resultant rentable area would equate to less than the current area.

The installation of a stair lift with a drop down seat was investigated however the existing staircase width that is being retained is restricted and not viable due to the minimum escape width being impeded.

5. Conclusion

The proposed changes to the property are necessary to allow the building to be repurposed and occupied.

Where the Shopfront and windows are to be installed on the Thomas Street elevation we propose to paint these to keep them uniformed, utilising the existing openings to ensure the building is maintained in its original form.

In terms of the building, we intend to retain and enhance any existing features, being sympathetic to the existing design.

Due to the limited size of the building footprint, it is not feasible to install a lift to provide wheelchair access to all floors of the building. Whilst the development does not allow for full disabled access to all floors of the building, the main retail facilities are available at ground floor level ensuring wheelchair users are not disadvantaged. Ambulant disabled access to the upper floors of the building will still be possible.