

Listed Building Consent Application Reference 138330/LO/2023
Application For Refurbishment Of Existing Office Space At Ground Floor Level
The Tootal Buildings, Broadhurst House, 56 Oxford Street, Manchester M1 6eu
Application by XLB Property
Design and Access Statement

1.0 Design Statement

- 1.1** The application proposal seeks to refurbish a series of existing office suites located on the northern and southern sides of the ground floor of the Tootal Buildings. The proposal seeks to deliver a series of new office suites and amenity spaces to meet modern occupier requirements.
- 1.2** The proposal looks to restore historic fabric features in creating these new spaces alongside delivering modern office accommodation that respects and complements the historic features of the building.
- 1.3** The existing floorspace was delivered as part of refurbishment works in the 1990s and is low quality office space of its time that is detrimental to the historic fabric of the existing building.
- 1.4** This works proposed include:
1. Removing existing false sealings and refurbishing ceilings to better reflect the historic nature of the building
 2. Refurbishing and improving glazing within the building
 3. The provision of new floors that remove carpeted floors and replace them with woodblock laminate and tiles that provides an aesthetic that reflects the building heritage
 4. The removal of studwork walls and enclosures to reveal heritage features
 5. The opening up of archway access points that have been blocked and lowered
 6. The refurbishment of original tiled wall features to uncover original colour schemes for those tiles
 7. New internal doors that better reflect the significance of the building
 8. New lighting and plant equipment including minimal overhead track and LED lighting and feature lighting pendants and wall lights
 9. Following the strip of existing false ceilings, surviving lath and plaster ceilings and cornicing will be retained, uncovered and redecorated
- 1.5** The full details of the works are shown on the plans that accompany the application and described in the Heritage Statement that is also provided.
- 1.6** These details show a full and comprehensive design scheme to enable the Local Planning Authority's consideration and determination of the scheme from a visual perspective. The works can be seen to be of a high quality design standard that replace substandard existing office space that detracts from the historic significance of the Tootal Buildings
- 1.7** The proposal will restore a number of features as described above and in the Heritage Statement and shown on the accompanying plans. Those features will support the historic significance of the building and alongside the wider works for new features and spaces will enhance the historic significance of the building. It is for this reason that the accompanying Heritage Statement confirms that the proposal has no harm to the Grade II* Listed Building and conversely it will result in a moderate beneficial direct impact on its historic fabric.
- 1.8** Against that background, the proposal accords with Policy CC9 and EN3 of the Manchester Core Strategy Development Plan Document (adopted 11 July 2012) as the proposal enhances the historic environment and the character of a Grade II* Listed Building.

- 1.9** The essence of the design principles and approach is that the Tootal Buildings is a significant heritage asset on Oxford Street in Manchester City Centre. It has been subject to substantial improvements that have revitalised the building and celebrated its heritage significance.
- 1.10** This therefore sets the tone and design principles behind the application proposal. It is a direct continuation of works that have already been undertaken to revitalise the Tootal Buildings. The floorspace that is being converted in no way presently celebrates the heritage significance of the Tootal Buildings. As commented on in the Heritage Statement, the floorspace was last refurbished in the 1990s and has resulted in a number of inappropriate modern alterations and features which are of no heritage interest.
- 1.11** The result of the 1990's alterations mean that on ground floor level all original ceilings/cornice have been concealed beneath suspended ceilings and/or fire compartmentation, there has been the concealment or removal of decorative columns and tilework and the covering and/or removal of all woodblock/mosaic flooring and insertion in areas of raised access floors.
- 1.12** The sensitive proposals subject to the application therefore reflect the need to introduce a high quality decorative scheme into these parts of the ground floor level and allow for any remaining original features and parts of the building to be uncovered and celebrated as part of the wider interior scheme.
- 1.13** This forms the whole basis for the design approach of the proposal to bring back into optimal use, existing, but vacant, office floorspace, in a way that complements, enhances and preserves the historic fabric and significance of the building, including reinstating and refurbishing historic features as described above.
- 1.14** We conclude that the design ethos of the proposal should be commended for enhancing the historic significance of the floorspace subject to the application and the evidence of the high quality nature of the delivery can be seen through the works already undertaken by the applicant to revitalise the building.
- 1.15** It is for the above reasons, that we conclude that the proposal accords with Policies CC1, CC9, EC3 and EN3 of the Core Strategy. Further details of the beneficial impact that the proposal will have are contained within the Heritage Statement provided with the application.
- 1.16** The conclusion on heritage design grounds is that as there is no harm that arises from the proposal the tests at Paragraphs 200 – 202 of the National Planning Policy Framework do not apply, but in any event, the proposal will ensure that the ground floor areas of the building can be brought back into their optimum viable use and contribute to the economic objectives of Policies EC3 and CC1 of the Core Strategy.

2.0 Access Statement

- 2.1** There are no amendments to how the building is accessed as a result of this proposal or any amendments to any operational access requirements, for example servicing.
- 2.2** The floorspace subject to the application will continue to be accessed by users from Oxford Street and all internal pathways within the building will meet Building Regulation requirements for accessibility and access for all. The proposal provides a more open plan nature to the office environment, particularly on the southern side of the building and therefore navigation around the building should be improved.



- 2.3** In addition, the building itself is in a highly accessible location to users of the City Centre including from the surrounding residential areas on foot, but also through public transport infrastructure including bus route along Oxford Street / Oxford Road and the wider City Centre, Oxford Road train station and St Peter's Square tram stop, and cycling infrastructure including that located directly to the front of the building.
- 2.4** The proposal therefore raises no access concerns and accords with Policy T2 of the Core Strategy.