

Planning

Growth & Development

Delegated officer report for planning application

Application no. 138842/LO/2023 & 138841/FO/2023

Date registered valid: 15 December 2023

Proposal: LISTED BUILDING CONSENT for internal and external alterations associated with works to undercroft service area and associated works to provide protected fire escape route (138842/LO/2023)
External alterations associated with works to undercroft service area and associated works to provide protected fire escape route (138841/FO/2023)

Address: St James Buildings, 79 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6FQ

Ward(s): Piccadilly Ward

Applicant: Mr James Moulton Bruntwood

Agent (if any): Mr Ralph Taylor Paul Butler Associates

Case officer: Max Gibson
Tel: 0161 219 6359
Email: maximillian.gibson@manchester.gov.uk

Recommendation: Approve

Date of recommendation: 09/02/2024

Application details

Type of application: Listed Building Consent & Full Planning Permission

Development type: Listed building alteration & Minor Other

Date of site visit:

Standard consultations:

Printed: 21 December 2023

Expired: 14 January 2024

Neighbour notifications

No neighbour notifications have been printed and sent.

Site notice

Posted:

Expired: Posted:

Expired: Posted:

Expired:

Press advert

Published: 2 January 2024

Expired: 23 January 2024

Departure from Development Plan: No

Environmental Statement: Not required

Description of site/building

The application relates to the Grade II Listed St James Buildings, which is a substantial eight storey building that was built in 1912 in the Edwardian Baroque style and designed by Charles Clegg and Son of Manchester and Fryer and Penman of Glasgow. It was designed as the headquarters of the Calico Printers Association Ltd. which was formed in 1899 and was a textile printing and merchant company.

St James Buildings is bounded by Oxford Street, The Rochdale Canal, the Grade II Listed Portland Buildings and the grounds of Linley House. Oxford Street is a highly trafficked route from South Manchester into the City Centre and is a particularly busy bus route and experiences extremely high footfall.

The building is currently used as a mixed-use building that predominantly houses offices, but also houses educational uses and has shops, bars, restaurants and cafes at the ground floor.

Listed building: Grade II

Conservation area: Whitworth Street Conservation Area 1985

Tree Preservation Order:

Description of area

The surrounding area contains a large number of listed buildings include the Grade II* Listed Churchgate House, the Grade II Listed Palace Theatre and the Grade II Listed Portland Buildings. The site is also within the Whitworth Street Conservation Area.

Surrounding uses include The Place Theatre, Oxford Road Train Station, residential accommodation, multi-storey car parking, offices, restaurants, hotels, cafes and shops.

Description of development

The development relates to the installation of a protected fire route from four rear staircases out of the building via the undercroft area to the rear of St James Building to improve the fire safety of the building. To deliver the corridor, some partial demolition of an existing raised walkway would be undertaken, with the walkway extended together with the installation of fire rated partitions to enclose the corridor. New fire rated shutters and doors would be installed at ingress and egress points to the corridor. Some plant would be relocated or boxed in to further improve fire safety. Safety features, such as barriers, bollard and railings would be installed in the undercroft area, clearly demarcating areas and aiding the management of traffic circulation throughout the space. A fire rated bin store would be installed next to the entranceway. Externally, 1no. roller shutter is to be replaced, 1no. shutter repainted and a 1no. new roller shutter would be installed to a currently opened entrance archway. These would be powder coated black to match.

Consultations & Notification Responses

Publicity – site notices were displayed on site to inform passers-by of the development. A notice was placed in the local press advertising the works as those affecting a listed building. Letters were sent to surrounding occupiers notifying them of the development. No representations have been received as a result of this publicity.

GM Fire and Rescue – no comments

Issues

The main policies that relate to this application are SP1 (Spatial Principles), DM1 (Development Management), EN3 (Heritage) and CC9 (Design and Heritage) of the Manchester Core Strategy (2012), DC18 (Conservation Areas) and DC19 (Listed Buildings) of the Unitary Development Plan for Manchester (1995) and Section 16 (Conserving the historic environment) of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Principle

The building under consideration is Grade II listed and located within Whitworth Conservation Area. It was constructed c.1912 to the design of Clegg, Fryer and Penman for the Calico Printers' Association in neo-Baroque style. When built, it was one of the earliest commercial steel-framed premises in the country, clad in Portland stone.

The space under consideration is located to the rear of the asset, and whilst of lesser significance that more ornate aspects of the GII listed asset is nonetheless integral and core to the asset's special architectural and historic interest.

The proposed scope of demolition is, on balance, considered to be acceptable. The works would cause a moderate degree of less than substantial harm to the Grade II listed building. However, the demolition is supported by a clear and convincing justification and otherwise outweighed by the public benefits, as it would ensure the building's fire escape is compliant with building regulations, and hence would be beneficial to public safety.

Visual amenity

Externally, there alterations to the building's appearance would be minimal. This includes repainting of 1no. roller shutter and the installation of 1no. roller shutter to a currently open vehicular access point to the rear of the building and the replacement of 1no. roller shutter. These would partially be visible from Dickinson Street. There would be a negligible impact on visual amenity created by this aspect of the works. The 2no. new shutters would be of a similar appearance the existing shutter and be painted black to match what is in situ, thereby ensuring a neutral impact on the appearance of the building.

The new roller shutter to open entrance would create some minor harm to visual amenity by virtue of the introduction of a solid element to a currently permeable entrance. However, it is accepted that the shutter is needed to aid security and fire safety. Furthermore, in the context of a rear service entrance and another adjacent, pre-existing roller shutter the impact on visual amenity is not considered great enough to warrant a refusal. All other elements would be internal and therefore would have no impact on the wider street scene or external appearance of the building. Therefore, there are no concerns regarding visual amenity that would warrant a refusal.

Impact on the listed building

There would be some demolition of historic fabric necessary to deliver the new fire rated corridor, amounting to a low level of less than substantial harm. This would entail the partial demolition of the existing concrete and brick raised walkway and associated stairs to facilitate its extension to form the floor of the corridor. On balance, whilst this would entail intervention into and removal of historic fabric, the heritage value of this element is considered low and is outweighed by the public benefits of providing enhanced fire safety and adherence to building regulations.

The installation of partitions would involve some instances of a low level of less than substantial harm, where the partitions would be affixed into historic brickwork. On balance, whilst this is not considered optimum from a heritage standpoint, the public benefit of providing the corridor.

The addition of a new enclosed corridor and partition at the entrance to the undercroft would alter the appearance of the space, changing the manner in which it would be read. This would create a low level of less than substantial harm, again outweighed by the public safety benefits delivered by the development. The corridor itself, whilst read as a clearly modern intervention into the space, would not be full height and so would allow some continue appreciation of the original proportions of the space once inside the undercroft itself.

The utilitarian materiality of the construction would reflect existing materials and finishes and is considered to be acceptable for use within a rear service area. The new stairs would incorporate a DDA refuge area, which is supported pursuant to policy CC10, as it would support accessibility of the building.

These interventions would be reversible in the long term and care has been taken to ensure there is no intervention into many of the most significant historic elements, namely a historic steel crane beam and joists and the windows above the corridor. The new partitions would be scribed around the steelwork, as shown on the approved drawing (Drawing - Proposed AXI - 120 REV 05 LOADING BAY FIRE CORRIDOR TYPICAL SECTION received by the City Council, as Local Planning Authority, on 15/12/2023). There would be no works to the windows above the corridor, as confirmed in the approved drawing (Drawing - Proposed AXI - 140 REV 05 LOADING BAY INTERNAL ELEVATIONS received by the City Council, as Local Planning Authority, on 15/12/2023).

However, the window above the left-hand roller shutter fronting on to Dickinson Street would need to be fire boarded from the inside of the building, to ensure a 60-minute fire rating. This would have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the listed building, particularly from the inside, altering the manner in which light enters the space. This would amount to a small instance of less than substantial harm. However, it is considered that, on balance, this element is acceptable as it is necessary for achieving adequate fire safety and would be full reversible.

Together with the 3no. roller shutters externally, there would be a number of fire rated roller shutters incorporated internally. This would include two just inside the entranceway. One

shutter, to the left hand side when viewed from Dickinson Street, would fit neatly inside the existing opening the right hand side and when opened would cause a negligible change to the understanding of the space. The right-hand shutter would necessitate the building of a new subdivision, just within the entranceway, as shown on the approved drawing (Drawing – Proposed AXI- 145 INTERNAL PROTECTED FIRE SHUTTER DETAILS AS PROPOSED SHEET 2 received by the City Council, as Local Planning Authority, on 08/02/2024). This would have significant effect on views into the undercroft and significantly changing the manner in which the space is appreciated, amounting to a moderate-high degree of less than substantial harm. The reversibility and necessity of this element of the works is considered to outweigh the significant harm caused to the character and appearance of this space within the listed building.

The installation of a new roller shutter to the rear entrance on to Dickinson Street would make redundant an historic cast iron roller gate that recesses into the wall next to the entrance. The gate and its mechanism are to be retained in situ and in their entirety, with the new fire rated bin store wall set away from the gate, thereby ensuring this historic feature is not impacted by the works in any manner as confirmed on the approved drawing (Drawing - Proposed AXI - 100 REV 08 GROUND FLOOR PLAN received by the City Council, as Local Planning Authority, on 24/01/2024). The bin store would be a freestanding structure, which would not impact historic fabric, which could be fully removed at a later juncture and hence is considered acceptable.

There would be a number of interventions into modern fabric that are considered acceptable. There would be the installation of new bollards to the main undercroft floor together with some new floor painting, to demarcate vehicular and pedestrian areas, to aid safe movement within the space. New railing would be installed to a raised platform that houses a services area. Electrical junction boxed and other existing services would be boxed in with fire rated partitions, again in the interest of improving fire safety.

Impact of the conservation area

As noted previously in this report, the most significant material change to the exterior of the building would be the installation of a new roller shutter. This is largely not visible from within the conservation area, with limited views from Dickinson Street. This is not considered to be detrimental to the character or appearance of the conservation area as it is the context of mostly obscured service area with two adjacent roller shutters in situ. The replacement of 1no. existing roller shutter and the repainting of 1no. existing shutter would have a very low positive impact on the conservation area as it would 'freshen up' the appearance of this part of the building and give the location a better maintained appearance. Given the above, the proposal is considered acceptable pursuant to policy DC18 of the Unitary Development Plan for Manchester (1995).

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

In assessing the merits of an application officers will seek to work with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner to seeking solutions to problems arising in relation to dealing with the application.

Condition(s) to be attached to decision for approval OR Reasons for recommendation to refuse to application reference 138842/LO/2023

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:

- Drawing - Proposed 01 REV F GA AND DETAILS OF CORRIDOR FLOOR & ROOF
- Drawing - Proposed 03 REV G TYPICAL SECTION-PROTECTED CORRIDOR
- Drawing - Proposed AXI - 120 REV 05 LOADING BAY FIRE CORRIDOR TYPICAL SECTION
- Drawing - Proposed AXI - 140 REV 05 LOADING BAY INTERNAL ELEVATIONS
- Drawing - Proposed AXI - 143 FIRE SHUTTER DETAILS
- Drawing - Proposed AXI - 144 BOXING IN OF SERVICES ELEVATIONS PLANS AS PROPOSED SHEET 2

All received by the City Council, as Local Planning Authority, on 15/12/2023

-Drawing - Proposed AXI - 141 REV 02 EXTERNAL ELEVATIONS received by the City Council, as Local Planning Authority, on 23/01/2024

- Drawing - Proposed AXI - 100 REV 08 GROUND FLOOR PLAN
- Drawing - Proposed AXI - 142 REV 03 BIN STORE AND GANTRY ACCESS

Both received by the City Council, as Local Planning Authority, on 24/01/2024

-Drawing - Proposed AXI- 145 INTERNAL PROTECTED FIRE SHUTTER DETAILS received by the City Council, as Local Planning Authority, on 08/02/2024

-Heritage Statement HERITAGE STATEMENT received by the City Council, as Local Planning Authority, on 15/12/2023

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) Junctions between new partitions and the historic steel beam shall be installed in accordance with the approved detail (Drawing - Proposed AXI - 120 REV 05 LOADING BAY FIRE CORRIDOR TYPICAL SECTION received by the City Council, as Local Planning Authority, on 15/12/2023).

Reason - The proposed works affect a building which is included in the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest so careful attention to building work is required to protect the character and appearance of this building in accordance with saved policy DC19.1 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester and policies SP1, EN3, CC9 and DM1 of the Core Strategy.

4) The historic cast iron gate and associated mechanism shall be retained in full and in situ as stated on the approved drawing (Drawing - Proposed AXI - 100 REV 08 GROUND FLOOR PLAN received by the City Council, as Local Planning Authority, on 24/01/2024).

Reason - The proposed works affect a building which is included in the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest so careful attention to building work is required to protect the character and appearance of this building in accordance with saved policy DC19.1 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester and policies SP1, EN3, CC9 and DM1 of the Core Strategy.

5) Prior to installation, samples and specifications of the roller shutters and any finishes shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the City Council, as Local Planning Authority. The approved details shall be implemented in full as part of the development and remain in situ for the lifetime of the development.

Reason - The proposed works affect a building which is included in the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest so careful attention to building work is required to protect the character and appearance of this building in accordance with saved policy DC19.1 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester and policies SP1, EN3, CC9 and DM1 of the Core Strategy.

6) Prior to the installation of any M&E services to the listed building, full and final specifications and details (including scaled cross sections, floor plans, ceiling plans and elevations of the location, appearance and method of installation) shall be submitted for approval in writing by the City Council as Local Planning Authority.

The approved details shall be implemented as part of the development and completed prior to first occupation of the development.

Reason - The proposed works affect a building which is included in the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest so careful attention to building work is required to protect the character and appearance of this building in accordance with saved policy DC19.1 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester and policies SP1, EN3 and DM1 of the Core Strategy.

Condition(s) to be attached to decision for approval OR Reasons for recommendation to refuse to application reference 138841/FO/2023

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 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2) The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following drawings and documents:

- Drawing - Proposed 01 REV F GA AND DETAILS OF CORRIDOR FLOOR & ROOF
- Drawing - Proposed 03 REV G TYPICAL SECTION-PROTECTED CORRIDOR
- Drawing - Proposed AXI - 120 REV 05 LOADING BAY FIRE CORRIDOR TYPICAL SECTION
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-Heritage Statement HERITAGE STATEMENT received by the City Council, as Local Planning Authority, on 15/12/2023

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.

Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified

Heritage & Urban Design

Appendix 2 – Planning constraints

Article 4 Direction - City Centre PD Restriction - Class B1(a) To C3

Article 4 Direction - Removal Of PD Rights Change Of Use From Class C3 To Class C4

Aircraft Safeguarding Zone - Aircraft Safeguarding Zone - All Exceeding 90M

Coal Authority - Development Low Risk - Name: DEVELOPMENT_LOW_RISK_AREA

Conservation Area - Whitworth Street Conservation Area 1985

Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -

Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Middle) -

Area Team Boundary - Name: CENTRAL