

Chancellor's Court, Fallowfield

Design and Access Statement

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1. Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared to support an application for the Change of Use and alterations of an existing commercial unit over two floors. It is proposed to convert the upper floor of the existing unit into a new high quality apartment for student rental, and alter the ground floor of the unit for use as a management suite serving the local rented student residential properties.

The unit to which this application relates is self-contained with an entrance and glazed feature corner addressing the street. It has been vacant for nearly two years, since July 2022. It has been actively marketed for 18 months since falling vacant, but generated little or no interest in that time. The applicant has been advised that the property is unlikely to find a new tenant in its current format. This proposal seeks to return the unit to beneficial use, and by doing so, positively address an existing void property which is detrimental to the neighbourhood and local streetscene in its current state.

2. Context

2.1 Location

The site is located approximately 3.5 miles South of Manchester City Centre, in the Fallowfield area. This area has a high student population, and is home to the University of Manchester Fallowfield Campus. Well managed high-quality student accommodation in the area is in high demand.

The site occupies a fairly prominent corner location on Mosely Road, at a traffic light junction with Balmoral Road and opposite one entrance to the University of Manchester Fallowfield Campus. This campus entrance gives access to the University's Unsworth Park student accommodation and Armitage Sports Centre. A local corner shop occupies the other built-up corner on this junction.

Chancellor's Court itself is a purpose-built student accommodation development with managed rental tenancies. It is surrounded by other predominantly student residential properties of mixed type, including numerous Houses in Multiple Occupation.

In this context, the provision of a new high quality student apartment for rent and a new management suite to serve the local student population would be complimentary. Bringing the corner unit back into active use will also be beneficial for the local area, and returning footfall to this unit will support the local shop.

2.2 Scale

The scale of existing building is unchanged by the proposal. The existing unit is over two floors, with approximately 94sqm at ground floor level and 86sqm at first floor level. The first floor will be converted to a 2 bed 4 person apartment, with access from the existing residential circulation core. The ground floor will be altered for use as a management suite serving local student accommodation, including parcel hold for deliveries to the wider Chancellor's Court residences.

2.3 Appearance

The existing building is 3 storeys with a mix of red and buff brick walls, pitched tiled roof and white PVC framed windows. The corner addressing the Mosely Road / Balmoral Road Junction includes a faceted 'circular' feature bay at first and second floor levels, with a single-storey projecting glazed feature at ground floor level.

2.4 Landscaping

The small fenced forecourt to the unit is hard landscaped with a mix of:-

- Block paved footpath from gate to one door
- Flag paved footpath approach to other door
- Loose gravel beds



The site seen from road junction



The site addressing Balmoral Road



The site seen from Manchester University Campus on exit



The site addressing Mosely Road

3. Design

3.1 Use

The first floor will become a 2 bed 4 person apartment for student rental. The ground floor will become a management suite to serve the local rented student accommodation. This will include lettings, facilities management of repairs and maintenance activities, a space for meetings with residents, and a parcel hold and collection service for Chancellor's Court.

3.2 Amount

The first floor apartment will be approximately 86sqm, creating a generous space for 2 bed 4 person accommodation. The ground floor suite will be approximately 94sqm in floor area. The overall floor area will not be increased or decreased under the proposal.

3.3 Scale

The first floor apartment will be approximately 86sqm, creating a generous space for 2 bed 4 person accommodation. The scale of development will not be affected by the proposal.

3.4 Layout

The first floor apartment will be accessed via the existing residential circulation core. Entrance will be made into a lobby of which all other rooms are accessed. At the centre of the layout will be an open plan kitchen / dining / living space, which enjoys views over the road junction and across to the University of Manchester campus facilities beyond via the generous feature bay window. Either side of this are two generous double bedrooms. One bedroom will have en-suite

sanitary facilities. There will also be sanitary facilities accessible off the entrance lobby, meaning any visitors need not access this via a bedroom.

The ground floor management suite will have a small entrance lobby and reception desk which will be used to offer a parcel hold and collection service. Beyond reception an open plan space will act as flexible office and meetings space, and there will be a separate meeting room off this to facilitate private discussion as necessary. There will be a small private office within the management suite. It will be provided with its own dedicated toilet and beverage bay kitchenette.

3.5 Appearance

The existing external appearance will not be materially altered under this proposal.

Changes to appearance will be limited to de minimis redecoration of trim to the projecting ground floor feature area, replacement of signage and tidying up of the small associated fenced forecourt which has become overgrown with weeds since the unit has been vacant.

A new external door is likely to be required, pending further investigation of the state of repair of the existing.

3.6 Landscaping

Existing paving and gravel has become somewhat overgrown with weeds, and will be tidied up as part of the process of bringing the unit back into active use. Beyond that, the landscape will remain as existing, with a de minimis exception of local levelling at the threshold to one of the doors to take out a small (c. 50mm step) in order to render it nominally flush for wheelchair access

4.0 Access

4.1 Pedestrian Access

Access to the first floor apartment will be via one of two entrances: one from Mosely Road, the other from Balmoral Road, giving a convenient route from either direction of approach.

Each entrance door leads to the same central stairwell which takes people directly up toward the apartment entrance.

Whilst the entrance doors have level access thresholds and sufficient width to allow wheelchair access, there is no passenger lift within the existing building for wheelchair users to access the upper floors.

Access to the management suite is via a gate in the external fence from Mosely Road footway. From there, a nominally level footpath surfaced with block paving and flag paving offers an easy route to the main entrance door. The door threshold has an existing c.50mm step which will be rendered flush by minor alteration as part of the project to allow wheelchair user access. The main entrance door is sufficiently wide to accommodate wheelchair users.

Within the management suite, a new reception desk area will be designed to accommodate wheelchair users, and the internal floor runs at one flat level throughout the unit to offer full access for all. The toilet within the Management suite will be a wheelchair accessible facility.

4.2 Public Transport

Local public transport links are excellent. In particular, Mosely Road enjoys bus services, and Wilmslow Road offers what is reputed to be one of the busiest bus routes in Europe within a few hundred meters of the site and links the area with the main University Campus in Manchester City Centre.

4.3 Vehicle Access

The new apartment will enjoy use of the ample private courtyard car parking available to residents of Chancellor's Court.

Balmoral Road and surrounding streets offer on-street car parking for visitors and readily available spaces to drop off passengers close to the management suite.

4.4 Services

The new apartment will be serviced from the private courtyard as per the wider Chancellor's Court development.

The management suite will also enjoy an element of servicing from this same private courtyard. Parcel deliveries are envisaged to use local on-street parking opportunities as they would if delivering to a private residential address in the local area, but with the added benefits that there will always be a manned reception desk to receive the delivery at the Management suite, and multiple parcels can be delivered in one visit, thereby reducing journeys.