

Statement in support of the proposed change of use of the existing lower ground floor commercial space to one two bed apartment at **Outram House, Piccadilly Village, Manchester M4 7AA**



JG-D has been instructed by Mr T Mahmood trading as HM Empire Estates to prepare a Planning application for the change of use of the existing lower ground floor Commercial space at Outram House in Piccadilly Gardens to create a two bed apartment..

Planning History

Originally a rural outskirt to the East of Manchester Ancoats expanded in the latter part of the 18th Century with the construction of the Rochdale and Ashton Canals and associated cotton mills. Great Ancoats Street became one of Manchester's most important roads and as part of the inner ring road formed the gateway to North Manchester and Oldham. Piccadilly Gardens was built in the early 1990's on the site of Phoenix Works, a former metal works, between

Ashton Canal and Great Ancoats Street. It was originally designed as a mixed use scheme with a variety of complimentary uses including live work units, shops, offices and apartments but most of the spaces have been converted to residential use. A Prior Notification approval was granted in 2018 (119364/P30PA/2018) for the change of use of the rest of Outram House from offices to 43no Studio apartments.

A further prior notification application was made for the conversion of the application site and the floor above into four apartments in 2023 (App no 137575/P3MAP/2023) but withdrawn at the suggestion of the LPA based on the perceived low lighting levels to one of the lower ground floor apartments, and the lack of parking. The scheme has now been split with the conversion of the Upper Ground Floor a standalone Prior Approval application and this application for the conversion of the lower ground floor into a two bed apartment.

Existing Commercial Space

The existing lower ground floor space provided support and meeting accommodation for ALH Accident Lawyers Helpline handling personal accident compensation claims.

Linked offices at upper ground floor level were accessed by twinned stairs down to the application space which is divided by a central loadbearing wall. Lobby areas to both stairs provide external access to a loggia with links to the Canal towpath and James Brindley Basin. One half of the space included a glazed meeting room whilst the other offered a kitchen space and staff break-out areas. The accommodation undersails the building above and is limited to window openings on two elevations. It also includes a double garage accessed from Millbank Street through James Brindley Basin. The Commercial use ceased in 2022.

The Scheme

Proposals work within the existing envelope to create a two bed residential apartment. The existing stair openings will be infilled with fire resisting construction and a central corridor created to access the proposed accommodation from one of the existing external doors.

Bedroom accommodation will be located to the entrance of the apartment with one room served by the existing window opening to the car park, the other by the window and door openings to the covered walkway. Sanitary and storage accommodation will be positioned to the internal corner of the apartment whilst an open plan living space will benefit from the existing opening to the canal, refurbished to include a window to match the existing in lieu of glazed brick.

Planning Policy

National Planning policy guidance is set out in National Policy Statements, primarily the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published 20th July 2021, the Planning Practice Guidance Suite (PPGS) first launched 6th March 2014 together with Circulars, Ministerial Statements and associated technical guidance. The NPPF constitutes guidance for local planning authorities and is a material consideration in determining applications.

Chapter 2 Achieving sustainable development advocates a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Chapter 5 seeks to ensure a sufficient supply of homes whilst Chapter 8 promotes healthy and Safe communities.

Chapter 12 of the NPPF aims to achieve well designed places.

Local Planning Policy is provided by the Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2012 - 2027 ('the Core Strategy') which was adopted by Manchester Council on 11th July 2012.

Relevant policies within the Core Strategy include SP 1 which relates to spatial principles and the creation of well designed, inclusive spaces.

Policy EN19 seeks to ensure appropriate provision for the storage and collection of waste whilst H1 relates to overall housing provision.

Sustainable transport is covered within Policy T1 whilst DM1 offers guidance on specific development principles.

Planning Assessment

The applicant acknowledges the assistance given by the LPA in determining the previous application and believes that the revised proposals are in accordance with Planning Policy.

The conversion of an underused commercial space to provide living accommodation is deemed to offer a sustainable approach. Outram House was converted to living accommodation over 5 years ago and the application site sits incongruously amongst its residential neighbours with security grilles and boarded openings. The previous approval provides exclusively one bed accommodation whilst the proposed scheme offers two bedrooms potentially appealing to a wider market and encouraging a more diverse community. As a change of use impacting the setting is considered marginal although as previously noted removing the commercial use – and the associated security measures – is deemed a positive enhancement.

Assessed against the Core Strategy the proposed scheme equally delivers an enhancement on the current arrangement. Single level living accessible by a level threshold broadens the range of potential residents and the change of use offers passive surveillance to an exposed corner of the site.

The site operates a site wide refuse strategy which is controlled by the managing agents. Although permission to locate refuse storage within the covered walkway was requested the applicant has been advised that the existing secure storage – located diagonally opposite the application site – must be used. Assurances have been given however that sufficient capacity is available for both refuse and recycling.

As previously noted, the provision of a two bedroom apartment offers diversity from the single bed apartments of Outram House and windfall schemes can be beneficial in meeting housing requirements.

Outram House is well located and benefits from readily accessible public transport links on Great Ancoats Street and Piccadilly Station. The scheme incorporates cycle storage within the apartment and also benefits from the existing garage, accessible from James Brindley Basin which provides two parking spaces.

In terms of the requirements of Policy DM1, the majority of the criteria are deemed covered by the nature of the scheme. The conversion of an existing building within an established development leaves little opportunity to effect change. The removal of the security grilles and boarded openings is considered an enhancement and the changing pattern of occupation will offer community benefits. Dedicated external amenity space is not available throughout the site but the external courtyard and canal footpath link to the wider city.

The area of concern raised by the previous application relates to the internal environment of the proposed second bedroom however. The conversion of the commercial space offers the opportunity to re-open the boarded door opening to increase the glazed area serving the room although both windows face into the covered walkway between the Basin and Canal. It is opined that the area of glazing is commensurate with the size of the room however and lighting/ ventilation will be appropriate. Oblique light is available from both North and South and the canal acts as a reflector. A similar arrangement exists at 11 James Brindley Basin.

Access

The new dwelling will feature a primary access with a level threshold linked to the existing paved approach from the development courtyard.

Internally any projection and/or fixed objects on circulation routes will not reduce the effective width of the clear space below 750mm.

The position of all accessible switches and socket points are to comply with the requirements of Approved Document Part M2, Section 8, diagram 29 - set at a maximum of 1200mm above finish floor level.

Climate Change Mitigation

The issue of Climate change will be addressed through the conversion of the existing commercial space. Lights will be energy saving and will be fitted with timers whilst water saving devices will be fitted to all sanitaryware.

The applicant will undertake the works with local contractors and use local materials. Waste will be recycled as far as possible and recycling provision will also be provided.

Ecology and Environment

The existing building offers limited opportunity for habitat enhancement but a sparrow terrace will be erected as part of the conversion works.

Walkover Inspection

A walkover inspection of the site has revealed no evidence of subsidence or defects.

Incoming Utilities Assessment

The existing use suggests that services capacity will be sufficient to serve a new dwelling.

Drainage assessment

The application site is within Flood Zone 1.

Existing connections will be re-used for the proposed conversion works.

From: Caroline Bousfield <caroline.bousfield@urbanbubble.co.uk>
Date: 16 February 2024 at 12:27:52 GMT
To: tajlat_ert@hotmail.com
Cc: Charlotte Sleep <charlotte@urbanbubble.co.uk>
Subject: 8 - 10 Outram House

Good afternoon,

Huge apologies that you have been awaiting a response from Charlotte.
She is currently out of the office.

The directors have informed me that your proposal for 8 - 10 Outram House has been approved, you have the consent to go ahead subject to planning and previous agreements discussed.
Requirements have been highlighted, such as keeping the garage door closed at all times.

If you have any questions, please let me know and I will feed them back for discussion.

Many thanks,
Caroline



Caroline Bousfield
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Confirmation from Freeholder's agents of scheme approval