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Vegetarian Society – Cover Letter

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Submitted via Planning Portal Reference: PP-12641525

Dear Sir / Madam,

The Vegetarian Society - Jackson's Warehouse, Manchester

Planning and Listed Building Consent for change of use of the ground floor unit of Jacksons Warehouse from Use Class E (Office) to Sui Generis to accommodate a vegetarian cookery school with associated office area (Sui Generis), including use of external area to the front of the building for outdoor seating associated with the cookery school.

Introduction

We write on behalf of our client The Vegetarian Society, for a Listed Building Consent and formal planning permission to make changes to the ground unit located within Jackson's Warehouse.

The proposed description of development is:

Planning and Listed Building Consent for change of use of the ground floor unit of Jacksons Warehouse from Use Class E (Office) to Sui Generis to accommodate a vegetarian cookery school with associated office area (Sui Generis), including use of external area to the front of the building for outdoor seating associated with the cookery school.

This application is submitted in full and as such accompanied by a full suite of plans, drawings and technical reports as required by Manchester City Council's Validation Checklist. These are listed below for completeness.

Application Documents

The application consists of the following documents:

- Application Forms and Ownership Certificates
- Covering Letter – Savills
- Site Location Plan
- Existing Floor Plan
- Heritage Impact Assessment – Savills
- Design and Operator's Statement – The Applicant (The Vegetarian Society)
- Table Top Ventilation Details
- Proposed Floor Plan – Dawnvale Group
- Cooking School Plan – Dawnvale Group
- Wash Up Area Plan – Dawnvale Group

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A payment to cover the application fee of £462 and administration fee of £64 has been paid via the Planning Portal.

Pre-application Engagement

The client and design team have been keen to engage Officers from the outset of the project. Emails were exchanged with Officers. The initial feedback included ensuring any existing fume extraction can deal with the requirements of the use and ensuring other technical issues such as waste have been addressed, as such, this application includes relevant details.

Jackson's Warehouse

The main Jackson Warehouse building is a Grade II* listed building located off Tariff Street. The property is located in the heart of the "Northern Quarter" of Manchester city centre. The building is not located in a Conservation Area.

To the immediate west of Jackson Warehouse is a canal basin area which is accessed off the Rochdale canal tow path. The building is six storeys in height and is a typical Victorian warehouse constructed in 1836. The building comprises a former warehouse which was converted in 2003 to a mixed use development (LPA: 065875/FO/CITY3/02) with commercial space at ground floor level (area subject to this application) and residential apartments above.

The upper floors comprise residential apartments and at the time of the original change of use application the intention was to create a mixed use development with commercial space at ground floor level and residential properties above. The proposed change of use will ensure that this layout remains.

The ground floor commercial unit covers circa. 256 sqm internal floor area. It is rectangular in shape and is sub-divided internally by a number of walls. The commercial unit runs through the whole length of the wider building and the entrance to the property overlooks the canal basin which is accessed of the Rochdale Canal.

Planning History

The key planning approvals in relation to the building, specifically the ground floor commercial area, are set out below.

LPA Reference	Description of Development	Status / Date
065875/FO/CITY3/02	Conversion of former warehouse to provide 42 apartments with retail use (Use Classes A1/A2/A3) at ground floor	Approved 2003
078960/LO/2006/C3	Listed Building Consent for the installation of replacement individual letter sign and new perimeter signage (Moon)	Approved 2006
065876/LO/CITY3/02	Listed Building Consent for works to allow conversion of former warehouse to residential apartments and retail use	Approved 2003
078931/AO/2006/C3	Installation of replacement individual letter fascia sign and new perimeter signage (Moon)	Approved 2006
060522/LO/CITY3/00	Listed Building Consent for alterations in connection with proposed conversion to residential apartments	Approved 2001
079190/FU/2006/C3	Use of external area for outdoor seating, (11am - 9pm Monday to Saturday, 11am - 8pm Sunday)	Temporary Approval 2006

090329/FO/2009/C2	Use of the existing terrace as an outdoor seating area in association with the existing ground floor restaurant/bar for a temporary period of 12 months	Temporary Approval 2010
096833/FO/2011/C2	Use of the existing terrace as an outdoor seating area in association with the existing ground floor restaurant/bar for a temporary period of 12 months	Temporary Approval 2011

The Applicant

The applicant is The Vegetarian Society, a UK based charity formed in 1847, operating from Manchester since 1848. The organisation has been based outside Altrincham since 1968 but they now wish to relocate the head office and teaching kitchen into the city centre. The accessible location and character of Jacksons Warehouse (as well as this units previous use) align with the requirements of The Vegetarian Society.

Proposals

This application relates to the ground floor and external area associated with Jackson's Warehouse. The area is currently vacant but it was last in use as an office (Class E) having received approval for a change of use from bar/ restaurant in February 2019 (LPA Reference: 121825/LO/2018).

The existing use was delivered as part of the wider conversion of the former warehouse building in 2003 (LPA: 065875/FO/CITY3/02) Since then, the building has been subject to a number of change of use applications, having previously been used an office, bar and restaurant, all of which now fall under a Class E, flexible commercial use, following changes to the Use Class Order in September 2020.

Whilst the proposed office element required by The Vegetarian Society would conform to the current use of the building (Class E Office), the cookery teaching element falls under a Sui Generis use and therefore a change of use is required.

There are two main requirements for the space:

1. **Office** - Relocation of The Vegetarian Society offices, providing office space for employees relocating from existing Altrincham offices

2. **Cookery School** - Relocation of The Vegetarian Society Cookery School from existing Altrincham location

Office Element

The office element will serve as a base for employees and guests of the organisation to work. The existing space was last used as offices, so the transition of part of the area to an office space will ensure minimal intervention.

The Vegetarian Society currently employees 23 members of staff, including 3 full time members of the cookery school plus additional flexible contract and freelance staff. All members of staff will be relocating to the new office space, following the closure of the Altrincham location.

Cookery School Element

The cookery school element is part of The Vegetarian Society's existing offer, which they wish to continue with when they relocate to a new office space. The cookery school will operate in part of the building, alongside the offices and will offer educational classes which will be led by an instructor. There are a number of strands to

the cookery school, including teaching classes, workshops and demonstrations. The number of attendees will depend on the type of cooking class. The majority of classes will host 16 attendees, as most sessions will be paid for 'hands on' classes running throughout the week. Further information in relation to the type of classes, length and capacity is set out in the table below.

Cookery Class	Information	Attendees
Hands on Cookery Class:	Courses and classes run most weekends (daytime and evenings).	Up to 16
Longer Courses	3-5 day courses, approximately 8 times a year	Up to 16
Community and Bespoke Sessions	Ad hoc as funding permits, usually operating in the daytime on weekdays.	Up to 25
Culinary Demonstrations, Tasting Events, Guest Speaker Events		Up to 40
Culinary Theory Classes		Up to 30

The building has been used as a café, bar and restaurant in the past and therefore the principle of using this space for cooking and hosting people has previously been accepted by the Local Planning Authority. However, in this case the scale and timings of the proposed classes would be much smaller and quieter than if it were to return to a bar/ restaurant use. The classes will be infrequent and there will be a limit to the timings of the class – ensuring they take place in sociable hours and do not impact on residential amenity. Nonetheless, a more intense food and drink use has previously existed in this location which would suggest the cookery school element is acceptable, given that it would be minimal in comparison.

The change of use seeks to accommodate nine cooking stations which will be separated from the office area through a soundproof glass wall. All ventilation will be through an extractor fan system in the counter tops.

Given that the proposed extraction will be counter top, no external alterations are required. This essentially ensures minimal intervention with the listed building, providing a less intrusive option which is appropriate for the proposed cooking activities (given that they will be limited to vegetarian cooking – i.e. no meat or fish fumes).

Waste production will be minimal, comprising low volumes of paper, mixed recycling and food waste. The applicant will engage a commercial/recycling waste company and contract for removal of waste and recycling. They expect they will collect fortnightly, except for food waste which will be weekly. 3 no. 110 litre containers will be housed internally within the unit in the service cupboard next to the toilets, with date and time for collections planned such that there is no need to located any bins externally. On collection days, staff will transport the bins to the collection area approximately 30mins before the collection time.

No major internal physical works are proposed to the building. The internal works predominately comprise office and cookery school fit out works (such as installation of office fixture and fittings and cooking stations).

Internal Alterations

The westernmost room will remain in their existing use as WCs, a shower room and kitchen. There are no proposed alterations to WCs and minimal alterations are proposed to the existing kitchen space, including the replacement of existing kitchen units and installation of new ambient food storage units. A glazed partition is proposed within the central west room, separating the boardroom from the communal dining and reception area. Two other glazed partitions are proposed either side of the cookery school area, to provide further separation from the communal area and the offices. The partitions will follow the alignment of the existing walls between the spaces and their glass materiality will ensure the sense of openness is retained.

In the adjacent room to the east, the non-original glazed partition will be removed to the south, opening up this space as per the original layout. The new cooking units will be fixed to the non-original floor with the majority of the existing brickwork to remain exposed.

The proposed alterations to the easternmost rooms comprise installing plasterboard partitions to create a staff kitchen and WC in the room to the north, with no alterations made to the south.

External Area

The planning history relating to the building confirms that outdoor seating in this area has previously been approved and used alongside the previous food and drink use, again suggesting that it is acceptable in principle, whilst it was not utilised alongside its most recent office use, this application seeks permission to reinstate this use, providing outdoor seating for cookery school attendees and office employees.

The space will be activated for external seating purposes during the day (weather dependent) and all paraphernalia associated with the use will be removed and stored inside the building at the end of the day when the building is closed.

The outdoor space will only be used between 9am – 10pm and will only be operational as late as 10pm on summer evenings when cookery classes run into the evening, therefore on an ad hoc basis.

External planters will be placed around the area in front of the marina to act as barriers for safety purposes.

Heritage

A Heritage Statement has been produced by Savills and supports this application which confirms that the overall contribution that the ground floor makes to the significance of the Grade II* listed building is predominantly derived from the two central rooms, punctuated by the original shipping holes, as well as the overall openness of the wider floorspace. Notable original features include exposed brickwork, iron columns, timber beams and trusses.

The Heritage Report confirms that the proposals have been designed to be sympathetic to such features, retaining both material elements and the openness of the floor space, which is achieved by the use of glazed materiality for new partitions and minor alterations required.

As such, the report confirms that the proposals are considered to result in no adverse impact to either historic fabric or the floorplan/layout of the building. Overall, the proposals are judged to cause no harm to the Grade II* listed building.

Planning Policy

Section 38(6) of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act requires that all planning applications are determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Development Plan for Manchester comprises the Core Strategy that was adopted on 11 July 2012 together with the saved policies from the Manchester UDP and the Proposals Map. The adopted Manchester Core Strategy sets out the City Council's Vision for Manchester to 2026.

The Strategy identifies the Site as falling within the 'City Centre'. Key policies relevant to the site are as follows:

Policy	Description
Policy SP1 Spatial Principles	Details the key spatial principles which will guide the strategic development of Manchester to 2027. The policy states that the Regional Centre of Manchester will be the focus for economic and commercial development, retail, leisure and cultural activity, alongside high quality city living.
Policy EC1 Employment and Economic Growth in Manchester	Priorities for ensuring continued economic growth include demonstrating that employment generating development has fully considered opportunities to provide jobs for local people, through construction or use; and ensuring the continued social, economic and environmental regeneration of the City.
Policy EC3 Regional Centre	States that within the development for employment generating uses including offices and other commercial development will be encouraged. Office developments will be appropriate providing that they are in locations which are well connected by sustainable transport to both the city centre and residential areas. Housing will also be an appropriate use within the Regional Centre, although this should complement the development of mixed use employment areas. Subject to site and location details, the Regional Centre will generally be a location where higher density residential development is appropriate.
Policy EN1 Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas	All development in Manchester will be expected to follow the seven principles of urban design (character, continuity and enclosure, public realm, ease of movement, legibility, adaptability and diversity) and have regard to the strategic character area in which the development is located.
Policy EN3 Heritage	Throughout the City, development that complements and takes advantage of the distinct historic and heritage features of its districts and neighbourhoods, including those of the City Centre will be encouraged. New developments must be designed so as to support the Council in preserving and enhancing the historic environment, the character, setting and accessibility of areas and buildings of acknowledged importance, including listed buildings, and conservation areas. Proposals which enable the re-use of heritage assets will be encouraged where they are considered consistent with the significance of the heritage asset.
Policy CC1 Manchester City Centre	The city centre is a strategic economic location and focus of employment growth in the City and City Region. Within the city centre and the fringe a variety of high quality accommodation types, sizes and foot-plates will be encouraged to boost investment by local, national and international businesses. The city centre and fringe will be considered a suitable location for the consideration of high density buildings and commercially led mixed use schemes. The policy states that “Developments which lead to the more intensive use of employment land (in terms of floorspace provided) will be supported”.
Policy CC4 Visitors – Tourism, Culture and Leisure	Policy CC4 posits a focus on the City Centre as a hub for culture and leisure in the City Region. As such, proposals which improve the appearance, use and accessibility of all cultural and visitor attractions and associated facilities will be supported.

Policy CC9 Design and Heritage	Development in Manchester City Centre should preserve or enhance the heritage assets that have been identified, including listed buildings and conservation areas. The Council will support high density and mixed use development in the City Centre, but developers must recognise the specific design challenges that must be overcome to ensure complementarity of function and form. New development must support the range of uses the Council expects in the City Centre and contribute to a coherent and integrated physical environment.
Policy CC10 A Place for Everyone	The City Centre will develop as a location which appeals to a wide range of residents and visitors. Development which promotes this objective will be supported, particularly through increasing the diversity of activity in the City Centre and high standards of accessibility to buildings and across spaces.
Policy DM1 Development Management	All development should have regard to the specific issues including: effects on amenity such as noise, privacy, light, air quality, road safety and traffic generation; accessibility; community safety and crime prevention; vehicular access; and, green infrastructure.

Planning Context

Manchester City Centre is a strategic economic location and focus of employment growth in the City and City Region (as identified within Manchester's adopted Core Strategy, 2016). The Core Strategy confirms that in the City Centre and the fringe a variety of high quality accommodation types, sizes and foot-plates will be encouraged to boost investment by local, national and international businesses. The City Centre and fringe will be considered a suitable location for the consideration of high density buildings and commercially led mixed use schemes.

The proposed changes are considered to be acceptable and accord with the objectives of Core Strategy EC1 and EC3, in that they will seek to complement the initial proposed use for this part of the building – remaining in a commercial use, in line with previous uses for the building – office use and food and drink. However, the proposed cookery teaching element is less intense than a café or restaurant use would be, in that the use is infrequent and small scale, operating in line with more sociable hours.

The proposed scheme seeks to refurbish Jackson's Warehouse in a way that both fully celebrates its heritage. The proposals have been assessed against policies EN3 (Heritage) and CC9 (Design and Heritage) to ensure that the refurbishment works and improvements respect the listed building. A Heritage Report has been submitted as part of this application which assesses the heritage impact in detail.

Conclusion

This proposal seeks to change the use of Jackson's Warehouse to facilitate the Vegetarian Society occupying a city centre office space location, with teaching space for vegetarian cookery classes. The proposals create a high quality area which celebrates and enhances the unique details from the original building.

The design and layout has been carefully considered and minimised harmful intervention. The proposed works will fulfil the building's economic contribution to the City, in line with adopted planning and regeneration policy. The proposed development will contribute to the economic, social and environmental improvement of the site.

We look forward to working with the local planning authority on the formal assessment of the planning application. We hope that you will share our view that the scheme will make a positive contribution to the local area.

We trust that the application is in order and look forward to receiving confirmation that it has been validated in due course. In the meantime, should you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact Jay Patel at these offices.

Yours sincerely



Savills Planning
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