Alterations and Conversion of

748-756 Wilmslow Road

Didsbury

Manchester

M20 2DW



Design and Access Statement

November 2023

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1. Site and Contact information

Site address: 748-756 Wilmslow Road
Didsbury
Manchester
M20 2DW

Contact details:

Name of applicant: Didsbury Estates

Name of Agent: IPS Architects

2. Introduction

This design statement accompanies the full planning application for the alteration and conversion of the upper floors of 748-756 Wilmslow Road, Didsbury, Manchester, M20 2DW. This statement is to be read in conjunction with all other submission documentation, which accompanies the application.

The existing property consists of a retail unit and restaurant at ground floor with two-storey maisonette flats above on the first and second floors.

The building sits within the main retail area in Didsbury and does not reside within, nor is directly adjacent to, the Didsbury St James Conservation Area which resides to the south.

This document outlines a proposal to convert the first and second floors from residential accommodation to new office space.



Location of the site – Bing Maps



Location of the site – Bing Maps

3. Context

The application site consists of an operating retail unit and restaurant at ground floor with three, two-storey maisonettes over on the first and second floors. The property is located within a mixed residential / commercial area. It is within very easy walking distance to good transport links via buses and the nearby Didsbury Village tram stop.

3.1 existing use

The existing site consists of an operating retail unit and restaurant at ground floor with three, two-storey maisonettes over occupying the first and second floors.

3.2 existing amount/scale

The proposed application is for conversion of the first and second floor residential accommodation to new office accommodation. Each office will have a new servery and WC.

3.3 existing appearance

On the front façade, at ground floor, the existing building consists of shop fronts with large, glazed areas for the retail and restaurant spaces. On the first and second floors, the building consists of red facing brick with high level ribbon UPVC windows. The ribbon windows are locally dropped/enlarged to provide windows for the maisonettes above. To the rear, the ground floor units run the full length of the building with the first and second floors set back forming a central first floor courtyard/terrace area. The courtyard area is accessed from a staircase to the south of the property and, in turn, the courtyard provides amenity space and access to the maisonettes. There is white UPVC cladding at first floor and red facing brick on the second floor.

3.4 existing layout

The property is located near the corner of Wilmslow road/A5145 and Whitechapel Street, with its front facade and main entrance facing Wilmslow road.

The specific application site is currently an operating retail unit and restaurant at ground floor with three, two-storey maisonettes over occupying the first and second floors.

3.5 existing landscaping

The first-floor terrace consists predominately of a felt flat roof with some localised planters and a washing line. There are no other areas of landscaping either existing or proposed that are included within this application.

4. Design Principles and concepts

4.1 proposed use

The proposed use is intended to provide diversity to a currently mixed residential/commercial area with the introduction of new office space at first and second floor levels. It is intended that the office space will bring additional footfall into the retail centre during the working day.

4.2 proposed appearance

Permission is being sought to make both internal and external alterations to the property with a change of use. The ground floor will remain unchanged with its current use with all changes being proposed at first and second floor levels.

The proposals seek to convert the first and second floor maisonettes into office space to bring diversity to the retail centre and provide additional footfall during the working day. As part of the conversion, it is proposed to lower the window sills to provide additional internal daylight and to reflect the windows on the neighbouring properties.

To the rear, a new covered walkway will be installed to provide shelter for workers accessing the office space. In order to provide some amenity/break out space for the workers, the existing courtyard/terrace/roof area is to be decked with millboard or similar decking material to improve the visual appearance with outdoor seating for workers to utilise. Localised planters are to be introduced to provide some greenery to the space with new timber screening to provide some natural materials amongst the masonry structure.



Existing Courtyard space



Existing Courtyard space

4.3 proposed layout

The proposed offices would be accessed from the existing staircase to the south of the property with a new covered walkway providing sheltered access to each of the new offices. Each office would be 2 storey.

The existing first floor courtyard is to be refurbished as described previously to provide a break out space directly adjacent the office entrances.

Internally, the existing maisonette dividing walls are to be retained while removing all other internal walls to provide 3 new, open plan office spaces. Combined with the enlargement/lowering of the windows, the open plan spaces are intended to provide, well lit and flexible working spaces.

Each office is to be provided with WC facilities and a servery for workers.

5. Inclusive Access

This Access Statement has been prepared to accompany the planning application for change of use. As explained in the substantive application, the application is simply for permission to convert the existing first and second floors of the premises to office space.

It is not proposed to change the access from street level due to the practicalities of the site/existing building and the fact that the building/access stairwell fronts directly onto the pavement. It is envisaged that access for disabled employees/visitors would be managed by the final tenant/occupier.

Means of escape from the first and second floors is via the staircase to the south.



6. Community Safety

The application site is in an existing retail and restaurant space with residential over located on Wilmslow Road.

The proposals have been designed to limit any opportunities for anti-social behaviour or vandalism with replacement windows to offer additional security. To this end, they have been informed by practical crime prevention measures.

7. Environmental sustainability

7.1 sustainable materials

Where possible, materials will be sourced locally to lower the embodied energy of the build. Materials, such as timber will also be sourced from sustainable manufacturers.

7.2 biodiversity and local environment

The proposals do not cause any harm to the local environment or biodiversity due to their inherent design and the existing hard landscaping.

7.3 water

Water usage in the new WCs/serveries will be limited via water saving devices.

7.4 waste management

The works will ensure that all waste is correctly collected and sorted on site to maximise recycling and re-use.

8. Movement to, from and within the development

8.1 connection

The site is located on Wilmslow Road, which is a mixed commercial / residential area not far from good transport links including a bus stop outside and Didsbury Village Tram stop within a 5 minute walk.

8.2 modes

The property is less than a five-minute walk from Didsbury Village Tram stop with connections to Manchester. There are also networks of bus routes with a bus stop directly outside the property.

8.3 parking

Parking will not form a part of this proposal; there is sufficient local capacity for both off and on street parking.

9. Summary

The site presents an opportunity to provide additional office space to a mixed commercial/ residential area close to excellent transport links.

The core aim is to provide additional office space with the opportunity for additional footfall with the retail area during the working day.

The external window alterations are designed to mimic/reflect the neighbouring properties and alterations to the rear are intended to enhance the currently underused roof terrace/courtyard area. All other proposed changes are to be formed by internal alterations only, which should not impact on the external character of the building.