



PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

UNIT 19, ROYAL EXCHANGE ARCADE, MANCHESTER, M2 7EA

JUNE 2023

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 APM Design Ltd have been commissioned on behalf of Luxe Fitness to prepare this Planning, Design and Access Statement as part of the Listed Building Consent Application for proposed refurbishment works to the ground floor and basement of Unit 19, Royal Exchange Arcade, Manchester, M2 7EA.
- 1.2 This statement has been prepared in relation to the proposed refurbishment of the vacant basement gym as well as the adjoining ground floor café with associated catering facilities and welfare spaces within the basement. The Client's proposal once works are complete is for a gymnasium with associated juice bar offering. There is therefore to be no separate application for change in use of the building from its current allocated planning categorisation as the current use class E is appropriate.

Case overview

- 1.3 This document demonstrates the following:

The site is in a highly sustainable city centre location with a high demand for its use. It would therefore have a positive impact on the community and area as a whole.

The proposals have been prepared and subsequently meets the requirements and recommendation of the local development core strategy plan, national planning policy framework, planning (listed building and conservation areas) act 1990 and the design for access².

The Heritage Statement provided in support of this document demonstrates that the proposals will have no adverse affects on the heritage of the site.

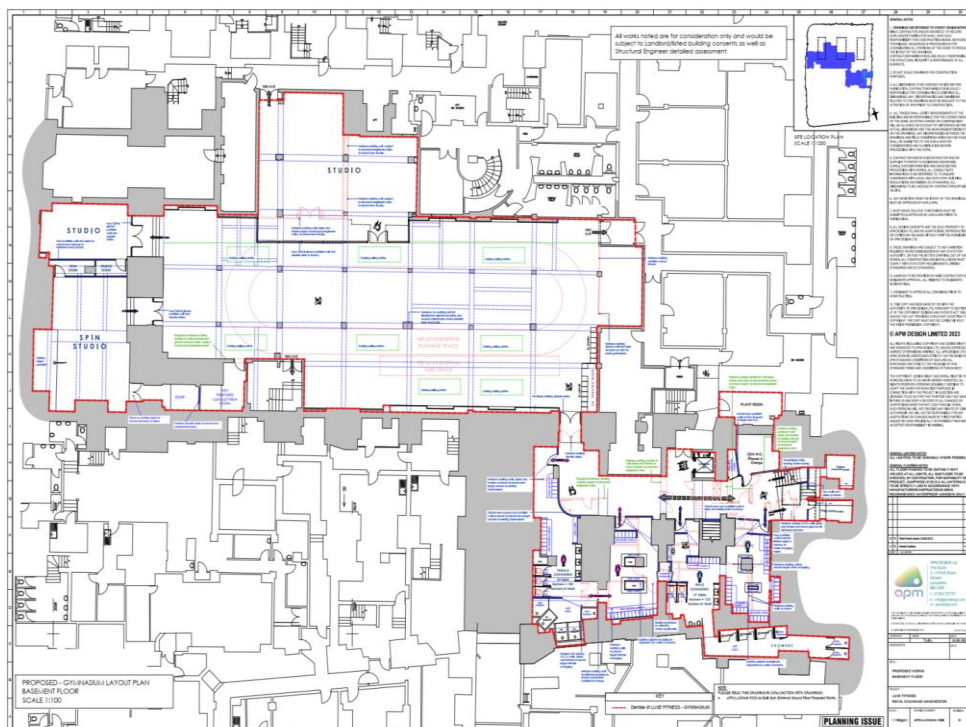
The application should therefore be approved without delay.

- 1.4 The contents of this report shall include the following:

1. Introduction
2. Site and Proposed Development Context
3. Proposed Design Principals
4. Policy and Framework Context
5. Conclusion

2. SITE AND DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

- 2.1 The Royal Exchange building is a Grade II listed building and is located within Manchester city centre's St Ann's square conservation area.
- 2.2 As well as being within the St Ann's square conservation area, the Royal Exchange is also adjacent to the Manchester King Street conservation area.
- 2.3 The Royal Exchange building is neighboured by Market Street (North), Exchange Street (West), St Ann's Square (South), and Old Bank Street (South). The building is a prominent landmark in the area as well as serving as a main pedestrian route for transit between Deansgate, Market Street and King Street. The Royal Exchange Arcade is recognised as a leading leisure and retail destination in the city.
- 2.4 The building has seven storeys above ground level; five main floor go to parapet level with a further two above. There are then a further four basement levels. Eleven floor levels in total.
- 2.5 The corresponding Heritage Statement which has been provided as part of this application goes into detail regarding the heritage history and consideration for this proposal.
- 2.6 The units within the arcade can all be classified as planning class use E (a,b,c). With the upper floors of the building comprising of office use. There is also a large theatre within the building which shares the same name.
- 2.7 The site is within the arcade of the Manchester Royal Exchange. Ground Floor unit 19 was a café until early 2023, it has since been left vacant. The large adjoining basement was last used as a gymnasium, the same use now proposed. The basement has been vacant since summer 2022 when the former tenant closed the business.
- 2.8 See below extract of the current basement floor plan:



2.9 See below photographs showing the current condition of the basement and ground floor unit.



- 2.10 The most recent approved planning scheme in relation to the site is - 118801 / FO / 2018 - which was approved planning consent and change of use 14th May 2018. This application was to change the use of the basement from a nightclub to a gymnasium and consequently for the refurbishment of the site to make it suitable for its new use.
- 2.11 In addition to the above application, there is a precedent of other units within the Royal Exchange Arcade undergoing refurbishment works. It is worth noting that many of these units have modern illuminated signage and modern shopfront displays. This application seeks to sensitively work with the existing historic shopfront to celebrate the heritage of the building.

3. PROPOSED DESIGN PRINCIPALS

- 3.1 The proposal is to provide a new gymnasium with associated client juice bar. This will, where possible, make use of the existing gymnasium layout with a number of proposed alterations to ensure that future clients can move about the space efficiently and safely. The proposal is for the gymnasium to be open twenty four hours a day, seven days a week, subject to final landlord approvals.
- 3.2 The Client, Luxe Fitness, has two other venues elsewhere in the UK, both in historic buildings and has demonstrated a successful business model.
- 3.3 Please note that whilst the existing basement has been developed for gym use, a number of alterations are required to ensure the latest proposal is a long term success, in contrast to the previous gym which proved to be unsustainable, in part due to the existing basement space planning configuration which provided inadequate equal opportunity access and client welfare spaces.
- 3.4 Full detail of the proposed new works can be found elsewhere in the planning application, however by means of a summary please note the key works proposed:

Existing main gym entrance to become an out of hours and equal opportunity point in access, with the main entrance intended to be via the existing unit 19 café shopfront.

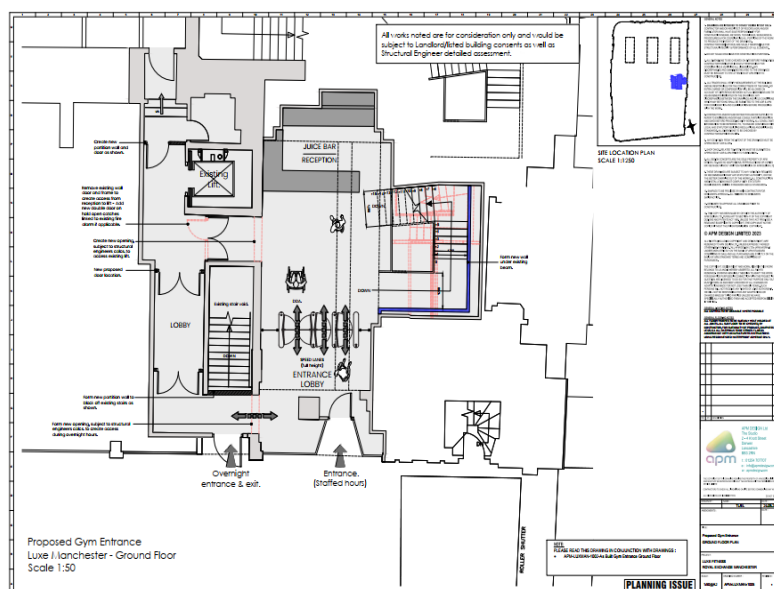
A lift suitable for wheelchair access will be provided to ensure access to the basement level.

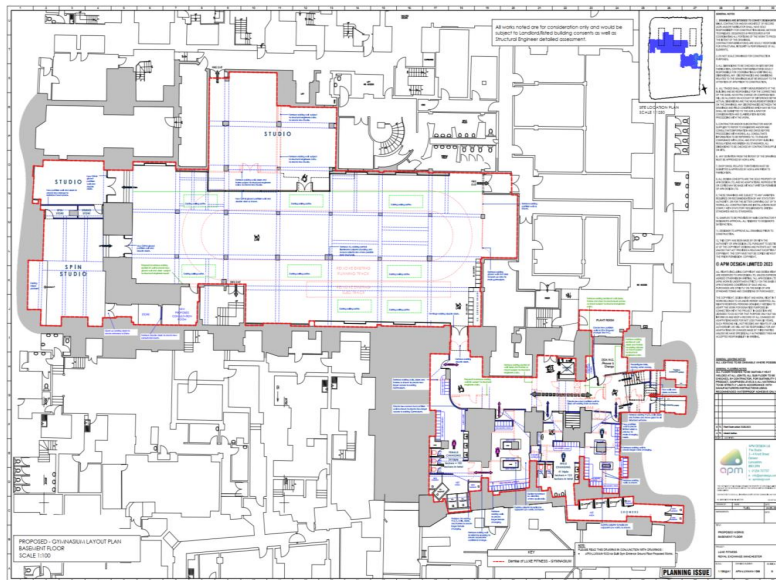
The existing gym access staircase will be sealed off with the new main access being via the existing café staircase which is to be enlarged to facilitate an increase in foot traffic.

The basement areas are to be reconfigured to create a level access throughout to enable equal opportunity access and a more efficient and safe flow for Clients using the changing areas, gymnasium and studio spaces.

A new interior design scheme will be introduced in line with the brand identity of the Client's other gyms.

- 3.6 See below extracts of the proposed plans submitted as part of this application.





- 3.7 The gym will be equipped with an effective and adequate CCTV system with a digital recording facility. The system shall be maintained and operated at the premises. Recorded images will be retained for at least 28 days and will be available to the police upon request.
- 3.8 Gym / management staff will:
- Ensure fire extinguishers are regularly maintained and inspected;
 - Implement staff awareness schemes and training to ensure compliance with health and safety and fire prevention legislation;
 - Ensure the development and implementation of evacuation procedures; and
 - Ensure staff are trained to safely handle emergencies.
 - Ensure that shared Landlord / neighbouring unit escape route will be maintained at all times.
- 3.9 The proposals have been designed carefully to ensure the following compliance with Design for Access 2. This includes:
- Designated point of entrance and exit.
 - Installation of a new wheelchair accessible lift.
 - A new enlarged accessible toilet and changing room shall be provided as part of the new proposals.
 - Reconfiguration of floor levels to ensure levelled access throughout the basement, with the exception of two studio spaces (a third studio space will have level access).
- 3.10 Regular toilet checks will be conducted by staff. The management will ensure that sufficient toilets with an appropriate number of male/female toilets as per British Standards are available. Sufficient lighting levels will be maintained.
- 3.11 A smoking area is located on Cross Street for those patrons of the premises who wish to smoke. The area will be in full range of a CCTV system to prevent the illegal use of cigarettes and other smoking devices.

- 3.12 The proposals for waste management will be in accordance with the approved procedures for the Royal Exchange Arcade already in place.
- 3.13 Facilities for the storage of refuse and recyclable waste are internal within the unit. Staff members are responsible for regularly taking the waste to the bin store area located adjacent to the car park (shown on Landlords Refuse Collection Area Plan), from where it is the responsibility of the buildings management company to take this to the main refuse collection point (shown on Main Refuse Collection Area Plan), where a private refuse collection company is responsible for roadside collections.

4. POLICY AND FRAMEWORK CONTEXT

- 4.1 This section does not seek to repeat the relevant legislation and policies that are well known to officers, but rather consider the implications of these policies when applied to the current proposal.
- 4.2 The adopted development plan comprises the Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2012 -2027 ("the Core Strategy"), adopted by the City Council July 2012.
- 4.3 In addition to the statutory development plan, the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) published in March 2012 and reviewed July 2021, should be given appropriate weight in the planning

Key comments against the relevant policies are noted as:

- 4.4 In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the development plan is the starting point for the determination of the application. The application must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This is reaffirmed within the Framework, including the requirement that applications, which accord with the development plan, should be approved without delay.
- 4.5 The development plan for the site comprises the policies of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2012 -2027 ("the Core Strategy"), adopted by the City Council on 11th July 2012 and the saved policies within the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester (the UDP) which was adopted by the Council on 21 July 1995 in so far as these have not been superseded by the Core Strategy
- 4.5 Within the Local Plan, the site is designated within the boundary of the St Ann's Conservation Area and the boundary of the City Centre Shopping Area. As such the below have been considered:

Core Strategy Policy CC1 defines City Centre is a strategic economic location and focus of employment growth in the City and City Region. Provision of a range of economic development uses, such as retail, leisure, entertainment, cultural and tourism facilities will be encouraged in the City Centre.

Core Strategy Policy CC2 confirms that ancillary commercial and leisure services are acceptable within the Primary Shopping Area, providing retail remains the predominant use and proposals do not conflict with other policies within the Local Development Framework.

Core Strategy CC7 confirms that the City Centre presents the most viable opportunities for mixed-use development with a range of uses considered for all sites.

Core Strategy Policy CC9 seeks to ensure that development preserves or enhances the heritage assets that have been identified, including listed buildings and conservation areas.

Core Strategy Policy CC10 seeks to ensure the City Centre is a place for everyone and development which promotes this objective will be supported with particular reference to development which ensures high standards of accessibility to buildings.

Core Strategy Policy EN3 requires new developments to be designed so as to preserve or, where possible, enhance the historic environment, the character, setting and accessibility of 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.

Core Strategy Policy DMI sets out the specific development management issues that development should have regard to including appropriate materials and detail, effects on amenity including noise, accessibility for disabled people and refuse storage and collection.

- 4.6 The Framework was published on March 2012, revised July 2021, and sets out the central role of the planning system, which is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At the core of the Framework is the presumption in favour of sustainable development. One of the key dimensions of sustainability is protecting and enhancing our historic environment.
- 4.7 The NPPF makes it clear that a proposal that fails to adhere to historic environment policies in the NPPF is not sustainable development. The 12 Principles set out in include the need to “conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations”. Section 12 of the NPPF is specific to conserving and enhancing the historic
- 4.8 The NPPF makes it clear that a proposal that fails to adhere to historic environment policies in the NPPF is not sustainable development. The 12 Principles set out in include the need to “conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations”. Section 12 of the NPPF is specific to conserving and enhancing the historic
- 4.9 Chapter 7 of the NPPF is important, as it requires all developments to deliver good design. The NPPF states that local Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments will function well and add to the overall quality of the area.
- 4.10 Finally, the NPPF clarifies at, that when considering parking standards, LPA’s should take in to account the accessibility of the development and the availability of public transport.
- 4.11 As the site is located within the St Ann’s Conservation Area, Section 72 of the Act is of relevance as it requires the Local Planning Authority to pay special attention to the ‘desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance’ of the designated area. Consequently, it is important to consider the site as a contributor to the setting of the conservation area, and to consider the impact of the proposed development on this aspect of the wider historic environment.
- 4.12 Section 66 of the Act requires the Local Planning Authority to “have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses,” when considering whether to grant planning permission.
- 4.13 The unit is located within the Primary Shopping Area where ancillary commercial and leisure services are acceptable, providing retail remains the predominant use and proposals do not conflict with other policies within the Local Development Framework. 6.2. Within the Royal Exchange Arcade there are 16 units that comprise the ground floor frontages which link Cross Street with St Ann’s Square. Of these, 12 units (75%) are currently in planning class E(a) (retail use), 2 units (12%) are currently in planning class E(b) (cafe use) and 2 units are hair salons class E(c). It is clear from this study, the key ground floor frontages within the internal arcade retail would remain solely class E use and appropriate within the historical context of the building.
- 4.14 The application site is located within the Grade II Listed Royal Exchange Arcade, which in turn is located within the St Ann’s Conservation Area. In view of this, a Heritage Statement has been submitted.

- 4.15 The statement confirms that proposed fit-out seek to ensure that the character of the heritage asset has a positive impact. The proposed works will have a minimal impact on the historic fabric with the new interventions having a negligible interface with the historic fabric. In this regard the proposed works sustain the significance of the heritage asset and ensure the vacant space it to a viable use.
- 4.16 The alterations associated with the proposed fit-out have been carefully considered and the disturbance to the historic fabric is minimal and limited to those works which are considered necessary to bring the unit back into a viable use.
- 4.17 The proposals will have a minimal or negligible impact on the significance of the heritage asset. Consequently, the proposed development is consistent with the desirability of new development to make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness and¹⁵ therefore accords with the requirements of the NPPF in addition to Policy CC9.
- 4.18 The application site occupies a highly sustainable location; being located within the City Centre Primary Retail Area and therefore in very close proximity to other retail, leisure and employment uses in addition to all rail, bus and Metrolink services.
- 4.19 The site is in a highly sustainable location with excellent access to public transport. The location of the development is consistent with the objective of minimising the need to travel and thereby minimising any contribution of vehicle emissions to climate change.
- 4.20 The proposals would accord with the Framework in terms of meeting the challenge of climate change.
- 4.21 The proposal would have a positive impact on the local community in providing a safe environment in which people can exercise and subsequently improve their own mental and physical wellbeing, whilst also creating employment opportunities. The proposals is expected to create seven full time employment opportunities with a further fifteen part time jobs created. The proposal would also see associated employment opportunities for local cleaning and maintenance contractors.
- 4.22 The development proposals have been assessed against the definition of sustainable development contained in the Framework. Overall, it is clear that the proposal comprises a sustainable development, attaining the requisite beneficial economic, social and environmental outcomes that are now enshrined in national planning policy.
- 4.23 There are no policies in the Framework, which indicate permission should be refused. Rather the application should be determined having regard to the presumption in favour of sustainable development, this is a material consideration that should be afforded significant weight in determination of this planning application.
- 4.24 Material considerations have been identified that provide further support to the application proposals. In particular, the development would accord with the principles of sustainable development as set out in Framework.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The proposal provide a long term, sustainable, inclusive and in-demand use, within the existing planning use classification, for two vacant units within a prominent city centre location. The works proposed are limited in relation to both their extent and impact on the heritage of the building.
- 5.2 The proposals have been assessed against the development plan and other relevant policies and frameworks and found to be in compliance with the up to date policies which are found within the NPPF. The principle of the proposed development is considered to be in accordance with the Manchester City Council Core Strategy.
- 5.3 On the basis of the above, we respectfully ask that the application be granted approval without delay.