Paul Butler Associates
Planning, Development & Heritage Consultants

06 September 2023

Mrs Julie Roscoe
Head of Planning
Manchester City Council
Town Hall
Albert Square
Manchester
M60 2LA

FAO Angela Leckie

17.1162

Dear Mrs Roscoe,

Site Location: Afflecks, 52-54 Church Street, Manchester, M4 1PW
Proposal: Planning permission for the attachment of a sculpture to the building façade

On behalf of our client, Bruntwood Estates Ltd, please find attached a planning application for works to the Tib Street and Short Street elevations of the Afflecks building, specifically the attachment of a large horn sculpture to the façade of the building. The description of development is:

'Erection of former Tib Street Car Park 'Big Horn' sculpture at 1st and 2nd floor level at junction of Tib Street and Short Street.'

The application is a resubmission of application 118552/FO/2017 which was approved on 1 February 2018.

Application Submission

In addition to this application covering letter, the application is supported by the following documents and drawings:

- Completed Planning Application Forms and Certificates.
- Heritage, Design and Access Statement (prepared by Paul Butler Associates).
- Application Drawings (prepared by DW Consulting Engineers LLP):
  - Red Edge Site Location Plan (Ref: DW1490-02 REV A).
  - Existing and Proposed Elevations to Tib Street & Short Street (Ref: DW1490-01 REV B).
  - Fixing Details to Existing Brick Façade (Ref: DW1490-03).

Background – The Big Horn

The Big Horn is a large sculpture designed by David Kemp and originally erected in 1999 at the eastern corner of the Church Street Car Park which is located to the immediate north of Afflecks on the opposite side of Tib Street. The sculpture had been designed to sit atop the corner remnant of a former hat factory building (36-38 Church Street) which once stood on part of the car park.



Image 1: Building remnant and sculpture prior to removal / demolition



Image 2: Building remnant and sculpture removed. Afflecks Tib Street elevation to rear (proposed site of relocated sculpture)

Reference to the Visual Arts Database Service describes the sculpture as a 'Serpent-like musical instrument coiled round the remains of a Victorian building'. The entry states:

"Kemp's landmark sculpture was a massive musical instrument, to which were attached various eye-catching objects; the whole serpentine-like composition being coiled in and around the remains of the factory building. It was by far the largest piece in a series of "Unsound Instruments" that Kemp had worked on over a number of years, representations of musical instruments whose music had to be imagined from their shape."

Conservation Area Consent for the removal of the façade remnant and sculpture was granted (Ref 079745) in March 2007 to make way for a mixed use development which was never proceeded with.

Planning Permission (ref 114146/FO/2016) for the redevelopment of the Church Street Car Park site for a mixed use development of between seven and ten storeys was granted on 20 February 2017. This included demolition of the façade remnant and careful removal of horn sculpture. The submission had noted that the sculpture would be placed in storage until a suitable location for it could be found. Development of the mixed use scheme, known as 'Citu NQ' has now been completed.

The Site – Afflecks

'Afflecks Palace' – now known as Afflecks - was originally a group of buildings constructed in the mid-19th Century predominantly as warehousing and ground floor shops connected with the City's textile industry. The buildings would later be amalgamated to form the Affleck and Brown Department Store. This was later to be operated by C&A and then Debenhams before closing in the mid-1970s. The building was re-opened in the early 1980s in the independent stall holder format which endures to the present day, becoming an extremely popular alternative destination, particularly during the 'Madchester' years from the mid-1980s to mid-1990s. Threatened with closure in 2008, Bruntwood who had managed the building since 2007 took the unprecedented step of purchasing the building in order to secure its future as a Manchester icon.



Image 3: South East Corner of Afflecks

Afflecks is not listed, however it is likely to be regarded as a non-designated heritage asset by Manchester City Council. The building is located within the Smithfield Conservation Area.

The sculpture is proposed to be fixed to the south western corner of the building which overlooks Tib Street at its junction with Short Street – now a short service road providing access to the side of Afflecks, Crazy Pedro's Bar, and the side and rear of 21-33 Oldham Street. The sculpture will be fixed at a height allowing clearance of at least 5.3m to ground, in accordance with oversailing licensing requirements. The sculpture will extend to 12.8m at its highest point, therefore broadly covering part of the first and second floors of the building's corner.

Submitted Plan DW1490-03 provides detailed information in terms of the proposed method of fixing the sculpture to the facade.

Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Originally published on 27 March 2012, and most recently revised on 20 July 2021, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England. The document states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

The NPPF states that pursuing sustainable development involves seeking well-designed, beautiful places, and protecting the built and historic environment (paragraph 9). Developments should establish a strong sense of place using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit; and should respond to local character and history (Section 12).

The Development Plan for Manchester

The Core Strategy Development Plan Document (July 2012)

The Core Strategy, adopted in July 2012, is the key Development Plan Document against which proposals should be judged. Core Strategy objectives and policies that have been considered as part of this project include:

- ***Policy CC 1 'Primary Economic Development Focus'*** which seeks to support the development of a vibrant employment location attractive to businesses, employees and visitors to the City Centre.
- ***Policy CC 4 'Visitors - Tourism, Culture and Leisure'*** states that the City Centre will be the focus for culture and leisure; and, promotes development which improves facilities for visitors and residents.
- ***Policy CC 9 'Design and Heritage'*** states that development in the City Centre should preserve or enhance heritage assets, including conservation areas.
- ***Policy CC 10 'A Place for Everyone'*** promotes developments which increase the diversity of activity in the City Centre.
- ***Policy EN 1 'Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas'***. With regards to development within the City Centre, developers will be expected to consider the City's heritage and continue the rich pattern of activity in the core area.
- ***Policy EN 3 'Heritage'*** sets out that new developments must be designed so as to preserve / enhance the historic environment, the character, setting and accessibility of areas and buildings of acknowledged importance including conservation areas.
- ***Policy DM 1 'Development Management'*** sets out various issues that development should have regard to, including: appropriate siting, scale, materials and detail; and impact on the surrounding areas.

Saved Policies of the Unitary Development Plan for Manchester (July 1995)

The Unitary Development Plan (UDP) was superseded by the Core Strategy. However, a number of UDP polices have been 'saved'.

Policy DC14 'Shop Fronts and Related Signs' of the Plan seeks to ensure that the frontages and signage of commercial premises are in keeping with the character of the building and the surrounding area. Policy DC18.1 'Conservation Areas' seeks to protect, preserve and enhance the character of the city's conservation areas.

Planning Appraisal and Benefits

By its very nature, 'The Big Horn' is not designed to be 'within keeping'. It is designed to be distinctive, thought provoking, unusual, and prominent. Despite this, and considering the site's sensitive Conservation Area location, the fact that the sculpture may not be within keeping, does not mean that it is 'out of context'. In fact, the relocation of the sculpture to the façade of one of Manchester's most iconic buildings is entirely appropriate. The proposed scheme presents an excellent opportunity both to retain the sculpture close to its originally intended location, and also to further enhance the external appeal of Afflecks, which already benefits from artwork upon its facades.

In terms of the broader Smithfield Conservation Area, and the Northern Quarter, the relocation of the sculpture to Afflecks assists in the retention and creation of communal value, as well as helping to promote the independent, subculture-orientated nature of the Northern Quarter.

The relocation of The Big Horn to its proposed location on the façade of Afflecks is considered to be in full accordance with national and local planning policy and guidance. Due to the individual character of the Northern Quarter Area, the sculpture would not have a detrimental impact upon the character of the Smithfield Conservation Area. Please refer to the submitted Heritage Statement which provides an assessment of the heritage impact of the proposals.

The proposal will deliver a series of positive planning and regeneration benefits. It will:

- Lead to the reinstatement and secure the future of a well-known and much loved piece of public artwork.
- See the reinstatement of The Big Horn within close proximity to its original location, and again to the corner of a 19th Century building.
- Enhance the visual appeal of Afflecks – which already benefits from a number of sculptures, mosaics, and other embellishments – further contributing to the building's iconic status.
- Despite its prominence, the Big Horn is an appropriate addition to the building it will be attached to, and the proposal will not have an adverse impact upon the character of the Smithfield Conservation Area.

The proposed scheme is in accordance with multi-level planning policy, and there are no material reasons which should prevent the approval of this application.

We trust that this information is sufficient to enable the positive determination of this planning application and we look forward to working with you in progressing the application through to determination.

Yours sincerely

Lynsay Ewart

Lynsay Ewart BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI
Principal Planner