

21 July 2023  
Cover Letter – Public Realm



Emily Booth  
Planning Department  
Manchester City Council  
P O Box 532  
Town Hall  
Manchester  
M60 2LA

Jay Patel  
E: jay.patel@savills.com  
DL: +44 (0)161 602 8258

Belvedere  
12 Booth Street  
Manchester M2 4AW  
T: +44 (0) 161 236 8644  
savills.com

**Planning Portal Ref: PP-12315501**

Dear Emily,

**Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)**  
**Improvement works to the public realm area adjacent to 70 Great Bridgewater Street including removal of redundant lift core, upgrading of stairs and canalside balustrades, new planting and seating and other associated works**  
**Application by: Bridgewater Manchester (Luxembourg) Holding SARL**

## Introduction

We write on behalf of Bridgewater Manchester (Luxembourg) Holding SARL enclosing a planning application which seeks consent for the improvement to the public realm area adjacent to 70 Great Bridgewater Street (at the Bridgewater Canal side level).

The works associated with the 70 Great Bridgewater Street office building permission (MCC Reference: 129081/FO/2021 dated 23 April 2021) have now been implemented. These works will significantly upgrade and enhance the appearance of the building as well as significantly improving its sustainability credentials.

Since construction began it has become apparent that the area of public realm to the east of the building could also be improved to complement the new high quality office redevelopment and serve the wider area.

As such, the development presents an opportunity to comprehensively improve this area of City Centre public realm in a considered and cohesive way.

## Pre Application Stakeholder Consultation

The land is within the ownership of Manchester City Council (MCC) and borders land within the Canal and Rivers Trust (C&RT). As such the applicant has engaged in pre application discussions with both parties and the proposals that are included in this application have taken into consideration feedback received during these discussions (including the requirement for additional balustrading along the canal to improve safety).

More recently, the applicant has again consulted both MCC (Public Realm Officers) and C&RT as well as the adjacent Rain Bar (by letter dated 27 June 2023). Formal notice of this application has also been served on MCC as land owners.

In response to comments from CR&T, additional planting (within new planters) to improve the 'greening' of the area have been incorporated into the final proposals contained within this application.

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## **Application Documents**

In addition to this Covering Letter, the application is also accompanied by the following:

1. The completed application forms and certificates;
2. Site Location Plan - L0001 -
3. Existing Photographs
4. Landscape Design Statement - 4154 501B
5. Landscape Layout 4154 102C
6. Planting Plan - 4154 201 -A
7. Proposed External Stair - A3021
8. Existing External Stair - A3020 (to follow by email)
9. Proposed Street Elevation- East - L1612
10. Proposed Street Elevation – Rochdale Canal - L1611
11. Proposed Street Elevation – Great Bridgewater Street - L1610
12. Proposed Elevation – East - L1602
13. Proposed Elevation – Rochdale Canal - L1601
14. Proposed Elevation -Great Bridgewater Street - L1600
15. Existing Elevation – East - L1602
16. Existing Elevation – Great Bridgewater Street
17. Existing Elevation – Rochdale Canal -L0601
18. Existing Street Elevation – East – L0612
19. Existing Street Elevation – Rochdale Canal -L0611
20. Existing Street Elevation – Great Bridgewater Street – L0610

The requisite application fee of £234 alongside the £64, administration fee, has been paid via the Planning Portal.

## **Existing Public Realm**

The application site area measures 328sqm and is located at the Bridgewater Canal side level. This is lower than the street level along Great Bridgewater Street. The area is therefore accessed by a set of stairs from Great Bridgewater Street (and from the canal towpath at canal side level from both the east and west but also the north from the Rochdale Canal Lake located close to the Bridgewater Hall). The existing stairs connecting Great Bridgewater Street to the public realm space will be retained and enhanced to provide a key desire line and established pedestrian connection.

There is an existing lift which creates a visual blockage and has not been in operation for a number of years and not formed part of an accessible route around the city. Given the number of routes to the space (including accessible ramps), the lift core is no longer required. As such the improvements seek to remove the top section of the lift core and open up views to the canal, creating better integrated connections and natural surveillance.

The existing magnolia trees within the area will all be retained and improved so as to contribute to the wider improvements to this area.

The area in question did not form part of the red line boundary for the original application (Planning Permission Reference: 129081/FO/2021). Nevertheless, the proposed works set out below should be viewed alongside the above approval.

The area is currently managed and maintained by MCC and we expect this arrangement to continue.

## Proposals

### *Design*

The design improvements are detailed within the Landscape Design Statement submitted with this application.

The proposals seek to incorporate links to the adjacent building through the proposed colour and pattern of the adjacent office building. An existing bench will be removed and replaced with a series of new furniture which will include a range of seating with and without backrests and the stair core viewing area will become a focal feature in the landscape.

Most of the existing hardstanding and paving will be retained and improved, repointed and treated with a small area being removed and replaced (which is out of character with the surrounding hardstanding).

New paving is proposed over the former lift area, which will match the paving approved along Great Bridgewater Street as part of the original planning application.

The existing stairs will be resurfaced and improved balustrading, handrails and infill metal work will be designed to follow the character of the 'red' metalwork on the building façade.

### *Biodiversity*

It is anticipated that the area will provide a pocket of green space and encourage wildlife by enhancing the flora and fauna of the site, contributing to improved biodiversity in the city centre. The soft landscaping will include additional planting and improvements to existing trees.

### *Safety*

The proposed redevelopment of the adjacent office building will improve natural surveillance over the space during the day and into the evening.

Additional balustrading will be provided in response to the Canal and River Trust and MCC feedback. The existing bollard and chain link fall restraint will be replaced with double horizontal cross bar railings. New 'fall protection' infrastructure is also proposed to improve safety around the area.

Further details of which are outlined in the supporting Landscape Design Statement.

## 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                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Policy SP1</b><br>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. |
| <b>Policy EN1</b><br>Design Principles  | 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,                                                                                                                     |

|                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| and Strategic Character Areas                                                  | adaptability and diversity) and have regard to the strategic character area in which the development is located.                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Policy CC10</b><br>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. |
| <b>Policy DM1</b><br>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.                                        |
| <b>Policy EN9</b><br>Green Infrastructure                                      | The Council will encourage developers to enhance the quality and quantity of green infrastructure, improve the performance of its functions and create and improve linkages to and between areas of green infrastructure                                                                                          |
| <b>Policy EN10</b><br>Safeguarding Open Space, Sport and Recreation Activities | The Council will seek to retain and improve existing open spaces, sport and recreation facilities to the standards set out above and provide a network of diverse, multi-functional open spaces                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Policy EN11</b><br>Quantity of Open Space, Sport and Recreation             | Open spaces should be interconnected, to allow for better links for disabled people, pedestrians and cyclists both across and between sites and to enhance the biodiversity of the City.                                                                                                                          |

### Manchester's Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy (2018, refreshed in 2022)

Manchester City Council recognises that green and blue infrastructure is an essential part of creating a successful, liveable city. Parks, river valleys, gardens, street trees, green roofs, canals, and many other components all form part of a rich network that is integrated with the built environment in the world's most popular cities.

The vision for green and blue infrastructure in Manchester over the next five years is that by 2025 high quality, well maintained green and blue spaces will be an integral part of all neighbourhoods. The City's communities will be living healthy, fulfilled lives, enjoying access to parks and green spaces and safe green routes for walking, cycling and exercise throughout the City. Businesses will be investing in areas with high environmental quality and attractive surroundings, enjoying access to a healthy, talented workforce.

Manchester's Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy, together with its Stakeholder Implementation Plan, was approved in July 2015. The strategy is founded on the basis that attractive, multi-functional green and blue infrastructure is a key component of shaping and delivering the quality of life people expect and enhancing the City's global image as a place in which to live, work and invest.

More recently, the Strategy was refreshed in 2022 with a new implementation plan being developed, highlighting approaches, challenges, projects that will bring the Strategy to life over the coming years.

The proposals will positively improve connections along the canal side public realm area within the city centre. The space has the opportunity to provide areas for the wider community and the proposed development to use as informal relaxation / working space. Being located along a popular walking route and with the canal side setting the improved public realm offers the opportunity to provide a small pocket park area within the city.

Adjacent residential developments and the Rain Bar have views directly over the space which will also be improved.

The proposed improvements are therefore in full accordance with MCC approach to green and blue infrastructure and relevant planning policy.

### **Conclusion**

The proposals will significantly improve the area, providing a more inviting and usable public space area whilst also boosting biodiversity. As such, the proposed development will positively improve the immediate area as well as the public realm offer for the wider city centre.

Should you require anything further or have any questions, please contact Jay Patel.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Savills", written over a thin horizontal line.

**Savills**  
Planning