

30 June 2023
Sunlight House Covering Letter - Ground and Basement



Development Management
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For the Attention of Jennifer Atkinson

Submitted via Planning Portal PP-12279504

Dear Sir / Madam

**Application for Ground and Basement Works to Sunlight House
Sunlight House, Quay Street Manchester, M3 3JZ**

Introduction

We write on behalf of our client, Kinrise (Sunlight Limited) to apply for a Listed Building Consent and formal planning permission to make changes to the ground and basement area of Sunlight House. The proposed changes are both internal and external to facilitate a number of new Class E occupiers within the space. The area currently comprises a health and fitness studio with swimming pool, which spans across the ground, basement mezzanine and basement floors of Sunlight House and is occupied by a single tenant, The Bannatyne Group.

The description of development is as follows:

"Planning and Listed Building Consent for internal and external alterations associated with use of part ground and basement floors for flexible restaurant, office and leisure uses, including removal of swimming pool, improved access to atrium space, provision of accessible cycle store, shopfront alterations and other associated changes."

The building comprises a 14 storey (15 including roof plant to western side). This application relates to the refurbishment and reconfiguration of the ground and basement floors and follows applications to improve the wider building.

The supporting Design and Access (D&A) Statement fully details the proposed scope of changes to the ground and basement.

Confirmation of the flexible commercial use (Class E) of the ground, basement and sub-basement area has already been granted under the grant of a Certificate of Lawfulness of Existing Use or Development (CLUED) under Section 191 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 10 of The Planning and Compensation Act 1991 (MCC Reference 135529/LE/2022 approved 11 January 2023).

The planning application fee of **£1,234** has been paid electronically via the Planning Portal.

Offices and associates throughout the Americas, Europe, Asia Pacific, Africa and the Middle East..

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Background

Sunlight House is located on the corner of Quay Street and Little Quay Street in the city centre of Manchester. The part of the building which relates to this application fronts Quay Street and incorporates part of the ground floor, basement and sub-basement.

Sunlight House is a Grade II listed building completed in 1932 by Joseph Sunlight, architect and developer, as the headquarters for his property business, with offices and shops to let. At the time, it was Manchester's tallest building.

The building is within the Deansgate Conservation Area, with other listed buildings including the Manchester Opera House on Quay Street, Royal London House at the junction of Deansgate and Quay Street and the former County Court building on Deansgate, which are all Grade II Listed and the former County Court building on Quay Street, which is Grade II* Listed.

Sunlight House has been extensively modernised throughout including refurbishment works previously throughout the building since its original construction and much of the original fabric and floorplan have been lost. As such there are clear opportunities to further remodelling of the building and better revealing and sensitively restoring the surviving original features.

The application forms part of the wider refurbishment of the building following a new ownership. The proposals form part of a holistic vision for the building but has been submitted as a separate application due to the proposed phased programme of works.

Pre-application Engagement

The proposed changes have been subject to pre-application engagement with Manchester City Council's Planning and Heritage teams. A pre-application meeting was held on-site on Monday 5th June 2023. The pre-application response generally supported the proposals and further information was subsequently submitted to MCC to provide clarification on queries raised.

The client and design team have been keen to engage Officers from the outset of the project and have had a number of positive discussions to present and take on board officer feedback prior to submission. The initial meetings and on site feedback have been critical in putting forward a balanced case for the improvements to this part of the significant building.

Submission Package

The application comprises this covering letter and a number of documents, namely:

Document	Author
Application Forms and Certificates	Savills (UK) Ltd
Covering Letter	Savills (UK) Ltd
Heritage Statement	Savills (UK) Ltd
Design Statement	Anomaly London
MEP Statement	King Associates
Ventilation Statement	King Associates
Acoustic Report	Han Tucker Associates Ltd

Architectural Plans

The list of submitted plans prepared by Anomaly are detailed on the 'Document Issue Register' SLH-ANO-XX-PO-IS-A-00300.

The Existing Area

Ground Floor

The existing ground floor is dominated by a gym use which promotes a relatively inactive frontage on both Quay Street and Atkinson Street. The majority of the primary frontage is either blocked through vinal advertisement of internal partitions. The florist retail unit remains a relic of the original active intent of multiple and different scale units along the street frontage.

Basement Mezzanine

The basement mezzanine at poolside level provides a range of supplementary changing and sauna spaces for the pool, as well as back of house areas.

Basement

The basement space is a mix of older changing areas that have now been significantly amended to serve as duct routes for plant around the buildings.

Façade and Elevations

The Design and Access Statement includes an elevation appraisal which confirms that the primary frontage onto Quay Street is dominated by poor quality graphics, blocking visibility and connection to the internal space.

Proposals

This application focuses on the refurbishment of the ground and basement floors but should be read alongside the strategic vision and previously submitted applications for the office accommodation refurbishment (MCC Planning Reference: 136161/LO/2023) and consolidation and creation of vastly improved central plant equipment for the building (MCC Planning References: 136163/LO/2023 & 136162/FO/2023).

The proposed changes are outlined in detail within the supporting Design and Access Statement prepared by Anomaly.

Given that the site has a Class E use across the entire footprint, the proposals will curate a series of careful tenancies to activate both internally and externally. The proposals seek to naturally activate the frontage to Quay Street.

The office accommodation entrance and proposed café to the corner will activate the relationship between Quay Street and Little Quay Street and forms part of separate live application (MCC Planning Reference: 136161/LO/2023).

The design team have limited the amount of necessary interventions, where possible, in order to protect and enhance the historic fabric of the building.

Ground Floor

The proposals seek to activate the Quay Street frontage with retail / restaurant offering which will connect to the basement level, where additional seating and back of house areas will be provided. Atkinson Street is still subject to a number of discussions to ensure a mix of tenants and improvements to the 'rear' of the building. A small unit will be created to Atkinson Street to allow direct cycle access into new and improved storage and shower facilities within Sunlight House (Level 1 of the car park site).

Basement Mezzanine

The basement will include the creation of a direct route from cycle access through to the cycle store which will utilise very low quality space in dilapidated back of house store rooms. The location capitalises on existing drainage routes from the existing male changing rooms, as well as providing the best use of spaces with lower ceiling height and no natural light.

The poolside landing element will be maintained and enhanced into bleacher style seating for events and the proposed co-working space, leading down to the basement level. Existing steps will be maintained to allude to the historic use of the site within the new design and activation.

Part of the basement mezzanine is proposed for partial removal on the Quay Street side to allow for full height duplex units on both Quay Street and Atkinson Street. The removal will facilitate connection from both sides into the central area.

Basement

The proposal removes the active use of the swimming pool which will conform to Joseph Sunlight's original aspirations for the building, which envisioned this area as a restaurant. Although the pool will be removed the pool wall location will become a line for glazed partition wall separating different uses surrounding the pool and the structure will be maintained, with the steps creating a 'bleacher' style seating area. The wall pool will be opened up between the structural columns to allow for the activation of the central space.

Parts of the basement are difficult to activate due to conditions, head height and no opportunity for level access throughout the basement mezzanine level and lift/ stair configuration. The proposal includes the removal of the smaller area of older changing cubicles to allow for a full area of duplex and full height units to Quay Street.

Façade and Elevations

The historic shop fronts to Quay Street and Atkinson Street have largely remained intact over the years and much of the original detailing and colour remains evident. The internal arrangements and heavily branded advertisement vinyls have detracted from their design and many of the access doors are no longer in use, in some instances they are blocked off as 'escape only' fire doors.

The proposals seek to utilise historic signage brackets for tenant signage and upgrade the ventilation louvres to contemporary and subtle design to tie in with the redecorated historic shop front.

The removal of vinyl advertising signage to provide glazing into the ground floor space and the introduction of a number of tenants will open up and activate this façade. The rich detailing and colour to the façade is to be enhanced through redecoration and refurbishment. Archive photographs show that the current paint colours are aligned with the original.

The existing louvres comprise an inoffensive and subtle design and align with the existing framing. A contemporary replacement which maintains the subtle design is proposed. Numerous design options were considered for the louvres and a subtle design was selected as the most appropriate, given they can be 'lost' within the design and colour of the shopfronts. Further detail regarding the proposed louvres is outlined in both the Design and Access Statement (Anomaly) and Ventilation Statement (King Associates).

There are a number of historic signage brackets still present around the building – one of which is in use by the florist unit. It is proposed that these brackets will be used for the signage for future tenants, with a heritage style sign applied to each bracket. The proposed signage will depend on the future tenant and would therefore be subject to separate advertisement consent applications.

Planning History

The planning history relating to the part of the building in question, confirms that permission was granted to change use from a night club to health club, 20 November 1990 (MCC Planning Reference: 037880).

This area has been used as a health club/ gym has been since 1991 and is currently still in use. A Certificate of Lawfulness was granted on 11 January 2023 (MCC Planning Reference: 135529/LE/2022) to allow the Use of part of the ground floor, basement and sub-basement of Sunlight House as Class E (a-g). The area permitted under the Certificate is the same as this application.

There are a number of previous planning applications relating to the wider Site, a full planning history is included in **Appendix 1** of the supporting Heritage Report.

Other Considerations

Ventilation and Mechanical Electrical and Plumbing (MEP)

King Associates have been instructed to prepare a Ventilation Statement and MEP Statement in support of this application. Both statements detail the mechanical, electrical and plumbing strategy and the ventilation strategy for the central atrium retail area, proposed restaurants including kitchens, shower block and Atkinson Street retail areas.

The D&A also provides further information regarding the MEP and the proposed louvres.

Refuse

The existing and proposed refuse and service strategy is outlined in detail within the supporting D&A Statement. The existing service route from Atkinson Street will remain in place and the proposed changes provide a generous space to cater for the mixed use building.

Noise

A Acoustic Report has been completed by Hann Tucker Associates Ltd in support of this application, which confirms the proposals raise no issues regarding noise and acoustics.

Heritage

A Heritage Report has been prepared by Savills in support of this application. The report concludes that the proposals are considered to result in a low level of less than substantial harm to the significance of the Grade II listed building and the low level of harm is clearly outweighed by the numerous heritage benefits provided by the improvements to the condition of the building and the public benefits provided by the proposals.

Please note, a separate Listed Building Consent application has been submitted to support the proposed changes. The fundamental principle across both applications is to celebrate the remaining rich heritage characteristics of Sunlight House, at the same time unpicking the less sensitive changes that have taken place as part of previous changes to the building, with the overall objective to return the iconic building to its full economic use.

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 <u>other commercial development</u> 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 <u>"Developments which lead to the more intensive use of employment land (in terms of floorspace provided) will be supported"</u> .
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	Development in Manchester City Centre should preserve or enhance the heritage assets

Design and Heritage	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

Sunlight House is located on the corner of Quay Street and Little Quay Street where it occupies an important strategic location, immediately adjacent to the Spinningfields district of Manchester City Centre. The location is within walking distance of all the services and facilities offered by Manchester City Centre. It has direct connectivity to the City's Inner Ring Road and the M62, M61, M60 motorway. Manchester City Centre is also a public transport hub providing accessibility to a range of modes of sustainable transport including rail, bus and tram services. The site is served by the free City Centre Metroshuttle service, which provides frequent and fast connections to the four major rail hubs: Piccadilly, Oxford Road, Victoria and Salford Central stations (closest train station being Deansgate approximately 0.5 miles from the site), as well as destinations across the City Centre.

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.

Spinningfields has become established as a world class office destination, characterised by new build office buildings aimed at the financial and professional services sector and wide mix of uses including high quality civic, residential, hotel, leisure and retail space in a carefully planned and managed environment offering very high quality public realm. The St John's area is located to the south (along Quay Street) at a key gateway to the city centre. Formerly home to Granada TV St John's is being transformed into a new unique city centre neighbourhood where people both live and work.

The building is therefore very well established in its commercial location and has the potential to play a key role in the provision of a unique high quality commercial floor space with ancillary food and drink / leisure uses that fully complements regeneration initiatives across the City Centre.

Planning Benefits and Accordance with Policy

The proposed changes are considered to be acceptable and accord with the objectives of Core Strategy EC1 and EC3, in that they will ensure seek to complement the wider ambition for the redevelopment and improvement of the building and existing office use. The Class E, flexible commercial use offering will contribute to continued economic growth in the city by providing a number of retail and restaurant outlets within the building.

Not only does this application seek to improve the layout and historic fabric of the building it promotes public benefits with an improved façade and the facilitation of a number of Class E uses within the space. This will promote additional employment and economic development and complement the surrounding mixed use areas, including, Spinningfields and St John's.

The proposed scheme seeks to refurbish Sunlight House in a way that both fully celebrates its heritage whilst also ensuring its long term future by providing space for a number of retail and F&B occupiers as well as linking the area to the existing office space through a co-working area, creating more synergy throughout the entire building. The proposal also seeks to provide public benefits by creating a more active frontage along Quay Street and celebrating the main façade.

Preservation and restoration of original features has been central to the design process, which can be clearly seen in the focus on referencing and better revealing the historic character of the building, particularly with the use and space adhering to Joseph Sunlight's original ambition for the space, which included the use of the swimming pool area to be used as a restaurant. Whilst the swimming pool would be removed, the fabric of it will be retained with the steps providing 'bleacher' style seating for events and co-working set up and the replacement of the pool wall with glazed partitions.

The proposed works would deliver the following key benefits:

- Boost to Quay Street frontage and Spinningfields – the proposed changes at ground floor will have synergies with the adjoining land uses and be complementary to the leisure, shopping and entertainment offer in the area, further adding vibrancy and activity to the area, both throughout the day and into the evening. This increased activity will add to the safety and security of the area.
- Vitality – the works will help will bring parts of the building that have been underutilised and previously closed off to the public back into spaces which can be enjoyed and celebrated. The changes will therefore help bring part of Sunlight House back to life, providing economic benefits to the City, and also contributing to the ongoing regeneration of Quay Street. The uses will complement the existing commercial and leisure uses within the area, in accordance with the City Centre Strategic Plan 2015-2018.
- Choice and new offer – Manchester is much celebrated for its food and drink and leisure offer and when combined with a key heritage assets, the proposal can help play a key role in attracting visitors and contributing to wider inward investment, as well as helping to realise the community and place agendas at the heart of the city. The changes proposed at ground and nbasement level will further help diversify the offer for tourists and visitors, in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CC4.
- Job Creation –The proposals will also lead to job creation during the construction and operational; phases. This will accord with the provisions of Policy EC1 and paragraph 81 of the NPPF which states that *“Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.”*

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.

Conclusions

This proposal seeks to refurbish and activate part of the ground floor, basement and sub-basement of Sunlight House to create a high quality and flexible use which celebrates and enhances the unique details from Sunlight's original proposal.

The design has 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 city.

Should you have any questions please do contact me using the details above.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "J. Patel".

Jay Patel

Director