

PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This statement is prepared in support of a planning application which seeks to secure planning permission for the installation of a goods lift and change of use from residential (2-bed flat) at the 1st and 2nd floors to storage in connection with the existing pharmacy at 101 Beech Road, Chorlton, Manchester, M21 9EQ.

1.2 The Statement aims to demonstrate that the proposed development, in terms of the usage, mass, scale and design, respects the character of the host building, amenity of the neighbouring residents and heritage characteristics of the Chorlton Green Conservation Area. It is considered that the proposed development accords with the general thrust of the NPPF Guidance and local planning policies adopted by Manchester City Council.

1.3 In addition to the statement, the planning application accompanies the following supporting documents: -

- Site Location Plan shown as edged in red (Scale 1:1250).
- Proposed Site layout plan (Scale 1:50)
- Existing internal layout of the ground/upper floors of the building (Scale 1:50).
- Location of the proposed goods lift and enclosure at the first floor of the building (Scale 1:50).
- Existing and proposed rear elevations of the building (Scale 1:50)

2. THE APPLICATION SITE AND THE SURROUNDINGS

2.1 The application site comprising a 2 storey mid-terrace building is located at 101 Beech Road, Chorlton, Manchester, M21 9EQ. It is located within a row of properties with business usage at the ground floor and storage/residential at the first floor. Currently the business usage of the properties within the row provides a variety of small-scale retail, community and commercial services. The row of properties within which the site lies, is located on the southern side of Beech Road. There is another row of similar business properties located on the opposite side of the site at Beech Road.

2.2 The application building has been used as a pharmacy (Beech Road Pharmacy) at the ground floor and residential (2-bed flats) at the first floor including roof space for a very long time. Access to the pharmacy is gained via the front door and the flat at first floor via a staircase from the back-alley way. The roof area in front of the flat entrance is covered with timber decking.

2.3 The building is of red brick construction, with a glazed shop front at ground level. There is a paved area at the front of the building abutting the pavement along Beech Road. The site is located within the Beech Road local shopping centre, forming part of the Chorlton Green Conservation area. The area surrounding the site is a mixed-use area of predominantly housing and business uses.

3. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3.1 The proposal entails:

a) Change of use the first floor flat from residential (Use Class C3) to storage in connection with the existing Beech Road pharmacy (Use Class E (e)).

b) Installation of a goods lift to run between the ground and first floors of the building. The goods lift, approximately 0.9m wide, 0.9m deep and 2.2m tall, would be constructed in mild steel, finished in grey baked enamel RAL 7038 with a stainless-steel base. At the first floor, the lift will be contained within an enclosure covered with a flat roof and cladded on sides with vertical hanging red tiles to match the existing.

4. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Relevant planning policies

4.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The Framework (NPPF) states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to sustainable development, to which there are three dimensions - economic, social and environmental. The Framework re-iterates that planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Paragraph 14: States that at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and, in 'decision-taking', this means that development proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved without delay.

Para126: States that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities".

Para 130: States that planning decisions should ensure that developments:

- 1) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area
- 2) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping.
- 3) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting.

Para134: States that development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design⁵².

Para 194 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment): States that in determining applications, Local Planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting.

Para 197: States that in determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;

- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

4.2 Local Development Framework

The Manchester city local development framework comprises the Manchester Core Strategy, saved UDP policies and other Local Development Documents. Planning applications in Manchester must therefore be decided in accordance with the policies set out in these documents.

There does not appear to be any site-specific policy relating to the application site. However, the following city-wide policies of the Core Strategy are considered relevant to the proposal:

Policy SP1: Sets out the key spatial principles which will guide the strategic development of Manchester to 2027. Policy SP1 states, amongst other things, that:

- a) Beyond the regional centre will be the focus for economic and commercial development, retail, leisure and cultural activity, alongside high-quality city living. There will be an emphasis on the creation of neighbourhoods of choice, providing high quality and diverse housing around district centres which meet local needs, all in a distinct environment.
- b) All development should have regard to the character, issues and strategy for each regeneration area, in this case the Strategic Regeneration Framework for Central Manchester.
- c) New development will maximise the potential of the City's transport infrastructure, in particular promoting walking, cycling and use of the public transport.

Policy SP1 specifies the Core Development Principles for parts of the City. The following principles are considered relevant to the proposed development:

- a) Makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods of choice including the creation of well-designed places that enhance or create character; making a positive contribution to the health, safety and well-being of residents, considering the needs of all members of the community regardless of age, gender, disability, sexuality, religion, culture, ethnicity or income and to protect and enhance the built and natural environment;
- b) Minimise emissions, ensure efficient use of natural resources and reuse previously developed land wherever possible.
- c) Improve access to jobs, services, education and open space by being located to reduce the need to travel and provide good access to sustainable transport provision.

Policy DM1: States that all development should have regard to the following specific issues for which more detailed guidance may be given within a supplementary planning document. Relevant considerations are:

- a) Effects on amenity, including privacy, light, noise, vibration, air quality and road safety and traffic generation.
- b) Accessibility: buildings and neighbourhoods should be fully accessible to disabled people with new development providing access to all via sustainable transport modes.
- c) Community safety and crime prevention.
- d) Design for health, including the impact of noise, disturbance and pollution.
- e) Adequacy of internal accommodation and external amenity space.
- f) Refuse storage and collection.

Policy EN 3 Heritage: States that throughout the City, the Council will encourage development that complements and takes advantage of the distinct historic and heritage features of its districts and neighbourhoods, including those of the City Centre.

New developments must be designed so as to support the Council in preserving or, where possible, enhancing the historic environment, the character, setting and accessibility of areas and buildings of acknowledged importance, including scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings, registered parks and gardens, conservation areas and archaeological remains.

4.3 Unitary Development plan (UDP) for the City of Manchester (Saved Policies)

The Following policies of the Unitary Development Plan (saved policies) are considered relevant to the proposal:

Saved policy DC18.1- Conservation Areas: States that the Council will give particularly careful consideration to development proposals within Conservation Areas.

a. The Council will seek to preserve and enhance the character of its designated conservation areas by carefully considering the following issues:

- the relationship of new structures to neighbouring buildings and spaces;
- the effect of major changes to the appearance of existing buildings;
- the desirability of retaining existing features, such as boundary walls, gardens, trees, (including street trees),

4.4 The guidance to development in Manchester (SPG/SPD) (2007) :

The document offers design advice and sets out the City Council's aspirations and vision for future development and contains core principles to guide developers to produce high quality and inclusive design. Each new development should be designed having full regard to its context and the character of the area. The principles that development should seek to achieve include character and context.

5. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

5.1 The application building has been used as pharmacy at the ground floor and 2-bed flat at the upper floors for a long time. Whilst the pharmacy has been a successful enterprise, the flat however, has remained unpopular/unattractive to many tenants. As such it has been difficult to secure a long term tenancy for the flat. At different times, the flat has remained vacant for a considerable period of time. One of the factors attributing to the unpopularity of the flat, the applicant believes, is the poor access via the back-alley way and unpleasant environment.

5.2 On the other hand, the pharmacy has been a complete success and gaining popularity amongst wider community. The pharmacy not only serve residents of a large catchment area but also care homes/institutions as well. In order to serve and function satisfactorily, it is necessary that all the required medicine and other associated equipment's are kept with easy reach within the pharmacy. Currently all pharmaceutical activities take place at the ground floor of the building which, due to the limited floor space, is considered totally inadequate and unsatisfactory. There is an acute shortage of storage space within the pharmacy. Recently the government/NHS has introduced additional responsibilities for the pharmacies and the shortage of storage space is causing a serious problem for this pharmacy to perform efficiency and effectively. The applicant feels that additional storage floor space can be made available if planning permission is granted for the change of use of the above flat.

Please see attached a statement prepared by the applicant detailing the service provided by the pharmacy. See details attached.

6. PRE - APPLICATION CONSULTATION

6.1 Pre-application advice was requested from the Local Planning Authority about the proposed development. Comments received from the officers are as follows:

(Mr David Lawless Principal Planning Officer.) 18th May 2023

Yes, would need planning permission but seems fairly straight forward.

(Katie Raw – Assistant Planning Officer 18th May 2023

1. The site is within the Chorlton Green Conservation Area.
2. The goods lift goes up to a decking area which can be seen externally. This element would require consent. More information be provided on the external works as a result of the goods lift. Concerned with regard to the negative impact on the Conservation area.
3. Change of use of the flat would result in the loss of residential accommodation. This needs further information justifying the proposal.

Copy of the officers' response attached.:-

Please see comments from the planning officer below

7. PLANNING APPRAISAL

Principle of development

7.1 The proposal relates to a 2-storey mid-terrace shop premises with residential accommodation at the upper floors, located within a parade of shops forming part of a local shopping centre. The properties surrounding the application premises are occupied predominantly as business/residential premises. The proposal involves change of use of the residential flat at first floor for storage in association with the shop at the ground floor and installation of a goods lift within the shop enabling the goods to be moved from the one floor to the other.

7.2 The site fronts onto Beech Road, a busy local traffic route linking Barlow Moor Road to the east and Whitelow Road to the west. Due to the location of the site within a local shopping centre on a local traffic route, it is considered that the site is situated within a sustainable location and the proposal offering compatible use of the building, should be accepted in principle, subject to the assessment of impact in terms of the siting, design, appearance and the character of the Conservation Area.

Assessment of impact of the proposed development

7.3 The application site is included within the Chorlton Green Conservation Area. However the building is neither listed nor lies close to any ancient or buildings of historic interest.

7.4 Policy DC18.1 of the UDP seeks to preserve and enhance the character of the designated conservation areas by maintaining, preserving and enhancing the appearance of the existing buildings and features within them. Similarly policy EN3 of the Core strategy and guidance contained in the NPPF emphasise that the new developments, by way of design, should support the Council in preserving or, where possible, enhancing the historic environment, the character, setting and accessibility of areas of acknowledged importance, including conservation areas.

7.5 In order to assess the impact of the proposed development on the conservation area and heritage assets, it is important that all the elements of the proposal are considered in detail. The proposal relates to

a) Change of use of the flat

7.6 The proposal would result in the use of the 2-bed flat as a storage unit for the pharmacy. The goods would be stored inside the unit and taken out of it whenever required in accordance with the requirements of the pharmacy. The conversion of the flat and use as a storage unit would not involve any changes or alterations affecting the exterior of the building. As such it is considered that the proposed change of use would have no adverse impact on the appearance of the building or the character of the Conservation area.

7.7 With regard to the loss of a residential accommodation, as stated previously, it should be emphasised that the flat, due to poor access via the back alley way and the surrounding unpleasant environment, has been unpopular and unattractive to many tenants in the past. As such the flat, at different times, has remained vacant for a considerable period of time. As a business enterprise, the flat is unsustainable and non-viable. The applicant feels that the flat as a residential unit, makes little contribution to maintaining or enhancing the supply of housing stock for the Council. As such, it is considered that the loss of residential accommodation in this respect, would neither

compromise nor undermine any of the Council's policies seeking retention/provision of housing stock.

The applicant would like to emphasise that presently the pharmacy, due to the lack of adequate storage space, is experiencing insurmountable problems to perform its functions expediently and effectively. The pharmacy needs additional storage space to discharge its liabilities and the storage space at the flat would help satisfy that need.

b) Installation of a goods lift

7.8 The proposed goods lift, approximately 0.9m wide, 0.9m deep and 2.2m tall, would be installed inside the shop at the ground and would run between two floors of the building. It would be constructed in mild steel, finished in grey baked enamel RAL 7038 with a stainless steel base. At the first floor, the lift will be contained within an enclosure covered with a flat roof and cladded on sides with vertical hanging tiles to match the existing (i.e. red brick) The enclosure, approximately **-2.4--m wide, 1.4-m deep and 2.4m tall**, would be erected close to the entrance door of the flat. It is considered that the lift enclosure, due to its position, scale, design, and materials, would have little detrimental impact on appearance of the surrounding buildings or the character of the conservation area.

7.9 Currently the roof in front of the flat is covered with a timber decking enclosed with approximately 1.8m high timber fence on sides and rear. Furthermore, there is an existing staircase covered with transparent plastic sheeting leading to the decking. Due to its location/position and the surrounding boundary fence, it is considered that only **0.5m** of the upper part of the lift enclosure would be visible from the adjacent properties. As such the lift enclosure would have very limited visibility from the rear and sides. It is contended that the proposed lift enclosure would neither impact the amenity of the occupiers of the adjacent properties nor would adversely affect the appearance or character of the Conservation area. It is therefore considered that the proposed development is in accordance with the guidance in the NPPF, policies DM1 and EN3 of the Core Strategy and saved policy DC18 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester.

8. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is reiterated that:

- The first floor flat, due to its poor surroundings and access, is unattractive and unsustainable as a residential unit.
- The pharmacy lacks storage space and use of the flat for storage would help manage the pharmacy expediently and effectively.
- The proposed enclosure for the goods lift, due to siting, scale, design and appearance, would neither impact the amenity of the surrounding properties nor the appearance/character of the Conservation area.
- It is requested that planning permission, subject to appropriate conditions, be granted.

