



Supporting Planning, Heritage Design and Access Statement

Arthur House, Manchester

March 2023

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Report title: Supporting Planning Statement

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Status: Final Rev B

Draft date: 2 March 2023

For and on behalf of Avison Young (UK) Limited

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning, Heritage, Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Avison Young on behalf of Custodian REIT PLC ('the Applicant') in support of an application for full planning permission for the following development at Arthur House, Chorlton Street, Manchester:

"Full planning application for refurbishment of existing office space comprising the installation of new roof terrace with pergola; internal and external refurbishments, including new security fencing, access lobby, installation of solar panels, new gym with associated changing rooms and studio, cycle store, refurbishment of entrance plaza including new signage, new planters, and other associated works"

- 1.2 This Statement addresses the relevant planning and heritage considerations, in addition to design and access requirements of the proposals.

Supporting Information

- 1.3 The application is accompanied by a suite of supporting documents. The following documents are submitted in support of this application:

- Application form, relevant land ownership certificate (duly signed) and relevant planning application fee;
- Covering letter prepared by Avison Young dated 31 January 2023;
- Full set of existing and proposed drawings including;
 - Existing Ground Floor Plan (223-YOU-XX-00-DR-I-0202);
 - Proposed Ground Floor Plan (223-YOU-XX-00-DR-I-2001);
 - Entrance Landscaping Plan (223-YOU-XX-00-DR-I-9020);
 - External Signage Plan (223-YOU-XX-00-DR-I-9021);
 - Existing First Floor Plan (223-YOU-XX-01-DR-I-0203);
 - Proposed First Floor Plan (223-YOU-XX-01-DR-I-2002);
 - Existing Elevation A (223-YOU-XX-EL-DR-I-0301);
 - Existing Elevation B (223-YOU-XX-EL-DR-I-0302);
 - Existing Elevation C (223-YOU-XX-EL-DR-I-0304);
 - Existing Elevation D (223-YOU-XX-EL-DR-I-0305);

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- Proposed Elevation A (223-YOU-XX-EL-DR-I-2101);
 - Proposed Elevation B (223-YOU-XX-EL-DR-I-2102);
 - Proposed Elevation C (223-YOU-XX-EL-DR-I-2103);
 - Proposed Elevation D (223-YOU-XX-EL-DR-I-2104);
 - Existing Roof Plan (223-YOU-XX-R1-DR-I-0207);
 - Proposed Roof Plan R1 (223-YOU-XX-R1-DR-I-2701);
 - Proposed Roof Details (223-YOU-XX-R1-DR-I-2751);
 - Proposed Planter (223-YOU-XX-XX-DR-I-2126);
 - Proposed Ele. Frame (223-YOU-XX-XX-DR-I-2127);
 - Frame B_C (223-YOU-XX-XX-DR-I-2128);
 - Frame and Glazing D-F (223-YOU-XX-XX-DR-I-2129);
 - Access Gate and Fence Plan F-I (223-YOU-XX-XX-DR-I-2130);
 - Perimeter Fence (223-YOU-XX-XX-DR-I-2131);
 - Proposed Roof Extension (223-YOU-XX-XX-DR-I-2132);
 - Site Location Plan (223-YOU-XX-XX-DR-I-9001);
 - Roof Level Electrical Services P1 (2677-CWC-RF-DR-E-6001); and,
 - Roof Level Electrical Services P2 (2677-CWC-RF-DR-E-6201).
- This Planning, Design and Access (including Heritage) Statement prepared by Avison Young;
 - Photo Schedule, dated January 2023;
 - Completed Waste Management Strategy Proforma including;
 - Waste Strategy; and
 - Waste Strategy Drawing.

2. Site and Surrounding Area

- 2.1 This chapter discusses the site's location and characteristics of the surrounding area.

The Site

- 2.2 The site comprises a GF + 6 storey office building, with basement located within the administrative boundary of Manchester City Council ('MCC'). The site is located within the heart of Manchester City Centre and fronts Chorlton Street and has a site area of 980m². Arthur House was built in the 1960's and its office facilities are currently outdated and in need of refurbishment. The building currently has approximately 11,000sqft vacant office space out of a total 28,500sqft lettable area.
- 2.3 The site is not located within a conservation area, however it is in proximity to a number of listed buildings. The closest of which being the Grade II* listed Britannia Hotel which is located just 10m north west of the site, on the opposite side of Silver Street.

Surrounding Area

- 2.4 The site is bound to the south west by Chorlton Street, the north west by Silver Street, the north east by Gold Street and the south east by Major Street. The surrounding area comprises a mix of uses including offices, hotels, bars, restaurants, cafes and retail units.
- 2.5 The site benefits from excellent transport connections, being just 200m south of Piccadilly Gardens Metrolink and bus interchange. Additionally, there is a bus stop on Chorlton Street, immediately adjacent to the site. This bus stop is served by the number 1 and 197 bus services which provide connections across Manchester City Centre, and out to Stockport via Chorlton, Longsight, Levenshulme, Burnage and Heaton Mersey.

Sustainability

- 2.6 The site represents a highly sustainable location which is well-connected to a range of public transport modes. The site is well positioned within walking distance of all three of Manchester City Centre's major train stations. Manchester Piccadilly Train Station is 425m east of the site, Manchester Oxford Road Train Station is 600m south west of the site, and Manchester Victoria Train Station is 950m north of the site. The site is also easily accessible by tram with Piccadilly Gardens Metrolink Stop located approximately 200m north of the site.

Summary

- 2.7 The site comprises a GF +6 storey office building, with basement, located in Manchester City Centre. The site is situated in an accessible location in close proximity to amenities, services and infrastructure, as well as being well-connected to the public transport network.

3. Planning History

3.1 A review of MCC's online planning register has been undertaken. The following applications are relevant to the site:

- 121501/FO/2018- Change of use of fifth floor from Office (Class B1) to a flexible use of a language school (Class D1)/office (Class B1) pursuant to Schedule 2 Part 3 Class V of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015. Approved December 2018.
- 117311/FU/2017- Change of use of the 6th floor from B1 (office) to D1 (training centre). Withdrawn October 2017.
- 116656/FO/2017- Replacement stairwell windows on the south west elevation (Chorlton Street elevation). Approved August 2017.
- 113412/FO/2016- Alterations to the external appearance of the building and works to external areas. Approved November 2016.
- 106474/FO/2014/C2- Elevational alterations to replace 84 no. existing windows within Arthur House, Chorlton Street on the Silver Street and Major Street frontages. Approved October 2014.

Summary

3.2 This review of previous planning applications has demonstrated that, the site has been subject to several planning applications which have resulted in internal and external alterations to the building since its construction.

4. Relevant Planning Policy Framework

- 4.1 This section of the Statement outlines the relevant adopted and emerging planning policy framework and guidance at a local and national level.

The Development Plan

- 4.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that decisions should be made in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

- 4.3 The relevant adopted Development Plan Documents for the area include:

- The Manchester Core Strategy (adopted July 2012); and,
- Saved policies from the Unitary Development Plan ('UDP') (2004).

Manchester Core Strategy

- 4.4 The Manchester Core Strategy was adopted by the City Council on 11 July 2012. It is the key document in Manchester's Local Development Framework. The Core Strategy sets out the long-term strategic planning policies for Manchester's future development.
- 4.5 As defined by the Proposals Map, the site is located within the City Centre and Regional Centre boundaries.
- 4.6 The key policies of the Core Strategy which apply to the site are summarised below.
- 4.7 **Policy EC 1 (Employment and Economic Growth in Manchester)** states that a minimum of 200ha of employment land will be developed between 2010 and 2027. Priorities for ensuring continues economic growth include improving the portfolio of employment premises by providing a range of employment sites and premises for small, medium and large businesses. Development proposals should have regard to climate change resilience with an aim of zero carbon emissions, ensuring the design makes the best possible use of a building in terms of efficient space, enhancing the sense of place and considering the needs of access via walking, cycling and public transport.
- 4.8 **Policy EC 3 (The Regional Centre)** states that within the Regional Centre development for employment generating uses including offices and other commercial development will be encouraged.
- 4.9 **Policy CC 1 (Primary Economic Development Focus: City Centre and Fringe)** emphasises that the City Centre is a strategic economic location and focus of employment growth in the City and City Region.

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- 4.10 **Policy CC 9 (Design and Heritage)** states that development in Manchester City Centre should preserve or enhance the heritage assets that have been identified, including listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled ancient monuments.
- 4.11 **Policy EN1 (Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas)** states all development in Manchester will be expected to follow the seven principles of urban design and have regard to the strategic character in which the development is located. Development in the City Centre Character Area should, consider the City's heritage and continue the rich pattern of activity in the core area, contribute positively to the experience of all at street level, and where possible provide new areas of open space.
- 4.12 **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.
- 4.13 **Policy T 2 (Accessible areas of opportunity and need)** states that the Council will actively manage the pattern of development to ensure that new development is easily accessible by walking, cycling and public transport.

Unitary Development Plan

- 4.14 The Manchester UDP was adopted by the Council in July 1995. The Manchester Core Strategy replaces significant elements of the UDP. The following saved policies are relevant to this application for planning within a conservation area.
- 4.15 **Policy RC20 Small Area 17** recognises this area contains many substantial buildings both old and new. It has the potential to offer a more attractive environmental setting and to sustain a higher level of activity. The Policy recognises Chorlton Street as having an important traffic role.
- 4.16 **Policy DC19.1 (Listed Buildings)** states that the Council will seek to preserve and enhance the settings of listed buildings by appropriate control over the design of new development in their vicinity, control over the use of adjacent land, and where appropriate the preservation of trees and landscape features.

Other Material Considerations

4.17 There are a series of other planning policy guidance documents at the national level that are relevant to the determination of this application comprising:

- National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') (July 2021); and,
- National Planning Practice Guidance (March 2014).

4.18 A summary of these documents is provided below.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021)

4.19 The revised NPPF was published in July 2021. The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies and guidance and how this can be applied. The NPPF is a material consideration in the determination chapter of planning applications.

4.20 Chapter 6 of the NPPF regards building a strong, competitive economy. Paragraph 81 of this Chapter states planning policies and decisions should help create conditions in which business can invest, expand and adapt.

4.21 Chapter 16 of the NPPF provides guidance relating to conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Chapter 194 states 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.

4.22 Paragraph 197 states "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."

4.23 Paragraph 202 states where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

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- 4.24 Paragraph 206 states that local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.

National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) (2014)

- 4.25 National Planning Practice Guidance ('NPPG') was introduced in March 2014. The NPPG replaced a considerable amount of former guidance comprising Planning Policy Guidance Notes and Planning Policy Statements.
- 4.26 The NPPG provides guidance relating to the 'Historic environment'. With regard to decision-making, the NPPG refers to 'Significance' stating that, in terms of heritage-related planning policy is defined in the Glossary of the National Planning Policy Framework as the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting (Paragraph: 006 Reference ID: 18a-006-20190723).
- 4.27 With regard to providing an assessment of the impact of proposals on the significance of affected heritage assets, the NPPG emphasises that the level of detail should be proportionate to the asset's importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on its significance (Paragraph: 009 Reference ID: 18a-009-20190723).

Summary

- 4.28 This section has identified a series of Development Plan Documents and other material considerations to be taken into account in the determination of the application.

5. The Proposed Development (Design and Access)

- 5.1 This section demonstrates how the proposed development is a suitable response to the site and its setting and demonstrates that it can be adequately accessed by prospective users.

Scope of Works

- 5.2 The proposed works comprise the refurbishment of the existing office building. This will involve, the creation of a useable roof terrace, and the redevelopment of the ground floor to offer gym, changing rooms and extended cycle parking facilities for the office occupiers. A new secondary access is proposed to the building, as well as refurbishment of the existing entrance plaza, replacing a number of windows and the installation of security fencing to the site boundary. Solar panels are proposed at roof level.
- 5.3 The scope of work also includes a number of internal alterations to produce a modern CAT A+ and CAT B refurbishment. The internal alterations will fall outside of the realm of planning.

Use

- 5.4 The building will remain in operation as an office (Use Class E). No changes to the existing use are proposed as part of this planning application.

Amount

- 5.5 The existing floorspace is 3,663m² this will increase to 3,946m² of useable floorspace (an increase of 283 m²) due to the creation of a useable roof terrace and an increase in floorspace at ground floor level to allow for the provision of amenity spaces for occupiers of the office (gym, fitness studio, cycle store and changing facilities).

Layout

- 5.6 At ground floor level an increase in floor area is proposed to allow for the provision of a gym, changing area, cycle store, shower and WC block, there will also be a new access lobby structure. At roof level it is proposed to create a roof terrace with pergola, which will provide usable outside space to office occupiers. This application seeks consent for these works.
- 5.7 The building will be subject to a CAT A+ and CAT B refurbishment of reception; 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 6th floor office suites and WC's and lift lobbies to 1st – 6th floors, to create high quality, modern office space. Additionally, a new staircase is proposed from the 1st floor to the 2nd floor. These internal

upgrades do not require planning permission and therefore, these internal alterations do not form part of this planning application.

Scale

- 5.8 The proposed development comprises minor works to the exterior of the site. The scale of the works is identified on the supporting plans. No changes are proposed to the height of the building.

Appearance

- 5.9 The changes in appearance to the building which are being sought in this application comprise the following:

- alterations at ground floor level resulting in an increased floorspace to include gym, fitness studio, changing facilities and bicycle store;
- painting and shotblasting the external elevations;
- installation of plant climbing framework and plants to part of Major St elevation;
- replacing windows (1st – 3rd floors front and rear elevations & floors 1 – 6 to lift lobbies and secondary staircase);
- installing security fencing to site boundary;
- new planters (Major St; new entrance canopy);
- refurbishment of entrance plaza, including new signage canopy over entrance;
- roof terrace with pergola;
- new access lobby structure; and,
- solar panels.

Waste and Servicing

- 5.10 The waste storage and management will remain as existing and is detailed in the accompanying Waste Strategy, prepared by Savills, who are the property managers for the building.

Access

- 5.11 The primary access to the building will remain unchanged for both vehicles and pedestrians. A new secondary access for pedestrians is proposed in the southern corner of the building to provide more direct access to the cycle storage and changing facilities.
- 5.12 The ground floor level car parking currently comprises 32 spaces, which is proposed to be reduced to 13. This reduction in car parking spaces is to allow for the redevelopment of the ground floor to include gym, studio, changing facilities and cycle store. There are currently 8 cycle spaces which is proposed to increase to 36 to encourage more environmentally friendly and sustainable modes of transport.
- 5.13 The building will remain DDA compliant.

6. Planning Appraisal

- 6.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires all applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 6.2 This section assesses the proposals against the relevant policies of the adopted Development Plan for MCC and the NPPF (2021).

Principle of Development

- 6.3 The site is located within the heart of Manchester City Centre and is surrounded by a mix of uses. The proposed works will refurbish an existing building to create a high quality, modern office space. This will bring economic benefits to the locality, which accords with policies EC1, EC3, and CC1 of the Manchester Core Strategy (2012) by encouraging economic growth and generating employment opportunities supporting a range of businesses including SMEs. Furthermore, the site is situated within an accessible location within the City Centre and Regional Centre boundaries where employment development is supported (Policies T 2, CC 1, and EC 3). The redevelopment represents a substantial investment from the applicant which will support the local economy both during construction and operation.
- 6.4 The site has been subject to a number of external and internal alterations over successive years. The proposed internal and external alterations will enhance the site through the use of good design and high-quality materials. This will improve the quality of the premises to provide high quality office space within the city centre with a useable outdoor amenity space, which will better meet the requirements of modern day tenants. Therefore, the proposed alterations will conform with Policy EN1 by being in accordance with the seven principles of development while having regard for the City Centre Strategic Character Area.
- 6.5 The proposed alterations will have a positive effect on the area's architectural and historic character and bring economic benefits in a highly sustainable locations which is well served by public transport.

7. Heritage Appraisal

- 7.1 While the site itself does not constitute a listed building, there are listed buildings present within its vicinity, most notably the adjacent Grade II* listed Britannia Hotel which is located just 10m north west of the site, on the opposite side of Silver Street. This scheme proposes limited external alterations, and will improve the appearance of Arthur House, resultantly improving the character of the area surrounding the Britannia Hotel.
- 7.2 The site is not located within a Conservation Area. The closest Conservation Areas to the site are Gorge Street Conservation Area, which is approximately 75m west of the site, and Whitworth Street Conservation Area, which is approximately 80m south east of the site. Due to the height and massing of nearby buildings, Arthur House (the Site) is of very limited visibility from both Conservation Areas. The nature of this application means that the refurbishment works will not be visible from either Gorge Street or Whitworth Street Conservation area, and as such the application will have no impact on the character or setting of any Conservation Areas.
- 7.3 The previous paragraphs demonstrate that this proposal accords with Policy EN3 of the Manchester Core Strategy which states 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 heritage assets, a stance which is mirrored within Policy DC19.1 of the UDP. Additionally, the proposal will accord with NPPF paragraph 202 as it will not lead to substantial harm to any of the surrounding designated heritage assets or Conservation Areas.
- 7.4 Overall, the scheme is considered to be wholly acceptable in terms of heritage impacts, given it for minor external alterations, which will positively impact the character of the area surrounding the Grade II* Listed Britannia Hotel, and will not be visible from the nearest Conservation Areas to the site.

8. Summary and Conclusion

- 8.1 This Planning, Heritage, Design and Access Statement has been prepared by Avison Young on behalf of Custodian REIT PLC ('the Applicant') in support of an application for full planning permission for the following development at Arthur House, Chorlton Street, Manchester:

"Full planning application for refurbishment of existing office space comprising the installation of new roof terrace with pergola; internal and external refurbishments, including new security fencing, access lobby, installation of solar panels, new gym with associated changing rooms and studio, cycle store, refurbishment of entrance plaza including new signage, new planters, and other associated works"

- 8.2 The site comprises a 7-storey office building within Manchester City Centre. The site is situated in an accessible location in close proximity to amenities, services and infrastructure, as well as being well-connected to the public transport network.
- 8.3 The site has been subject to several planning applications over the years which have resulted in internal and external alterations to the building allowing for the building to be altered in line with required modernisations.
- 8.4 The external alterations applied for in this application comprise the following:
- alterations at ground floor level resulting in an increased floorspace to include gym, fitness studio, changing facilities and bicycle store;
 - painting and shotblasting the external elevations;
 - installation of plant climbing framework and plants to part of Major St elevation;
 - replacing windows (1st – 3rd floors front and rear elevations & floors 1 – 6 to lift lobbies and secondary staircase);
 - installing security fencing to site boundary;
 - new planters (Major St; new entrance canopy);
 - refurbishment of entrance plaza, including new signage canopy over entrance;
 - roof terrace with pergola;
 - new access lobby structure; and,

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- installation of solar panels.

- 8.5 Additionally, there are a number of internal alterations being proposed, including, the reconfiguration of the ground floor to include gym, changing area, cycle store, shower and WC block, there will be a new access lobby structure, a new roof terrace with pergola and a new staircase from the 1st floor to the 2nd floor office.
- 8.6 It is considered that the proposed alterations, resulting in a useable and attractive outdoor space within the proposed office redevelopment, will make a positive contribution to vitality of this part of the city centre. The scheme will create high quality, modern office space which will meet the demands of this central location. As this scheme proposes limited external alterations which will have an overall positive impact on the character of the area surrounding the listed building. The proposal will upgrade office space and increase occupancy in a sustainable location within Manchester City Centre bringing about considerable economic benefits. The redevelopment represents a substantial investment from the applicant which will support the local economy both during construction and operation. Whilst the number of car parking spaces will reduce on site, this is a positive change as it will encourage more environmentally friendly and sustainable modes of travel, the reduction in car parking is to accommodate the inclusion of increased bicycle storage and gym facilities, therefore further promoting a healthy lifestyle. The redevelopment will therefore offer economic, social and environmental benefits.
- 8.7 Overall, it is considered the proposal accords with planning policy both nationally and locally and will allow a significant enhancement and modernisation of this city centre office building. The proposal represents a well-designed scheme which will provide tangible and sustainable benefits which will be a major benefit to the building and the City Centre.

Appendix I

Site Location Plan

Contact details

Enquiries

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