

OMI Architects

1383/Da/32-34 Laystall Street, Manchester

Outline and justification for proposed changes to Planning and Listed Building Consent (128911/FO/2020 and 128904/LO/2020)

09th February 2023

Background.

Following a long period of consultation with Manchester City Council, planning and Listed building Consent applications were submitted for the conversion of the Grade II Listed former terracotta manufacturers workshops and showroom at 32-34 Laystall Street into a mixed use scheme of 89 residential apartments in a new building at the rear of the site with commercial office accommodation provided within the original listed showroom and a new side extension which completed the corner of the urban block. Planning and Listed Building Consent was granted on 02 February 2022.

Since the applications were approved, pre-demolition conditions have been discharged and the demolition of the workshop outrigger and 1950s warehouse to the rear of the site has been completed. Pre-commencement conditions for the works to the Listed showroom have also been discharged. In general, the project is moving forward positively, with the consent of Manchester City Council.

The consented scheme for the Listed Showroom utilised the original carriage pass through the centre of the building as a new communal entrance/ waiting area. The original arched opening onto the street was retained, the existing modern roller shutter removed and a new pair of custom made steel gates secured the opening, left open during operating hours to reveal a glazed screen and entrance doors inset in the opening behind. This new entrance space would then provide access into a new lift and stairs built within the new extension, giving access to the open plan upper floors of the building. At ground level the rest of Listed Building was divided in its original form to create 2 separate office spaces, each with its own entrance door off Laystall Street.

Reason for Change

The Listed showroom owners and applicants for the scheme, McCauls, in anticipation of the restoration and extension of the building being completed, have taken advice from a commercial agent (OBI) who have reviewed the proposed plans (the consented scheme) and provided advice to McCauls on changes that should be made to improve the buildings commercial let-ability.

The primary concern was the amount of internal space given over to the communal entrance area which was considered to be too generous for the amount of office space that it ultimately served and represented a loss in let-able area to the building as a whole. Linked to this was the fact that the layout would compromise the ability for a single tenant to take the building in its entirety which, based on the size of the building and the available floor space, would be a target market for the building.

Whilst mindful of the need to preserve key elements of the listed fabric, which was the aim in the consented scheme, the advice was to remove an element of subdivision from the ground floor, make the entrance space part of the ground floor let-able area and provide a new, smaller, entrance off Pigeon Street within the extension and immediately adjacent to the circulation system. This would bring added efficiency to the plan, generate additional net let-able floor space and provide more flexibility for future lettings, including the option to let the building as a whole.

Additionally the advice proposed the retention of the existing stair from level 00 to level 01 and the reintroduction of the stair from level 01 to level 02. This would provide further flexibility, allowing connection between the floors of the listed building without the need to use the communal stair in the extension. Thus allowing a tenant to take more than one floor within the listed building and have those floors directly connected within the demise.

The benefit to the building is the retention of the existing stair from ground to first floor which was previously approved for removal. The stairs from first to second floor would be new, but would follow the alignment of a previously removed staircase.

Finally, the building's rear elevation, previously obscured by the outrigger, has been updated to reflect the revealed condition post demolition. We are also proposing the omission of the three large windows that sit within the original 'taking in' openings. In their stead we are proposing three sets of timber boarded doors, which more closely match the original character and appearance of the building. The proposed doors would be fixed shut and would be visible both internally and externally.

Amendments

Considering the advice from the commercial agent, along with the significance of the building, its original plan form and remaining historic fabric we have proposed some amendments to the consented scheme which are the basis of this application.

All of the proposed changes are relatively minor and, in our view, the outward perception of the scheme will remain unchanged. The most significant changes are within the new build extension and therefore the impact on the listed elements is limited.

Each of the changes proposed has been considered by Heritage Architecture in their accompanying 'Addendum Heritage Statement'. Their conclusion is that the changes result in:

'both negligible/minor adverse impact and neutral/beneficial impact and that in balance these minor changes to the consented scheme will not impact the special interest of the listed building as concluded in the previous consent'.

In view of this, combined with the commercial benefits of the proposed changes, we conclude that there is adequate justification for the proposed amendments to be supported.

The changes are broken down as follows;

EXTERNAL AMENDMENTS

Rear Elevation

This has been updated more generally to reflect findings from the recently completed demolition.

- Sizes of openings
- Exposed Lintel Introduction
- Levels to ramped areas
- Drainage pipe setting out
- Venting for MVHR omitted. (MVHR not now required)
- 3no fire rated windows omitted and replaced with three sets of fixed shut, timber boarded doors.
- The bin store door on the ground floor would also be updated to a timber boarded door to match.

Pigeon Street Elevation

- New main entrance door and adjoining window introduced
- Terracotta roses introduced above new entrance door/screen
- Soldier course band wrapped over the head of the doorway
- Striped Brick column reduced to 440mm width from 665mm
- Omission of one window from level 01 and level 02, to tie in with the proposal at ground floor and align more closely with the proportion of glazed opening to solid elements of the showroom façade

Laystall Street Elevation

- Single door to the extension omitted and replaced with full height window
- Striped Brick column reduced to 440mm width from 665mm

INTERNAL AMENDMENTS

BASEMENT

- Stair to basement omitted (design development of the MEP scheme means that there is no longer a need to create a plant room in the basement). Basement access to be provided via a new access hatch in the floor within the listed building.
- MVHR requirement omitted, as above.

GROUND

New Build

- Sliding partition shown at ground floor
- Lobby glazed screen introduced to stair to provide lobby separation to comply with the developed fire strategy.
- New build Stair arrangement adjusted to accommodate the above.

Existing

- Partition separating the carriage pass from the office space position amended to only separate off the accessible WC and rear entrance.
- The extent of tiling has been adjusted to only include the central carriageway.
- WC removed from existing stair space/ lobby to allow flexibility for tenant fit out.
- The timber ceiling and joinery seats from previous lobby area in carriage pass has been omitted as this area will now be subject to tenant fit out
- Existing staircase from ground to first floor to be retained
- Stair from ground to first to be sealed from ground floor lobby

UPPER FLOORS

- Reinstatement of the staircase connecting first floor to second floor.
- Small FR glazed openings within the new internal partition to the stair to be included.
- The new toilet facilities at first and second floor amended to accommodate the new stair and lobby.
- The setting out of the new stair within the extension has been adjusted.
- The 'over tiling' of the existing timber floor within WC pods has been omitted to avoid threshold difficulties.
- A new internal wall has been added within the new stair well to separate the stair from the lobby to comply with the developed fire strategy (as ground floor).