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Design/ Access Statement

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Client: AQA

Project: Devas Street, Manchester, M15 6EX - Window replacement

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Proposed replacement to all windows to all floors within the Annex and Octagon.

1.0 PROCESS

Assessment

Physical

AQA occupy three buildings, and these are currently connection by a link structure, the buildings are currently known as Mansfield Cooper, Annex and Octagon as indicated in image 1.1. Mansfield Cooper will only include a light refurbishment (carpet and decoration) as the lease on this building is up within 5 years and will be returned to the Landlord. The Annex and Octagon will include a full revamp from the external to the internal, to modernize the building and bring up to current standards and regulations.

The Annex and Octagon are a 1960s concrete framed structure, with masonry infill, typical of its time. The building has been refurbished in previous years, with new aluminum glazing to the reception area and façade replacement to the entrance areas, the remaining fabric and glazed windows to both Annex and Octagon are the original 1960s, the glazing is the original 40mm single glazed steel frame system with opening windows. In several areas especially in the Octagon a secondary timber glazed frame has been added at a later date.



Image 1.1

Social & Economic

The AQA building houses the offices of AQA, an exam board. Due to the confidential nature of producing and marking examination papers, there is a high level of security around entering and exiting the building. Supplementary staff are brought in at key times to facilitate the marking of examination papers.

Involvement

AQA have had long term occupancy of this building, Claremont Group Interiors have been briefed on the usage and history of the building by AQA. Claremont will undertake and oversee all the refurbishment works to the three buildings.

Evaluation

The existing windows to the Annex are the original 40mm single glazed steel frame, for the age of the building and windows themselves they are in reasonable condition, but in areas clearly have heavy wear to openers and frames themselves, and with the powder coating flaking in places. Even though the windows are not facing a main road the area as a heavy foot traffic through the site due to the sighting within the Manchester University campus area, this does provide sound issues at certain points of the day on the lower elevations. Also, with the windows only being single glazed on the none shielded elevations you get a draught through the windows especially to the higher elevations.

In 2011 an application (096910/FO/2011/C1) was approved for the main reception revamp to the Annex including the facade, canopy, and glazing. The new glazing was installed to meet the current regulations back then and was constructed from a double-glazed powder coated aluminum frame as per image 1.2. This has set a precedence for the upgrading of the windows to meet current regulation and update the 1960s building to the current standards without losing the originally character and aesthetics of the building.

The Octagon is of the same construction as the Annex however, some of the windows include a timber secondary glazed unit clearly installed later. The secondary frame stops short of the top due to the original window openers so does provide a complete seal to the window area. So, the above is the same principal just not as bad from a noise of draught point of view.



Image 1.2

Design Rationale

The Annex and Octagon is currently the Head office of AQA. The brief from AQA to Claremont is to modernize the internal space of the building to suit the current ways of working, most rooms are enclosed, and part of the new design would be to open-up the spaces internally and make an open plan environment. Therefore, the building is required to meet current regulations from a mechanical, fresh air and heat loss point of view. To achieve this, we are proposing to replace the mechanical system and install a mechanical ventilation system to negate the need for opening windows and provide the required amount of fresh area to the space all year round. To maintain the thermal performance within the building we are proposing to replace the existing single glazing to a double glazing to meet current regulations and make the building more energy efficient.

2.0 USE

The use of the building will not change from the current situation, but the internal refurbishment of the Annex and Octagon will have a massive effect of the way AQA function and will modernize the way in which they work for the future.

3.0 AMOUNT OF DEVELOPMENT

The proposed works will not alter the size or shape of the current footprint and openings.

4.0 SCALE

The windows will be installed into the existing apertures within the building with no additional openings created. The profile of the proposed frame would be approx. 52mm width x 75mm depth. The mullions/transoms will be positioned in the same positions as the current with the same quantity as existing.

Typical sizes and profiles can be found in the below drawings:

Existing Typical Elevations

AQA MAN GF 200 WINDOW PLAN, SECTION & ELEVATIONS

AQA MAN 1F 200 WINDOW PLAN, SECTION & ELEVATIONS

AQA MAN 2F 200 WINDOW PLAN, SECTION & ELEVATIONS

AQA MAN 3F 200 WINDOW PLAN, SECTION & ELEVATIONS

Proposed Typical Elevations

AQA MAN GF 200 WINDOW PLAN, SECTION & ELEVATIONS

AQA MAN 1F 200 WINDOW PLAN, SECTION & ELEVATIONS

AQA MAN 2F 200 WINDOW PLAN, SECTION & ELEVATIONS

AQA MAN 3F 200 WINDOW PLAN, SECTION & ELEVATIONS

5.0 PLANNING POLICY

National Policy

In the first instance it is necessary to consider the national planning policy context which is the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published in July 2021. The NPPF is clear that Planning Permission should be granted for development where it accords with planning policy. To this end in **Paragraph 7** of the NPPF the point is made that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Paragraph 8 of the NPPF outlines the three strands to sustainable development namely economic, social and environmental objectives. In this case the redevelopment will deliver economic gains in the form of construction work during the conversion work, the end scheme will deliver much needed housing from a social perspective and the reuse of the existing building and its sustainable location have environmental benefits.

Paragraph 9 reinforces the point that planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area. This is particularly relevant in relation to this proposal.

The National Planning Policy Framework in **paragraph 11** makes it clear that a presumption in favour of sustainable development is at the heart of national planning policy and where a proposal accords with planning policy then it should be permitted without delay.

Further attention is drawn to **Paragraph 38** of the NPPF which encourages local planning authorities to approach decision-taking in a positive way by looking for solutions rather than problems. Decision-takers at every level should seek to approve applications by using the full range of planning tools available to them and working proactively with applicants. In this particular case it is submitted that given the nature of the proposal the Local Planning Authority could have mitigated any future harm they deem may be created by the proposal by using appropriate conditions and this is further supported in **Paragraph 55** of the NPPF, which identifies local circumstances as a relevant factor to take into account when making decisions. Further **Paragraph 56** makes it clear that planning conditions should be kept to a minimum and only imposed where necessary.

Paragraph 81 makes it clear that planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. 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. This proposal represents a major international company investing in the locality creating job opportunities for local people and as such should be supported.

Paragraph 86 further highlights that Planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation. Local planning authorities should promote the long-term vitality and viability of town centres by allowing them to grow and diversify in a way that can respond to rapid changes in the retail and leisure industries, allowing a suitable mix of uses that reflects their distinctive characters and functions.

Overall, the NPPF confirms that the primary objective of development management is to foster the delivery of sustainable development, not to hinder or prevent it. Local Authorities should approach development management decisions positively - looking for solutions rather than problems so that applications can be approved wherever it is practical to do so. Securing the optimum viable use of the property and achieving public benefits as key material considerations for application proposals.

Local Planning Policy

Manchester City Council adopted its Core Strategy on 11th July 2012. Within the Core Strategy the following policies are considered relevant to the consideration of these proposals.

Policy EC 1 Employment and Economic Growth in Manchester

The proposals will result in a much more energy efficient building than the existing building which will respond to climate change by locking heat in during the winter months whilst providing a temperate environment during the summer months. This will help reduce CO2 emissions through increased energy efficiency throughout the building in accordance with the aims of this policy.

Policy EC 2 Existing Employment Space

This policy seeks to retain and protect existing employment space from inappropriate development. The proposals involve the refurbishment of outdated buildings which no longer meet the requirements of modern employment space. The proposals will result in a substantial upgrade to existing employment space thus safeguarding its long-term future as employment accommodation in line with the objectives of Policy EC2.

Policy CC 1 Primary Economic Development Focus: City Centre and Fringe

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 focus for employment growth will be in B1a high density offices and the Council will give particular encouragement and support for such development in the Birley Fields/Manchester Science Park area.

The proposals support the delivery of this policy objective by upgrading existing employment accommodation to modern energy efficient standards thus safeguarding its future use for employment use.

Policy EN 1 Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas

The site sits within The Corridor (Higher Education Precinct (HEP)) Character Area. This area contains major educational and medical institutions located alongside a linear route in a variety of large-scale buildings. Underlying this are remnants of the historic past such as the grid iron street pattern dating principally from the 19th Century. The area contains a network of open spaces often resulting from more recent developments and is busy especially with public transport and pedestrian movement through much of the 24-hour day with patterns of movement linking areas to both sides of Oxford Road. The Corridor represents the only area where the levels of activity, range of uses and scale of built form associated with the City Centre extend beyond the Mancunian Way.

The proposals involve the refurbishment of existing buildings which reflect the existing character of the area and will contribute towards the preservation of the existing character of the locality by ensuring these buildings remain fit for purpose in the 21st century.

Policy EN 4 Reducing CO2 Emissions by Enabling Low and Zero Carbon Development

The proposals have been designed to reduce the need for energy through design features that provide passive heating, natural lighting and cooling to reduce the need for energy through energy efficient features such as improved insulation and glazing to meet residual energy requirements. This is in line with the aims of this policy in the Core Strategy.

6.0 APPEARANCE

The look of the windows will match the same profile as the existing with the same number of transoms and mullions per bay. The spec will be aluminum with the above sizes finished in RAL 7037 matt to match the RAL of the new windows installed on the Ground floor reception as per the application above. The first floor of the Annex and Octagon will have the spandrel panel to match the existing and cover the dwarf wall and sill internally, this will also be finished in the RAL 7037 matt. In several locations, we will need to install louvres to the top section of the glazing on each floor in both buildings for mechanical ventilation. This will not be too similar to existing louvres in the Octagon windows. NOTE: the mechanical design is currently in development and will be ready by the end of July, we will then send an updated elevation and plan drawing showing the positions of these.

CONCLUSION

The proposal will increase the thermal performance of the building and meet current standards and regulations making the building much more energy efficient. The overall look/style will be very similar as the existing and the finish/feel of the windows will be more in line with the precedence set with the ground floor reception windows.

The proposals are considered to be consistent with the requirements of both National and Local

Planning Policy delivering a major upgrade to existing employment space in the city which will safeguard its future in the long-term. Having regard to the above the application should be approved without delay in accordance with the

