

PLANNING REPORT

Site Name : Unit 6, Longden Road.

Site Location : Manchester, M12 5SR.

Combined Planning and Design & Access Statement in support of a Retrospective Planning Application to regularise the sub-division of an existing commercial unit to form 2 units, and the change the use of one of the units created to a vehicle repair places (Use Class B2), including the provision of a vehicle parking area/forecourt to the front and low frontage dividing wall to separate the two forecourts created.



On behalf of

Mr Stoyan Ishoviyarov.

October 2022.

Job Number C/0263/1

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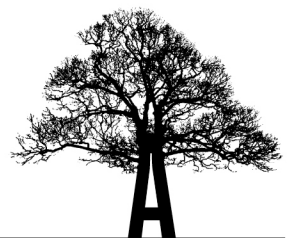
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1.Introduction

1.1. Background.

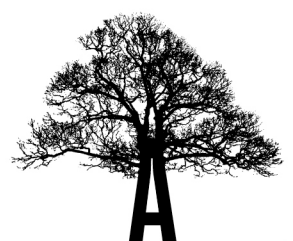
1.1.1. This statement, which comprises both a Planning Statement and a Design & Access Statement, has been prepared to support a retrospective planning application to regularise the sub-division of an existing commercial unit to form 2 units, and the change the use of one of the units created to a vehicle repair places (Use Class B2), including the provision of a vehicle parking area/forecourt to the front and low frontage dividing wall to separate the two forecourts created.

1.2. The Site and its surroundings.

1.2.1. Unit 6 Longden Road was created from the subdivision of the former United Co-operative Laundry building, located at the junction of Hemmons Road and Longden Road, around which a number of business units have been developed to the immediate north and east of the original laundry building. The main building has a frontage onto Longden Road, facing on to residential properties on the south side of Longden Road. The application site is in the middle of a row of business units along this frontage, a site location plan is included as Plan 1, which shows the extent and location of the proposal/application site edged in red.



Image 1 – North looking view onto site as existing, from south side of Longden Rd.



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1.3. Description of the Development.

1.3.1. My client, the operator of Autostar Motors Limited, took over the lease of the application property in October 2021, which at the time was already operating as a vehicle repair garage, and had already been established via previous physically subdivision of the unit, post 2019 as I understand. I am advised by my clients that he purchased the lease in good faith having not been made aware by the previous leaseholder and operator that the previous user had not obtained the correct planning consent. The development and the design concept are further described in Section 4, “Design and Access”, of this statement.

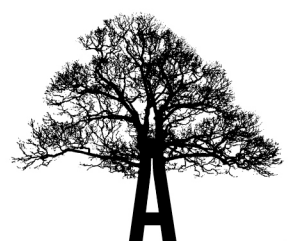
1.4. Planning History.

1.4.1. There is no available history relating to how the former Laundry became commercial industrial premises. There is no extant consent for former B1 (now E), B2 or B8 use for the former laundry building as a planning unit in itself.

1.4.2. Planning permission (Ref. No: F15904) – “Insertion of new roller shutter door in elevation to Longden Road and use of the premises for the refurbishing of pianos.” at “Unit 6, Former U.C.L.A. Laundry, Longden Road, Longsight”, in July 1981, the only previous consent directly relating to the application site. I contend that this, as the last lawful use, establishes a lawful former B1 (now E) Use Class at the application property. Images off Google Street view show the premises in that use in July 2011:



Image 1 – View of application property as at July 2011.



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1.4.3. Images from October 2012 to July 2019 show the premises vacant:



Image 2 – View of application property as at July 2015.

1.4.4. Images from July 2019, and the most recent on Street View, show the previously existing boundary wall already demolished behind a hoarding, one would assume around the time the alterations and subdivision to create the unit as currently is, took place:



Image 3 – View of application property as at July 2019.

1.4.5. The application site is not subject to any statutory designations.



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2.Case in Support of the Application.

2.1. Introduction.

2.1.1. This statement will go on to demonstrate that the proposal is compliant with existing National & Local policies and as such, there is a robust case for considering this application as fully compliant in policy terms. It will also demonstrate that there are no unacceptable adverse effects on interests of acknowledged importance resulting from the proposal.



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3.Planning Policy.

3.1. Planning Framework.

- 3.1.1. The following sections will provide an analysis of key policy issues that impact on this proposal.
- 3.1.2. For the purposes of this application, the relevant development plan is the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, “The Framework”) July 2021, an the local development plan, which is the adopted Manchester Core Strategy 2012–2027 (July 2012) and the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester (the UDP), adopted July 1995. The local development plan therefore predates the most recent iteration of the Framework (of July 2021).

3.2. National Planning Guidance and Local Policy.

3.2.1. Building a strong, competitive economy.

3.2.2. NPPF para 81 provides 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.”

3.2.3. Policy SP1 “Spatial Principles” in the adopted Manchester Core Strategy 2012–2027 (July 2012) provides:

“Spatial Principles

The key spatial principles which will guide the strategic development of Manchester to 2027 are:

- *The Regional Centre will be the focus for economic and commercial development, retail, leisure and cultural activity, alongside high quality city living.*
- *The growth of Manchester Airport will act as a catalyst for the regional economy, and will also provide the impetus for a second hub of economic activity in this part of the City.*
- *Beyond these areas, the emphasis is 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. The majority of new residential development in these neighbourhoods will be in the Inner Areas, defined by the North Manchester , East Manchester and Central Manchester Regeneration Areas.*



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- *The City is covered by regeneration areas including the City Centre. All development should have regard to the character, issues and strategy for each regeneration area as described in the North, East, Central and South Manchester and Wythenshawe Strategic Regeneration Frameworks and the Manchester City Centre Strategic Plan.*
- *The City's network of open spaces will provide all residents with good access to recreation opportunities. The River Valleys (the Irk, Medlock and Mersey) and City Parks are particularly important, and access to these resources will be improved.*
- *New development will maximise the potential of the City's transport infrastructure, in particular promoting walking, cycling and use of the public transport. The extension to the Metrolink network through the Oldham and Ashton lines will create key corridors for new development.*

Core Development Principles

Development in all parts of the City should:-

- *Make a positive contribution to neighbourhoods of choice including:-*
 - ✦ *creating well designed places that enhance or create character.*
 - ✦ *making a positive contribution to the health, safety and wellbeing of residents*
 - ✦ *considering the needs of all members of the community regardless of age, gender, disability, sexuality, religion, culture, ethnicity or income.*
 - ✦ *protect and enhance the built and natural environment.*
 - ✦ *Minimise emissions, ensure efficient use of natural resources and reuse previously developed land wherever possible.*
 - ✦ *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. “*

Issues relating to the determination of this application.

3.2.4. Micro businesses like my clients rely on the availability of small units such as the application proposal, available at affordable rents. Local (including the May 2010 Manchester Economy and Employment Space Study that underpins the Core Strategy) and National Policy does seem to me to focus on strategic provision of employment land and premises while overlooking the accommodation needs of very small users like my client.

3.2.5. The application in principle complies with policy SP1 in that it improves access to jobs.



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3.2.6. Making effective use of land

3.2.7. Framework Para 119 provides (inter alia) that:

- a) *Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions.*

3.2.8. Core Strategy Policy DM1 “Development Management” provides (inter alia, only applicable criteria listed):

“Development Management

All development should have regard to the following specific issues for which more detailed guidance may be given within a supplementary planning document:-

- * *Appropriate siting, layout, scale, form, massing, materials and detail.*
- * *Impact on the surrounding areas in terms of the design, scale and appearance of the proposed development. Development should have regard to the character of the surrounding area.*
- * *Effects on amenity, including privacy, light, noise, vibration, air quality, odours, litter, vermin, birds, road safety and traffic generation. This could also include proposals which would be sensitive to existing environmental conditions, such as noise.*
- * *Accessibility: buildings and neighbourhoods fully accessible to disabled people, access to new development by sustainable transport modes.*
- * *Community safety and crime prevention.*
- * *Design for health.*
- * *Adequacy of internal accommodation and external amenity space.*
- * *Refuse storage and collection.*
- * *Vehicular access and car parking.”*



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3.2.9. Saved Unitary Development Plan Policy DC26 relates to Development and Noise:

“DC26.1 The Council intends to use the development control process to reduce the impact of noise on people living and working in, or visiting, the City. In giving effect to this intention, the Council will consider both:

- a. the effect of new development proposals which are likely to be generators of noise; and*
- b. the implications of new development being exposed to existing noise sources which are effectively outside planning control.*



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Issues relating to the determination of this application.

3.2.10. The applicant took over the lease from the previous leaseholder, Mr Balisane in October 2021 for the sum of £15,000. The appellant now appreciates that he was misled in terms of the lease he purchased not being in relation to an authorised subsisting vehicle repair and servicing and MOT testing facility, and he is eager to achieve retrospective consent with appropriate conditions.

3.2.11. The applicant operates the business on his own without staff. In that his main business is major and complex vehicle repairs, this physically limits the number of client vehicles that are worked on at any one time. The theoretical daily maximum capacity of the workshop would be one vehicle in the unit being serviced/ repaired and 2 parked outside awaiting servicing, although this capacity has never in practice been achieved. No works are undertaken at asocial hours. I attach at Appendix 1 a 6 month sample of client bookings from the appellants work diary to verify this. I also submit that this very low intensity pattern of use by its nature cannot give rise to offences of unacceptable noise and disturbance and unacceptable levels of vehicle traffic movements. To this end I attach at Appendix 2 an Acoustic Planning Report which concludes that sound levels due to typical operational activities at the car workshop are likely to achieve the required maximum sound level of LAmax 60dB at the nearest noise sensitive receptor with the roller shutter door closed. I can confirm that a planning condition requiring that the roller shutter doors remain closed when the typical operational activities listed at para.7.3 of the Acoustic Planning Report are undertaken is acceptable to the applicant.

3.2.12. In May 2010 an appeal decision (ref APP/B4215/A/10/2119586, decision letter attached at Appendix 3) was issued in respect of refusal of planning permission for the use of premises as a vehicle repair, service and MOT garage (Use Class B2) at Unit 5 Longden Road. The main issues identified were effect of the development on highway safety with particular regard to off-street parking provision and its effect on the living conditions of nearby residents in terms of noise and disturbance.



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3.2.13. In dismissing that appeal, where it was common ground that the garage in that case carried out repairs to around eight cars each day, Inspector Fitzsimon considered that the level of off-street parking available to the garage was not sufficient to enable all associated vehicles to be accommodated within its curtilage at all times, and as a result held that the appeal proposal in that case compromised highway safety as a result of inadequate off-street parking. In relation to the current application, this is a considerably less intense use with dedicated external parking for up to 2 vehicles, and hence in comparison the impact on highway safety must surely be negligible, in that no on street parking will result.

3.2.14. In relation to allegations of noise and disturbance, Inspector Fitzsimon in the appeal at Unit 5 concluded that no evidence had been advanced that the daily comings and goings generated by the garage are materially greater than the levels of activity likely to be associated with previously permitted uses of the building. Furthermore, it would be possible to prevent vehicle repairs from being undertaken outside the building by imposing an appropriately worded planning condition. In addition, any noise generated by mechanical and body repairs undertaken within the building itself can be adequately mitigated by the appropriate use of roller shutter doors. Given that the applicant is operating a far less intense operation than that considered at Unit 5 in 2010, I submit that with the imposition of appropriate conditions this application should be allowed on the same basis.



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3.2.15. The following Consents have been granted in the period since the Manchester Core Strategy was adopted;.

107140/FO/2014/N2 – Change of use from B1 light industrial unit to B2 vehicle repair, service & MOT centre, Unit 9a Longden Rd, Approved with conditions 12 Dec 2014.

099981/FU/2012/N2 – Change of use from warehousing to car servicing and car repair garage, Unit 4 Longden Road, Approved with conditions 1 Nov 2012.

3.2.16. The Council needs to be consistent in its approach to considering identical/similar proposals, and it must be emphasised, that the above consents are considerably larger users in very close proximity to the application site, yet have been deemed acceptable and policy compliant. On this basis the current application premises must surely be deemed acceptable and a grant of permission warranted (with appropriate conditions imposed).



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4.Design & Access.

4.1. Background.

4.1.1. The purpose of a Design and Access Statement is to communicate the design process and considerations that have informed this scheme, and also how the design considers the accessibility of the site.

4.2. Context.

4.2.1. Existing buildings/structures on and surrounding the Site.

4.2.2. This application seeks retrospective planning permission for the sub-division of an existing commercial unit to form 2 units, and the change the use of one of the units created to a vehicle repair places (Use Class B2), including the provision of a vehicle parking area/forecourt to the front and low frontage dividing wall to separate the two forecourts created.

4.2.3. The proposal site is situated in the middle of a row of business units along a commercial frontage onto Longden Road (which was formerly the United Co-operative Laundry building), and amounts to some 0.02 ha in site area. The subdivision of the former Unit 6 circa 2019 resulted in the creation of two separate units, (the larger for which my client seeks permission to regularise the established B2 vehicle repair business) of 66 m.sq gross internal floor area, and another smaller unit (not in my clients control) of approximately 10 m.sq gross internal floor area which will be retained in E class light industrial use.

4.2.4. Existing Access

4.2.5. The units and forecourt have existing direct frontage access off Longden Road.

4.2.6. Local services in Levenshulme are less than 5 minutes walk west along Longden Road from the application site, including as ASDA supermarket and bus stops, for both staff and customers to be able to access food and drink at lunchtime etc and to travel to work by bus. Levenshulme railway station is an approximate 7 minutes walk.



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4.3. Design Principles.

4.3.1. Relevant Guidance.

4.3.2. Paras 3.2.8 above sets out the relevant policy framework by which this application should be considered.

4.3.3. Development Requirements.

4.3.4. The development requirement is to retrospectively consent the creation of two business units by way of the subdivision of a larger single unit.

4.3.5. Scale, Massing, Legibility & Continuity.

4.3.6. The proposal does not involve any significant external alteration to the original unit. It is assumed the shuttered bay to my clients unit was created at the same time the units were subdivided in 2019, and this is not considered to have materially altered the symmetry of this unusual but not unattractive former laundry building.

4.3.7. A low separating wall to remark the respective curtilages of the two forecourt areas created will be provided, constructed from reclaimed bricks that still remain stacked on site, presumably after the demolition of the boundary wall that fronted these units up until approximately 2019.

4.3.8. Safe and Welcoming Places.

4.3.9. The development lies within a safe and accessible environment where crime and disorder and fear of crime are minimised through the consideration of natural surveillance from the units and provision of secure security shutters.



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4.3.10. Sustainability and Green Design.

4.3.11. The Framework puts great weight on approving sustainable proposals without delay. The NPPF defines three dimensions to sustainable development:

- An Economic Role
- A Social Role
- An Environmental Role

4.3.12. Economic: The proposal creates two business units at affordable rents, thereby servicing the accommodation needs of very small micro businesses (including provision for new business start ups) like my client.

4.3.13. Social: The proposal ensures the site is being used efficiently in terms of providing a modest, but potentially much needed contribution to small employment unit supply and job creation in this part of the Manchester City area.

4.3.14. Environmental: The proposal has neutral impacts on nature or biodiversity, the site being a business unit with no existing green spaces.

4.3.15. Adaptability.

4.3.16. All internal configurations comply with Building Regulations Approved Document Part M, 2016 edition that includes access to and into the dwelling, circulation within the unit, and accessible electrical switches and sockets and W.C provision.



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4.4. Access Principles.

4.4.1. Access and parking

4.4.2. The proposal will achieve safe access into the unit, and will accommodate parking by way of external parking space for two cars at my clients unit and one at the smaller unit, there being sufficient manoeuvring space for cars to safely access and egress in forward gear.

4.4.3. As discussed at section 4.2.6 above, the site is suitably accessible by walking and cycling.

