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Planning Department
Manchester City Council
Town Hall Extension
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14th December 2022

PCK – 21-309
BY EMAIL

To whom it may concern,

**APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION AND ADVERTISEMENT CONSENT
40 SPRING GARDENS, MANCHESTER, M2 1EN**

We write on behalf of our client, Aviva (the “Applicant”), to apply for planning permission and advertisement consent for the proposed removal of the existing canopy and recladding of the vestibule at 40 Spring Gardens, along with alterations to signage. This application seeks to revise application ref: 132560/AO/2021, which was approved on 21st February 2022.

We provide below a description of the existing site and the proposed external changes, as well as an assessment of the proposals against the statutory tests and planning policy. We conclude by noting that the signage and external alterations should be approved by virtue of their positive impact to the amenity of the local area, their conformity with public safety considerations and compliance with planning policy.

a. Application Submission Package

A plan package has been provided for the Council’s review, consisting of:

- Cover Letter – Iceni Projects (this document);
- Heritage Note – Iceni Projects;
- Site Location Plan, Existing and Proposed External Signage – Space Invader Design;
- Concept CGIs – Space Invader Design

b. The Site & Surroundings

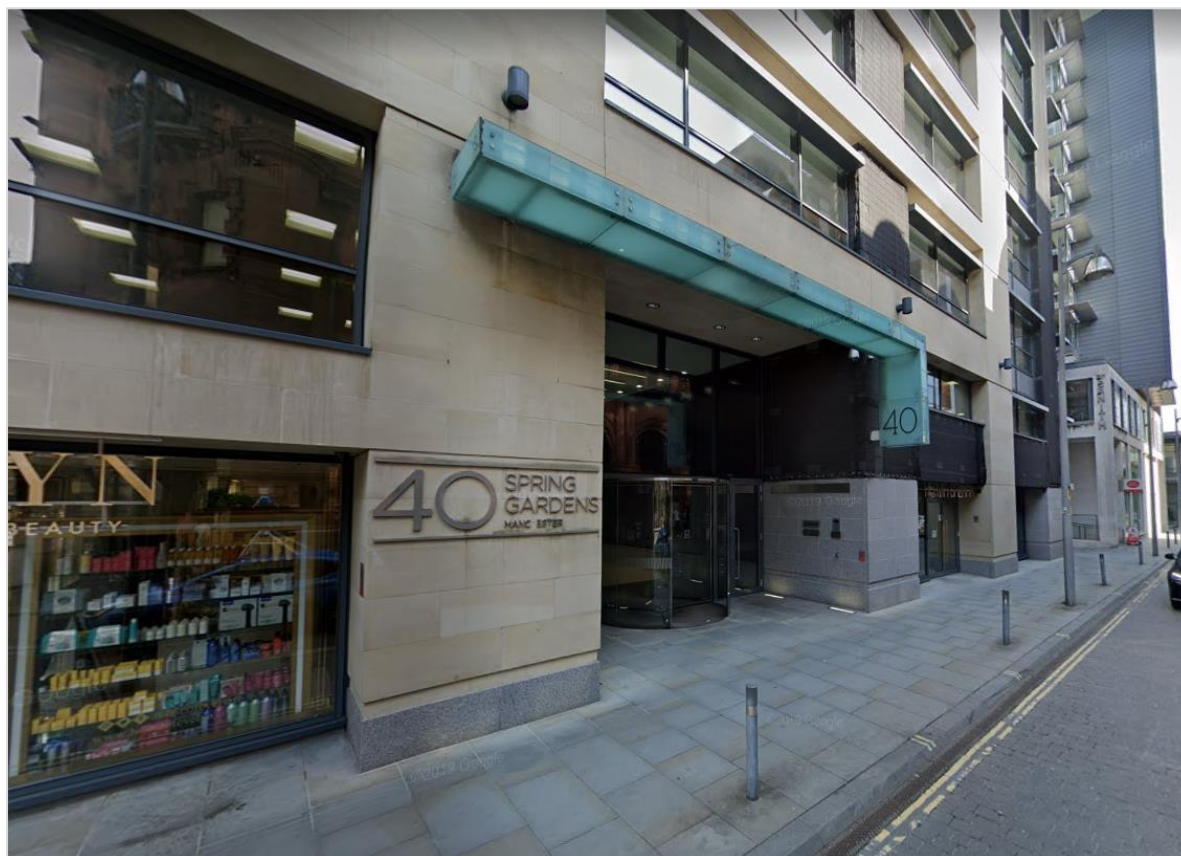
The application site comprises a 9-storey (including basement level) building located on the northwestern side of Spring Gardens in Central Manchester. The principal eastern elevation of the building fronts on to Spring Gardens, however the building also has frontages on to Brown Street to the west, and the pedestrianised street of Marriots Court to the north. Adjoining the site immediately to the south is the Manchester Reform Club; a venetian gothic-style building which is Grade II* listed.

Although the building on the application site is not itself listed, it is within the Upper King Street Conservation Area and is surrounded by a number of designated heritage assets.

The current building on the application site was constructed in 2007 and is of a modern design when compared to the surrounding historic development. The building currently comprises predominantly Class E office floorspace at upper levels, but does have some Class E retail uses at ground floor level.

At present, the main entrance into the building comprises a glass canopy which projects out from the existing stonework and advertises the number '40'. The current vestibule area is clad with granite, and metal lettering on the main façade advertises the site address. Such features of the building are somewhat dated and have been subject to damage in recent years. An image of the existing main entrance into the building is shown below:

Figure 1 – Photograph showing existing signage, vestibule, and canopy at 40 Spring Gardens



Source: Google Maps

c. Application Ref: 132560/AO/2021

Application Ref: 132560/AO/2021 sought consent for the proposed removal of the existing canopy and recladding of the vestibule at 40 Spring Gardens, along with the replacement of existing signage and introduction of new signage on the principal elevation of the building. The application was approved but unfortunately incorrect plans were submitted meaning not all the proposed changes were included within the Approved Plans.

d. The Current Proposals

The current proposals are also seeking consent for the removal of the existing canopy and recladding of the vestibule at 40 Spring Gardens, along with the replacement of existing signage and introduction of new signage on the principal elevation of the building.

The proposed signage to the front elevation will continue to read '40 Spring Gardens', as per the existing signage, however the typeface will be changed, this change was missing from the previous application elevation drawing. The signage within the vestibule has been amended, removing the words 'Spring Gardens', now simply stating '40', the typeface remains unchanged. As in 132560/AO/2021 the vestibule signage will be backlit.

The vestibule will be clad with corrugated aluminium panelling and some additional lighting will be introduced around the glazing within the vestibule. A tinted glass film will be added to the glazing and the frames will be resprayed. In addition, the existing glass canopy shall be removed.

These amendments will further improve the character and appearance of the building. Below is a CGI of the proposals.

Figure 2 – CGI showing proposed new signage and vestibule at 40 Spring Gardens



Source: Space Invader Design

e. Planning Application Considerations

Rationale for External Alterations and Advertisements

The freeholders of the building seek to invest in and refurbish the building, not only to provide visual improvements and wayfinding for its tenants and visitors, but also to ensure that the building can enhance the streetscene and positively contribute to the character of this part of the city centre. The owners of the site are committed to providing high-quality design to assist in strong placemaking, and the signage for and entrance area into the building form part of that strategy.

Heritage Impact

As referred to above, the site is within the Upper King Street Conservation Area and both adjoins and is surrounded by a number of designated heritage assets. The currently planning application is therefore accompanied by a Heritage Note which has been prepared by Iceni Projects, setting out the heritage considerations associated with the current proposals.

The Heritage Note confirms that the site is not considered to hold any special architectural or historical interest and therefore makes (1) a neutral contribution to the significance of the surrounding listed buildings and (2) a low contribution to the Upper King Street Conservation Area. It sets out that the proposed external alterations will improve the aesthetic quality of the building's exterior, and are considered to have no impact on, and thereby maintain, the special interest of the nearby heritage assets.

The proposals are therefore considered to fully adhere to Manchester Core Strategy Policy CC 9 (Design and Heritage) which requires buildings to be of a high standard of design in terms of appearance and function whilst preserving or enhancing any identified heritage assets.

Visual Appearance and Relationship with Host Building

The proposed replacement and additional signage and the aluminium wrap cladding have been designed to ensure that they appear as integral features to the building and do not detract from the character of the host building. The scale and pattern of both the signage and the cladding have been carefully considered to ensure that they are not disproportionate but are of a scale consistent with their surroundings.

f. Advertisement Consent Considerations

Current national guidance for advertisement control is set out in the NPPF (Paragraph 136), which recognises that the display of outdoor advertisements can only be controlled in the interests of "amenity" and "public safety", taking account of cumulative impacts, as guided by the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended ('the Regulations').

The NPPG provides further interpretation of the Regulations; repeating the provisions in the NPPF, adding that the development plan may be taken into account as a material consideration, although it cannot override the two principal issues.

Amenity

The 2007 Regulations states that factors relevant to amenity include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any features of historic, architectural, cultural or similar interest. On amenity, the NPPG states at Paragraph 79, that:

"In practice, 'amenity' is usually understood to mean the effect on visual amenity in the immediate neighbourhood of an advertisement or site for the display of advertisements, where residents or passers-by will be aware of the development."

In terms of 'amenity' the local planning authority is required to consider the effect of the proposal on the appearance on the building or on the visual amenity in the surrounding area (including the cumulative impact of multiple advertisements in the surrounding area and the brightness of any proposed illuminations). In considering visual amenity, the LPA should consider the impacts as well as the benefits associated with the advertisement proposal.

In examining this scheme's impact on amenity, we would note that it has a positive effect; the proposed new signage will ensure that the building is easily identifiable, will solidify the building's presence on Spring Gardens, and will assist in wayfinding purposes in this part of the city centre. The signage is not considered to cause any harm to the amenity of any of the surrounding premises.

Public Safety

When considering 'public safety', the local planning authority are advised to have consideration to the effect the signage has upon the safe use and operation of any form of traffic and transport (particularly the potential to distract drivers, cyclists and pedestrians).

In examining this scheme's impact on public safety, we would note that as required by the NPPG, the proposals would not:

- Obstruct or impair sight-lines at corners, bends or at a junction, or at any point of access to a highway;
- because of its size and siting, cause obstruct or confuse a road-user's view, or reduce the clarity or effectiveness of a traffic sign or signal, or would be likely to distract road-users because of their unusual nature;
- include external illumination that would be flashing, be a colour which could be confused with traffic signals/authorised signals, or because of their size or brightness, could result in glare and dazzle, or distract road-users.

For these reasons, it is considered that the proposal would not create a hazard to highway safety and complies with the NPPF and the design advice set out within the NPPG.

g. Conclusion

The proposed external alterations, including the proposed removal of the existing canopy, the re-cladding of the vestibule and the introduction of new signage have been carefully considered in their context. The proposals will visually improve the design of the building, whilst ensuring that they maintain the special interest of the Upper King Street Conservation Area and the nearby listed buildings.

This assessment has applied the tests set out at paragraph 136 of the NPPF, as guided by the Regulations, and demonstrates that the proposal would be appropriate in terms of amenity and public safety. We therefore request that planning permission and advertisement consent are granted.

Should you have any questions regarding this application, please don't hesitate to get in touch via phone (07747 157 274) or email (pchandlerking@iceniprojects.com). We look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours sincerely,



Paul Chandler-King
PLANNER