



HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

APPLICATION NUMBER: 135019/FO/2022
REPLACEMENT & RECONFIGURATION OF GROUND
FLOOR FRONTAGE
TO PRINCIPAL ELEVATIONS, INCLUDING RE-
INSTATEMENT OF CORNER
ENTRANCE AT GROUND FLOOR
1 - 5 , SWAN STREET, ANCOATS, MANCHESTER, M4 1LJ

Date	Monday, 17 October 2022
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1.1. Introduction

- 1.2. This assessment is prepared and submitted in support of an application under Section 73 of the Town and County Planning Act (“TCPA”) (1990) for replacement and reconfiguration of ground floor frontage to principal elevations, including re-instatement of corner entrance at ground floor level. The application site is an existing cocktail bar names Mechanica at 1-5, Swan Street, Ancoats, Manchester, M4 1LJ. The application has been received by the City Council and provided with reference: 135019/FO/2022.
- 1.3. This assessment provides detailed consideration of heritage matters, considering both the significance of the building and the tests of the NPPF.
- 1.4. This section forms the requisite Heritage Assessment as required by national and local policy. In undertaking this assessment, we have had regard to the NPPF (2021), and the relevant policies of the development plan. We have also considered the guidance contained in:
- Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets Historic England Advice Note 12 (October 2019);
 - Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management Historic England Advice Note 1 (Second Edition) (February 2019); and
 - The Setting of Heritage Assets Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition) (December 2017).
- 1.5. This assessment should be read in conjunction with the drawings and documents which make up the planning application.

2.1. Description of Site and Surroundings

- 2.2. The application site comprises the ground floor of a single building, which is itself over three stories. The building is of a traditional red brick construction, under slate roof.
- 2.3. Fronting to Swann Street and Oldham Street, at first and second floor level, the building features decorative lintels, sills and quoins. These, alongside the stone detailing to the eaves, contribute to the character and appearance of the area.
- 2.4. The ground floor appears to have been substantially remodelled over time and provides no visible features of value to the character and appearance of the area.
- 2.5. The rear of the property features a small yard area, laid to hardstanding.
- 2.6. The ground floor of the building, to which the application relates, was last used as a cocktail bar, Mechanical. The cocktail bar recently closed and the building appears secure.
- 2.7. The surrounding area is a mix of commercial uses to the ground floor, with relatively new, high density residential accommodation above. New development is in the form of substantial purpose built residential blocks with commercial uses on the ground floor.
- 2.8. The planning history of the site includes a decision to grant planning permission on the 12th of September 2013 (MCC reference: 102888/FO/2013/C2) for the change of use of the building from retail (use class A1 and A2) to bar use (use class A4). The proposed works included the refurbishment of the upper floors of the building which were, at the time, to remain in office use.
- 2.9. Similarly, the ground floor and basement of the building (MCC reference: 122952/FO/2019) was subject to an application for a retrospective change of use of ground and basement floors, to A4 Use, and external alterations including repair works to facades and windows. This later application incorporated the changes to the Swan Street and Oldham St facades at ground floor level which are evident on the site currently.
- 2.10. The upper floors of the building (MCC reference: 113894/P3OPA/2016) were the subject of a change of use of 2nd and 3rd floors from use class B1(a) to use class C3 apartments comprising 14 studio apartments. This permission appears to have been implemented.

- 3.
- 3.1. The Proposal
- 3.2. The planning application proposes the replacement and reconfiguration of the ground floor frontages to the buildings principal elevations, including re-instatement of corner entrance. The proposals involve the following:
- 3.3. Swann Street Frontage
- Remove the current deep fascia, and replacement with specialist designed frontage signage, entablature detail and flashing.
 - Removal of current tinted glazing treatment, and replacement with traditional window openings, awnings and glazed tile simulated pier.
 - Removal of current door on to Swann Street, and replacement with corner entrance with timber entrance door vestibule.
- 3.4. Oldham Street Frontage
- Remove the current deep fascia, and replacement with specialist designed frontage signage, entablature detail and flashing.
 - Removal of current tinted glazing treatment, and replacement with traditional window openings, awnings and glazed tile simulated pier.
- 3.5. The proposals seek to improve the appearance of the building from the main frontages and restore the building to an appropriate scale and design at the ground floor. Reference to the buildings original structure are made through the introduction of brick piers, smaller scale fenestration and decorative glazed tiling.

4.1. **Assessment**

4.2. The NPPF defines significance as:

“The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence but also from its setting.”.

4.3. The site is located within the Smithfield Conservation Area which was designated in February 1987. The application site is located at the eastern extent of the Conservation Area, but does not adjoin any Listed Buildings. The area surrounding the application is set out below.



Source: Manchester City Council

4.4. Since its establishment in 1821, Smithfield has been known as the centre for Manchester's food markets, where fruit, vegetables, meat and fish have been sold on both a wholesale and retail scale. At its peak around the turn of the century, it was probably the largest market complex in Britain.

4.5. In the past the predominant building type was food markets. Few of these are still present, and those that are retained have mostly been converted to other uses. The remaining buildings in

this area of the Conservation Area are composed of relatively small buildings of one to four storeys, and new proposals here will need to be scaled appropriately.

- 4.6. The Conservation Area statement notes that it is important that the narrow-fronted character of the older buildings is retained in any new development. This will ensure a vertical rhythm in the 'street wall' when viewed in perspective. The height, scale, colour, form, massing and materials of new buildings should relate to the existing high-quality buildings and also complement their character.
- 4.7. The statement goes on to note that both the larger and smaller buildings within the conservation area exhibit a great variety in style. There is however also a common unity which designers of new and refurbished buildings should acknowledge. The document makes it clear that superficial copies of historic buildings will not make a positive contribution to the historic character of the area. On this basis, it is clear that each building should have a vitality of its own.
- 4.8. In providing advice to designers, the statement makes it clear that they should be aware of proportion and rhythm in their buildings and also differentiate a ground floor, middle portion (where there is sufficient height to do so) and a top part which creates a varied skyline, in order to enhance the area.
- 4.9. Specifically in relation to the design of signs and canopies, the Conservation Area Statement advises that they should be carefully designed so as not to compete with or cancel the architectural details of buildings.
- 4.10. More generally in relation to the urban design context of the area the Conservation Area Statement advises that designers of proposed buildings should take account of urban design context rather than evolving a design which has no clear relationship with buildings nearby. This does not mean a debased copying of historical forms. These serve only to devalue the genuinely historical buildings nearby. It does mean acknowledging the characteristics of massing, proportions, elevational subdivision, colours and materials of adjacent buildings in the design of modern additions.
- 4.11. The Conservation Area Statement goes on to provide detailed advice in relation to shop security and particularly the installation of solid shutters on ground floors. It is recommended that when shopfronts are replaced, they should incorporate structural members both vertically and horizontally, in order to provide a greater degree of security. This may be carried out in a traditional manner, with a stallriser, or it might be achieved with a more modern design. Sub-

division of the front also makes good sense, as replacement of individual parts is much cheaper than re-installing an entire shopfront.

4.12. The advice with NPPF is clear that:

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.

4.13. In this regard it is clear that the proposal will result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the heritage asset, and that the public benefits can be summarised as follows:

- Securing the optimum use of the building in the longer term,
- Careful and appropriate conservation and repair of the main frontages of the building,
- Restoration of a historic design to the frontages, with an emphasis on the vertical elements and correctly proportioned fenestration, subdivision of ground floor elements and incorporation of structural members to provide a greater degree of security,
- The use of appropriate materials and shop frontage design reflecting, but not mimicking, the traditional form of surrounding ground floor frontages,
- the removal of the current large horizontal glazing elements, associated signage bar and inappropriate window tint, and
- Employment associated with the construction work needed to implement the proposal,

4.14. Having regard to the above considerations, the requirements of policy CC9 of the Local Plan are fully reflected in the proposal, as is the advice within NPPF.

5.1. Conclusion

- 5.2. The proposal entails the removal of harmful horizontal elements and dominant curtain glazing to both the Swan Street and Oldham St frontages. The installation of replacement glazing, and traditional piers will create traditionally inspired frontage on the ground floor of these elevations.
- 5.3. The shop front proposal has been inspired by both surrounding buildings and the structure of the original building evident from the upper floors and has sought to provide appropriate response to this important corner site. The reinstatement of an entrance on the apex of the corner, the use of traditional materials and the careful design of windows, doors, glazing, signage and details all combine to enhance the surrounding Conservation Area beyond it's present appearance.
- 5.4. The proposal would not give rise to impacts which conflict with the provisions of the adopted development plan or guidance within NPPF.
- 5.5. I am unaware of any material considerations that dictate a decision other than in accord with the development plan should be made and therefore consider that planning permission should be granted by the local planning authority without delay.
- 5.6. In conclusion on heritage matters therefore the proposal is in accordance with the requirements of the development plan and NPPF.