

Application Number/s: 132507/LO/2021

Applicant: The City of Edinburgh Council

Agent: JLL

Location: 54 Princess Street, Manchester

Proposal: LBC for internal fire safety works to all floors including basement

Ward: Piccadilly

Description of Site and Surrounding Area

The application relates to 54 Princess Street, which was built together with no.56 Princess Street. The building is on the west side of Princess Street, on the southwest corner of the intersection of Princess Street and Portland Street. The building is in an area of Manchester City Centre that falls within the Whitworth Street Conservation Area, an area that is rich with listed buildings and heritage assets. The application property is a 6-storey former warehouse building, comprising a basement, ground floor, three above ground floors and an attic topped with a mansard roof.

Description of Proposal

The listed building consent application seeks various works to increase the fire resistance of the common parts of the building, such that they will meet the appropriate modern standards (sixty minute fire rating).

Basement

- Existing fibrous fire-retardant materials on columns to be left, exposed steel/metalwork to be treated with 60-minute fire-rated intumescent paint.
- Existing suspended ceiling in corridor to be replaced with 60-minute fire rating, access panels of 60-minute fire-rated board to be introduced for access.
- Existing areas of flush ceilings to be replaced with fire board to give 60-minute fire rating.

Ground Floor

- Street level entrance area – flush board under drawing of ceiling to be stripped and replaced with 60-minute fire-rated board and painted with emulsion paint. Existing down stand of perimeter bulkhead to be replicated and lighting reinstalled.
- Mezzanine lobby – flush ceiling stripped and replaced with 60-minute fire rating board. Existing square surround and treatment of column head to be replicated. Recessed LED lighting to be fitted with 60-minute resistance fireboxes. Door and frame of riser cupboard to be replaced with FD-60 door and frame to fit opening. Fire resistant board introduced at ceiling level of cupboard.
- Removal of tongue-and-groove board to ceiling of staircase and introduction of 60-minute fire rated board, to be painted.

- Removal of flush ceiling to cupboard under stairs and replacement with 60-minute fire rated board.

First Floor

- Removal of tongue-and-groove ceiling from staircase and replacement with 60-minute fire rated board, to be painted.
- First floor lobby with lift – Application of 60-minute clear intumescent paint to existing Lincrusta paper. Where ceiling is free of lincrusta and flush, replacement with fireboard. Timber beams currently painted white to be painted with intumescent paint. Downstand detail to be replicated with 60-minute fireboard fixed to subframe. Removal of boxing around column and column treated with intumescent paint and re-boxed with 60-minute fireboard. Door and frame to riser to be replaced with FD-60 door and frame. Fire resistant board to be introduced at ceiling level of the cupboard.

Second Floor

- Staircase – As per lower floor.
- Second floor lobby with lift – As lower floor.
- L-Shaped Corridor – Flush plasterboard to ceiling to be removed. If timber above is in good condition, to be exposed, sanded and coated with intumescent paint already previously approved elsewhere. If poor condition, ceiling will be replaced with 60-minute fireboard on like for like basis. Timber floorboards to rear to be stripped back and coated with intumescent paint. Exposed steel to be sanded back and painted. Ceiling gaps in the boards or between board and beams stopped with appropriate material to provide fire integrity. New fire door will replace existing door to rear staircase to match in design.
- Toilet block – Replacement of ceiling with 60-minute rated fireboard with dismantling and putting back together the cubicles.

Third Floor

- Third floor lobby with lift – As per lower floors.
- L-shaped corridor – As per lower floor
- Toilet block – as per lower floor

Fourth Floor

- Minor alterations as per lower floors.

Publicity LBC

Site Notice/s Posted and Dates: Posted 19/01/22, Expired 09/02/22

Press Adverts Published and Dates: Published 18/01/22, Expired 08/02/22

Neighbour Notification: Notified 17/01/22

Representations Received: None

Consultations

Environmental Health

- No comment to make

Highway Services

- No comment to make

Urban Design & Conservation

- No comments received.

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990:

Section 66 of the Act states that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the LPA shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. The LPA shall have regard to the desirability of preserving features of special architectural or historic interest, and in particular, listed buildings.

As part of this assessment, the LPA will have special regard to internal features of the building, particularly those of special architectural or historic interest it possesses, and which should be preserved. The LPA will consider information submitted by the applicant, which assesses the impact and any loss of any historic fabric.

In this instance, the alterations and additions to the listed building consist of only internal alterations, with an application submitted only for Listed Building Consent. The interventions to the heritage asset revolve exclusively around alterations to common areas to improve the fire rating of the building. The proposal does not propose the removal, replacement or alteration to any significant architectural features within the building.

Save Unitary Development Plan Policies:

- Conservation Areas (18)

Policy DC18.1(a) requires the LPA to seek to preserve and enhance the character of its designated conservation areas by carefully considering issues.

In this instance, although the building is within the Whitworth Street Conservation Area, no external alterations or additions are proposed to the building. As such, there would be no identifiable impact on the character or appearance of the conservation area and the development would not impact upon its preservation or enhancement.

- Listed Buildings (19)

In determining applications for listed building consent, the LPA will have regard to the desirability or securing the retention, restoration, maintenance and continued use of such buildings and to protect their general setting. Specifically, DC19.1(c) states that the LPA will not permit any external or internal alteration or addition to a listed building where, in its opinion, there would be an adverse effect on its architectural or historic character. DC18.1(f) states that the LPA shall not permit alterations to a listed building

which would prevent the future use of any part of the building, upper floors or basements, or where poor maintenance is likely to result.

The proposed alterations to the listed building are focused primarily on removing existing interventions/alter addition material and replacement with more modern, fireproof materials. In effect, it is generally considered that the alterations relate primarily to maintenance and ensuring the fire safety rating of the building is such that it can remain in continued use as an office building.

There will inevitably be some harm caused to the listed building's interior as a result of the changes proposed. However, these changes are modest and the harm not significant, with the general character and appearance of the listed building remaining fully intact. Where there is potential for any harm to the listed building to be further reduced or controlled, appropriate conditions may be added, requiring the applicant to provide further detail and method statements.

In summary, it is considered that the alterations to the building, consisting of carefully considered fireproofing to limited internal areas of the building, would retain the building's character, allow the building's retention and continued maintenance and use. There is negligible impact on the building's architectural and historic character and therefore the proposed alterations/additions accord with saved UDP Policy DC19.1.

Core Strategy Policies:

- Design and Heritage (CC 9)

Development in Manchester City Centre should preserve and enhance the heritage assets that have been identified, including listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled ancient monuments.

In this instance, the alterations are for modest internal works only in order to achieve a better fire rating and secure the building's continued use. As such, the proposal is acceptable in that it would preserve and enhance identified assets.

- Heritage (EN 3)

New developments must be designed so as to support the Council in preserving or, where possible, enhancing the historic environment, the character, setting and accessibility of areas and buildings of acknowledged importance. This includes listed buildings. Proposals which enable the re-use of heritage assets will be encouraged where they are considered consistent with the significance of the heritage asset.

This proposal is for listed building consent only and, as such, no external work is proposed and the character of the building will be preserved, with no identifiable impact on the historic environment or character of the area. Though not direct, the proposed fireproofing of the building will ensure that future users of the office building will be assured of the fire safety of the building, with the proposals only causing modest impact to the heritage asset. As such, the proposal accords with Policy EN3.

National Planning Policy Framework:

The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. Applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicated otherwise. The NPPF is considered a material consideration.

The overarching purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Sustainable development within the planning system has three objectives, which are interdependent and consist of economic, social and environmental sustainability objectives. So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay.

- Decision-making (4)

LPAs should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way, including by proactively working with applicants to secure sustainable development and engaging in pre-application discussion. In this instance, there was pre-application advice given, which led to the amendment or additional information being provided (front-loading).

LPAs should consider whether otherwise unacceptable development or proposals that do not have information available/it is not possible to provide until a later date could be made acceptable through appropriate use of planning conditions. Planning conditions shall only be used where they are necessary, relevant, enforceable, precise and reasonable in other aspects. It is considered that a number of appropriate planning conditions can be added to any approval to secure details of further information, which would make the development proposed acceptable.

- Conserving and enhancing the historic environment (16)

Heritage assets, including listed buildings, are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in an appropriate manner, appropriate to their significance.

In determining applications, LPAs require the applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made to their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance. The information provided should be detailed enough to understand potential impacts of the proposal. In turn, LPAs should identify and assess the particular importance of heritage assets affected by the proposal.

In determining applications, LPAs are required to take into account the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of the asset and retaining their viable use, ensuring they make a positive contribution to sustainable communities and economic vitality, and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character.

When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to its conservation. The impact a development has on a heritage asset is assessed on a sliding scale, from total loss to less than substantial harm.

In this example, the proposal is for modest internal alterations to common areas, to ensure that the building is appropriately covered by fire protection measures, which in turn would protect the heritage asset in the event of a fire. It is considered that the applicant has thoroughly described potential impacts to the heritage asset.

Though any loss or change to historic or original fabric is harmful to the heritage asset, it is not considered that the alterations are significant and would be characterised as less than substantial harm. In the case that development to a listed building is considered to cause less than substantial harm, public benefits need to be weighed up against this harm. It is considered that the benefits of ensuring that the listed building is protected and conforms with modern fire safety standards is a significant benefit, which would ensure that the building can remain in use as an office building. It is not considered that the proposed works conflict with any local planning policies.

Conclusion

The proposed alterations and additions to the common areas within the internal fabric of the building are considered necessary in order for the building to achieve modern fire safety standards. The applicant has provided a detailed heritage statement setting out impacts to the listed building, which are considered to be less than substantial. The proposals can be further controlled by way of planning condition/s requiring further details and method statements for the proposed works.

The proposals accord with relevant local policies, including saved policies from the Unitary Development Plan and policies from the Core Strategy. As such, the proposals are acceptable.

RECOMMENDATION:

That planning permission be granted subject to the following planning conditions:

1. The development must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason - Required to be imposed pursuant to Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

2. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following drawings and documents:

- Location Plan ('Location Plan 54 Princess Street Manchester', undated) – Received 15 December 2021
- Site Plan ('Site Plan 54 Princess Street, Manchester, M1 6HS', undated) – Received 15 December 2021
- Basement Level -1 & -2 Scope of Works (Drawing 1244-0B-SW01(D) dated 23 July 2021) – Received 15 December 2021
- Ground Floor Scope of Works (Drawing 1244-0G-SW01(E) dated 23 July 2021) – Received 15 December 2021
- First Floor Scope of Works (Drawing 1244-01-SW01(F) dated 23 July 2021) – Received 15 December 2021
- Second Floor Scope of Works (Drawing 1244-02-SW01(E) dated 23 July 2021) – Received 15 December 2021

- Third Floor Scope of Works (Drawing 1244-03-SW01(D) dated 23 July 2021) – Received 15 December 2021
- Fourth Floor Scope of Works (Drawing 1244-04-SW01(C) dated 23 July 2021) – Received 15 December 2021

Reason - To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans. Pursuant to policies SP1 and DM1 of the Core Strategy.

3. Notwithstanding the details shown in the approved documents and detailed in condition 2 of this decision, full and final details as well as methodology where applicable of the following shall be submitted and approved in writing prior to any works to those elements commencing on site:

- a) Application of fire-rated intumescent paint to be applied to steel/metalwork and Lincrusta .
- b) Removal of existing suspended ceilings/flush ceilings and replacement with 60-minute fire-rated board
- c) Proposed replicated perimeter bulkhead/s and column head/s as well as their treatment
- d) Proposed replacement doors and door frames to riser cupboards
- e) Removal of tongue-and-groove ceilings to staircase and replacement with fire-rated material
- f) Details of the condition of timber above plasterboard ceiling/s to corridors, complete with proposed intervention to timber including any treatment/s.
- g) Treatment to timber floorboards
- h) Details of fire door/s to be fitted to replace existing door/s.

Reason: To ensure that the appearance of the development is acceptable to the City Council as local planning authority in the interests of visual amenity of the area within which the site