COVER LETTER
Variation of Condition – Land on Catherine Road

GOLD SKETCH STUDIOS

Introduction

Location: Land On Catherine Road, Manchester, M8 4HE

Application Ref: 139500/FO/2024

Project: Erection of 3-storey block of apartments containing 6 No. self-contained flats (Class C3)

This statement is submitted to Manchester City Council in support of an application to vary Condition 2 (Approved Plans) and Condition 23 (Retained Trees) of the planning permission granted on 24 October 2024.

The application site consists of a parcel of derelict land on Catherine Road. It currently holds planning permission for the development of a three-story apartment block comprising six self-contained flats with associated parking and landscaping.

Approved Documents under Original Planning Permission (Application Ref: 139500/FO/2024)
The following drawings and reports were approved as part of the original planning permission:

- GSS23159.4 - Land on Catherine Road - 502.2 - Site – Proposed
- GSS23159.4 - Land on Catherine Road - 503.2 - Proposed Street Scene
- GSS23159.4 - Land on Catherine Road - 003.2 - Proposed Plans and Elevations
- GSS23159.4 - Land on Catherine Road - 004.2 - Proposed Plans and Elevations
- GSS23159.3 - Land on Catherine Road - 501 - Site - Location and Block Plan
- Catherine Road BNG Rev C September 2024
- Rev C Catherine Road The_Statutory_Biodiversity_Metric_Calculation_Tool_-_Macro_enabled_tool_23.07.2024(1)

Updated Documents Submitted for Variation of Condition
The following updated drawings and reports are submitted in support of this Variation of Condition application:

- GSS23159.6 - Land on Catherine Road - 003.1 - Proposed Plans and Elevations
- GSS23159.6 - Land on Catherine Road - 004.1 - Proposed Plans and Elevations
- GSS23159.6 - Land on Catherine Road - 502 - Site Proposed
- GSS23159.6 - Land on Catherine Road - 503.3 - Proposed Street Scene
- Catherine Road BNG Jan 2026-min
- Rev D Catherine Road The_Statutory_Biodiversity_Metric_Calculation_Tool_-_Macro_enabled_tool_23.07.2024(1)

Background and Reasoning for Variation

During the original application process, the design was modified at the request of the Council to facilitate the retention of a specific tree at the front of the site. This resulted in the building's front-left elevation being pulled back and reduced. While the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) statement was updated to reflect this change, other technical reports were not adjusted.

The council wished to retain the tree due to the fact that this land is within a conservation area. We understand the importance of maintain as many trees as possible within a conservation area and therefore were happy to adjust our plans and reduce the size of the building accordingly. Now that the project has graduated to design and construction phase, unfortunately further issues with the tree and its roots have become apparent as will be explained below. Although this variation of condition seeks to remove this tree (as will be explained below), which is not something we ideally wanted to do, this is unfortunately necessary in order to redevelop this site which is currently in a state of waste, disuse and neglect and is an eyesore to the conservation area. Therefore, after much consideration, we are submitting a Variation of Condition to remove the tree, as will be explained below.

As the project has now moved into the design and construction phase, the following technical and practical conflicts have been identified:

- **Structural Impossibility:** Following site visits, the contractor and structural engineer have confirmed that retaining the tree is impossible. The size of the tree roots directly conflicts with the necessary foundations for the building, even with the previously reduced design. They have stated that their position would be to build according to the approved Tree Report which states that all trees need to be removed.
- **Existing Document Contradictions:** The current permission contains an internal contradiction. The approved Tree Report (which concluded that all trees must be removed for construction) conflicts with the approved drawings and Condition 23, which mandate the tree's retention.
- **Optimisation of Design:** Since the tree cannot be saved for structural reasons, we propose returning the building to its original "squared-off" design. This utilizes the site more efficiently and provides a more visually pleasing aesthetic that is consistent with the original design intent.

Furthermore, the tree reports approved as part of the original planning permission, including *Catherine Rd RTS 22042024*, *RTS 22042024 TCP 001*, and *RTS 22042024 AIA 002*, all recommend the removal of the existing trees to facilitate construction. These reports provide the technical justification for tree removal and, as such, we request that they be retained as part of the planning record to ensure consistency and clarity in support of this Variation of Condition application.

Proposed Variation

We seek to vary the conditions as follows:

1. **Condition 2 (Approved Plans):** To substitute the currently approved drawings with updated plans that remove the tree and reinstate the original building footprint (squaring off the front-left elevation). This will also allow for a more visually pleasing aesthetic and the full utilisation of the space.
2. **Condition 23 (Retained Trees):** To amend the requirements regarding "retained trees" to reflect the removal of the tree at the front of the site.

An updated BNG Report is submitted with this application. This report addresses the removal of the tree and provides a clear strategy for achieving the required credits.

As the site lacks the space for "like-for-like" tree replanting following the removal of this specimen, the updated statement details how the correct credits will be achieved off-site. This ensures that the development remains in compliance with Policy EN15 of the Manchester Core Strategy.

Therefore this application to vary the conditions stated, will ensure that everything is in sync and nothing contradicts each other.