

Design, Access and Heritage Statement

4A Ridgefield, M2 6EQ

Section 16 on the NPPF

23.02.26

Proposal:

Proposed change of use from ground floor street level storage/fire exit serving existing basement nightclub by subdivision to coffee shop and retention of fire exit. The works externally include the alteration to existing wooden shop front including an additional door (fire exit) where there is currently a solid timber panel and replacing the existing solid timber door with a glass door. It is proposed to subdivide the unit internally so that the space accessed via the new glass door is a coffee shop and the partitioned area becomes the fire exit off the staircase to the basement.

Address: 4A Ridgefield, Manchester, M2 6EQ



Artistic impression of proposed shopfront

1. Introduction

This Heritage Statement is submitted to Manchester City Council to support the planning application for the change of use of 4A Ridgefield to a cafe. This report fulfills the requirements of the NPPF (Section 16) to describe the significance of the heritage asset affected and the potential impact of the proposal.

2. Description of the Heritage Asset

The Site: The property is a four-storey building constructed of stone. It was originally designed as a block of commercial buildings with shops and a bank at ground level and offices above. The ground floor currently consists of a modern retail shopfront.

The block is Grade II listed, having been listed back in October of 1974.

Character & Context: The building is part of a dense cluster of heritage-protected structures but is also a contrast to modern structures including opposite on Ridgefield, the island development, a 10-storey commercial property that has recently been completed.

Linking the island development and the proposed site is the pedestrianisation of Ridgefield. This change was designed to improve pedestrian links between Lincoln Square and St Ann's Square, creating a more walkable city center. The frontage of the proposed site will face this refurbished street.

3 Statement of Significance

Setting: 4A Ridgefield retail unit is situated on the ground floor of Queens Chambers, a building that fills a city block surrounded by Deansgate, Ridgefield, John Dalton Street and Back King Street.

Historic interest: The Queens Chambers original structure was designed by Pennington and Bridgen and dates back to 1876.

The building's use has consistently prevailed over the years with retail use at street level and office use on the upper floors.

The original building was extended to create an entirely occupied city block with a central open internal yard. The basement unit associated with 4A Ridgefield has been utilised as a night club since the 1970's.

Architectural interest: The fenestration of the front façade for the retail units are regular, although they can differ in height and width, and are defined by rounded corners to the upper sections of the apertures. There are shop fronts present with feature stone transoms and mullions although it is not evident how many other openings are characterised by these historically.

View of Queens Chambers seen from John Dalton Street with Ridgefield on the right (pedestrianised street) and number 4A (application site) 2nd unit in from the corner.



Current Use

The building contains commercial spaces, including offices above, ground floor includes shops, restaurants and a barbers shop.

The basement is a nightclub and the applicant's unit is currently a fire exit and former store/cloakroom serving the nightclub (no longer used).

Current Condition

Overall, the building is in a good condition. The primary elevations fronting Deansgate and John Dalton Street, from the first floor upwards, remain mostly unaltered.

On the other hand, the ground floor retail units have transformed and adapted greatly over the years to adapt to their owners and needs; each taking a varying method forward for the individual shop fronts. The building had seen some highly unsympathetic shop fronts and interventions be introduced that covered and/or removed original features and dominated the façade. However, the most recent renovations have restrained their interventions to sit within the original stone apertures with arched corner detailing, allowing them to be read clearly one from the other.

The Setting of the Building

Location: The building is an island site with the frontage on 105-113 Deansgate. The location of the proposed works is to the rear at 4A Ridgefield.

Design Proposals Summary and full justification for the Proposed Works: The existing unit is boarded up except for the door which is a back entrance to the club in the basement. The plan is to reuse the frontage and open it up as it was originally intended.

The work will include not the replacement of but an alteration to the existing wooden shop front frame, adding an additional door and entranceway. Replacing the existing solid door with a glass door and subdivision of the plot, partitioning off the staircase to the basement and creating a smaller unit for the coffee shop. The dark stain to the existing wooden shop front will be striped back to the original lighter colour. The interior materials will match this colour and will have a sympathetic palette including a Larch timber counter and back bar.

Internally we propose to remove the plasterboard ceiling and dividing wall to reveal the original structure and ceiling height of 4.3 meters. The built backbar behind the counter will just cover a plasterboard stud wall. No original surfaces will be covered.

The heritage and design justification

It is intended to conserve the existing original and historic features.

The existing door and shop front and grill above have no historical significance.

The current existing door is timber core (of no significance ie 'modern' timber door) and is currently damaged and in poor condition.

The proposed design has been chosen to be present itself as a high end/ tasteful design and to be made from high quality timber with the frame refurbished and stained to match the new doors/timber. The design has a subtle and tasteful contemporary motif to be welcoming to the public and present an appealing front to potential coffee shop customers.

The shopfront adaptation has been designed to be robust and secure due to the highly trafficked location just off Deansgate and due to the existing recessed nature of the doorway which in the city centre can often be susceptible to anti-social activity. The historical justification is that simplicity and restraint allow the beauty

of the surrounding original and historic stonework to be noticed. The doors/ shopfront does not attempt to replicate any historical doors/shopfront but to respect the past and be of the present without being pastiche.

The existing recessed shopfront and warm wood colour contrasts the stone work sufficiently to accentuate and contrast with the stone and the dark colour is considered appropriate to the coffee shop use (psychologically associated with coffee, the warm and rich colours represent the proposed use).

4 Description of the proposed works

Externally

As previously mentioned, the 4A Ridgefield unit has recently been occupied by a night club and before that by a retail unit.

Externally there are minimal interventions to the existing shopfront proposed, the 4A Ridgefield entrance is intended to be adapted and refurbished. The current shop front is not original or historic. It is set within and recessed within the historic opening; it is made up of a timber framed shop front with central and left hand bays with glazed panels set within a stained timber frame of generous proportions. To the right of the centrally glazed window is a solid timber door through which access and egress currently occurs. To the base of the

shopfront there is a timber sill and upstanding which sits proud of the main frame. Above the shopfront frame and glazing/door sits a substantial non original metal grill the purpose of which is to serve the existing air conditioning units which sit behind this within the existing internal ceiling void; these units serve the neighbouring barbers.

It is proposed to maintain a grill and to replace the existing with timber slats to match the timber shopfront below.

It is proposed to replace the solid door to the right of the glazing and within the existing timber frame to install a glass door which would be the primary entrance to the new proposed coffee shop.

The central window would remain glazed and it is proposed to split this into two by introducing a horizontal transom allowing the upper sash to open up and out to create a minimal awning for take aways.

The left hand bay within the existing timber shop front frame would have the glazing replaced by a solid timber fire exit door to the existing basement night club.

Internally.

The unit has had most of its original features removed or covered up, to the extent where the original shopfront cast iron frame has been unsympathetically cut above the existing shopfront and removed totally below and left partially intact above. It is proposed to reveal the partial remains of the former original shopfront internally by removing the non original and non historic suspended ceiling and to express this within the new coffee shop interior as a feature so that the history of the building (and what remains of it within this unit) can be appreciated by the coffee shop customers. The items around the original shopfront remains shall be removed with utmost care and diligence as part of this application, to ensure no damage is caused to the little remaining original fabric of the historic building. Our

approach is to expose as much of the historic fabric as possible to allow for the original structure to be appreciated.

The main ceiling is fully intact above the non original suspended ceiling including the cornice details as can be seen from the existing photographic records including as part of this application. It is intended to carefully remove any loose plaster/paper and paint the surface of the original ceiling with a historic farrow and ball paint.

Any services are to remain exposed. Any new services shall be mounted to the new stud walls and will not affect the original fabric of the building.

The key changes are as follows:

Remove existing non original internal stud dividing wall between former cloaks area and main space.

Remove existing non original suspended ceiling above the new coffee shop area.

Install a new fire rated modern timber stud plastered wall to subdivide the space between the new coffee shop and the existing fire escape from the basement nightclub.

Install a new coffee shop counter and back counter.

Install coffee shop furniture (all removable).

No proposed changes to the existing floor finishes.

Impact on Character and Appearance of the Area

As the existing space isn't used and doesn't present itself positively or contribute to the recent upgrade to Ridgefield, by introducing an active use with the creation a small cafe and a remodelled shop front, the works will aim to improve the appearance of this section of the building and the new cobbled street.

None of the original stonework and structure of the building will be touched or altered externally or internally.

Preserve, Enhance and Mitigate

Our proposal is not to mimic the existing historic structure, but to remove certain unsympathetic non-original elements, and replace some particular components with simple sympathetic modern alternatives, that read clearly as of their time, whilst complimenting the traditional building they sit within. All the proposed interventions are minimal and do not detract from the historic building as is suggested through current planning guidance on listed properties.

Any existing original elements found during the renovation works shall be retained and repaired as a part of the whole proposal.

The proposed alterations will enable and enhance the commercial viability of the unit.

The plan is to use an existing unit and shop as it was intended when the building was built in 1876. The existing wooden frontage to be altered in a sympathetic manner to look in keeping with the building and bring life to this section of the new Ridgefield.

We aim to sustain and enhance the significance of the heritage assets of the building, putting them to viable use consistent with their conservation.

This will be a positive contribution to the street architecture and heritage and work with enhancing the revitalised pedestrian walkway

5. Assessment of Impact and Mitigation (NPPF Section 16)

- Impact on Significance: The proposed change of use is predominantly internal, and the external changes are minor
- Setting of Adjacent Listed Building: The muted, traditional design of the storefront ensures that the setting of the adjacent Grade II listed building is not negatively affected, preserving its special character.
- Minimising Harm: All works are designed to be reversible. The new, freestanding kitchen counter will not affect the historic timber joists.
- Public Benefit: The proposal brings a vacant, low-quality retail space back into viable use, securing the long-term maintenance of the building, which is considered a public benefit in line with NPPF policy.

6. Conclusion

The proposal has been developed with careful consideration of the site's historical, architectural, and artistic significance. The alterations internally expose the original features and are reversible, and are designed to improve the general appearance of this small part of the building.

It is considered that the proposal complies with Section 16 of the NPPF by preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of the area.

Waste Strategy

We are proposing to maintain the existing retail unit refuse strategy that exists in the city centre. Waste shall be kept to a minimum where possible, including throughout the proposed works.

Refuse shall be collected throughout working hours in waste and recycling bins, they shall be emptied at the end of the evening and the waste placed into orange bags sourced from Manchester City Council (or an alternative source). The bags

will be dropped off in the location marked on the waste drawings. Collections are daily in the early evening.

Please note that no extra space is being created.

To be read in conjunction with waste pro forma included as part of this application.

Servicing

Servicing to the unit will be minimal and limited to the occasional transit delivery van twice weekly for a few minutes.

Servicing shall take place from South King Street and then any goods walked through Ridgefield to no. 4A.

Access Statement

The unit is centrally located within Manchester City Centre in close proximity to public transport infrastructure and numerous car parks. Ridgefield itself has recently been significantly improved by way of a pedestrianisation scheme which is the impetus for the viability of this proposal.

Photos



Existing frontage



Proposed frontage



Pre-pedestrianised Ridgeway

View of Building from Deansgate



Pedestrianised Ridgeway today

View of Building from John Dalton Street
looking down Ridgeway