

TFP. BRIDGEWATER HOUSE

58–60 BRIDGEWATER HOUSE, WHITWORTH STREET, MANCHESTER M1 6LT

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

TO ACCOMPANY PLANNING APPLICATION FOR
CHANGE OF USE & LISTED BUILDING CONSENT
FOURTH FLOOR

Rev 2

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INTRODUCTION

This Design & Access Statement has been prepared on behalf of APAM (the client). The statement has been prepared to support minor works to the fourth floor of Bridgewater House, Whitworth Street, Manchester. The affected part of the fourth floor is currently vacant and holds a Class E planning use. However, the opposite side of the floor plate is currently used as Class F1, for educational purposes. The proposals have been drawn up to satisfy demand for Class F1 use in the building, due to current occupiers needing to facilitate a response for their services.

Background

1.1 Name of the scheme:

Part Fourth Floor

58–60 Bridgewater House, Whitworth Street, Manchester M1 6LT

1.2 Applicant:

APAM Ltd

1.3 Designer/Agent:

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Statement assessing the loss of office space against Policy EC2 of the Core Strategy

Bridgewater House is a commercial building providing office and training space for its tenants. The client is committed to maintaining the longevity of the building whilst emphasising the rich fabric and history of the site.

In 2024 an application to change the use of part of the fourth floor to Class F1 was granted (application reference 140240/FO/2024) and with the volume of letting enquiries coming from educational bodies, it makes sense for the whole of the fourth floor to be Class F1 use.

In relation to the aforementioned application, at the time the application was submitted, the applicant submitted evidence that the proposal would result in a 6% increase in educational floorspace in the building, taking the level to 26% overall. Since this date, the fifth floor has been approved from Class F1 use also, which would still leave 65% of the floorspace in Class E use. Therefore, Class E uses in the building would, remain predominant. Furthermore, the building management company has stated that take up of office space is low in the building, with the entire fifth floor unoccupied for over 12 months. Given the above, it is considered that the change of use is appropriate pursuant to policy EC2 of the Manchester Core Strategy (2012)

This statement has been prepared in accordance with the policies and procedures of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) following a visual and photographic survey of the site in addition to an examination, analysis and assessment of available historic records.

SITE & HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Bridgewater House is Grade II Listed and was constructed as a shipping warehouse in 1912, designed by Harry S. Fairhurst for the Lloyds Packing Company. It is eight storeys plus an additional two attic floors above a basement and sub-basement, rectangular in plan, with loading bay to rear. and comprises a steel frame with cladding of sandstone ashlar and white glazed terracotta. The building was constructed for Lloyd's Packing Warehouses Limited and, like many warehouses, was built to a common design with steps to a raised ground floor with showroom and offices.

Today Bridgewater House is an important component of the Whitworth Street Conservation Area and forms a group with the Refuge Assurance building, India House and Lancaster House. They reflect the historical importance of the textile industry.

Bridgewater House retains many characteristic, operational features, including the external cantilevered iron structure of the overhanging loading bay, reflecting its important original relationship with the canal. Beautiful original internal features such as decorative tiles exist in circulation stairs and corridors and the ground floor lobby areas.

The building has primarily been converted to office use but some floors are in educational use.

The application property lies within the Whitworth Street Conservation Area which was designated in September 1974 and extended in June 1985. These designations require that Manchester City Council carefully consider any development proposal in terms of heritage impact. For any development affecting a conservation area, special attention must be given to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area (Section 72, Planning [Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas] Act 1990).

There have been various applications for the site and the last, relating to the ground floor area to which this application deals with was in 2017, planning ref. 115761/LO/2017. This application sought to obtain Listed Building Consent for the remodelling of the existing entrance and reception, including Change of Use to part of Ground Floor for cafe use with external alterations including new doors and cladding plus internal reconfiguration to circulation and reception areas to form new cafe and relocation of WC facilities. This application was approved.

PROPOSED SCHEME

The Proposal

Bridgewater House offers great accommodation for education users. The potential client for the expansion of the fourth floor, Into, have occupied the building for over 10 years and would like to continue to expand. The client has good interest from this type of occupier given the location, floor plate size and price point. The operating hours would be Monday to Friday 06:00 to 19:00, to match that of the other side of the floorplate.

The recent refurbishment of the reception to create the business lounge/café/breakout enables the movement of numbers throughout the building and offers amenity to education users. The client has extensively refurbished the 5th floor and let this space to Victoria College of Arts and Design, this required a change of use to educational, which was granted. Into had previously expressed interest in part of the 4th floor and obtained educational use consent for that space. Unfortunately, their interest fell away, so the landlord opened up the entire floor and refurbished the full 20,000 sq ft to the same specification delivered on the 5th floor.

Our client now has interest in the 4th floor from another established city-centre educational provider looking to expand. They are keen on the space with existing educational use and this interest may extend to the remainder of the floor, subject to consent. We believe granting educational use for the additional area would help attract a single occupier for the whole floor.

Due to the economic headwinds occupational demand is limited at the minute. Occupiers in the market are generally focussing on good quality space to attract their staff back to the office, which focuses around the three key tenets of ESG credentials; amenity offer; and quality of space. This has resulted in larger occupiers focussing on new build stock over older refurbished buildings. The part of the 4th floor to which the application relates was refurbished to CAT A standard and has remained vacant and lettable since 31st March 2023. The suite has been market on the building website ever since. <https://bridgewaterhouse.co.uk/availability/>

Educational take up has propped the Manchester market up over the past few years. In 2023, in the absence of larger office requirements, the largest transaction was Arden University taking 42,944 sq ft at 2 Hardman Street. Our team were also involved in the University of Bolton taking 36,164 sq ft in Valo Building.

Currently, there are over 80,000 sq ft of educational requirements in the Manchester city-centre market, and Bridgewater House has the infrastructure and flexibility to accommodate these needs. Feedback from educational users has been positive, particularly regarding the building's fundamentals with two cores and four staircases allow them to achieve the occupational densities they require.

The scheme is to be read alongside the following drawings;
AS01 Existing Layout Plan
Design & Access Statement

Access

The proposals to change the use of part of the fourth floor do not affect the existing access or circulation throughout the space.

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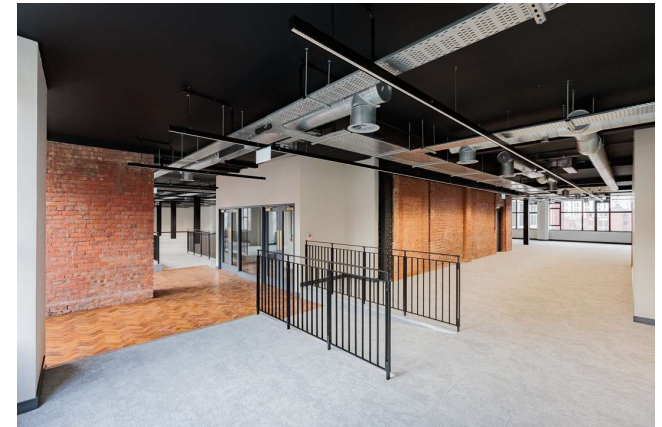
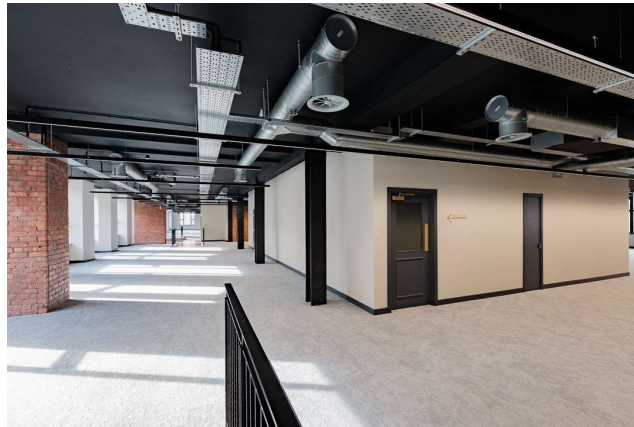
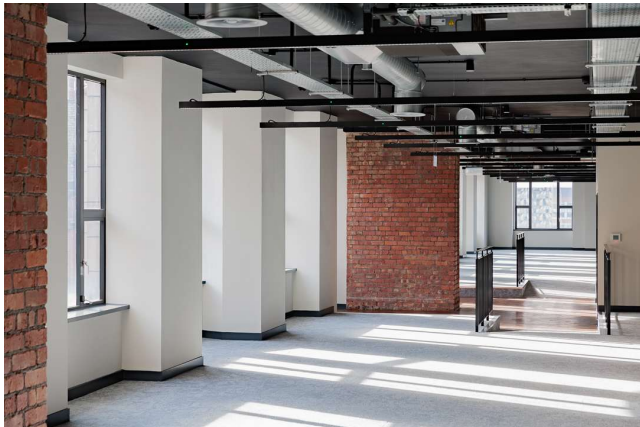
PROPOSED SCHEME

Current Occupancy of Building

Property	Floor	Tenant Name	Area (sq ft)	Curent F1	Use Class E	Vacant Area (sq ft)
Manchester, Bridgewater House	Part Ground Floor G01	Into Manchester Limited	3,746		3,746	
	Part Ground Floor G02	APAM Ltd (BWH)	2,680		2,680	
	Part Upper Ground Floor	Manlets Residential Lettings	389		389	
	Part First Floor 101/102/103	Vacant	6,920		6,920	6,920
	Part First Floor 104/105	Into Manchester Limited	11,959	11,959		
	Part Second Floor 201	Vacant (Previously Manchester D&B)	5,283		5,283	5,283
	Part Second Floor 202	Into Manchester Limited	15,391	15,391		
	Part Third Floor 302	Into Manchester Limited	9,285	9,285		
	Part Third Floor 301	Into Manchester Limited	2,096	2,096		
	Part Third Floor 305	Into Manchester Limited	5,108	5,108		
	Pt 3rd Floor	Into Manchester Limited	2,821	2,821		
	Fourth Floor Part A	Vacant	13,932	13,932		
	Fourth Floor Part B	Vacant	6,500		6,500	6,500
	5th Floor	VAD	20,034	20,034		
	Part Sixth (Long)	Vacant	11,415		11,415	11,415
	Part sixth (Short)	The British Council	8,970		8,970	
	Part Seventh Floor 706	First Transpennine Express Ltd	7,255		7,255	
	Pt Seventh Floor 701 & Pt Eight Floor 803	Manchester Metropolitan University	17,183	17,183		
	Part Eight Floor 801	First Transpennine Express Ltd	7,462		7,462	
	Part Eight Floor 802	Vacant	6,054		6,054	6,054
	Ninth Floor	Dept UK Holding Limited	17,143		17,143	
	Tenth Floor	Hilton Smythe Commerical (UK) LTD	1,106		1,106	
	Car Parking & Storage		30,223		30,223	3,461
Manchester, Bridgewater House Total			212,955	97,809	115,146	39,633
				45.93%	54.07%	

EXISTING PHOTOS

Example of the CAT A fit out



Above are photos provided by the client of the space to which the application relates to. The area has already been fitted out to CAT A which includes floor and wall finishes and this was dealt with under a separate application which was approved.

The floor finishes already installed are carpet tiles and LVT and the wall finishes retain the original exposed brick whilst plasterboard walls are painted.

These finishes will be retained for use by the tenant.

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ASSESEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This section identifies the significance of the relevant areas of the proposed works using the following hierarchy of significance: high (national), medium (local/county) and low (slight) significance, including neutral (not important but also does not detract from a site's value) and detrimental (where something has a negative effect on significance) or visually intrusive. These assessments cover the historic, evidential, aesthetic and community values of the heritage asset in question if appropriate.

HIERACHY OF SIGNIFICANCE

High

The exterior façade plays a crucial role in the broader street scene, adding to the character of the conservation area.

- There are no works proposed to the exterior of the building as part of this application.

Medium

Cast iron columns within reception lobby

Lift shaft within café area and it's steel doors.

Original wall tiles lining some of the stair cores.

Internal timber mouldings.

- There are no works proposed which affect any of the items above

Low

None

Neutral

None

Detrimental

None

The application is for change of use of part of the fourth floor. The area being applied for has already undergone a CAT A refurbishment. Any new additions to facilitate the expansion of the educational tenant will comprise of new flooring, loose furniture and wall finishes. No works to the existing building fabric or MEP will be required.

CONCLUSION

It is understood that the application to change the use of part of the fourth floor from Class E to Class F1 will not affect any of the internal and external areas of significance. All historical features itemised in the assessment of significance are not affected by the proposals and the introduction of applied finishes such as loose furniture will not affect any of the building fabric.

Changing the use of part of the fourth floor will enrich the space and secure a long-term future for Bridgewater House as a class-A office and educational accommodation. This adaption to the use of part of the fourth floor will help to reinforce and celebrate the rich history of the building in an endeavour to set the development apart from its competitors in the city.

To summarise, we believe the proposals will greatly benefit the building and it's potential for a vibrant future and given information presented in this document, it is considered that the change of use is appropriate pursuant to policy EC2 of the Manchester Core Strategy (2012).

THANK YOU.