Green and Blue Infrastructure Statement

10 – 12 Whitworth Street West

Atri7 6 Limited

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The Manchester's Great Outdoors: A Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy for Manchester 2015-2025, was first adopted in July 2015 and was subsequently updated in 2022. This Green and Blue Infrastructure Statement sets out how the proposed development positively responds to the vision and objectives for environmental improvements contained within 'Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy Implementation Plan Refresh 2021-2025'.

Vision

By 2025 high quality, well maintained green and blue spaces will be an integral part of all neighbourhoods. The city's communities will be living healthy, fulfilled lives, enjoying access to parks and greenspaces and safe green routes for walking, cycling and exercise throughout the city. Green and blue infrastructure will be supporting Manchester's growth.

Response: The development proposes a well-considered contribution to supporting access to blue and green infrastructure. This is proportionate to the plot size (0.12ha) and the building footprint extending to the plot edges in order to make an efficient use of land in a sustainable location.

Some planting is proposed at street level in the stall riser location to each bay on Whitworth Street West, with a nominal amount of planting proposed at the rooftop level where the roof covers will support this. The soft landscaping opportunities have been explored by the design team but due to restrictions regarding light levels and maintaining adequate width on the pavements around the site, this is considered to be the maximum that can be meaningfully provided.

The main contribution the proposed development is considered to make to the vision is via improvements to the public realm generally. The improved street scene and the natural surveillance created by the scheme will improve the pedestrian experience in the vicinity of the site, creating a safer and more welcoming environment for pedestrians and cyclists and encouraging access to the nearby green and blue infrastructure networks.

Objectives

1. *Improve the quality and function of existing green and blue infrastructure, to maximise the benefits it delivers*

Response: The site comprises a parcel of brownfield land that has remained vacant for several years. More recently, the land has been turfed and bound by a 2.4-metre-high fence, such that the site has no public access and delivers little to no public benefit.

As such, the green infrastructure proposed at the site, comprising planting in the stall riser locations at street level on Whitworth Street West and raised planters at roof terrace level as described above, presents an improvement in quality and function to the existing provision at the site. The street scene and public realm improvements described above are also considered key in maximising the benefits of existing nearby green and blue infrastructure.

2. *Use appropriate green and blue infrastructure as a key component of new developments to help create successful neighbourhoods and support the city's growth.*

Response: The proposed development will develop a currently vacant plot in an active part of the city centre. The development has been designed to be accessible and legible, to ensure an important contribution to the creation of a successful neighbourhood for the city's growth.

For the reasons described above, the green infrastructure proposed as part of the scheme is considered to be the maximum that can be meaningfully provided given the relevant constraints and is thus appropriate.

The street level planting proposed to Whitworth Street West will improve the street scene, which alongside the public realm improvements offered by the proposed scheme generally, will make a significant contribution towards creating a successful neighbourhood.

Furthermore, the landscaping at the rooftop terraces will be visible from the higher levels of surrounding taller buildings, further improving the perception of the site and neighbourhood and contributing to the creation and ongoing development of a successful place.

3. *Improve connectivity and accessibility to green and blue infrastructure within the city and beyond*

Response: The site currently offers no functional connectivity to surrounding green and blue infrastructure. The proposed development will enhance connectivity and accessibility by creating a more welcoming public realm along Whitworth Street West through an active frontage with high levels of passive surveillance. This will contribute to a more attractive, pedestrian-friendly local environment and encourage increased pedestrian and cycle movement within the city.

4. *Improve and promote a wider understanding and awareness of the benefits that green and blue infrastructure provides to residents, the economy and the local environment.*

Response: The site is on a key route into/ around the city and within close proximity to public footpaths along the Rochdale Canal. Improvements to the quality of the street scene and public realm generally will demonstrate the visual and environmental benefits of incorporating and encouraging access to green and blue infrastructure.

The enhancements offered by the proposed development will contribute to a more attractive environment, increased levels of natural surveillance and enhancements to the public realm, which will subsequently encourage more journeys by sustainable transport methods like walking and cycling.

Summary

In its current condition, the site makes little meaningful contribution to a network of green and blue infrastructure. Whilst the site is turfed, it is secured by 2.4m high railings and offers limited public realm benefits.

The proposed development makes a modest but well-considered contribution to green infrastructure, in a way that is considered to have maximised the opportunities for planting at the site given the constraints of light levels and maintaining suitable pavement widths.

The scheme makes a significant contribution towards improving the public realm and creating an environment more welcoming of pedestrians and cyclists. This encourages and creates connections to nearby green and blue infrastructure networks, positively contributing towards the vision set out within the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy.