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Planning Department
Manchester City Council
Town Hall Extension
Manchester
M60 2LA

1st May 2026

Dear Sir/Madam,

FULL PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE EXTERNAL RE-ORGANISATION AND IMPROVEMENTS OF THAIKHUN RESTAURANT INCLUDING THE ERECTION OF A NEW CANOPY STRUCTURE AT THAIKHUN, UNIT 16, THE AVENUE, SPINNINGFIELDS, MANCHESTER

PLANNING PORTAL REF: PP-14898278

Introduction

On behalf of the applicant (Thai Leisure Group), we hereby submit an application for the external re-organisation, improvements and erection of a new canopy structure at Thaikhun restaurant at The Avenue, Spinningfields, Manchester. This submission describes the proposals and examines the planning considerations which they raise. In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, determination of the planning application must be made in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

This application is also accompanied by the below technical reports and drawings:

- Odour Assessment (prepared by Redmore Environmental);
- Operational Noise Egress Assessment (prepared by Sandy Brown);
- Design and Access Statement (produced by Farrell & Clark);
- Internal CGIs/Visuals (produced by Design Tonic);
- Site Location Plan (Ref. 507004-FCA-ZZ-XX-DR-A-0700, Rev P01);
- Existing Floor Plan (Ref. 507004-FC-FCA-00-DR-A-001, Rev P01);
- Existing Elevation (Ref. 507004-FC-FCA-00-DR-A-001, Rev P01);
- Existing Section (Ref. 507004-FC-FCA-00-DR-A-001, Rev P01);
- Proposed Floor Plan (Ref. 507004-FC-FCA-00-DR-A-002, Rev P01);
- Proposed Elevation (Ref. 507004-FC-FCA-00-DR-A-002, Rev P01);
- Proposed Section (Ref. 507004-FC-FCA-00-DR-A-002, Rev P01).

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Business and Client Overview

Thai Leisure Group (TLG) is a UK-based restaurant company that owns and operates a portfolio of Thai dining brands, including Thaikhun, a street-food style restaurant. They were founded in 2004 in Leeds and have since grown into one of the UK's leading Thai restaurant operators, with multiple sites across the country.

Thaikhun was established as a casual dining offshoot of Chaophraya, offering authentic Bangkok-style street food within an immersive restaurant environment inspired by the bustling markets and street scenes of Thailand. The brand is known for its distinctive interiors featuring colorful Thai bric-a-brac, creating an engaging and atmospheric setting for guests

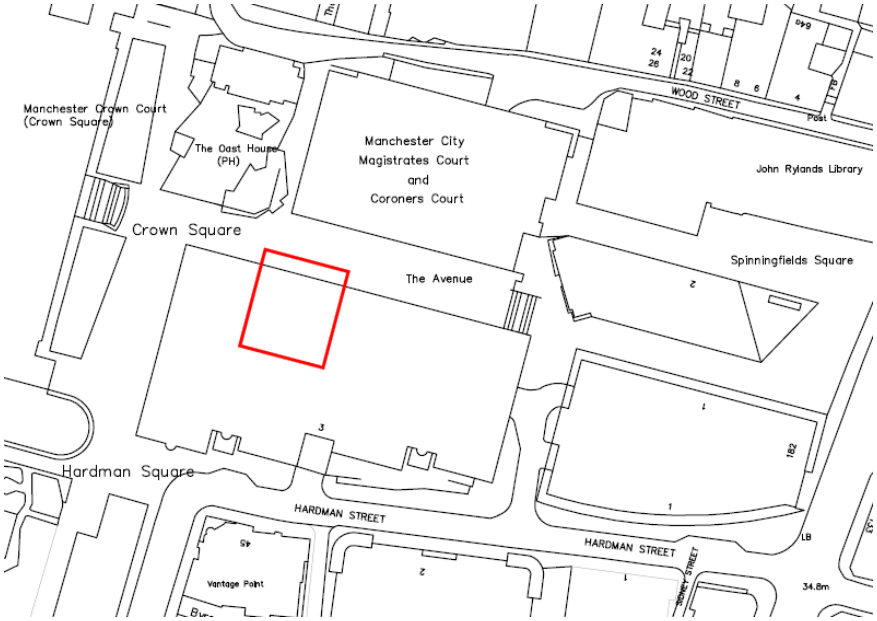
Thaikhun Manchester Spinningfields opened in June 2014 as the first UK restaurant for the Thaikhun brand. The Manchester restaurant was an early and significant addition to the rapidly developing Spinningfields dining district. At the time of opening, The Avenue at Spinningfields was emerging as one of the city's leading premium leisure and dining destinations, and the restaurant contributed to establishing the area as a vibrant hospitality hub.

Pronounced 'tycoon,' the name reflects the concept of 'your Thai restaurant', designed to provide a personable, accessible and vibrant Thai street-food dining experience.

Site Description

Thaikhun restaurant is located on Byrom Street in central Manchester, an area that forms part of the city's vibrant Spinningfields district. This setting places the site within a city centre commercial and leisure hub, surrounded by modern office buildings, high-end retail, and a wide selection of bars and restaurants. The location benefits from strong pedestrian footfall, particularly from nearby workers, shoppers, and visitors exploring the city centre. It is also well connected, with easy access to public transport links and key routes through Manchester, making it a convenient and attractive destination within a lively urban environment. Over the past decade, the district has continued to evolve, attracting a wide range of new restaurant operators within the local hospitality sector.

Figure 1: Site Location Plan



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Planning History

From reviewing the planning history attached to Manchester City Council's planning portal, there appears to be one application subject to the site which relates to the installation of 1no internally illuminated fascia sign (application ref: 140137/AO/2024). This was approved in August 2024.

Development Description

The proposed development will include:

- A new small commercial finishing kitchen for takeaway orders (known as a Quick Service Restaurant (QSR)).
- The removal of the existing canopy structure and siting of a new canopy structure, and;
- Proposed façade refurbishment.

The full description of development is as follows:

'Full planning application for the reorganisation and improvement of the external restaurant area, including the addition of a quick serve restaurant and the removal of existing canopy structure and erection of a new canopy structure including a solid roof and glazed walls at Thaikhun restaurant at The Avenue, Spinningfields, Manchester'

Proposed Development

Quick Serve Restaurant

The proposed development includes the addition of a new Quick Serve Restaurant (QSR) within what is currently the external dining area, located adjacent to the streetscape 'The Avenue'. The new QSR point will be an ideal opportunity for Thaikhun to extend its reach to new types of customers, whilst refining and streamlining services that can enhance the experience for already loyal visitors, by facilitating quick-serve take away options for local workers to providing easy collection for food delivery services. It is important to note that a this is a finishing kitchen, no cooking will be undertaken in this area.

New Canopy Structure

The proposal includes the siting of a new canopy structure, creating a new structure around the existing outdoor dining area. This will replace Thaikhun's existing external dining area which is currently designed for use in the warmer and drier months, with a corten steel frame and fabric awning canopy over two distinct seating areas either side of the main entrance, whereby low height timber planters and framing facing onto the Avenue separate diners from passing pedestrians.

The new canopy structure will utilise the existing corten steel column and beam frame, stripping these of the existing awnings and timber planters and screening. Then provide a new solid roof with composite insulated panels fixed onto the existing steel beams, to shelter guests from the Manchester weather. External walls will wrap around the existing columns, utilising curtain walling and infill panels on both ends facing the neighbouring restaurants.

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The front main elevation onto 'The Avenue' will have low level rainscreen cladding of fibre cement panels, reflecting the use of stone and brick within Spinningfields, and glazed curtain walling above, to maintain the active frontage. One section of the front elevation will also include a high level bi-folding screen for a bar seating area that will be opened during warmer months. At low level all long the front elevation will be tiled planter boxes, maintaining some of the existing greenery (please note, the existing greenery is faux).

of Thaikhun restaurant we are proposing to utilise the existing corten steel column and beam frame, stripping these of the existing awnings and timber planters and screening. Then provide a new solid roof with composite insulated panels fixed onto the existing steel beams, to shelter guests from the Manchester weather.

This new structure will therefore provide a year-round dining experience for guests within the challenging hospitality market, where better occupancy and improved guest experience are key to surviving. A local precedent of outdoor dining is the nearby Fazenda restaurant, located opposite from Thaikun.

External Façade

A façade refurbishment is also proposed to the external appearance and entrance, to help improve visibility and street presence, whilst upgrading elements of the bar and front-of-house areas to support a more dynamic guest experience.

The proposals include forming three distinctive entrances to the restaurant (street food, a la carte and bar areas), with repurposed Thai style shutters in various colours. These entrances will provide separate functions, with central one picking up the main restaurant trade, the Easterly one being used by delivery drivers picking up orders from the new QSR, whilst the Westerly entrance will lead directly into the bar area, forming a link with The Avenue North.

The refurbishment will also comprise the installation of a mobile DJ booth. This will help to create refreshed and contemporary interior and external environment aligned with the current brand identity whilst improving the overall layout, comfort, and atmosphere for guests. Operational hours for the DJ would likely be Friday evenings and Saturdays (12pm to 3pm and evenings 7pm to 11pm), as well as same times on bank holidays or Thai festival dates like Songkran or Loy Krathong (ie: 13-15th April).

The proposed refurbishment will introduce a modernised interpretation of the Thaikhun brand, while retaining the distinctive character and vibrancy that the restaurant is known for. The design approach aims to recreate the energy and atmosphere of a Bangkok street scene in the heart of Manchester, delivering an immersive dining environment filled with colour, texture, and authentic cultural references.

It is important to note that the refurbishment is contained within the existing footprint and the improvements will allow the restaurant to better serve the surrounding corporate and office community, particularly during lunchtime periods, by facilitating quick-serve and takeaway options for local workers.

Please refer to the accompanying drawing pack and the Design and Access Statement or further information.

Business Need

The need for refurbishment is based on three key reasons:

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1) Changing Market Conditions,

2) Age of Existing Design, and;

3) Refreshing the Design Nationally.

In recent years, the hospitality sector has become increasingly competitive, particularly within major city centres such as Manchester. The site has experienced a decline in sales performance, reflecting broader industry pressures as well as growing competition within both the casual dining and Thai restaurant sectors. Consumer expectations have also evolved significantly since the restaurant first opened in 2014. Modern diners increasingly seek high-quality, contemporary environments alongside engaging dining experiences, particularly within established leisure destinations such as Spinningfields.

While the restaurant remains well regarded, the interior and external presentation of the site have not undergone a significant refurbishment for several years. As a result, the current design no longer fully reflects the modern brand identity or the expectations of today's restaurant guests. A comprehensive refresh is therefore necessary to maintain competitiveness within the local market and ensure the continued success of the venue.

Additionally, the proposed refurbishment will introduce a new design concept intended to serve as a benchmark for the wider brand portfolio. Subject to the success of the project, similar updates are planned for the other Thaikhun restaurants located in Bath, Oxford, Aberdeen, Glasgow, Southampton, Newcastle upon Tyne and Sheffield. By introducing the refreshed design at its flagship location, the business intends to reinvigorate the brand nationally and strengthen its position within the UK Thai dining sector.

Technical Considerations

Noise

An Operational Noise Egress Assessment (produced by Sandby Brown) were instructed by the applicant to undertake an environmental noise survey to determine the existing sound levels on and around the site. Based on the requirements of the Local Authority and on the results of the noise survey, amplified sound from the operational uses of the development have been designed such that the cumulative noise level at nearby noise sensitive premises does not exceed spectra equivalent to *LAeq,15min* 50 dB during the day, and *LAeq,15min* 48 dB during the evening. An assessment of operational noise associated with entertainment noise has also been carried out and internal operational noise limits have been set, including the addition of lobbied doors and an electronic noise limiter to ensure internal limits are not exceeded.

Please refer to the accompanying Operational Noise Egress Assessment (produced by Sandy Brown).

Odour

An Odour Assessment (produced by Redmore Environmental) were instructed by the applicant to assess the impacts of any potential odour emissions as a result of the proposed development. The results of the assessment indicated the odour risk was classified as low. This is as a result of there being no food

preparation or cooking being undertaken within the new Quick Service Restaurant as the kitchen area will be used solely for take-away order finishing. Additionally. the order / collection hatch will be closed when not in use to minimise odour emission from this potential source. It is considered that the existing restaurant kitchen mitigation is acceptable and that proposals would not increase odour risk.

Please refer to the accompanying Odour Assessment (produced by Redmore Environmental).

Planning Policy

Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that when determining a planning application, the decision maker must make their determination in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

This chapter therefore considers the relevant national planning policy and guidance which form a material consideration in the determination of this application, and the development plan which consists of the Core Strategy (2012 – 2027), and the Greater Manchester Places for Everyone Plan (PfE, 2024).

National Planning Policy Framework

The latest version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in December 2024 and provides a framework within which locally prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced. It is a material consideration in planning decisions.

The NPPF has a clear presumption in favour of sustainable development (para 10). Sustainable development means that the planning system pursues economic, social and environmental objectives (para 8), although they are not criteria against which every decision can or should be judged (para 9). Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way, with decision-makers at every level required to seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible (para 39).

The presumption in favour of sustainable development means that local planning authorities should, without delay, approve developments that accord with an up-to-date development plan; and where the relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless other policies provide a clear reason for refusal or if any adverse impacts of granting consent would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole, with particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land and securing well-designed places (para 11).

Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt, with significant weight to be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development (para 85).

Planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account need; local market conditions; availability of infrastructure and services; the desirability of

maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting or of promoting regeneration and change; and the importance of design (para 129). Local planning authorities should refuse applications which they consider fail to make efficient use of land (para 130).

Section 12 focuses on design, noting that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development (para 131). Developments should be designed to function well and add to the overall quality of the area over their lifetime; be visually attractive and sympathetic to local character; establishing a strong sense of place; optimising the potential of the site to accommodate an appropriate amount of development; and create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible, which promote health and wellbeing and amenity, and where the fear of crime does not undermine quality of life (para 135).

Greater Manchester Places for Everyone Plan (adopted March 2024)

The Greater Manchester Places for Everyone Plan (PfE) is the result of a process that began as the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF) in 2014, and is a joint long-term development strategy for nine Greater Manchester districts, focusing on sustainable growth, housing, jobs, and infrastructure. The key policies relevant to the development proposals include:

- *Policy JP-Strat2: City Centre* – this policy recognises the role of the Manchester City Centre as being the most significant economic location in the country outside London. The city centre will continue to provide the primary focus for business, retail, leisure, culture and tourism activity in Greater Manchester, and support economic growth.

- *Policy JP-S1: Sustainable Development* – sets out the aim for development to maximise its economic, social and environmental benefits simultaneously. This policy outlines the aim for Manchester to become one of the most liveable city regions in he world, consisting of a series of beautiful, healthy and varied places, with a distinctive clear identity that respects and acknowledged the character and identify of the locality in terms of design, siting size, scale and materials use. Visually stimulating developments are alco encouraged, to help create interesting and imaginative environments, which raise the human spirit through the use of quality design.

- *Policy JP-S5: Clean Air* - a comprehensive range of measures will be taken to support improvements in air quality, focusing particularly on locations where people live, where children learn and play, where there are impacts on the green infrastructure network and where air quality targets are not being met.

- *Policy JP-J1: Supporting Long-Term Economic Growth* – this policy supports a thriving, inclusive and productive economy.

- *Policy JP-P1: Sustainable Places* – this policy supports PfE's aim for Greater Manchester to become one of the most liveable city regions in the world, consisting of a series of beautiful, healthy and varied places, each having the key attributes that all development, wherever appropriate, should be consistent with, including: distinctiveness, resilience, adaptability, durability, resource-efficiency, safety, functional and convenient inclusive design, well-connected, comfortable and inviting, and well-served.

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Core Strategy (2012 – 2027)

The Manchester Core Strategy was adopted by the City Council on 11 July 2012. It is the key document in Manchester's Local Development Framework. The Core Strategy sets out the long-term strategic planning policies for Manchester's future development. A number of UDP policies have been saved until replaced by further development plan documents to accompany the Core Strategy. The key policies relevant to the development proposals include:

- *Policy CC1: Primary Economic Development Focus* – this policy confirms that the City Centre is a strategic economic location and focus of employment growth in the City and City Region. With the city centre and the fringe, a variety of high-quality accommodation, types, sizes and foot-plates will be encouraged to boost investment by local, national and international businesses. The provision of a range of economic development used such as retail is encouraged in the city centre, to support the development of a vibrant employment location, attractive to businesses, employees and visitors to the city centre.

- *Policy CC10: A Place for Everyone* – this policy encourages the City Centre to develop as a location that appeals to a wide range of residents and visitors and promotes development that will increase the diversity of activity. Creating a place for everyone is an important objective if Manchester's potential as a visitor attraction is to be realised. This policy also recognises that evening and nighttime economy is an important consideration.

- *Policy EN1: Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas* – all development in Manchester is expected to follow the principles of urban design and have regard to the strategic character area in which the development is located. Opportunities for good design to enhance the overall image of the City is fully encouraged. This site is located within the 'City Centre Character Area', which encourages developments to consider the city's heritage and continue the rich pattern of activity in the core area, and contribute positive to the experience of all at street level.

- *Policy EN16: Air Quality* – the Council will consider the impact on air quality for proposed developments.

Policy Summary

In summary, the replacement canopy structure, the addition of a quick serve restaurant, and the external façade proposals will deliver a range of interconnected benefits that extend beyond the individual business to the wider street, city centre, and local economy, as per Policy JP-J1.

At street level, the high-quality design will improve the visual appeal and vibrancy of the environment. A thoughtful active frontage will provide a more inviting public realm, and enhance the overall user experience. These proposals make much more efficient use of Thaikhun's external area and reinforce the city centre as a focal point for social and economic activity. A strong food and hospitality offer also

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contributes to a diverse, mixed-use environment that supports both daytime and evening economies, as per Policies CC1 and CC10.

The upgrade will also provide Thaikhun with an opportunity to regenerate and future-proof operations for all year-round use. An improved layout, and modern facilities will enhance efficiency, customer satisfaction, and revenue potential. A refreshed brand presence and improved customer experience will also help the business stay competitive in a challenging market, ensuring long-term viability.

It is considered that these proposals fully align with the aforementioned National and Local Policies.

Conclusion

This letter has been prepared on behalf of Thai Leisure Group to support the reorganisation and improvement of the external restaurant area, including the addition of a quick serve restaurant and the removal of existing canopy structure and erection of a new canopy structure at Thaikhun restaurant at The Avenue, Spinningfields, Manchester.

Overall, this proposal will:

- Improve the visual quality and customer experience of the venue
- Support the ongoing commercial viability of the business
- Strengthen the hospitality offering within the Spinningfields district
- Reinforce the restaurant's role as a vibrant and engaging destination within Manchester's dining scene.

The refurbishment is therefore considered a positive and appropriate enhancement to the property, ensuring the continued success of the restaurant and its contribution to the local hospitality landscape.

The proposed scheme has been shown to align with the relevant policy and legislation, and to assist in the delivery of a scheme which will have great benefit for the city, whilst causing no harm in terms of amenity, or to the site's setting or significance.

I trust the submitted application is satisfactory and I look forward to acknowledgement of its receipt. Should you wish to discuss the proposals or have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

Phoebe Threlfall

Associate Director