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Ref; 21/1262/301 – D and A

Design and Access, and Planning Statement

Change of use of vacant retail unit to 'Northern Social' public house to ground floor premises at 275 Bury New Road, Whitefield, Manchester

Applicant: Robert Peel Limited

Date: 8th November 2021

This statement has been produced to accompany a planning application for a change of use of the ground floor premises of this property to a public house, and internal alterations and a new glazed frontage.

Photographs of the existing property are included in appendix 1.

1 - EXISTING AND PROPOSED USE

The ground floor of the existing building has been vacant since 2018 and was last used as a retail unit with counter sales to the general public for motor supplies (use class E).

To the frontage on Bury New Road the property has a dilapidated and run down appearance, and the ground floor premises require a program of significant repair and refurbishment.

Since the closure of the retail unit we understand that the ground floor premises had been advertised for sale but nobody had purchased the premises for a retail use and the applicant purchased the property in early 2021.

A change of use is proposed for the ground floor premises to a public house (Sui Generis use). The applicants and directors of Robert Peel Limited are Stephen Elliott and Kirsty Maher. Stephen has had 30 years licensed retail experience and Kirsty 15 years. They have been trading at the Northern Craffthouse nearby (271 Bury New Road) since November 2016 and this has been a successful venture.

At the Northern Craffthouse the main theme is an all-day American eatery serving brunches, burgers, burritos and tacos, alongside handcrafted cocktails and craft beers. There are also cocktail masterclasses and gin tasting evenings.

The concept for the new premises would be different with a top end drinks offering, games tables such as shuffleboard and ping pong, and a food offering of pizzas and bar snacks. Northern Social is proposed as a venue combining an appealing beverage and food offer with a competitive gaming element. The brand and interior is aimed to appeal to a wide range of clientele and cultivate a low key and relaxed atmosphere, encouraging customers to drink, dine and play.

It is expected that Northern Social would create approximately 25 new jobs, half of which would be full time positions.

The first floor is utilised as offices with a separate entrance off Bury New Road adjacent to the entrance to the ground floor premises. No changes are proposed to the first floor premises.

The proposed opening hours for the ground floor public house use are;

- 12:00pm – 1:00am Monday to Sunday

Change of use of ground floor premises to public house, 275 Bury New Road, Whitefield

2 - AMOUNT OF DEVELOPMENT

The proposal utilises the current building with no extensions proposed.

Ground floor area: 196m²

First floor area: 130m² (estimated) - Offices retained as existing.

3 - LAYOUT

At ground floor level the existing entrance will be retained within a new glazed frontage. A combination of tables and raised seating is proposed to the main floor area and extending up to a central bar area.

Areas for games tables are included with ping pong shuffleboard, and beer pong tables, and a photo booth and pinball.

A kitchen, storage room and toilets will be located to the rear of the premises adjacent to the rear access that will be used for deliveries and servicing. The applicant owns the yard area at the rear that is shared with a tenant undertaking motor repairs. There is space to the rear yard for the storage of bins, and access for servicing and deliveries.

4 - SCALE

No extensions are proposed and the external footprint and massing of the building will not change.

5 - LANDSCAPING

There is no landscaping provided to the existing premises and no external space available to provide this.

6 - APPEARANCE

The building will generally be retained in its existing form but is in need of significant repair and refurbishment. There will be limited changes to the external appearance as follows:

- New glazed frontage to the premises.
- Relocation of entrance to a central position incorporating ramped access up to level door threshold, and improved access into the ground floor premises.
- Complete internal refurbishment.

7 - ACCESS

The introduction of the new glazed frontage and incorporation of new entrance will be designed to provide access for all users including people with disabilities and this will make this building more accessible (saved UDP policy HT5 – Accessibility for those with special needs).

8 – PLANNING STATEMENT

A pre-application enquiry was made with Bury MBC in May 2021 for this change of use proposal. This included discussions with the appointed planning officer and issue of a formal pre-application response.

The main points of the pre-application response were;

- The proposed change of use would involve the loss of a retail unit contrary to policy S2/3, but in view of the unit having been vacant since 2018 it is considered that the change of use to public house use would not impact on the vitality of the shopping centre.
- Recognised that shopping areas have changed with regard to their function and land use characteristics (since adoption of UDP in 1997), with alternative uses becoming an ever increasing feature in many shopping areas.
- Premises are vacant and as such bringing the unit back into use is considered favourably.
- The proposed public house use is considered to be acceptable in terms of scale and is compatible with the row within which it is located.
- A noise survey should be submitted with any application that would focus on the noise break out from the rear of the premises, and the internal noise levels from inside the public house.
- The proposed use would be serviced the same as the existing use and the other premises within the row which also include food outlets, and the proposal is considered to be acceptable.
- Further justification should be provided in terms of parking provision, with a suggestion that public transport availability be reviewed.

Bury UDP (1997)

S2/3 - Secondary Shopping Areas and Frontages

The ground floor premises were formally used for motor spares/accessories sales but this use ceased in 2018 and the ground floor unit has since been vacant.

The ground floor premises have steel roller shutters installed that are now permanently closed in view of the premises being vacant. The shutters and shutter box have a dilapidated appearance being worn and having areas of surface corrosion and grime. As a vacant premise the frontage area has been left to deteriorate with no occupier in place to provide the incentive to maintain and improve the premises.

This results in the ground floor premises having a run down and dilapidated appearance at what is a highly prominent junction position at a main throughroute. In the pre-application response it is accepted that the change of use would not impact on the vitality of the secondary shopping centre. It is recognised that shopping areas have changed with regard to their function and land use characteristics (since adoption of UDP in 1997), with alternative uses becoming an ever increasing feature in many shopping areas.

The premises is vacant and has been for in excess of 3 years and as such bringing the unit back into use is considered favourably in relation to retention of a vacant unit that may impact on the vitality of the district centre. In the pre-application response it is advised that the proposed public house is considered to be acceptable in terms of scale and is compatible with the row in which it is located.

In terms of the row of units within which the proposed unit is located there are the following uses;

Table 1

	Address	Use
	273 Bury New Road	Commercial flooring
	275 Bury New Road	Subject premises
	277 Bury New Road	Restaurant
	1 Radcliffe New Road	Barber shop
	3 Radcliffe New Road	Health food take away
	5 Radcliffe New Road	Gift shop
	7-11 Radcliffe New Road	Restaurant
	7a-11a Radcliffe New Road	Ladies fitness & weight loss
	13 Radcliffe New Road	Barber shop

It is recognised in the pre-application response that shopping areas have changed with regard to their function and land use characteristics, and there has been significant change in shopping habits and demand for retail units since the time that the UDP was adopted (1997).

In addition from September 2020 there were significant changes to the Use Classes Order with Class A (1/2/3) effectively replaced with Use Class E (a/b/c). This results in the old retail Use Class (A1) now being part of the Commercial, Business and Service Use Class (Class E) , and there being greater flexibility for permitted change of use of premises within Use Class E.

From analysing the data included in table 1, 44% of the premises are in retail use E(a), or are other services appropriate in a service locality E(ciii).

Expanding this further to include the two restaurant uses – E(ciii) 67% of the premises are uses falling under current use Class E.

In terms of the proposed public house use the subject premises would be the only use of this type within the subject row (two other premises being restaurants rather than public houses and providing a different offering). There is the Northern Crafhouse close by that is a public house but the next nearest public houses are the Cross Keys (200metres away) and the Goats Gate (400metres away) with both of these premises being out of the main or secondary shopping frontage/Whitefield town centre. Surprisingly the next nearest public house in Whitefield centre to the south and fronting the main throughroute is the New Grove Inn (680 metres away).

A number of public houses have been lost to the centre of Whitefield including the Masons Arms and Old Red King. There are very few public houses left in Whitefield centre and only one other premise (Northern Crafhouse) in close proximity to the subject premises to the north of Whitefield centre.

S2/6 – Food and Drink

The subject property fronts Bury New Road, a busy throughroute with a large retail/leisure complex located opposite (Elms Square) and mainly surrounded by other commercial uses. There are very few residential properties in the immediate vicinity.

The ground floor premises are well contained within a solid brick structure. A noise assessment has been undertaken to assess the potential impact on the Nearest Sensitive Receptors and concludes that there will be negligible impact. Measures are recommended to mitigate any impact including that the glazed elements are to meet the sound reduction values stated, and a noise limit level on all mechanical plant.

The main function of the proposed use is as a public house. There will be a hot food offering of pizzas but this is of a limited and secondary nature and resulting in a requirement for small scale kitchen equipment and mechanical extract ventilation. A simple mechanical extract fan is proposed that will vent to the rear yard area that will be discreet in size and appearance and of very limited environmental impact. The proposed extract system will comprise of an extract fan and silencers. The

extract will be fixed through the rear external wall and will be a Lo-Carbon Centra axial flow fan (see data sheet).

The proposed change of use would be serviced from the rear yard and the existing rear entrance door.

Bins will be provided at the rear to allow separation and storage of general waste, bottles and cans, and paper and cardboard. In the pre-application response it is noted that the proposed change of use would be serviced the same as the existing use and the other premises in the row which also include food outlets, and the proposal is considered to comply with UDP Policy S2/6 in this respect.

The rear yard area is shared between the subject premises, the tenant to the buildings to the opposite side of the yard undertaking auto repairs, and the neighbouring property that is used for commercial flooring sales. As the owner of the majority of the yard area and landlord of the tenant undertaking auto repairs the applicant is satisfied that they can adequately manage the premises and co-ordinate deliveries to the rear yard area.

Deliveries to the proposed use will be limited in number (estimated at two deliveries of drinks per week, and two deliveries of catering supplies). The applicant has extensive experience of managing licensed premises including the arrangement and supervision of deliveries. They are satisfied that they can organise efficient delivery of supplies and co-ordinate these with the adjoining businesses so that Devon Avenue is not impacted, and the public highway can be maintained clear of obstruction.

We emphasise that the proposed use will require a limited number of deliveries and the requirement for this is not likely to exceed the deliveries required to service the existing lawful use as retail sales. Even where a neutral impact from servicing is assessed as a result of the change of use, we consider there is the opportunity for improvement in the management and servicing of the premises due to the applicant's experience of running a licensed premises in a responsible manner.

Bringing the premises under the applicant's management and supervision provides an opportunity to ensure that adequate arrangements are in place to co-ordinate deliveries, and the storage and collection of waste.

Earlier in this statement we have discussed that the proposed use will not result in an over concentration of public houses. There have been significant changes to the use classes order since the time that the UDP was adopted and it is recognised that shopping areas have changed with regard to their function and land use characteristics.

In the justification for policy S2/6 it is recognised that food and drink establishments (including public houses) are most appropriately located within town and district

centres and other mixed use areas, where their impact will tend to be least damaging and demand for their services is arguably greatest.

S3/3 - Improvement and Enhancement (All Centres)

It is evident that there has been a significant change in shopping patterns over the last 25 years and significant decline in the demand for retail premises in main and secondary shopping frontages. The subject premises have remained vacant for over 3 years now and have a dilapidated appearance.

The use of the premises as a public house would bring the premises back into use and improve the vitality of the secondary shopping frontage. The proposed use can complement the existing public house (Northern Crafthouse) and restaurants in this area by providing a more diverse offering, and strengthening the hospitality venues in Whitefield Centre. This can provide a more vibrant location and help to retain and attract new visitors.

EN1/2 – Townscape and Built Design

It is proposed to make significant investment in the ground floor premises with provision of a new glazed frontage, comprising full height glazing to much of the frontage (anthracite grey), metal cladding in matching anthracite grey to the fixed panels, and new fascia signage. This would be an appropriate treatment for the proposed use and in keeping with the frontage/facia treatments to the adjacent units, and would result in a significant improvement in the appearance of the building.

The changes in external appearance to the building are limited to the ground floor frontage with no changes proposed to the first floor premises, or the rear elevations.

EN1/7 – Throughroutes and Gateways

The subject premises has a wide double frontage at a prominent position at the junction of Bury New Road and Radcliffe New Road. This is the main throughroute between Bury and Whitefield, and Whitefield and Radcliffe.

The subject premises are vacant and have a dilapidated appearance. The security shutters remain closed most of the time re-inforcing the impression of a vacant premises and that this part of Whitefield is in decline and providing a potential barrier to attracting visitors.

Through opening the Northern Social and bringing the premises back into use a substantial investment can be secured, that will result in a significant improvement in the appearance of the premises. People travelling along the throughroute will see

that the premises are open and in use and this can assist in attracting visitors to spend time in Whitefield town centre, and adding to the attractiveness and vibrancy of this area as a visitor destination.

EN7/2 – Noise Pollution

The proposed public house use is located in a town centre location directly fronting a busy throughroute. Directly opposite is the Elms Square retail and leisure complex. There are very few residential properties in close proximity and this is considered to be an ideal location for a public house use.

The pre-application response noted that there are residential properties at the rear, and first floor flats above the neighbouring property. It was advised that a noise survey should be submitted with any application that would focus on the noise break out from the rear of the premises, and the internal noise levels from inside the public house.

An environmental noise survey and noise impact assessment have been undertaken to assess the potential increase in noise levels from the proposed use on the surrounding Noise Sensitive Receptors. The assessment shows that the external noise levels do not exceed the lowest statistically most repeated measured background sound level during the proposed operational times. This indicates 'Negligible Impact' when assessed in accordance with BS4142 and 'No Observed Effect Level' when assessed in accordance with the NPSE and NPFF.

Recommendations and mitigation are provided in the assessment, including;

- Required sound reduction for the glazed elements including the new glazed frontage – use acoustic laminated double glazed units from Pilkington's Optiphon range, with 4mm glass/16mm cavity/5mm glass.
- Mechanical plant associated with the development should not exceed the cumulative plant noise limit level of 35.0 dBA at the closest Noise Sensitive Receptor.

The subject premises are well contained comprising a solid brick structure with only a single rear door for servicing/emergency exit at the rear. There is very limited opportunity for noise break out at the rear.

A commercial vehicle repair business is located to the opposite side of the yard at the rear with substantial buildings between the rear elevation of the subject premises and the nearest residential properties (Devon Mews).

EC4/1 – Small Businesses

It is the Council's policy to ensure that the needs of small and growing businesses are met by looking favourably on proposals for such developments, where these do not conflict with other policies and proposals of the Plan.

In the justification for this policy the Council had identified that a high percentage of jobs provided in the Borough were in companies employing fewer than 25 people, and that such companies should be encouraged.

It is estimated that 25 jobs will be created by the subject venture (12 full time and 13 part time) providing much needed employment that can benefit the local population and economy.

H2/4 – Car Parking and New Development

The application relates to the ground floor premises of an existing building located to Whitefield town centre, with limited external space. The previous use for the sale of motor parts/accessories had no off street parking provision, and the applicant is unable to offer any off street parking for the proposed change of use to a public house.

Policy H2/4 confirms the Council's support for a balanced transport strategy, and that car parking provision must also relate to the availability of public transport and should be set at a level which encourages the use of public transport. It is discussed that in locations that have good access to other means of travel than the private car reduced requirements for parking should be adopted. This relates particularly to the Borough's main bus and Metrolink corridors and to the town and district centres, which are well served by public transport.

The building is located to the town centre with access to main bus services and close to the Whitefield Metrolink stop and has excellent links to public transport;

- Morrisons (STOP E)
The nearest bus stop located to the west side of Bury New Road is 108metres away (Stop ID: MANTMTJD).

Service 135: Manchester City Centre to Bury Town Centre including Manchester, Cheetham, Cheetham Hil, Heaton Park, Besses o'th Barn, Whitefield, Bury Interchange, plus local stops between.
05:36 – 00:45, services every 10mins peak, and every 20 minutes off peak.

Service 513: Farnworth to Bury Town Centre including Farnworth, Ringley, Chapelfield, Park Lane, Whitefield, Radcliffe Bus Station, Bury Interchange, plus local stops between.
06:57 – 20:30, services every 13mins.

- Morrisons (STOP F)

The nearest bus stop to the east side of Bury New Road is 140metres away (Stop ID: MANTMTJG).

Service 135: Bury Town Centre to Manchester City Centre including Bury Interchange, Whitefield, Besses o'th Barn, Heaton Park, Cheetham Hill, Cheetham, Manchester, plus local stops between.

04:35 – 22:36, services every 10mins peak, and every 20 minutes off peak.

Service 513: Bury town centre to Farnworth service including Bury Interchange, Radcliffe Bus Station, Whitefield, Park Lane, Chapelfield, Ringley, Farnworth, plus local stops between.

06:28 – 20:30, Services every 13mins.

- Whitefield Metro link station

Located 200metres away providing direct services to Manchester City Centre and Bury town centre, and the Metrolink network beyond serving Greater Manchester.

Services to Bury tram stop 05:38 – 00:04

Service to Manchester 06:00 – 23:36

Services running every 12 minutes.

The subject location has a good range of public transport services in close proximity facilitating good access to all local and main centres with a high frequency of services.

There is good availability of private hire taxis in Whitefield town centre and it is reasonable to expect that a high proportion of customers visiting the proposed public house will utilise public transport or private hire taxi's rather than driving to the premises and having to park. By contrast we expect that a higher proportion of customers utilising the former motor parts use would have driven to the premises by private car and would have required parking.

It is anticipated that the majority of visitors to the proposed use will walk to the premises (residents of Whitefield), will utilise the bus or Metrolink services bearing in mind that the premises are located directly on a main bus route and close to the Metrolink stop, will be in the area in any event for an afternoon or evening socialising in Whitefield, or will travel using a private hire taxi.

Where patrons still choose to travel by private car there is adequate availability of car parking in close proximity at Lily Hill Street car park (Council owned, located within 200metres and provides 49 car park spaces). Other car parking facilities are available in Whitefield town centre.

Whilst we understand that there would be a preference for the availability of off street parking for the proposed use the application is to an existing building in a town centre location and this is simply not available. It would be beneficial if the building could be put to a viable use and we consider that there is unlikely to be any greater demand for parking resulting from the proposed change of use to public house than there would be for the existing lawful use for retail sales.

The building is located on a main bus route and close to a Metrolink stop providing links to Bury and Manchester centres and easy access to frequent public transport links to a wider range of destinations.

It is considered that the proposed public house use is likely to generate at least some demand from local people, and from customers who would be in the Whitefield area to visit the existing hospitality venues and this is likely to result in some walk-in trips.

The proposal will support the principals of sustainable development and will benefit from a balanced transportation strategy (walk, car, bus, Metrolink). This will minimise the environmental impact of traffic.

9 – COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND IMPACT ON NEIGHBOURING USES

The applicant has attempted to inform the local community of their proposed change of use by undertaking a leaflet drop to neighbouring premises in the immediate vicinity and inviting them to meet at the applicants existing premises (Northern Craffhouse) so they could explain their proposals. There was very limited response to this invitation and attendance at the meeting.

The proposed use is in an appropriate location for a public house, it being a town centre location where people are already attracted to hospitality uses, and there are good public transport links to allow efficient access.

The subject building is in a location where the majority of the properties have a commercial use and including a number of restaurants.

The building fronts onto Bury New Road a main highway and a new glazed frontage is to be incorporated that will significantly improve the appearance of this building. In accordance with the Noise Assessment that has been submitted the glazed frontage is designed to reduce external noise transmission with the use of acoustic laminated double glazed units. The building is well contained to the sides and rear and we consider that there will be negligible noise transmission.

The applicants have many years' experience of operating licensed premises in a responsible manner. Kirsty is the Designated Premises Supervisor for Northern Craffhouse and has implemented all the relevant measures to comply with the licensing objectives.

The Northern Crafthouse is managed to ensure the safety of the staff and customers and this includes employing an adequate number of suitably trained staff to ensure that the premises are properly supervised, and the installation of CCTV to monitor the premises. Similar measures are proposed be taken forward for the management and supervision of the new premises. Separate to the requirement to submit a planning application for the proposed change of use there will also be the requirement to apply for a premises license.

10 - SUMMARY

This proposed change of use can deliver a number of significant benefits including:

- Reuse of a vacant building.
- Significant investment that will improve the appearance of a property located to a prominent road junction and main throughroute between Bury and Whitefield.
- Creation of employment (estimated 25 new jobs).
- Creation of a hospitality venue and improving the range and diversity of hospitality venues to Whitefield Town Centre, and strengthening the offering of bars in this area to create a more attractive visitor destination.
- Provision of a facility where at least some of the customers are likely to be local residents, or people in Whitefield town centre to visit the existing hospitality venues (walk-in trips).
- No greater demand for parking than is likely to be required through the existing lawful use of the premises as a retail use.
- Implementation of a balanced and sustainable transport strategy (walk, Metrolink, bus, private hire taxi, private car).
- Improvements to the accessibility of this building for all users, with a new central entrance with a ramped access up to a level door threshold.

It is assessed that there will be very limited negative impacts as a result of the proposed change of use, including;

- A noise assessment has been undertaken and concludes that there would be negligible impact and provides recommendations and mitigation to ensure that this is the case.
- It is not possible to offer off street parking to this property, there is no vacant external space to provide this. This would be the case whatever use the

premises were put to. Bearing in mind the town centre location with good public transport links, that some patrons will be walk-ins and the nature of the proposed use as a licensed premise it is assessed that the proposed use would be unlikely to generate a greater demand for parking spaces than the current lawful use as retail.

- The premises will be serviced from the rear yard and rear door. Bins will be provided for the collection and storage of waste to the rear yard. This is the current arrangement for the existing lawful use and the same as neighbouring commercial uses. Deliveries to the proposed use will be of a very limited number. These can be managed to co-ordinate with the adjacent tenant and neighbouring property, to ensure that Devon Avenue is kept clear of delivery vehicles and to maintain the public highway clear of obstruction.

On balance it is considered that any perceived impact is very limited, and would be greatly outweighed by the benefits of the proposed use. The proposed investment into the property and reuse would result in regeneration and a significant improvement in appearance to a building in a prominent location on a main throughroute.

Northern Social can create a hospitality venue that would provide a different offering to existing facilities but would complement existing bars and restaurants, encouraging people to visit and improving the vibrancy of Whitefield town centre.

Statement issued: 9th November 2021

Appendix 1
Photographic survey (4th May 2021)



Image 1 – View to front elevation of subject building



Image 2 – View of building frontage

Change of use of ground floor premises to public house, 275 Bury New Road, Whitefield



Image 3 – View of front elevation of subject building & adjacent restaurant



Image 4 – View along Bury New road of adjacent commercial premises

Change of use of ground floor premises to public house, 275 Bury New Road, Whitefield



Image 5 – View to front elevation and gable elevation of Northern Crafthouse



Image 6 – View to rear elevation and service yard



Image 7 – Rear door to subject premises



Image 8 – View to rear elevation & service yard



Image 9 – Car park to adjacent Northern Crafthouse



Image 10 – Internal view – significant repair/refurbishment required