

Proposed Retail Fit-Out

Ground Floor Unit within the ex-Lewis's Department Store
Liverpool



DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

2nd July 2014

Revision 1 – 9th July 2014

Design and Access Statement

Introduction

This design and access statement has been created to accompany an application for listed building consent by Lewis's Liverpool LLP in relation to various works to the existing building fabric in order to create a unit for Lidl UK GmbH.

The present Lewis's store dates from 1947-56, and replaced the building that was damaged in the blitz. It is Grade II Listed.

The proposed Lidl will occupy roughly half the ground floor of the building, that part which has frontages to Ranelagh Street and Fairclough Street. This Design and Access Statement should be read alongside the submitted plans prepared by NJSR Chartered Architects LLP and the detailed Heritage Statement prepared by Peter De Figueiredo

The format of the statement is bespoke to the scheme given the relevant issues.

Overview

The shop unit forms part of the overall comprehensive redevelopment by Lewis's Liverpool LLP, and certain works to the existing building are to be undertaken by the landlord's team to make the unit ready to receive the fit-out.



Fig. 1 Extract of initial plan supplied by the landlord to Lidl GmbH illustrating the extent of the proposed unit

The retail space at the ground level of the Lewis's building has been offered to the market for over the last 4 years. This has been carried out through CBRE, Savills and Re:Co via a number of media methods including, hard copy brochures, digital email shots, inclusion on the Central Village website along with being advertised on the agent's websites and servers. Regular meeting between the retained agents and local agents also occurred on a regular basis in order to keep all avenues fully updated as to progress with the scheme and the availability of space.

Despite all of the above along with positive PR relating to the other leisure lettings within the Lewis's building and the global Central Village scheme little interest has been shown in the ground floor areas. This is mainly due to the very limited requirements for large space users in this area of the city (the building at this level will not separate down into smaller units easily).

On the limited interest that has been received the feedback generally was that the unit at ground level was restrictive in terms of the mezzanines and relationship between the floor area and street. The existing ground levels also caused concerns for retailers with their relationship to the buildings floor levels.

Lidl UK GmbH

Lidl entered the UK market in 1994 and opening its first store in Liverpool in 1996 on London Road just outside the City Centre. This has been complemented by stores in Kensington and Page Moss as well as stores just outside the City including Maghull, Bootle and Seaforth. Lidl are keen to expand further in Liverpool and are very excited about this opportunity to provide a flagship store in the heart of the City. It has been a challenge to adapt the standard format to the unique nature of the building however LIDL believe that they have now developed a bespoke and compelling scheme which complements the overall vision for the Lewis' development.

Lidl has over 600 stores across the UK and is targeting further expansion with an ambition to open 50 new stores next year. LIDL are also investing heavily in their existing estate eg. currently on site with a £1.5 million refurbishment of the Page Moss store. This growth is supporting local job creation and it was recently announced at a visit by George Osbourne to the Chessington store that there would be 2,500 new jobs created in this year alone.



Fig. 2 Typical Newspaper article regarding LIDL expansion plans

Lidl UK GMBH expects between 25-30 full and part time positions will be created at the store. The staffing numbers is dependent upon the turnover of the store – Lidl are hopeful that for centrally located site it will be toward the higher end of the scale.

The store manager would normally be supported by 2-3 deputy managers all on full-time contracts. The part time positions would vary between 8 - 40 hours a week. There is normally up to 3 part time staff working 40 hours a week (equivalent to full time).

Lidl always make an effort to employ locally. The store manager is usually a trained member of staff who transfers (via promotion) from an existing store in the Liverpool area.

Initial Assessment

Building Approach / Access

The only customer access point into the unit is the previous main entrance off Ranelagh Street. The existing overall design of the entrance area is symmetrical and important within the overall composition of the elevation. The issues with re-using this entrance for a significantly smaller, ground-floor only retail unit amount to scale of provision and accessibility.

With regard to scale of provision it is quite simple – there are too many doors currently in existence to suit the intended use, therefore one side of the entrance area would essentially be redundant.



Photo 1 – Upper section of entrance doors without stepped approach

With the existing topography the public footpath slopes downhill from the high point at the Adelphi end of the street, to the low point towards the central station end of the façade. The existing stepped approach [right hand side when viewed from the street] into the entrance is blended into the footpath via diminishing steps. Due to these site constraints the doors nearer to the Adelphi provide an approach allowing access to the store without the need to ascend steps and therefore are proposed to be the entrance point to the new unit. The lower set of doors would be retained [as they form a strong element within the overall listed façade], and potentially appropriate graphics applied to the door glazed panels to discourage the public from approaching.

The existing entrance that is proposed to be utilised will need to be replaced with auto-doors to an agreed design. This would need to be discussed and agreed with the conservation officer. It is relevant that the Heritage Statement confirms that the current doors are not original.

The future advertisement consent application to be made by Lidl would be to install the corporate signage over the left hand side entrance area.

The Heritage Statement concludes that the works proposed to the entrance area would be beneficial overall.



Photo 2 – Lower section of entrance doors with stepped approach

It is proposed that the right hand existing sign panel is removed and replaced with glazing to match the adjacent bays to further highlight the entrance point.

Visibility from the street frontage

This issue is pivotal to the scheme. The unit has been selected by Lidl because unlike the majority of food-stores it is not seen primarily as a destination, and has no car parking etc that would normally be present. For this reason the store needs to be inviting and immediately legible from the street frontage.

The current store arrangement presents two issues. The first is depth and series of steps in level within the window-back areas. The steps in the floor level previously responded to the street level and kept predominantly retail fashion visual merchandising at eye level. With the current use the window backs visually separate the passer-by from the store and make impulse purchases less likely.

The use proposed simply does not have the type of visual merchandising that would be appropriate to fill these window backs.

It is impossible to retain these window backs and connect with ramps etc as these would be far in excess of any gradients that are allowed within building regulations and would be un-useable.

For this reason it is proposed that the slabs forming the stepped window backs are removed by the landlord as part of their enabling works package required to form the shell that LIDL will fit out.

Following on from this the existing mezzanines make these areas inaccessible due to the height restraints of the existing structure [currently less than building regulations minimum of 2m].

For this reason it is proposed that the mezzanines are removed. In removing the mezzanines a number of columns become free-standing, and the proposal is to re-clad these with salvaged stone column cladding sections that are available on site, achieving uniformity within the public space.



Photo 3 – existing window back showing restricted view into unit and low beams

Internal ceiling treatment

The existing unit has a large number of soil pipes [presumably serving the hotel bathrooms above], strapped to the ceiling towards the rear of the public space. For this reason it is proposed to install a suspended ceiling that will effectively cover this installation. The fastening of this ceiling system and/or any sub-grid required would be discussed with the conservation officer as required prior to installation.

The intention would be to preserve as much of the original soffit as possible and for this to be contained within the ceiling void.

To address the street it is proposed that this ceiling level steps up at the second line of columns, and becomes a monolithic plasterboard soffit fixed as high as possible to suit the existing downstand beams [*refer NJSR drg 1372.005 A130*].

There are also areas where the existing beam cladding has been removed, and these areas will require fire casing to be installed by the landlord's contractor to meet the fire strategy and building control requirements for the unit.



Photo 4 – typical SVP installation to rear of unit necessitating a suspended ceiling

Internal columns

It is proposed that the existing columns to the public areas remain unaltered, with the exception of the first line of columns which are proposed to be re-clad to match the other stone clad columns following the removal of the mezzanine. The suspended ceiling as mentioned above is designed to close around, rather than to require any alteration to the existing column stone cladding.



Photo 5 – existing column to side of entrance that would become freestanding and clad in salvaged stonework

An overall review of the column treatments is noted below with a key reference plan.



Fig. 3 Existing plan with grid references locating columns

LIDL Lewis's internal columns

Ref:	Location	Proposal	Justification	Notes:
A3-A8	Under mezzanine	re-clad with salvaged stone column cladding following removal of mezzanine	To provide uniformity within the salesfloor	See Heritage Statement
B3-B9	Within salesfloor	retain as existing	-	-
C1	now outside demise	-	-	-
C1a	in LIDL welfare area	de-clad	space required for back of house welfare installations, not in the public area	column between C1 and C2
C2	in LIDL welfare area	de-clad	space required for back of house welfare installations, not in the public area	-
C3-9	Within salesfloor	retain as existing	-	-
D1	now outside demise	-	-	-
D1a	in LIDL welfare area	de-clad	space required for back of house welfare installations, not in the public area	column between D1 and D2
D2	in LIDL welfare area	de-clad	space required for back of house welfare installations, not in the public area	-
D3-D5	built into wall	retain as existing	-	-
D6-7	bewteen salesfloor and stock area	de-clad	space required for back of house welfare installations, not in the public area	-
E6-E8	in stockroom	de-clad	space required for stock, not in the public area	-

note: there are other columns on the stockroom area none of which are stone clad therefore not referenced in the schedule above

Fig. 4 Column treatment schedule

As with any food-store, the layout of the aisles is intended to form a circulation route around the store leading to the tills and exit point. In this unit the aisles have been positioned perpendicular to the street to provide views into the unit from the street, and through the unit to the bakery at the rear.

It is of note that this is a significant departure for LIDL when compared with their standard linear arrangement, and this will be the only store out of the 93 current NW stores to be laid out in this way.

The staff welfare facilities etc. are positioned to the side of the unit adjacent to the communal stair core which also forms an escape route from the building.

Summary

The modifications to the existing building have been carefully considered, and have taken into account specialist historic building advice from the landlord's consultant - Peter De Figueiredo and his report dated June 2014.

As summarised in the Heritage Statement the proposal will create a public benefit by allowing the ground floor section of the building to be brought back into use.