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SEVENDALE HOUSE SET FOR ONE OF CITY'S LARGEST REFURBISHMENTS IN A DECADE

One of the best-known buildings in Manchester's Northern Quarter, the Grade II Listed Sevendale House is set for a major £6M refurbishment project to restore it to its former grandeur and to provide modern office space to the city market. If the planning application now lodged with Manchester City Council is approved, this will be one of the largest projects of its type in the city in the last decade.

Dating from 1903, Sevendale House occupies a prominent island site within the Conservation Area of Stevenson Square. Behind its grand and ornate architecture, it offers five upper floors, capable of accommodating 61,500sq ft of future office requirements with sizeable floorplates of 14,500sq ft. At the completion of the refurbishment, it will be able to house over 700 workers who will animate the Stevenson Square area and provide the critical mass to sustain and improve its retail and leisure offering.

At present, four of the five upper floors are empty with basement and ground floor occupied by several retail and leisure operators. According to Mark Davies, Director of Philip J Davies (Holdings) PLC, the owners, the long term plan has been to wait for several lease expiries to occur before carrying out the major investment that will preserve and restore its unique features and to create a modern officeworking environment within its listed façade.

He commented: "This is our first opportunity in twenty-five years to carry out the long awaited renaissance of this significant building which will also enhance the attractions of the Northern Quarter to office users requiring good quality space in a great location with competitive overheads.

"The Northern Quarter's close proximity to Piccadilly and the business/financial core of the city gives us great confidence in terms of what we can offer here to augment Manchester's office provision to companies of all sizes. Whether it is the creative industries that gravitate to this area or professional service companies that need cost effective offices centrally situated, if this consent is granted, we are on target to provide this by March 2012."

The company, which has a number of properties within its portfolio, was established over forty years ago by Philip J Davies who continues to play an active role in the business and who is currently Chairman.

Adds Dominic Horridge, Building Consultancy Partner at OBI Property:

"On behalf of our client, we have worked closely with both Manchester City Council and English

Heritage over the past months on this important application and believe we have their support and confidence in our client's ability and commitment to deliver this project.

“ Philip J Davies (Holdings) PLC has assembled an excellent project team including Crookes Walker Consulting Ltd and Tier Consulting and Architectural History Practice with major input from our architects Stephenson Bell who fully understand the unique needs of this building and the complexities of its refurbishment. “

Concludes Roger Stephenson of Stephenson Bell: “We believe this building is the embodiment of the spirit of the Northern Quarter past and present. Its refurbishment presents us with many challenges including the intention to reintroduce the original lightwell which Manchester City Council's archive records show was part of its original design and planning consent. This will run from the first to the fourth floor of Sevendale House and ultimately provide the building with superb natural daylight to illuminate the office space we create.”

It is believed that the planning application will be considered in early March 2011.

Press Enquiries to: Helen Thomas/Sarah Walker of Meredith Thomas PR Ltd on 0161-935 8006

Or mobile 07968 039612.