

**APPLICATION FOR PREMISES LICENCE
BY MANCHESTER INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL**

BEFORE

**THE LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE OF
MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL ON 16TH JANUARY 2023**

PREMISES: FACTORY INTERNATIONAL, WATER STREET, MANCHESTER

WITNESS STATEMENT OF DEAN MEEHAN

1. My name is Dean Meehan, and I am the Venue Operations Programme Manager for Factory International. I make this statement in relation to the application for a new premises licence for Factory International, Water Street Manchester (the 'Application') made by Manchester International Festival.
2. The purpose of this statement is to provide background information with regards to Factory International and to explain the hours and activities sought in the Application. I hope that this statement will assist the Committee in advance of the hearing of the Application.

BACKGROUND TO MANCHESTER INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

3. Manchester International Festival started in 2007, and runs every two years. It is a period of nearly three weeks when a huge range of events and performances of all sorts of genre take place across Manchester. The programme of events during MIF is unrivalled, and I would submit that it is an incredible asset to the city.
4. The festival attracts artists from all over the world each time it runs, and has been the home of some incredible, ground-breaking performances.
5. It has been described by The New York Times as:

'One of the leading worldwide incubators for new, cutting-edge art. Though the festival has an international outlook and reputation, it also showcases Manchester stories and talent.'

6. MIF is an incredibly exciting entity to be involved in and to work for.

BACKGROUND TO FACTORY INTERNATIONAL

7. Factory International is a brand new building, the build of which has been commissioned by Manchester City Council.
8. MIF will be a long term tenant of the building. It is proposed to be the new home of the Festival itself, and, more widely, a global destination for arts, music and culture. It will commission and present a year round programme, which will emulate MIF in terms of its variety and cutting edge nature. There will be everything from theatre to music to installations and digital commissions.
9. The building itself is well suited to host ground-breaking performances, because it is ground-breaking in its design. The design is led by Ellen van Loon of the world leading architectural practice OMA. The space is 13,350 square metres, including a 21m high multi use event/performance space. It is incredibly adaptable, meaning that performances can be carried out on all sorts of different scales – from large scale shows to intimate performances and exhibitions. The large event space can be divided in multiple ways with a movable acoustic wall.
10. Indeed, the sound-proofing of the building is absolutely state of the art, meaning that noise breakout from performances is impossible. This further means that within the two larger event spaces inside the building, a music event could take place next door to a quiet exhibition event and no noise bleed would occur between the two spaces.
11. It is an extremely dynamic space, and this is important because our vision is that the venue continues to adapt, change and remain at the cutting edge of arts and culture for years to come.
12. I would refer the Committee to the video served as Exhibit DM1, which provides further detail on the building and the proposals for it.
13. Factory International is a huge project, not just for the city, but for the country and indeed globally. It is the largest investment in a national cultural project since the opening of Tate Modern in 2000, thanks to initial government investment followed by backing from Manchester City Council and Arts Council England.
14. As such, I am delighted that this incredible venue is going to be based in Manchester.

LICENSABLE ACTIVITIES AT FACTORY INTERNATIONAL

15. To give an idea of the sorts of events that will take place at Factory International, I can list some of the proposed initial programming for the early days of the venue (subject to the grant of this licence), as follows:

- 15.1. 'Free Your Mind' - a large scale immersive performance based on The Matrix films. It will include dance, music and visual effects, and will be directed by Danny Boyle.
 - 15.2. 'You, Me and the Balloons' - a major exhibition celebrating three decades of Yayoi Kusama's inflatable sculptures.
 - 15.3. 'The Welcome' - a 9 day programme developed by Greater Manchester residents including a range of music, circus, art and fashion.
16. This is some of the initial proposed programming, and there are other specific events of similar types which are contemplated but which cannot be confirmed at this stage for commercial reasons.
 17. Furthermore, of course, we cannot confirm our programming nor indeed cast the net more widely in terms of future bookings until we know what our licensing arrangements will be.
 18. However, in addition to these specific examples, I can also say that we hope to stage everything from theatre to music to exhibitions to dance to film, and various combinations of these activities. These performances will vary in size and scale from the small and intimate, to events which take up much of the space; from local artists and community projects to world renowned performers.
 19. We also hope that what we will stage will be consistently new, innovative and exciting. As has been said about Manchester International Festival by Creative Review:

'If there's a signature thread that ties together the eclectic works that have appeared at the Manchester International Festival, it's a desire to push at creative boundaries.'
 20. This is true of the Festival and will hopefully be true of Factory International.
 21. This is why we have applied for the full range of regulated entertainment activities, and why we have applied for extensive and flexible hours. We need a licence that provides for all sorts of different events and eventualities.

HOURS

22. I understand that the later hours have caused concern to local residents, and that they query what sorts of activities might be taking place within the premises in the early hours of the morning.
23. As a result of the innovative nature of the venue and the ambition to attract unique and new performances throughout the life of the licence, it is naturally difficult to give a definitive and exhaustive list.

24. However, I can certainly give some examples, as follows:

24.1. The 'You, Me and the Balloons' exhibition detailed above would, we anticipate, be sufficiently popular to sell tickets 24/7, and this would be our intention if we were able to do so.

24.2. We might wish to stream the world premiere of a live performance, say a theatre performance, which is premiering abroad and would therefore be shown during the night in the UK.

24.3. We might have 'durational' theatre or film performances which run 24/7; something like Christian Marclay's 'The Clock' which showed at Tate Modern in 2019 and was a 24 hour long film montage that patrons could visit at any time of the day.

24.4. We might host some private events, like corporate dinners or awards ceremonies which may run into the early hours.

24.5. We might have some performances or gigs which finish at 11pm or so, but where the artist and an exclusive group stay at the venue for an 'after-party'.

24.6. We also might have some live gigs or DJ events which run into the early hours of the morning.

25. As such, we would by no means be intending to trade 24/7 all the time, but there are sufficient examples of the types of occasion when we might do so that we consider it necessary to have a flexible licence which allows us to accommodate this.

26. I would wish to emphasise that there would be no intention to have any of the above type of event dominate our schedule – e.g. the venue would not become solely a late night music venue. The cornerstone of Factory International and its programming will always be variety and diversity.

27. Indeed, this is a necessity. Factory International and MIF are National Portfolio Organisations of Arts Council England, who provide a substantial proportion of our annual funding to support a diverse, eclectic and culturally led programme. This funding is conditional on presenting a rich diversity of artistically led programming, and therefore we would not receive this funding if we operated as a predominately commercial gig or nightclub venue.

28. This funding model distinguishes Factory International from other large scale venues in the city.

SAFEGUARDS

29. Nevertheless, as I say, I do understand that some of these types of proposals (and indeed some more than others) will cause concern to local residents, as is set out within the representations received.
30. However, I am absolutely confident that the team can deliver these events without causing issues to local residents in terms of noise, anti-social behaviour or crime and disorder.
31. This is an absolutely state of the art project, and its operation and management will be reflective of that. I would submit that the extensive and detailed set of conditions lodged with this application are reflective of that in the first instance.
32. Once we are aware of the hours that we will be permitted to trade (following the outcome of these proceedings) and once the project is nearer to completion, we'll be putting together an extremely extensive venue operations manual for the running of the site – as required by the conditions we have suggested.
33. We will then complete extensive additional event management plans whenever they are necessary. These will be highly detailed documents, which will assess on a case by case, event by event basis all the various risks and potential areas for concern and ensure that they are addressed.
34. These documents will ensure that the premises always trades and carries out events in a way which upholds the licensing objectives.
35. We will always work closely with the authorities, both as specified by our suggested conditions and in any other ways that are required of us. We have liaised with the authorities throughout this application process, and we are pleased that as a result they are happy with our licence application.
36. We will also continue to work with and liaise with local residents throughout the lifetime of Factory International. We have consulted widely throughout this process, and we have done everything we can to provide reassurance to local residents with regards to our intentions.
37. We regret that we have not been able to address all concerns, but subject to the grant of this licence, we would absolutely continue our dialogue with those who have engaged in the process. We have offered various conditions and provisions which we consider do deal with the concerns that residents have raised, as well as conditions which guarantee this continued engagement and information sharing.

38. We have no intention of being bad neighbours, it simply is not in our interests to upset or be in conflict with those who live and work near to us. We want to be a positive part of the local area and local community.

FACTORY ACADEMY

39. Indeed, this is important to us because one of the key overall aims of the project is for this venue to benefit Manchester in as many ways as possible.

40. As noted above, we want to bring some of the most exciting arts events and performances in the world to Manchester. We also want to showcase art and artists from Manchester to the world.

41. Additionally though, we want to provide opportunities for budding creatives through Factory International.

42. As such, it will also be home to Factory Academy. This will be a major training centre for Greater Manchester residents, which will help people from all backgrounds to start new careers in the creative industries. Factory Academy will deliver opportunities such as paid internships, training programmes and work experience programmes.

43. We hope that the premises will not only exhibit but also help to create the next generation of inspirational artists.

CONCLUSION

44. I hope that the above helps to paint a picture of what we think will be a truly unique project, the likes of which Manchester has not seen before.

45. I also hope that this in turn explains why we are asking the Committee to grant what is a fairly unique licence.

46. We understand that there will always be concerns with something that is out of the ordinary, but we would ask the Committee to review the extensive set of conditions that we have suggested as part of our application.

47. We would submit that as a result of these, the Committee can be confident in granting us the licence that we request. Whilst it would allow us the flexibility that we ask for, this would come hand in hand with an extensive set of conditions which provide safeguards to ensure that all activities are closely regulated, monitored and scrutinised.

48. This in turn will ensure that whatever the premises does, it always upholds the licensing objectives.

Water Street to Quay Street
(City Center, Trains & Parking)

Post event crowd control barrier


Grape Street

Water Street to Liverpool Road
(Trams)

Foot Bridge
(To Salford)

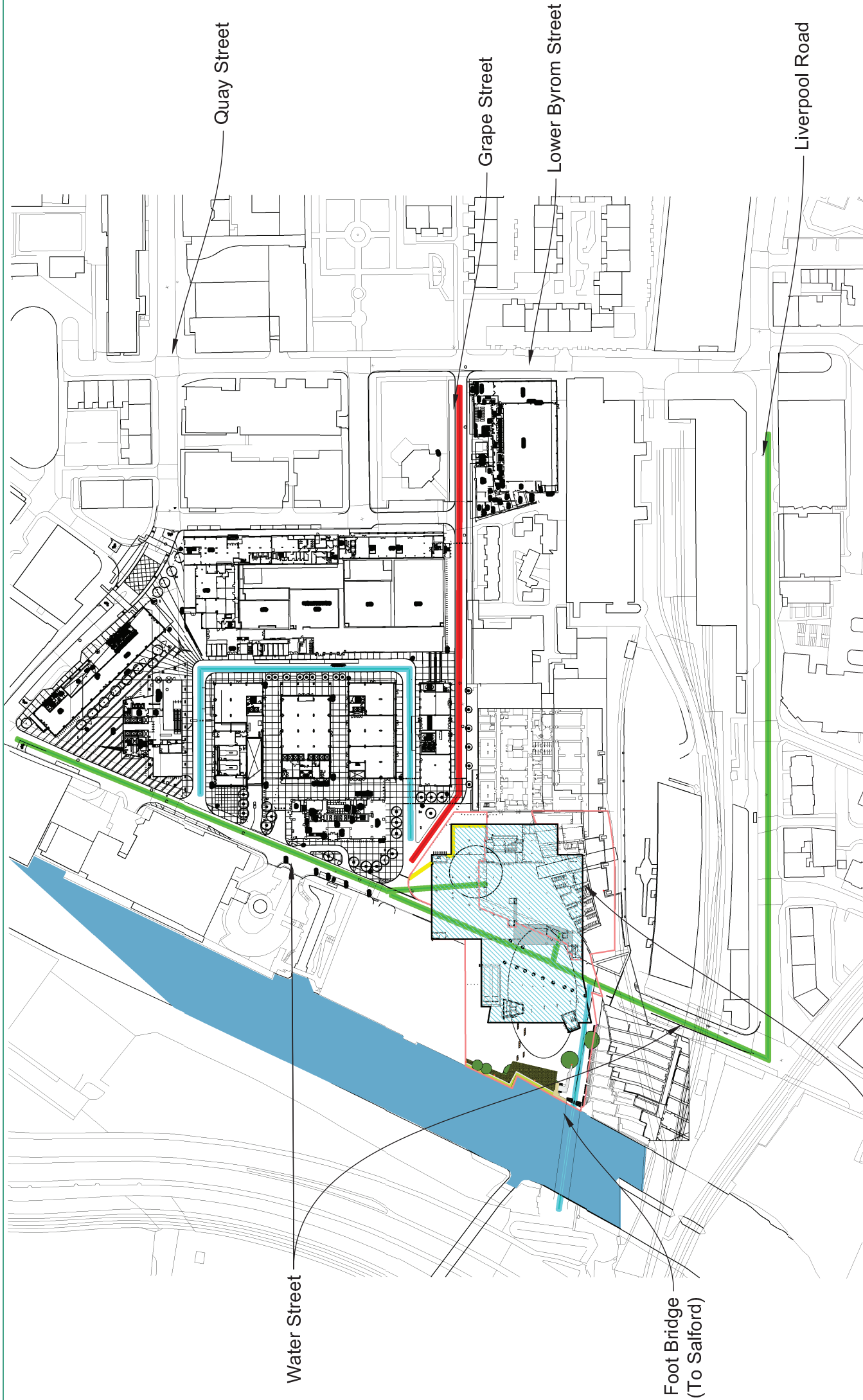
PROJECT		VENUE		STATUS	
Drawing Title		Factory Audience Disbursement		DATE	
DIRECTOR		DESIGNER		04 / 03 / 2022	
PRODUCTION MANAGER		DRAWN BY		SCALE	
[Redacted]		[Redacted]		DNS [®]	
[Redacted]		[Redacted]		Version:	
[Redacted]		[Redacted]		1.1	

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MIF
PRODUCTION

Factory



Quay Street

Grape Street

Lower Byrom Street

Liverpool Road

Water Street

Foot Bridge
(To Salford)

Factory

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PROJECT		VENUE		STATUS	
Drawing Title Factory Audience Disbursement		LIGHTING DESIGNER		DATE 04/03/2022	
DIRECTOR		DESIGNER		SCALE	
PRODUCTION MANAGER		DRAWN BY		DNS [®]	
				Version: 1.1	
				Sheet Ref:	