

APPENDIX 10.1: PLANNING POLICY

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2021

- 10.1.1 The NPPF aims to provide one concise document which sets out the Government's planning policies for England by replacing previous Planning Policy Guidance (PPGs) and Planning Policy Statements (PPSs). It aims to provide a planning framework within which the local community and local authorities can produce distinctive local plans which respond to local needs and priorities.
- 10.1.2 The NPPF outlines that *"the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development"*, which is defined as *"meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"*.
- 10.1.3 The NPPF also clarifies that planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions. The NPPF states that the planning system has three overarching objectives: economic, social and environmental. The environmental objective is described as follows: *"to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy."*
- 10.1.4 Paragraph 9 of the NPPF also notes that the objectives should be delivered through the planning process but recognises that planning policies and decisions should *"take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area"*.
- 10.1.5 Paragraphs 126-136 focus on achieving well-designed places and promote good design of the built environment. This approach is enshrined in Paragraph 130, which states:

"Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- a) Will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- b) Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
- c) Are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*

- d) *Establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*
- e) *Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*
- f) *Create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.”*

10.1.6 Paragraph 134 states:

“Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes. Conversely, significant weight should be given to:

- a) *Development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes; and/or*
- b) *Outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings...”*

10.1.7 Section 15 relates to the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment, with Paragraph 174 setting out that planning policies and decisions should look to achieve the above by *“protecting and enhancing valued landscapes”* and *“recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services”*.

[National Planning Practice Guidance, 2021ⁱ](#)

10.1.8 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) supports the NPPF. Under the Natural Environment PPG (July 2019), the sub-section ‘Landscape’ in Paragraph 037 supports the use of landscape character assessment as a tool for understanding the character and local distinctiveness of the landscape and identifying the features that give it a sense of place, as a means to informing, planning and managing change. The Natural Environment PPG makes reference to Natural England guidance on landscape character assessment.

10.1.9 Under the sub-section 'Green Infrastructure', the Natural Environment PPG's Paragraph 006 recognises that well-designed green infrastructure can help to create a sense of place and contribute to place-making, and that green infrastructure can help create safe and accessible environments.

10.1.10 Within the Design: process and tools PPG (October 2019), in the sub-section 'Planning for well-designed places', Paragraph 001 notes that well-designed places can be achieved through active input at all stages of the planning process. The Design PPG goes on to note that permission ought to be refused for poorly designed development failing to utilise opportunities to improve the character, quality and function of a place.

National Design Guide, 2021

10.1.11 The National Design Guide identifies the key influencing factors for good design and aims to influence the production of local plans, guidance and the determination of planning applications through the consideration of ten characteristics:

- Context,
- Identity,
- Built Form,
- Movement,
- Nature,
- Public Space,
- Uses,
- Homes and Buildings,
- Resources, and
- Lifespan.

Local Policy

Manchester's Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2012)

10.1.12 The Core Strategy outlines the Council's vision for Manchester in 2027 along with the planning policies which will be used to deliver that vision. The Core Strategy policies that are considered relevant to the Site and the Proposed Development include Policy SP1 Spatial Principles, which state:

"The key spatial principles which will guide the strategic development of Manchester to 2027 are:

- *The Regional Centre will be the focus for economic and commercial development, retail, leisure and cultural activity, alongside high quality*

city living. The growth of Manchester Airport will act as a catalyst for the regional economy, and will also provide the impetus for a second hub of economic activity in this part of the City.

- *Beyond these areas, the emphasis is on the creation of neighbourhoods of choice, providing high quality and diverse housing around district centres which meet local needs, all in a distinct environment. The majority of new residential development in these neighbourhoods will be in the Inner Areas, defined by the North Manchester , East Manchester and Central Manchester Regeneration Areas.*
- *The City is covered by regeneration areas including the City Centre. All development should have regard to the character, issues and strategy for each regeneration area as described in the North, East, Central and South Manchester and Wythenshawe Strategic Regeneration Frameworks and the Manchester City Centre Strategic Plan.*
- *The City's network of open spaces will provide all residents with good access to recreation opportunities. The River Valleys (the Irk, Medlock and Mersey) and City Parks are particularly important, and access to these resources will be improved.*
- *New development will maximise the potential of the City's transport infrastructure, in particular promoting walking, cycling and use of the public transport. The extension to the Metrolink network through the Oldham and Ashton lines will create key corridors for new development.*

Development in all parts of the City should:-

- *Make a positive contribution to neighbourhoods of choice including:-*
 - *creating well designed places that enhance or create character.*
 - *making a positive contribution to the health, safety and wellbeing of residents*
 - *considering the needs of all members of the community regardless of age, gender, disability, sexuality, religion, culture, ethnicity or income.*
 - *protect and enhance the built and natural environment.*
- *Minimise emissions, ensure efficient use of natural resources and reuse previously developed land wherever possible.*
- *Improve access to jobs, services, education and open space by being located to reduce the need to travel and provide good access to sustainable transport provision.*

10.1.13 Policy CC 6 City Centre High Density Development states:

“City Centre development will generally be high-density. It is a location where land should be used to maximise its efficiency. The appropriate scale, massing and height of development in the City Centre will significantly exceed what is appropriate elsewhere in the City.

Development will need to have regard to the Council’s approach to tall buildings (policy EN2), but any proposals which do not reflect the importance of maximising the development opportunities in the City Centre will only be supported where this accords with wider Core Strategy objectives.”

10.1.14 Policy CC 9 Design and Heritage, states:

“Design of new buildings will need to be of the highest standard in terms of appearance and function. The standards and guidance explained in other LDF policies should be the basis for the approach to design, with particular attention to be given to the City Centre context and character.”

Development in Manchester City Centre should preserve or enhance the heritage assets that have been identified, including listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled ancient monuments.

The Council will support high density and mixed use development in the City Centre, but developers must recognise the specific design challenges that must be overcome to ensure complementarity of function and form. New development must support the range of uses the Council expects in the City Centre and contribute to a coherent and integrated physical environment.”

10.1.15 Policy EN 1 Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas, states:

“All development in Manchester will be expected to follow the seven principles of urban design, as identified in national planning guidance and listed above 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 should be fully realised, particularly on major radial and orbital road and rail routes. Design and Access Statements submitted with proposals for new development must clearly detail how the proposed development addresses the design principles, reinforces and enhances the local character of that part of the City and supports the achievement of the Core Strategy Strategic Objectives.

4. Northern Character Area

The character of this area is significantly affected by the topography, with a marked increase in height moving northwards, cut by the River Irk and its tributaries. There is a finer grained, predominantly residential mix of development, broken up by open spaces and significant tree cover also linked to the local topography.

- *Developers should respond to the underlying topography and varied townscape created by the balance between built form and the tree-covered landscape.”*

10.1.16 Policy EN 2 Tall Buildings, states:

“Tall buildings are defined as buildings which are substantially taller than their neighbourhoods and/or which significantly change the skyline.

Proposals for tall buildings will be supported where it can be demonstrated that they

- *Are of excellent design quality,*
- *Are appropriately located,*
- *Contribute positively to sustainability,*

- *Contribute positively to place making, for example as a landmark, by terminating a view, or by signposting a facility of significance, and*
- *Will bring significant regeneration benefits.*

A fundamental design objective will be to ensure that tall buildings complement the City's key existing building assets and make a positive contribution to the evolution of a unique, attractive and distinctive Manchester, including to its skyline and approach views.

Suitable locations will include sites within and immediately adjacent to the City Centre with particular encouragement given to non-conservation areas and sites which can easily be served by public transport nodes

Elsewhere within Manchester tall building development will only be supported where, in addition to the requirements listed above, it can be shown to play a positive role in a coordinated place-making approach to a wider area. Suitable locations are likely to relate to existing district centres. The height of tall buildings in such locations should relate more to the local, rather than the City Centre, urban context.

By their very size tall buildings can have a significant impact on the local environment and its micro-climate. It is therefore expected that this impact be modelled and that submissions for tall buildings also include appropriate measures to create an attractive, pedestrian friendly local environment.

It will be necessary for the applicant/developer to demonstrate that proposals for tall buildings are viable and deliverable."

10.1.17 Policy EN 3 Heritage, states:

"Throughout the City, the Council will encourage development that complements and takes advantage of the distinct historic and heritage features of its districts and neighbourhoods, including those of the City Centre.

New developments must be designed so as to support the Council in preserving or, where possible, enhancing the historic environment, the character, setting and accessibility of areas and buildings of acknowledged importance, including scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings, registered parks and gardens, conservation areas and archaeological remains.

Proposals which enable the re-use of heritage assets will be encouraged where they are considered consistent with the significance of the heritage asset."

10.1.18 Policy EN 8 Adaption to Climate Change, states:

"All new development will be expected to be adaptable to climate change in terms of the design, layout, siting and function of both buildings and associated external spaces. In achieving developments which are adaptable to climate change developers should have regard to the following, although this is not an exhaustive list:

- *Minimisation of flood risk by appropriate siting, drainage, and treatment of surface areas to ensure rain water permeability*
- *Reduction in urban heat island effect through the use of Green Infrastructure such as green roofs, green walls, increased tree cover and waterways*
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- *The opportunity to provide linked and diverse green space to enhance natural habitats which will assist species adaptation.*

Developers will be permitted to use green infrastructure elements such as green roofs, green walls, street trees and waterways to contribute to compliance with CO2 mitigation under Policy EN6, subject to sufficient evidence to quantify their contribution to compliance.

10.1.19 Policy EN 9 Green Infrastructure, states:

“New development will be expected to maintain existing green infrastructure in terms of its quantity, quality and multiple function. Where the opportunity arises and in accordance with current Green Infrastructure Strategies the Council will encourage developers to enhance the quality and quantity of green infrastructure, improve the performance of its functions and create and improve linkages to and between areas of green infrastructure. Where the benefits of a proposed development are considered to outweigh the loss of an existing element of green infrastructure, the developer will be required to demonstrate how this loss will be mitigated in terms of quantity, quality, function and future management.

Key features of Manchester’s green infrastructure will include:

- *The continued development of a network of green spaces, water bodies, canals, paths and cycleways, with priority given to those parts of the City where there is an identified existing lack of open space. The Council will seek to protect existing street trees and promote new planting, particularly where this can enhance green links in the urban area.*
- *The continued maintenance and management of the Rivers Mersey and Irwell and their tributaries, for example the River Irk, River Medlock, Chorlton Platt Gore, Gatley Brook, Moston Brook and adjoining land, with regard to their multiple functions including recreation, flood management, and biodiversity.*
- *The provision of new, and improvements to the quality and accessibility of existing green infrastructure assets, to mitigate for any loss of green infrastructure as a result of development such as the Metrolink extension programme.*
- *The encouragement of green roofs, green walls, tree planting and other forms of green infrastructure to allow for the adaption to climate change in heavily urbanised areas.*
- *New green infrastructure provision should be an exemplar of best practice and innovation in terms of both its design and management.*

Local Development Frameworks

North Manchester Strategic Regeneration Framework (2012)

10.1.20 The Site is covered by the broad area that is defined within the North Manchester Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF), which defines the strategic context for the regeneration of North Manchester with key objectives that include:

- *The Strengthening of existing communities;*
- *Strengthening North Manchester's role as a residential area;*
- *The People;*
- *The Economy;*
- *The Physical Environment; and*
- *Implementation.*

Great Ducie Street Strategic Regeneration Framework (2018)

10.1.21 The Site is located within the area covered by Great Ducie Street Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF), which wraps around (but does not include) the Site, itself is the subject of a Strategic Regeneration Framework. The SRF provides the opportunity to significantly increase the density of development in this area, to something that is commensurate to the scale of development within the city centre and which is emerging around its expanded boundary.

10.1.22 The SRF aims to deliver development that focuses on Sustainability and Resilience to reduce carbon emissions and impacts on air quality, increase development densities and economic growth by promoting Density and Place-Making, it aims to front development onto the River Irwell to take advantage of the natural asset, create Active Frontages and improve Access and Movement.

Boddingtons Strategic Regeneration Framework (2015)

10.1.23 The Site is located within the Boddingtons Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF), which sits between a number of key regeneration areas, including NOMA, Strangeways and Victoria Station, on the northern edge of Manchester City Centre. The SRF aims to guide the re-development on the site, which is considered to be acceptable in planning terms.

10.1.24 The SRF indicates that the Site is appropriate to form a Gateway Location and states:

"The Study Area is located in a prominent location at the cross roads between two major arterial routes into the City Centre (Great Ducie Street and Trinity Way / New Bridge Street). This provides an opportunity for the inclusion of a landmark building to signal the arrival at Manchester City Centre."

10.1.25 The SRF sets out that the key views which it determines to reinforce the suitability of the Site for taller buildings:

- *“Approaching from the City Centre along Victoria Street*
- *Approaching along Trinity Way from the west*
- *Approaching along Great Ducie Street from the north, marking a new gateway to the City Centre.”*

10.1.26 The SRF also considers tall buildings could be accommodated on the northern edge of the Site at the junction of Dutton Street with Robert Street and Park Street as this would:

“provide a focus for future regeneration of the underdeveloped areas of ‘City Fringe’ immediately to the east. An axial vista from the Park Inn Hotel on Cheetham Hill Road along Park Street forms a strong and direct visual connection from the Green Quarter to the site through the underdeveloped areas between the two.”

10.1.27 However, the SRF sets out that tall building proposals should be assessed in line with national and local guidance and policy, with particular emphasis placed on:

- *“Landmark buildings will need to be of the highest architectural quality and have a positive relationship to the City’s skyline.*
- *Understanding any effects on the historic environment through a visual impact analysis and assessment of verified key views.*
- *They should contribute to the legibility of the area, and the provision of public space and high quality public realm”*

10.1.28 The SRF also considers the importance of landscaping schemes and public interface for the Site, in particular along the New Bridge Street and Great Ducie Street frontages, which are considered to contribute to the Sites Gateway Location due to their relationship with Manchester City Centre. As such, the SRF recommends that development of the Site aims to create a gateway to the City Centre.

Boddingtons Strategic Regeneration Framework Addendum (2019)

10.1.29 The 2019 addendum to the Boddingtons SRF sets out that development within the SRF area should take reference from existing and emerging development in the vicinity and states:

“The scale and massing of building form within the Boddingtons SRF area should respond to existing buildings in surrounding areas, to the indicative proposals contained within the Great Ducie Street SRF and to the approved Old Brewery Gardens scheme.”

10.1.30 The addendum recognises that the five tall residential buildings of the Old Brewery Gardens approval establishes a form of development along the north-eastern edge of the study area of up to 28 stories from ground level.

10.1.31 The College development will be located to the south western edges of the Boddingtons SRF study area, addressing the Great Ducie Street and New Bridge Street frontages which are positioned on a

major approach to the city centre and directly on Manchester's Inner Relief Road. These development frontages are considered to provide key opportunities:

"In the event that the College does not progress with later phases of development and/or does not require all of the land available for educational use, there may be scope to deliver other development on the site between the College and the existing Travelodge and (proposed) Multi Storey Car Park on Francis Street. In that instance, there may be opportunities for delivery of a taller building on this site, addressing new connections north east across the site from the River Irwell, subject to a robust justification as referred to above."

10.1.32 The SRF addendum recognises the importance of opportunities to re-establish connections through the SRF area to the wider area created by the approved landscape scheme for the Old Brewery Gardens and states:

"Developments should assist in mitigating the poor quality pedestrian environment currently created by the proximity of the Study Area to both Great Ducie Street and New Bridge Street through planting and other environmental improvements commensurate with their role as a gateway into the Study Area and on a key route into the City Centre, with a focus on introducing high quality frontages with attractive uses to encourage full integration of the Study Area with the City Centre and to draw people in."

ⁱ Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2016) *Planning Practice Guidance* [accessed at <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk>]