



Hexagon Tower, Manchester

Planning Statement

On behalf of Trinity Investment Management

March 2021

Contents

1	Introduction	2
	Pre-Application Consultation.....	4
	Structure of our Statement.....	4
2	The Application Site	5
	Site Location and Characteristics	5
	Planning History	6
3	The Proposed Development	8
	Description of the Application Proposal	8
	Hexagon Tower and its Current Condition.....	8
	Façade Repair Strategies Explored	12
	Proposed Elevation and Window Treatment	15
4	Planning Policy Context	16
	National Planning Policy	16
	Conclusion in relation to the NPPF	19
	Development Plan.....	19
	Other Material Considerations	23
	Summary	23
5	Planning Assessment	25
	Principle of the Development	25
	Design	26
	Heritage.....	27
	Sustainable Construction and Building Efficiency.....	30
	Summary	31
6	Summary and Conclusions	32
	Benefits of the Application Scheme	32

Table Index

Table 1.1	Application Documentation.....	3
Table 1.2	Application Drawings	3
Table 2.1	Planning History.....	6

Figure Index

Figure 2.1	Site Location and Surrounding Area	5
Figure 3.1	Hexagon Tower from Bottomley Side	9
Figure 3.2	Disrupted Visual Uniformity of Hexagon Tower	11
Figure 3.3	Existing Eastern Elevation	12

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Q+A Planning Ltd (Q+A) to support a full planning application submitted on behalf of Trinity Investment Management. The application seeks consent for the over-cladding and window replacement of Hexagon Tower, Crumpsall Vale, Blackley, Manchester M9 8GQ.
- 1.2 The purpose of this Statement is to provide details of the application proposals; describe the site and surroundings; identify key benefits of the application; review the planning policy framework; and to consider the overall 'planning balance' of the scheme. It will demonstrate that there is no reason why planning permission should not be granted for the sustainable form of development that is proposed.
- 1.3 The application scheme will deliver a range of benefits. These are considered in more detail elsewhere in this Statement and other accompanying reports. In summary, they include:
 - The de-bonded cladding represents a serious health and safety risk due to the increased likelihood of a significant piece of material falling from the building. The proposed over-cladding will fully remove the risk of unsecure cladding;
 - A holistic approach to remediating the progressive delamination of the building's façade and poor performing single glazed windows, rather than expensive reactionary 'patch repair';
 - Improving the visual appearance of the building whilst preserving key features. The colour and tone of the over-cladding has been selected to minimise the degree of change and to maintain the uniform appearance of the building in longer range views;
 - Significantly increasing the building's energy efficient performance;
 - The installation of an A1 rated fire cladding system; and
 - Safeguarding the long-term viability of a non-designated heritage asset.
- 1.4 Detailed research and investigations have been carried out by a professional team of consultants on behalf of the Applicant. Various documents are submitted in support of the planning application, in accordance with the relevant national and local validation requirements, and these are summarised in Table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1 Application Documentation

Document	Author
Planning Statement	Q+A Planning Ltd
Design and Access Statement	Corstorphine + Wright Architects
Heritage Statement	Graham Ives Heritage Planning
Deterioration of Cladding Pre-Planning Report	Mott MacDonald
Energy Statement	KJ Tait Engineers

- 1.5 Table 1.2 below lists plans that have been prepared by Corstorphine + Wright Architects to accompany the application.

Table 1.2 Application Drawings

Plans	Drawing Reference
Site Location Plan	0200-P-00
Existing Floor Plan Level 00	0210-P-00
Existing Floor Plan Level 01	0211-P-00
Existing Floor Plan Level 02	0212-P-00
Existing Floor Plan Typical	0213-P-00
Existing Roof Plan	0214-P-00
Existing East Elevation	0215-P-00
Existing South Elevation	0216-P-00
Existing West Elevation	0217-P-00
Existing North Elevation	0218-P-00
Proposed Floor Plan Level 00	0310-P-00
Proposed Floor Plan Level 01	0311-P-00
Proposed Floor Plan Level 02	0312-P-00
Proposed Floor Plan Typical	0313-P-00
Proposed Roof Plan	0314-P-00
Proposed East Elevation	0315-P-00
Proposed South Elevation (Coloured)	0316-P-00
Proposed West Elevation (Coloured)	0317-P-00

Proposed North Elevation	0318-P-00
Proposed Bay Elevation 01 (Coloured)	0320-P-00
Proposed Bay Elevation 02 (Coloured)	0321-P-00
Proposed Bay Elevation 03 (Coloured)	0322-P-00

Pre-Application Consultation

- 1.6 Prior to the submission of the planning application, the applicant and its consultants met with the Council (via MS Teams) to discuss the proposed development and the rationale for the works.
- 1.7 The pre-application exercise helpfully clarified the Council's position in respect of the heritage status of the building, confirming that Hexagon Tower has some heritage value and that it is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset.
- 1.8 Subsequent correspondence with Historic England confirms that the bar for statutory listing is very high for post-war buildings, particularly ones built as late as the 1970s. It was also noted that further blocks were planned as part of Hexagon Tower's development in the 1970s, and never built, therefore the current building represents a partial manifestation of the whole proposed design. Notwithstanding, in view of the Council's interest in the structure this application is supported with a Heritage Statement.
- 1.9 The submitted documentation seeks to take full account of the matters that were raised by the Council and other statutory consultees prior to the submission of the planning application.

Structure of our Statement

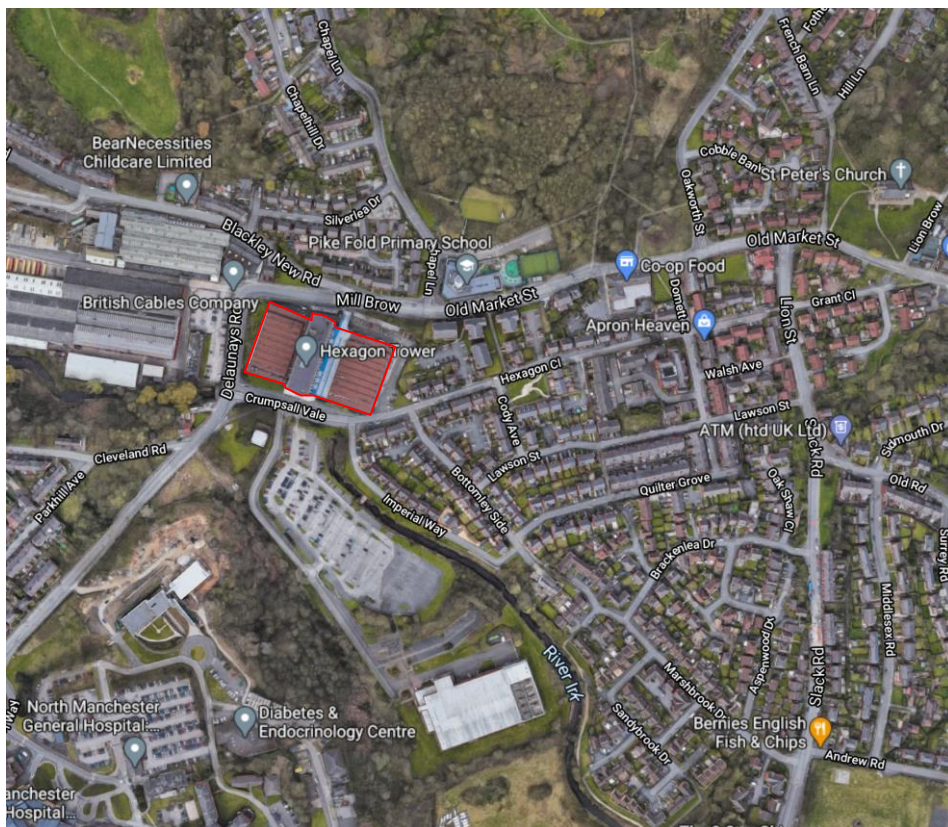
- 1.10 The remainder of the Statement is structured as follows:
 - Section 2 provides details of the application site, surroundings, and relevant planning history;
 - Section 3 provides details of the proposed development, the applicant, the general design principles, and concepts which have been applied, and describes the key benefits of the application scheme;
 - Section 4 sets out the planning policy context, having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the development plan and other material considerations;
 - Section 5 considers the planning considerations relevant to the determination of the application, and considers the scheme's 'planning balance' and public benefits as required under paragraph 197 of the NPPF; and
 - Section 6 summarises our conclusions.

2 The Application Site

Site Location and Characteristics

- 2.1 The application site comprises Hexagon Tower, a multi-storey building at Crumpsall Vale in Blackley, Manchester and its adjoining car parking and servicing areas.
- 2.2 Hexagon Tower is a purpose-built research and development laboratory building, including supporting office use. It comprises a main basement plus 13 storey tower which incorporates a double height ground floor with a mezzanine, with associated 2-storey podium block annexes ('machine halls') to the east and west sides. The building dates from the 1970s and is of reinforced concrete construction, with external mosaic tile cladding furnishing the elevations of the tower and both annexes. The tower was originally constructed as the research, development and production centre for Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI) and is now a specialist science and technology facility, also incorporating other uses, including an NHS clinic.

Figure 2.1 Site Location and Surrounding Area



Source: Google Maps

- 2.3 The site is accessed from both Old Mill Brow and Crumpsall Vale. Car parking and building access are via the service road to the side / rear of the building. Visitor and staff parking is provided at the main car park, located to the south / south east of Hexagon Tower, on the opposite side of Crumpsall Vale, though there is also a smaller area of car parking at the north east corner of the application site. Crumpsall Vale is accessed via Delaunay's Road with links to the A664 Rochdale Road and A576 Middleton Road.
- 2.4 The surrounding area is of mixed use with parcels of new build housing to the east and a large light industrial area located to the west. The site lies approximately 0.5km north east of North Manchester General Hospital.
- 2.5 Whilst the site is in Flood Zone 3 and thus has a high probability of flooding, the proposed development does not affect this (as confirmed during pre-app). As previously described, the Council considers the building to be a non-designated heritage asset, though it is not statutorily listed or in a Conservation Area.

Planning History

- 2.6 Available online planning history at Table 2.1 confirms the sites longstanding use as a research and development facility (Class E).

Table 2.1 Planning History

Application Ref.	Description	Decision and Date
F03148	Plant wing extension to wing of the research department building	Granted 08.09.75
F06218	Alterations to form offices to existing factory	Granted 25.07.77
F06000	Extensions to existing solvent store and transformer compound	Granted 11.02.77
F08804	Phase one of re-development of chemical works	Granted 26.07.78
F08871	Details of proposed Research Laboratories library and internal access road	Granted 26.07.78
F10661	Single-storey extension to accommodate discharge of chemicals from 40-gallon drum to plant in main building	Granted 26.04.79
19366	Erection of a solvent pumping unit with blast cubicles and control room.	Granted 26.07.83
32026	Elevational alterations to form new windows and door openings in connection with the conversion of the machine hall to an office and Laboratory testing facility.	Granted 29.07.98
046784/FO/NORTH1/94	Additional glazed windows to east facing elevation of east machine hall of Hexagon Tower and installation of two discharge flues through hall roof.	Granted 27.01.95

050996/FO/NORTH1/96	Construction of a bottled gasses and bulk liquid nitrogen storage facility at north end of Hexagon Tower	Granted 23.12.96
052580/FO/NORTH1/97	Office windows to be fitted to ground floor level as part of refurbishment works (west Machine Hall)	Granted 02.09.97
054285/FO/NORTH1/98	Elevational alterations to East Machine Hall and erection of equipment store	Granted 08.06.98
081817/FO/2007/N1	Revised car parking layout with 146 additional car parking spaces (including 16 disabled spaces) and 40 cycle spaces.	Granted 14.05.07
089759/FO/2009/N1	Elevational alterations to enclose existing external lobby area.	Granted 13.06.09
090255/FO/2009/N1	Reconfiguration of existing roof top car park to provide an additional 23 car parking spaces and alterations to existing pedestrian crossing on Crumpsall Vale.	Granted 31.07.09
110303/FO/2015/N1	Installation of 4 no. energy extract fans to the roof, following the removal of existing.	Granted 15.12.15
117019/FO/2017	Change of use of seventh floor (Class B1) to form satellite Renal Dialysis Unit (Class D1) including ground floor entrance works, welcome structure and bin store together with reconfiguration of existing parking. (north elevation entrance)	Granted 11.09.17
119548/JO/2018	Application to vary condition number 2 (specified plans) attached to previously approved permission 117019/FO/2017 to allow for changes to the entrance canopy.	Granted 30.05.18
120352/FO/2018	Resurfacing the flat roof areas of the east and west machine hall parts of the building together with the installation of replacement cladding to the parapets of the roof and replacement glazing in the east and west machine hall wings of the building. (ground and first floor powder coated aluminium windows anthracite grey)	Granted 23.07.18

3 The Proposed Development

Description of the Application Proposal

3.1 The description of the proposed development reads as follows:

'Proposed over-cladding and window replacement at Hexagon Tower.'

3.2 The external façade of Hexagon Tower is deteriorating in a progressive manner leading to expanses of the mini-mosaic tiling that covers the entirety of the solid portions of the building to delaminate and sheer off, presenting as a clear health and safety issue.

3.3 It is understood from works previously undertaken that it has not been possible to secure and safeguard the existing mosaic tiles in some areas. As a result, a solution focusing on their retention and exposure is no longer viable. The development proposals seek to sensitively overclad the building in anodised aluminium whilst retaining and securing the existing mosaics beneath.

3.4 Furthermore, the applicant intends to improve the buildings current poor sustainability and energy performance. Integral to this is the proposal to replace the original single glazed windows with a new full height aluminium framed powder coated system.

3.5 The remainder of this Section sets the context of the proposals, describing the current challenges of the existing elevation treatment and how attempts to arrest this decline have proved unsuccessful.

Hexagon Tower and its Current Condition

3.6 As previously described, Hexagon Tower was purpose built in the early 1970s for ICI as a research and development centre, one of four originally planned, designed by architect Richard Seifert as a multipurpose laboratory space. The building incorporates 17 independent vertical risers on each side with floor and ceiling ducts between them and a clear floor span with no internal columns, providing flexibility of floorplate design and layout.

3.7 The building is of a tower and podium configuration, with the podium containing a machine hall. The tower is constructed in an innovative and considered manner that marries an architectural language developed by R. Seifert & Partners from the early 1960s with the requirements of the brief provided by ICI. The tower is formed of pre-cast concrete façade modules and is sculptural in form that includes deep voids which when stacked together create vertical services distribution routes. Precast concrete beams are then laid between modules facing one another on the east and west facades to create column free space with horizontal service routes formed in the ceilings and floors.

- 3.8 The east and west façades are highly repetitive and sculptural with deep reveals around the windows and are reminiscent of buildings developed by Seifert & Partners at the now listed Space House, Holborn and Centre Point, St Giles during the early 1960s. The north and south façades are formed in a characteristically sculptural and visually striking manner as a 'bookend', an approach that was also utilised at the practice's earlier Tolworth Tower, Kingston. The solid façade elements are clad entirely in mini-mosaic tiles. As you move further away from the building the small format of the mosaic tiles means that they are no longer visually read as individual tiles, instead as part of the building as a whole (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1 Hexagon Tower from Bottomley Side



- 3.9 Although no longer owned or occupied by ICI, the building is still utilised for a purpose close to the original design intent, as a specialist science and technology facility. As it approaches 50 years since the completion of the building the external cladding treatment has been progressively failing for several years, to the extent that elements of the façade are delaminating presenting a clear health and safety risk.
- 3.10 Trinity Investment Management (the applicant) have an ongoing and rigorous maintenance / checking regime to ensure that the health and safety risks are appropriately managed. This regime is not a permanent resolution to the problem, with the applicant keen to establish an appropriate and sustainable solution as soon as possible.

- 3.11 Historical analysis of the cladding has taken place by Mott MacDonald. This includes monitoring the deterioration of the mosaic tiles to the external cladding which has highlighted the increased potential for large sections to fall from height. During testing between 2014 and 2019 it was also recorded that deterioration had occurred progressively across the building's façade, rather than in isolated events at specific locations.
- 3.12 Numerous areas of spalled concrete were observed by Mott MacDonald, primarily on the eastern and western elevations. Subsequently, leachate staining is visible on the concrete substructure and around approximately 60% of the window reveal soffits, suggesting that the detailing or sealing on the cladding panels at these locations was not adequate.
- 3.13 It is likely that the ingress of water behind the cladding, leading to expansive freeze-thaw action during the winter months, is the main cause of tile debonding. The presence of sub-surface cracks within the concrete reduces the strength of the material and therefore provides an accelerated path for water ingress along the interface. Freeze-thaw action is likely to lead to coalescence of the cracks within this weakened plane, allowing further subsequent water ingress. The pattern of damage, by which the most significant deterioration has occurred on the southern face of the building, suggests that thermal movements may also be a contributing factor to debonding.
- 3.14 Several other defects have been observed which are likely to contribute to the rate of deterioration by allowing water to penetrate behind the cladding. These include:
- Cracks through the cladding;
 - Areas of missing tiles;
 - Degraded sealant between panels and around the windows; and
 - Degraded flashing.
- 3.15 It is understood that Hexagon Tower is not unique in this issue, and that other mosaic clad buildings have experienced similar challenges where alternative means of cladding the façade have had to be sought. Sussex Heights in Brighton was similarly mosaic clad, where because of persistent delamination a planning application to render the building was approved in September 2017.
- 3.16 Where large panels of tiles are missing, or have been obviously 'patch repaired', the visual uniformity of the building is clearly disrupted. Missing tile panels can be read very clearly, and replacement tiles are not weathered in the same manner as the rest of the tiling meaning that they contrast visually (Figure 3.2).
- 3.17 Where panel joints have also been replaced it has often been with white silicone rather than grey, as original. Again, these white movement joints can be read very clearly and disrupt the Seifert design intent for a uniformity of finish to the precast panels (Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2 Disrupted Visual Uniformity of Hexagon Tower



- 3.18 Mott MacDonald conclude that larger areas of de-bonded cladding represent a serious health and safety risk due to the increased likelihood of a significant piece of material falling from the building. It is suggested that any panel with a de-bonded area greater than 30% of the panel be considered high risk.
- 3.19 Furthermore, the original single glazing across the building is poorly performing, and a long-term solution is required that maintains its historical value. The development proposals therefore also incorporate replacement windows.
- 3.20 The glazing as existing has relatively slim profiles that are painted black, designed to maximise the light and aspect of the glazing provided across the building. The ceiling plane that has been introduced across floor plates cuts through the glazing line, thus reducing the amount of light to the floorplate, noting that light higher on an elevation penetrates deeper on the floorplate.

- 3.21 The disruption to the original glazing on the east and west facades is a transom at a relatively low height, creating a small visibility panel below. Thought to have been introduced in order to reduce the size of the glazing pane to enable easier installation from within the building. The glazing is also tinted which is dark grey in colour. It is understood that the shape around the window reveals is based on the shape of a 'Benzene Ring' to reflect the nature of the operations of the building's original owner / occupier, ICI (Figure 3.3).

Figure 3.3 Existing Eastern Elevation



- 3.22 The slight tint across the original glazing is illustrated at Figure 3.3 and this has tried to be replicated on replacement windows with an applied film which has presented issues in achieving consistency.

Façade Repair Strategies Explored

- 3.23 Longer-term remedial strategies have been explored by the structural engineers (Mott MacDonald). These repair options include:
- Mechanical fixing;
 - Reinforced coatings; and
 - Vacuum assisted grouting.
- 3.24 There are major disadvantages to the retention of the exiting façade by any one, or a combination of these approaches, as outlined below. Principally, for each approach consideration would have to be given to the final appearance of the building, as existing areas of deterioration would not be addressed.

- 3.25 A brief discussion on each method is provided below, including commentary from Mott MacDonald on the options of either installing replacement cladding / render or over-cladding.

Mechanical Fixing

- 3.26 Mechanical fixing comprises the installation of fixings through the cladding panels and into the structural concrete beneath to retain the panels against the building. Evidently, multiple fixings would be required per panel, supported with an expanded metal mesh to retain areas between the fixings.
- 3.27 This method could be applied to 'restrain' isolated areas but would not prevent water ingress and so the cladding would still de-bond further, and the spalling of smaller areas of cladding from between fixing points would remain a possibility.
- 3.28 The precast façade panels are faced in mini-mosaic tiles with a grey grout / substrate fixing the tiles to the precast concrete panels. Due to the nature of their installation this in turn allows further water to penetrate, further exacerbating the spalling damage. In addition to this it is difficult to know how many voids have been created by this damaging process, thus increasing the safety concerns as it is impossible to tell at what stage further blocks of tiles may completely dislodge without forewarning.
- 3.29 It is considered that this approach would not be desirable due to the pronounced visibility of the fixings and metal mesh on the surface of the cladding, and the fact that it does not prevent further deterioration simply holds loose material.

Reinforced Coatings

- 3.30 The application of a reinforced coating would likely have to be used in combination with another approach to secure larger areas of de-bonded cladding.
- 3.31 Typically, these comprise an initial layer of coating, followed by a glass reinforced scrim (gauze), which is then over-coated with a different colour topcoat. If the base coat is applied too thinly the scrim cannot be fixed in, and if the topcoat is applied too thinly the scrim will show. Therefore, achieving uniformity of finish across the building would be very challenging and unlikely to be sympathetic. Mott MacDonald advise that this approach is unlikely to restrain larger areas across the building and would require periodic maintenance.

Vacuum Assisted Grouting

- 3.32 The basis of this method is to create a sealed system to allow the air to be extracted from the void behind the de-bonded cladding panel and introduce a resin to the void under low pressure to form a bond between the rear of the cladding panel and the structural concrete.

- 3.33 An initial trial was undertaken on the building in 2018, which confirmed that satisfactory results can be achieved. However, it was determined that this technique can only be employed in areas where there is an existing void behind the cladding panel. De-bonding of the cladding would be expected to continue in other areas at a progressive rate where it has not been treated. Mott MacDonald advise that additional repairs would be required at regular intervals, resulting in additional costs and disruption similar to the other options for retention of the existing cladding.
- 3.34 Whilst vacuum assisted grouting could be supplemented by mechanical fixing in order to potentially minimise the need for ongoing repairs, this would result in there being visible fixings across the building creating an overall poor final appearance. Grouting of the void between the concrete and the adhesive render would also not prevent the spalling of tiles or the cladding bedding layer, the risk of spalling material therefore would not be fully eliminated.
- 3.35 It is apparent that this is not a long term, sustainable solution to the problem.

Replacement Cladding

- 3.36 Removal of the existing tiles to allow the installation of a similar system or rendering the exterior of the building whilst providing an aesthetic benefit will not provide an opportunity to improve the efficiency of the building. Longer term the replacement system will be expected to eventually de-bond and require future maintenance and replacement. The controlled removal and disposal of the existing cladding presents as avoidable harm to the significance of the heritage asset.

Over-Cladding

- 3.37 The installation of a new modern fire compliant cladding system can be employed without the requirement to remove the existing mosaic tiling. The fixing used to support the new cladding system would be anchored into the structural concrete. Over-cladding would be expected to prevent water ingress and would also provide a less variable range of temperature exposure by limiting direct sunlight. Mott MacDonald advise that both of these factors would be expected to contribute to a reduction in the rate of additional debonding of the existing cladding.
- 3.38 Over-cladding of the building is considered to provide the greatest opportunity to improve the appearance of the building as the installation can be undertaken to all areas within a single programme of works. This being the case, the disruption to occupants of the building is expected to be minimised due to the avoidance of additional cycles of works (which, as described previously, is expected for retention of the existing cladding).
- 3.39 Over-cladding was therefore presented as a viable solution to take forward in design development since it would provide the greatest opportunity to improve the appearance of the building whilst providing a longer guarantee period.

Proposed Elevation and Window Treatment

- 3.40 In the context of the above analysis, the proposed over-cladding of the precast panels at Hexagon Tower should therefore:
- Have a uniform treatment of materials;
 - Subtly shimmer; and
 - Have sharpness and definition in its form.
- 3.41 As previously described, the mosaic tiles are fixed to the existing façade in large scale panels, the joints are visible and reflect the structural grid of the building. These visible lines will be reflected in the new panels where possible.
- 3.42 The proposed over-cladding will be a natural anodised aluminium panel, selected to respect the original colour scheme and texture of the mosaics. The resultant effect will be a subtle shimmer across the building, as per the original mini mosaics, which is key to people's experience of the building.
- 3.43 With regards to the replacement glazing, due to the practical issues of installing full height windows internally, the window design has been reviewed to include an appropriate height for a new transom. The replacement windows will need to be transported into and up the building via the existing goods lift, thus allowing for a maximum pane size of 2.4m in height. By raising the existing transom in height to circa 900mm from finished floor level, this will allow for 2no. glazed panels to be transported and installed internally.
- 3.44 Further details are provided elsewhere at Section 5 and within the submitted Design and Access Statement.

4 Planning Policy Context

- 4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act and Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 confirm that planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.2 Planning policy comprises a series of national planning documents including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2019) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) alongside any relevant policies and guidance.
- 4.3 In this section of the statement, and given the requirements of Section 38(6) identified above, we summarise relevant policy, first at the national level as set out in the NPPF, and second, as contained in the adopted development plan. In the following section of this report, we evaluate the application scheme against the key development plan policies and other material considerations identified below.

National Planning Policy

- 4.4 The NPPF (2019) is a key material consideration in all planning decisions and sets out the overarching policy priorities for the planning system against which local plans will be prepared and decisions made on planning applications.
- 4.5 The document notes at paragraph 7 that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Further, at paragraph 11 it notes that plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development which for decision-taking means:
- *approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; and*
 - *where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*
 - *The application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
 - *Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.*
- 4.6 In terms of decision-making, the document advises at paragraph 38 that local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive, creative way. They should work with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area and in particular, approving applications for sustainable development where possible.

- 4.7 Paragraphs 39-46 encourage early engagement and pre-application discussions to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning system and outcomes for the community.
- 4.8 Over a number of chapters, the NPPF considers how the Government's objectives will be achieved. Of relevance to the current proposal are chapters 6, 12, 14 and 16 which are discussed in more detail below.

Section 6 – Building a strong, competitive economy

- 4.9 Paragraph 80 advises that planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand, and adapt. National policy advances that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, considering both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.
- 4.10 In addition, paragraph 82 directs that planning decisions should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors. This includes making provision for clusters or networks of knowledge and data-driven, creative or high technology industries.

Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places

- 4.11 Paragraph 124 advises that the creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.
- 4.12 Paragraph 127 advises that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:
- *'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;*
 - *Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
 - *Are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change;*
 - *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;*
 - *Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development and support local facilities and transport networks; and*
 - *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.*

- 4.13 Section 12 goes on to state that design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals. It acknowledges that early discussion between applicants, the local planning authority and local community about the design and style of emerging schemes is important for clarifying expectations and reconciling local and commercial interests.

Section 14 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

- 4.14 Section 14 outlines that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk. It should help to: *'shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.'*
- 4.15 In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should expect new development to:
- *Comply with any development plan policies on local requirements for decentralised energy supply unless it can be demonstrated by the applicant, having regard to the type of development involved and its design, that this is not feasible or viable; and*
 - *Take account of landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption.'*

Section 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

- 4.16 Section 16 of the Framework considers conserving and enhancing the historic environment at paragraphs 184 to 202. It distinguishes between two main types of heritage assets: designated heritage assets and non-designated heritage assets.
- 4.17 The Framework defines 'heritage assets', in Annex 2, as:
- 'A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage assets include designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).'*
- 4.18 Paragraphs 189 to 192 deal with the general development of proposals which will have an effect on heritage assets. Paragraph 190 requires the LPA to identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.
- 4.19 Paragraph 192 requires LPA's to take account of the following when determining applications:

- *‘the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- *the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- *the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness’.*

4.20 The Framework defines heritage ‘significance’, in Annex 2, as:

‘The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.’

4.21 In accordance with paragraph 197, the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

4.22 As previously stated, the significance of the building is recognised by the Council and as such it is considered a non-designated heritage. Full consideration of the significance of the building and preparation of an NPPF compliant heritage statement is included as part of the suite of application documents.

Conclusion in relation to the NPPF

4.23 National policy places a firm emphasis on the need to support economic growth, taking account of local business needs and makes clear that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Planning practice guidance stresses the importance of good design, advocating that planning should drive up standards across all forms of development. These factors weigh heavily in favour of approving the scheme and being able to arrest the continuing failure of the existing elevation treatment.

Development Plan

Manchester Core Strategy

4.24 The development plan for Manchester comprises the adopted Core Strategy and Proposals Map and extant policies of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP).

4.25 The Core Strategy covers a period of 15 years from 2012 to 2027, describing Manchester today and outlines the Council’s vision for the City. This vision is underpinned by a number of spatial objectives, in particular in relation to heritage impacts and the need for a diverse economy:

- S01 (Spatial Principles): Provide a framework within which the sustainable development of the city can contribute to halting climate change.

- S02 (Economy): Support the further improvement of the city's economic performance and spread the growth benefits across the city.
- S06 (Environment): Protect and enhance both the natural and built environment of the city and ensure the sustainable use of natural resources, in order to mitigate and adapt to climate change, support biodiversity and wildlife, improve air, water and land quality, recreational opportunities and provide networks of high-quality green infrastructure, ensuring that the city is inclusive and attractive to residents, workers, investors and visitors.

4.26 Relevant policies applicable to the proposed development are identified below:

Policy SP1 – Spatial Principles

4.27 Policy SP1 confirms that 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; and
- Protect and enhance the built and natural environment.

4.28 Moreover, Policy SP1 emphasises the requirement of all development to minimise emissions, ensure an efficient use of natural resources and reuse previously developed land wherever possible.

Policy EC1 – Employment and Economic Growth in Manchester

4.29 Policy EC1 advocates the importance of improving existing employment premises and recognises the growth of 'knowledge-based industries', including digital and creative sectors, financial and business services, biotechnology, engineering, and environmental technologies.

4.30 Development proposals should have regard to climate change resilience demonstrating how CO₂ emissions will be minimised with an aim of zero carbon emissions, through energy efficiency, renewable energy and contributing to low and zero carbon decentralised energy infrastructure.

4.31 Moreover, Policy EC1 requires design proposals to make the best possible use of a site or building in terms of efficient use of space, ultimately enhancing the sense of place of the wider area, minimising impacts on adjacent uses and considers the needs of users of the site or building.

Policy EC2 – Existing Employment Space

4.32 The Council will seek to retain and enhance existing employment space and sites.

Policy CC9 – Design and Heritage

- 4.33 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 policies should be the basis for the approach to design. Development in Manchester should preserve or enhance the heritage assets that have been identified, including listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled ancient monuments.

Policy EC4 – North Manchester

- 4.34 Whilst the city centre is the focus for the city's commercial activity, there are important locations for economic development beyond. Policy EC4 confirms that north Manchester is expected to provide approximately 14ha of employment land around Strangeways, Collyhurst and Cheetham Hill. The district centre of Harpurhey and Cheetham offer opportunities for mixed use proposals.

Policy EN1 – Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas

- 4.35 All development in Manchester will be expected to follow the seven principles of urban design, having 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.
- 4.36 Design and Access Statements 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.
- 4.37 Within the 'Northern Character Area' (where the application site lies), Policy EN1 confirms that the character of the area is significantly affected by 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.

Policy EN2 – Tall Buildings

- 4.38 Within Policy EN2, tall buildings are defined as buildings which are substantially taller than their neighbourhoods or significantly change the skyline. 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.

- 4.39 Policy EN2 does not specifically address proposals relating to existing buildings, instead it is centred predominantly on the development of new tall buildings. The supporting policy justification notes that tall buildings by their very nature can dominate the street scene and be highly visible over long distances. The Council advises the importance of ensuring that tall buildings are designed to the highest quality, both in terms of their appearance and their impact on the functioning of surrounding space.

Policy EN3 – Heritage

- 4.40 Policy EN3 confirms that the Council will encourage development that complements and takes advantage of the distinct historic and heritage features. 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, conservation areas and archaeological remains.
- 4.41 Proposals which enable the continued use / re-use of heritage assets will be encouraged where they are considered consistent with the significance of the asset.

Policy EN4 – Reducing CO2 Emissions by Enabling Low and Zero Carbon Development

- 4.42 Policy EN4 establishes the importance of ensuring Manchester's development is set within the context of mitigating the impacts of climate change and adapting to its effects on the local environment. All development must therefore follow the principle of the 'Energy Hierarchy' being designed:
- To reduce the need for energy through design features that provide passive heating, natural lighting and cooling;
 - To reduce the need for energy through energy efficient features such as improved insulation and glazing;
 - To meet residual energy requirements through the use of low or zero carbon energy generating technologies.
- 4.43 Wherever possible new development and retrofit projects must be designed in a manner that allows advantages to be taken of opportunities for low and zero carbon energy supplies. Policy EN4 goes further by advocating that retrofit projects ought to be used as a mechanism to help improve energy efficiencies on existing buildings.
- 4.44 Moreover, the Council expects the use of building materials with low embodied carbon on new development and refurbishment schemes.

Policy EN6 – Target Framework for CO2 Reductions from Low or Zero Carbon Energy Supplies

- 4.45 Development involving the substantial improvements to an existing building will be expected to meet minimum targets on Building Regulations Part L, where viable.

Policy EN8 – Adaptation to Climate Change

- 4.46 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 considering developments which are adaptable to climate change due consideration of the need to control overheating of buildings through passive design.

Other Material Considerations

Guide to Development in Manchester SPD (April 2007)

- 4.47 A high-quality environment is created by buildings which reflect their purpose and respect the place in which they are located. Each new development should be designed having full regard to its context and the character of the area. The SPD advises that this should be demonstrated in planning submissions by way of design statements and where appropriate, visualisations / photomontages.
- 4.48 The SPD further assists in design development by commenting that building legibility through design is an important element. Vistas enable individuals to locate key buildings and therefore the primary face of buildings should lead the eye along important vistas. Pertinently, views to important buildings should be promoted in new developments and enhanced by alterations to existing buildings where the opportunity arises.
- 4.49 As previously described, the current dangerous and unsustainable condition of the cladding presents as an opportunity to enhance Hexagon Tower, whilst recognising its status as a non-designated heritage asset. The proposed new elevation treatment safeguards the future sustainability of Hexagon Tower as a heritage asset but fundamentally does not detract from the building's legibility as a key landmark feature within the area.

Summary

- 4.50 This section has identified a series of development plan documents and other material considerations, including national policy, to be considered in the determination of this application.
- 4.51 The key issues insofar as they are relevant to the determination of the application are as follows:
- Principle of development;
 - Design;
 - Heritage; and
 - Sustainable construction and energy efficiency.

- 4.52 In the remainder of this Statement, with cross reference to policies and other supporting documentation where appropriate, we explain how these planning issues are addressed and why the application is entirely consistent with the development plan and is supported by persuasive material considerations through the NPPF and other (public) benefits.
- 4.53 A full assessment of the schemes compliance with policy, is carried out in the following section.

5 Planning Assessment

5.1 The impacts of the development have been thoroughly considered in a series of studies and reports which form part of the application. Taking into account the development plan and the national planning policy context outlined in Section 4, we regard the key issues relevant to the determination of the application are as follows:

- Principle of the development;
- Design;
- Heritage; and
- Sustainable construction and building efficiency.

5.2 We summarise the scheme's effect in relation to each below.

Principle of the Development

5.3 National policy prescribes that planning decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses have the confidence to invest, expand and adapt in. Significant weight should be placed upon the need to support economic growth and productivity. In determining applications, Local Planning Authorities are required to recognise the specific locational requirements of different sectors, including enhancing provision for clusters of knowledge and high technology driven industries.

5.4 Hexagon Tower offers unrivalled accommodation as a specialist science and technology facility, home to several innovative companies who thrive in a research and development environment that is equipped with modern laboratories and office premises (including Lubrizol, Lonza and Intertek). Hexagon Tower forms part of a national network of science parks, covering over 1.7 million sq. ft with over 200 businesses, it is one of the UK's largest science park networks. Hexagon Tower hosts regular technical and social events that brings together the scientific community and business leaders.

5.5 The proposed alterations to the external appearance reflect a drive from the applicant to significantly improve the 'public face' of the tower, befitting of the status and important work of its occupiers and considerable internal investment that has taken place in recent years. Evidently, the application fully accords with the provisions of Policy EC1 which specifically advocates the importance of improving existing employment premises within Manchester, recognising the growth of knowledge-based industries and their wider contribution.

5.6 Notwithstanding the above, the existing mini mosaics are progressively deteriorating. This has been observed since at least 2014 and has been the subject of several investigations and analysis. It is likely that water ingress is the primary cause of debonding and sub-surface cracks within the concrete is accelerating this process. A defect plan is submitted in support of the application which illustrates the advancing extent of the damage on each elevation.

- 5.7 The de-bonded cladding represents a serious health and safety risk due to the increased likelihood of material sheering from the building. The southern elevation in particular has several panels with multiple defects, and this is the principal pedestrian entrance into the tower.
- 5.8 Numerous remedial measures have been considered by the project team over the course of several years, each of which has been discounted. In the context of the above, the principle of installing a new over-cladding system and replacement windows is clearly acceptable though recognised to be subject to the detailed material considerations outlined below.

Design

- 5.9 As explained elsewhere within this Statement, the design intent of the proposed over-cladding is of paramount importance to the success of the scheme, particularly in view of the building's designation as a non-designated heritage asset. The heritage significance of the building and extent of harm is summarised elsewhere within this report.
- 5.10 The proposed cladding panels are designed to reflect the structural grid of the building. The effect in visual terms will be the installation of a bespoke brushed anodised aluminium system that will provide enhanced definition and a 'crispness' across each elevation. The visible joint lines of the building will be reflected in the proposed cladding panels, providing a betterment to the existing with the replacement of the unsympathetic white silicone jointing.
- 5.11 Due to the bespoke nature of the product the cladding has limitations on the size of panels that can be produced and as a result, an additional joint line is proposed on the principal façades around the windows. The northern and southern elevations will be comprised of a standard panel size with accentuated joint lines that will align as close as possible to the existing joint lines within the mosaics.
- 5.12 In selecting the proposed over-cladding material, special attention has been paid to the original colour scheme and texture of the mosaics. Aside from the obvious failings in the mosaic system, decades of pollution and weathering has naturally dulled the sharpness of the building when viewed in long range views. It is however apparent from studying more sheltered parts of the tower, that a subtle shine and shimmer would have played an important part in people's experience of the building.
- 5.13 With this in mind, the inspiration for using a natural anodised aluminium has been derived from the existing silver / grey tones found within the mini mosaic tiles. Illustrative views contained within the Design and Access Statement provide indicative views of the authentic metallic sheen / lustre of the aluminium panels and how the new cladding system will assist in redefining the design intent of Seifert & Partners.
- 5.14 The proposed pre-coated anodised aluminium embodies other important benefits that when considered in the context of the scheme represent compelling reasons for selecting this type of product. These include being A1 fire rated and a UV colour resistance with no risk of surface finish fading.

- 5.15 With regards to the windows, the original glazing is single pane, poorly performing and has therefore reached the end of its natural life. There are recurring issues with water ingress and over recent years several windows have failed and become damaged. Isolated replacement on an ad-hoc basis is not a sustainable solution from a cost perspective. The over-cladding proposal presents as an ideal opportunity to replace the original windows at the same time, and for them to be considered holistically as part of one application.
- 5.16 As has already been described, from a practicality and health and safety perspective, it is necessary to install the full height windows internally. The dimensions of the internal goods lift dictate the maximum pane size as being 2.4m in height. As a result, it is necessary to slightly raise the transom bar in height to approximately 900mm from finished floor level. This will allow for two glazing panels to be transported within the building and installed internally.
- 5.17 The effect of increasing the transom height by approximately 600mm on the legibility of the building when viewed from ground level has been carefully considered. At level 4 a person would have to be approximately 17m away from the building for the transom to be visible. This distance would increase for the glazed units above, up to circa 50m at level 11. These values demonstrate that for people approaching the building, a transom raised by 600mm would have minimal visual impact.
- 5.18 Building legibility through design is an important element and is recognised in adopted policy and guidance. Vistas enable individuals to locate key buildings and therefore the primary face of buildings should lead the eye along important views. The proposed design ensures that views to the building are promoted and enhanced by a careful and considered material selection.
- 5.19 Importantly, areas of existing mosaic cladding would remain exposed in the protected spaces of the southern entrance. This will enable people to experience the original materiality as they enter the building.
- 5.20 It is considered that the proposed development meets the requirements of Manchester's design development plan policies EN1 and EN2. The design solution will make an appreciable positive contribution to Hexagon Tower and should be viewed as part of the building's evolution as a unique, attractive, and distinctive structure befitting of the important work that is carried out internally.

Heritage

- 5.21 In recognition of Hexagon Tower's status as a non-designated heritage asset, confirmed during pre-application discussions, the application is supported with a Heritage Statement prepared by Graeme Ives Heritage Planning.
- 5.22 In terms of designated heritage assets, the Church of St Peter (grade II*) is located approximately 500m east of Hexagon Tower on Old Market Street. The application site is considered to fall within the setting of the church and for completeness has been described in the accompanying heritage statement.

- 5.23 In determining the proposals, the Council has a statutory duty under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building, its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest that it may possess.
- 5.24 The Heritage Statement reviews the historic development of the application site and adjoining area, concluding that the townscape of Blackley has been shaped by several dramatic phases of change. The building of Hexagon Tower caused the River Irk to be culverted and now remains as a remnant from the ICI era that has mostly been replaced with a residential townscape. The Statement goes on to examine the building's architectural and historic value in detail, informed by a site survey.
- 5.25 While Hexagon Tower represents one of the final stages of the much larger ICI estate it now remains as one of the few surviving elements of a large industrial townscape that developed on the periphery of Blackley. Historically, it represents the culmination of that industrial period, though the majority has now been demolished. The more ambitious plans for a series of towers and linked podiums were never realised and the current setting of the tower is considered to make a neutral contribution to its heritage significance.
- 5.26 Graeme Ives concludes that whilst most of the interior has been subject to phases of adaptation and refurbishment to meet progressive occupiers, the heritage significance of the building derives from the following factors:
- The association with a leading Modernist architect;
 - The design of a bespoke building utilising a Brutalist form of construction clad in decorative mosaic cladding; and
 - The sculptural façades of the tower and method of pre-fabrication construction that was typical of Seifert & Partners.

Heritage Impact Assessment

- 5.27 In the context of the above, the proposed development has been assessed in accordance with relevant legislation, national and local planning policies. With respect to non-designated heritage assets the NPPF at paragraph 197 directs that:

“The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.”

- 5.28 The heritage value of Hexagon Tower is derived from a series of attributes, the majority of which would be unaffected by the proposed development. For example, the historic value of the association with Seifert & Partners, the bespoke office and laboratory design for ICI and the original ambition for a more extensive commercial townscape (that was not realised), would not be affected by the development proposals.

- 5.29 Similarly, the Heritage Statement goes on to assert that the proposed development would not affect the ability to appreciate the form of the tower and podium, which were common to a range of Seifert schemes. The innovative structure, and the sculptural form of the principal elevations, including the hexagonal window reveals, would remain unaltered. The form of the dramatic 'gable' elevations and protected mosaics undercroft at the entrance would remain key aspects of the building.
- 5.30 However, the materiality of the building would clearly change. At close range, the building benefits from the texture and diversity of colour achieved by the mosaic tiles, while from longer range views the building appears to be clad in a single uniform material that reinforces the repetitive and sculptural qualities of the elevations.
- 5.31 The mini mosaics would be retained in situ and simply over-clad with careful precision as part of the installation process. The proposed new cladding system would repeat the current pattern of panels and recessed joints which are considered to contribute to the aesthetic of the tower.
- 5.32 A clear and obvious improvement would be the over-cladding of the existing white silicone joining that is unsympathetic to the original design intent of Richard Seifert. The over cladding would retain the approach of a uniform elevational treatment that would allow the sculptural qualities of the window reveals to be appreciated as a key part of the architectural language. Importantly, the mosaic tiles to the undercroft of the southern entrance, will be retained to allow an appreciation of the original materiality as people enter the building.
- 5.33 The colour and tone of the proposed modular cladding system has been selected to best replicate the overall appearance of the building in longer range views. The pattern of the replacement windows has also been designed to replicate the existing window frames, though it is considered that a minor increase in the transom height would not significantly detract from the building's heritage value. Given the overall form of the building, the magnitude of change is assessed as being modest.
- 5.34 Whilst the NPPF differentiates between 'substantial' and 'less than substantial' harm in respect to designated heritage assets, it does not provide a range of potential impacts with regards to non-designated heritage assets. However, given the attributes of significance, the clear and evidenced need for repair and considered selection of a suitable modular cladding system, the magnitude of harm is judged to be low. Furthermore, and in mitigation, the current appearance of the building has greatly suffered because of the current mosaic defects. As explained elsewhere within this statement, and in other technical reports, this is highly likely to be a problem that persists without a longer-term solution.

'Balanced Judgement'

- 5.35 The Heritage Statement clearly sets out the scale of heritage harm and the significance of Hexagon Tower as a non-designated asset. In order to achieve the balance that is directed at NPPF paragraph 197, the public benefits of the proposals are invited to be weighed as part of the planning judgement. The benefits of the development are:

- The de-bonded cladding represents a serious health and safety risk due to the increased likelihood of a significant piece of material falling from the building. The proposed over-cladding will fully remove the risk of unsecure cladding;
- A holistic approach to remediating the progressive delamination of the building's façade and poor performing single glazed windows, rather than expensive reactionary 'patch repair';
- Improving the visual appearance of the building whilst preserving key features. The colour and tone of the over-cladding has been selected to minimise the degree of change and to maintain the uniform appearance of the building in longer range views;
- Significantly increasing the building's energy efficient performance;
- The installation of an A1 rated fire cladding system; and
- Safeguarding the long-term viability of a non-designated heritage asset.

5.36 In the context of the above, over-cladding the mosaic tiles will result in a low level of harm to the significance of the heritage asset. The public benefits of the proposal represent clear and compelling reasons to support this application when assessed against Policy EN3.

5.37 In summary, the proposed development will bring forward a comprehensive, long term solution to the challenges currently faced by the existing mosaics and single pane glazing. Approving the application will enable the heritage asset to benefit from a thorough programme of repair and maintenance.

Sustainable Construction and Building Efficiency

5.38 The proposed pre-coated anodised aluminium embodies important sustainability benefits that when considered in the context of the scheme represent compelling reasons for selecting this type of product:

- Euroclass A1 fire rated cladding which is the highest level of performance;
- UV colour resistance with no risk of surface finish fading;
- Corrosion and abrasion resistance;
- 40-year on-site durability and long-term guarantee; and
- Uniform surface finish.

5.39 For an A1 fire rated panel, the cladding suppliers offer a pre-coated aluminium finish which is manufactured through a coil coating process, providing a high-grade and quality surface that is 100% recyclable and environmentally sustainable.

5.40 In support of the application, an Energy Statement has been prepared by KJ Tait Engineers that outlines the significant benefits associated with the proposed over-cladding and window replacement in relation to the long-term energy and environmental performance of the building.

- 5.41 The energy improvements that would result from the proposals have been simulated using a dynamic thermal modelling software, which set out the energy performance of the building as well as the future carbon savings.
- 5.42 The submitted Energy Statement outlines a series of initiatives that the applicant has recently completed within the building, including introducing LED lighting, a new heating system and the installation of roof insulation. The effect of these changes has meant that the energy performance of the building has already improved in EPC terms.
- 5.43 Turning to the over-cladding and window replacement proposals, KJ Tait confirm these will result in significant energy and environment improvements. The improved glazing will reduce the thermal heat loss from the building, resulting in a reduction in the heat load to the building. Principally, the new U-Value for the glazing will be 1.1 W/m²/K, this is a large improvement over the existing single glazing U-Value (5.598 W/m²/K) which is set within frames that are clearly poorly performing and prone to water ingress.
- 5.44 The environmental benefit of the cladding will be to improve the air permeability of the building. The existing fabric is in a poor condition and as such has a high rate of 'air leakage'. Measures to reduce leakage is an important factor within a lab environment, where environmental conditions need to be closely controlled and monitored. In quantitative terms, the new cladding system is expected to enhance air permeability to approximately 10m³/hr.m⁻² from the existing rate of 25m³/hr.m⁻².
- 5.45 In selecting the proposed over-cladding system, the development offers an ability to make the building adaptable to the long-term effects of climate change. When inputting these improvements into the thermal modelling software, the resultant reduction in carbon emissions amounts to 24% per year. The sustainability benefits of the proposals should not be underestimated.
- 5.46 The proposed development demonstrates the applicant's commitment to minimising energy consumption and reducing embodied carbon over the future life of the building. In the context of the above, the scheme is considered to accord with policies EN4, EN6 and EN8. Specifically, the development meets the Council's expectations regarding retrofit projects being used as an opportunity to improve the energy efficiency of existing buildings.

Summary

- 5.47 In summary, the proposed development is acceptable in principle. In terms of other considerations, over-cladding the mosaics represents a low level of heritage harm which must be balanced against the clear and convincing public benefits of the scheme. The material selection ensures that the original design intent of Seifert & Partners is respected, whilst simultaneously significantly improving the building's energy efficiency. As such, the proposals are considered to accord with the relevant provisions of local and national planning policies.

6 Summary and Conclusions

- 6.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of Trinity Investment Management to support a full planning application for the over-cladding and window replacement of Hexagon Tower, Blackley.
- 6.2 The principle of undertaking enhancements to an existing building is supported in both the NPPF and the Manchester Core Strategy. National policy directs that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities to invest.
- 6.3 As has been explained elsewhere within this Statement, and in other accompanying reports, there are clear and compelling reasons that require a sustainable solution to stop the progressive deterioration of the external façade of Hexagon Tower.
- 6.4 The proposals have been informed by a comprehensive analysis of the site's characteristics and constraints. The design solution responds positively to key features within the site, and surrounding environmental context, creating an attractive and sympathetic development.

Benefits of the Application Scheme

- 6.5 The development will provide a range of benefits, including the following:
- The de-bonded cladding represents a serious health and safety risk due to the increased likelihood of a significant piece of material falling from the building. The proposed over-cladding will fully remove the risk of unsecure cladding;
 - A holistic approach to remediating the progressive delamination of the building's façade and poor performing single glazed windows, rather than expensive reactionary 'patch repair';
 - Improving the visual appearance of the building whilst preserving key features. The colour and tone of the over-cladding has been selected to minimise the degree of change and to maintain the uniform appearance of the building in longer range views;
 - Significantly increasing the building's energy efficient performance;
 - The installation of an A1 rated fire cladding system; and
 - Safeguarding the long-term viability of a non-designated heritage asset.
- 6.6 This Statement has demonstrated that the proposals achieve demonstrable accordance with the overall objectives of the NPPF, particularly notions of sustainability and achieving well designed places.
- 6.7 The design solution will make an appreciable positive contribution to Hexagon Tower and should be viewed as part of the building's evolution as a unique, attractive, and distinctive structure befitting of the important work that is carried out internally.

- 6.8 Over-cladding represents the greatest opportunity to provide an attractive and low-maintenance building façade which retains the existing architectural form, whilst eliminating the risk of debris falling from the building without necessitating removal of the existing cladding.
- 6.9 As the regular surveys and costly remedial work which would be associated with retention of the existing façade will not be required, over-cladding is considered to result in the least disruption for the tenants of the building in the long term. It is also associated with the greatest guarantee period, allowing future investment in the building to be better planned and delivered.
- 6.10 In line with paragraph 11 of the NPPF, there are no significant reasons that outweigh the benefits proposed by this sustainable development.

