



Firwood Building

Planning Statement

On behalf of

Xaverian College

February 2021

Contents

1. Executive Summary	3
2. Introduction	4
3. The Application Site and Surroundings.....	6
4. The Proposal	8
5. Relevant Planning Policy	10
6. Key Planning Considerations	17
7. Heritage	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Heritage Values of the Listed Buildings and the Victoria Park Conservation Area.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
8. Conclusion.....	25
Appendix 1: Planning History	27
Appendix 2: Site Location Plan.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Appendix 3: Location Plan.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Appendix 4: Site Photographs.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This Planning and Heritage Statement has been prepared on behalf of Xaverian College by P4 Planning Limited in support of a full and Listed Building Consent application for the demolition of an existing external staircase; internal alterations and minor external alterations to the Firwood Building at Xaverian College in Rusholme.
- 1.2. Xaverian College is an Ofsted 'Outstanding' Catholic college located on Lower Park Road in Rusholme. It is a popular sixth form college which has growth in recent years and currently has a pupil admission number (PAN) of 2,158 students but accommodates 2,450 students from across Greater Manchester.
- 1.3. The original school, known as the Catholic Collegiate was first established by Dr Turner in 1854, and was taken over by the Xaverian Brothers in 1862. Originally based in a house in All Saints, the growing college required new premises and a house in Victoria Park was purchased in 1905. The school was renamed to Xaverian College in 1907.
- 1.4. The increase in pupil numbers has put pressure on the existing facilities and the need to continue to provide quality pastoral care for the students has resulted in the need for the college to look at reconfiguring their existing provision to better utilise the available space.
- 1.5. The school site is located within the Victoria Park Conservation Area. The Firwood Building (formally the Xaverian building) is Grade II Listed. The surrounding area is made up predominantly of large residential villas, which have been converted into a number of different educational institutions or flats.
- 1.6. The proposed works comprises the demolition of a 1960s full height extension to the 1922 extension of the Firwood Building which currently encloses an existing staircase. The proposal seeks to internalise this staircase within the main Firwood building as well as provide a new student dining hall and associated kitchen.
- 1.7. The school has engaged with local ward councillors as well as planning and conservation officers at Manchester City Council regarding the proposal. The comments received from the Council have been incorporated into the final scheme.
- 1.8. Overall, the application will enable the school to deliver much needed improvements to their existing catering facilities as well as provide additional teaching spaces and offices to accommodate their growing needs.

2. Introduction

- 2.1. This Planning and Heritage Statement has been prepared on behalf of Xaverian College by P4 Planning Limited in support of a full and listed building consent application for external and internal works to Firwood Building, a Grade II Listed Building.
- 2.2. The proposed works comprise the demolition of a three-storey 1960s external staircase extension and the internal reconfiguration of the main building to provide a new canteen, kitchen and multi purpose space as well as a new internal staircase. The development will enhance teaching capabilities and improve student experience at Xaverian College, something that has become a growing pressure to meet in recent years as the student cohort has grown. There is also a pressing need to deliver improved catering facilities, providing a range of healthy meals to students to assist in their health and wellbeing.
- 2.3. The planning and listed building consent application proposes the:

‘Demolition of external staircase and repair walls; internal reconfiguration across three floors to provide canteen, new bathroom facilities, two additional classrooms, office space, replacement staircase and two new external openings to rear courtyard.’
- 2.4. The applicant, Xaverian College, is a sixth form college offering education to students aged 16 to 19. The college was founded by the Xaverian Brothers in 1862 and is located in Rusholme. The Firwood Building is the college’s original building, which has housed the college since 1905 when they relocated from a building on Oxford Road. Over the years, the college has expanded its campus significantly, with a mix of original buildings and new facilities on site. The works proposed relate to the 1920s addition to the original building.
- 2.5. This supporting Planning and Heritage Statement has been prepared to assist the Council in their determination of the planning application and serves several purposes. It provides full details of the proposal, and a description of the site background and planning history. It provides an overview of the relevant planning policy context applicable to the site and sets out the key planning considerations by way of justification for the proposal.
- 2.6. The application submission documents, and plans have derived from the discussions with the Council and comprise of the following:
 - Covering Letter;
 - Planning Application Forms;
 - Planning Application Fee of £462;

- Site Plan (5023-1101-P01-Planning-Site Plan);
- Location Plan (5023-1100-P01-Planning-Location Plan);
- Proposed GA Section (5023-1450-P01-Planning-Proposed GA Section);
- Existing GA Section (5023-1400-P01-Planning-Existing GA Section);
- Proposed GA Elevations (5023-1350-P02-Planning-Proposed GA Elevations);
- Existing GA Elevations (5023-1300-P02-Planning-Existing GA Elevations)
- Proposed GA Adaptations (5023-1200-P02-Planning-Proposed GA Adaptations);
- Existing GA Strip-out (5023-1150-P02-Planning-Existing GA Strip-out);
- Planning and Heritage Statement;
- Design and Access Statement; and
- Acoustic Survey

3. The Application Site and Surroundings

- 3.1. The Xaverian College campus is situated on Lower Park Road in Rusholme, within the Rusholme District Centre, an inner-city area two miles south of Manchester City Centre (see site location plan at **Appendix 1**). The campus is located within the Victoria Park Conservation Area and includes three listed buildings: The Firwood Building, The Marylands Building and Ward Hall.
- 3.2. The Firwood building was designed and constructed in 1871 by Alfred Waterhouse as a residential villa. It was sold to the Xaverian Brothers, prominent figures in education and the Catholic Church, in 1905 and became the main teaching block. Since then, it has been extended on numerous occasions (images in **Appendix 2**), including the 1920's red rustic brick extension and the 1960's external staircase extension. There is also a 1990's single storey extension which wraps around the 1960's staircase on the west elevation. The building obtained its Grade II listed in 1974.
- 3.3. This application deals with the 1960's staircase extension and part of the 1920's extension to the original Firwood Building. It does not propose any works to the Grade II listed Alfred Waterhouse portion of the building.
- 3.4. The application site is located within a small portion of the College Campus bounding Lower Park Road to the east, Crescent Range to the south, St Edwards Roman Catholic Church to the west and Regent Place to the north. The college comprises of two roughly rectangular parcels of land on adjacent sides of Lower Park Road. The main parcel is roughly 2.3Ha and sits to the west, while the smaller parcel to the east measures at 0.7Ha, combining to a total area of over 3Ha.
- 3.5. Access into the main parcel in which the Firwood Building is located can be obtained via the main entrance on Crescent Range, however a second entry point is located to the eastern edge along Lower Park Road.
- 3.6. The Xaverian College grounds are located to the western boundary of the Conservation Area. The north and eastern areas of the application site contain residential land use (Class C3), both private houses and University accommodation. Similarly, the south of the campus consists of primarily residential uses, with the distinctive circular shaped Park Crescent green space directly south of the college. The west of the site lies of the Curry Mile on Oxford Road, with many restaurants (Class E) and takeaways (Class Sui Generis).
- 3.7. The Victoria Park Conservation Area is characterised by its low-density residential dwellings set within generous plots; abundance of vegetation and landscaping; as well as rich architectural features and detailing. The area benefits from a high number of listed buildings and heritage assets.

Relevant Planning History

- 3.8. The site has a varied planning history, with the campus evolving over time to meet the changing needs of the college as it seeks to accommodate additional students and modern teaching requirements. The College has seen significant growth and change over time where planning applications have been approved. The full extent of this history is outlined in **Appendix 3**.

4. The Proposal

- 4.1. This planning application is submitted in full, with listed building consent and seeks to refurbish the Firwood Building, internally and externally. The proposed development comprises:

‘Demolition of external three storey staircase and repair to external walls; internal reconfiguration across three floors to provide canteen, catering kitchen, new bathroom facilities, two additional classrooms, office space, replacement staircase and two new external openings to rear courtyard’

- 4.2. The removal of the external staircase will enable the 1920s façade to be reinstated as per its original appearance. The internal remodelling works will create of a larger open plan dining space with associated kitchen and WCs. By lowering existing window sills, a new fire escape and access doors will be introduced from the new dining area to the rear courtyard. The refurbishment will also reconfigure the existing space to introduce two new classrooms and an office, as set out in more detail below.

Ground Floor

- 4.3. The existing 1960s red brick extension to the west elevation of the building, which currently houses a staircase will be removed and the original wall made good, with materials that match the existing, including brick detailing across all three floors. The existing fire escape door and associated external stairs will also be removed. The new staircase will be internalised within the Firwood building (Plan Ref: 5023-1450-P01-Planning-Proposed GA Section), utilising a space on the ground floor which currently provides toilet facilities and a kitchen for staff, and within office space above.
- 4.4. The new cafeteria will be located on the ground floor, currently occupied by offices. A new 274m² dining hall with associated 61m² kitchen space will be created. This expansion will enable the college to provide additional dining space as well as a larger kitchen to provide a better range of meals to the students. This is a key outcome of the proposal which will better student health and wellbeing.
- 4.5. The creation of two classrooms also aids the teaching ability of the college. These reconfigurations will work to address the pressures around timetabling and student numbers following the steady increase in cohort in recent years. The proposal does not look to increase student numbers but provides for the College’s existing students.
- 4.6. An existing window in the new canteen will be replaced with a door to provide access onto an existing courtyard. The proposal also seeks to remove existing windows and brickwork for the instillation of two new fire escape doors, along with a new bi-folding glazed door at the ground level. All restoration work such as this will use materials to match the original materials.

- 4.7. Further information on the design, including materials is provided in the accompanying Design and Access Statement.

First Floor

- 4.8. The proposals outline the creation of two large classroom spaces, an office, and new stair. This will be achieved through the internal reconfiguration of the existing ICT Suite. The removal of half-height studwork walls and wall mounted desks, along with the erection of full height walls.

Second Floor

- 4.9. The plans look at the removal of three existing faculty offices for the formation of one large office space. This internal reconfiguration will also allow for the erection of the new internal stair.

Pre-application Discussions

- 4.10. The applicant has engaged with planning and conservation officers at Manchester City Council regarding the proposed removal of the 1960s staircase and the internal and external works to the Firwood Building.
- 4.11. Draft plans and a summary of the proposal were shared with planning and conservation officers in early December 2020. Officer feedback was supportive for the removal of the staircase, providing sufficient justification was provided and recommended that the façade should be retained on a like for like basis. The conservation officer also recommended slight amendments to the proposals which have been incorporated in the submitted scheme.
- 4.12. The school has also communicated with the ward councillors to raise awareness of the proposal prior to submission and provided copies of the draft plans, although no response has been received.

5. Relevant Planning Policy

- 5.1. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The statutory Development Plan in this case comprises the Manchester Local Plan (July 2012), and the saved policies of the Manchester Unitary Development Plan (1995).
- 5.2. Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires special attention to the paid to the desirability of preserving features of special historic interest, in particular listed buildings.
- 5.3. The key planning policies and relevant supplementary guidance applicable to the proposals are referred to below, including relevant elements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 5.4. In relation to heritage assets and the determination of planning applications, the NPPF sets out that the applicant should describe the significance of any heritage asset affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the asset's importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

Manchester City Council Core Strategy (2012)

- 5.5. Policy CC9 refers to design and heritage. It states that *'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.'* It goes on to explain in 8.53 that the City's Conservation Areas are intrinsic to Manchester's identity and sense of place. Development plans that are not contextually responsive should not be supported by the Council.
- 5.6. The Core Strategy's Policy EN1 outlines the considerations developers are expected to make for the city's heritage assets. It defines eleven character areas in Manchester. The 'Southern Character Area' is one of these, which is characterised by its historic district centres, one of these being Rusholme. Development is required to retain this identity. Additionally, it is stated that *'opportunities for good design to enhance the overall image of the City should be fully realised.'*
- 5.7. Policy EN3 sets out that *'The Council will encourage development that complements and takes advantage of the distinct historic and heritage features of its district centres.'*

Extant Unitary Development Policies (1995)

- 5.8. Saved Policy DC7a.1 relates to the re-development of large buildings of historic interest. It is said that this *'will only be permitted where there is no loss to the visual character and amenity value of the site, nor to the visual quality and interest of the local area.'*
- 5.9. Policy DC18.1 advises that careful consideration will be given to applications within Conservation Areas. Proposals must look to preserve and enhance the character of an area's assets. This includes:
- a. *the relationship of new structures to neighbouring buildings and spaces;*
 - b. *the effect of major changes to the appearance of existing buildings;*
 - c. *the desirability of retaining existing features, such as boundary walls, gardens, trees, (including street trees);*
 - d. *the effect of signs and advertisements;*
 - e. *any further guidance on specific areas which has been approved by the Council.*
- 5.10. The plan goes on to highlight planning considerations for listed buildings. It is noted that this is to aid the protection of the City's built character and heritage. Firstly, it states that planning permission will not be permitted for *'any external or internal alteration or addition to a Listed building where in its opinion, there would be an adverse effect on its architectural or historic character.'* In addition to this, plans should *'seek to preserve and enhance the settings of listed buildings by appropriate control over the design of new development in their vicinity, control over the use of adjacent land, and where appropriate, by the preservation of trees and landscape features.'*

Victoria Park Conservation Area Appraisal

- 5.11. The NPPF requires local planning authorities to define and record the special characteristics of heritage assets within their area. In addition, Section 73 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 imposes a duty on the local planning authority to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas.
- 5.12. The Victoria Park Conservation Area was given is designated in 1972. Historically the area was a private estate encompassing numerous large houses on spacious plots. At current relatively few of these 1840s villas remain, as over the years many were demolished or modified. The area continues to consist of predominantly residential land use, alongside a church, a mosque, and Xaverian College.
- 5.13. The appraisal highlights that there will be variations in the quality of each development within the Conservation Area, and that special attention will be paid to the preservation and enhancement of the character or appearance of the area.
- 5.14. It is said in Chapter 15 of the appraisal that the quality of built form in Victoria Park has declined over the years. This is primarily due to development in the form of extensions or redevelopment at greater density. The appraisal anticipates that sympathetically designed

new development and the restoration of existing buildings will contribute to the enhancement of the area.

- 5.15. The appraisal understands that changes to the area will take place as pressure for development increases. It is said that where possible, such changes should be harmonious with the Victoria Park character area.
- 5.16. The document highlights the College as being a historical part of the Conservation Area's identity. It states that here, new buildings have been constructed in the grounds of an old house over a long period. However, the appraisal does not draw upon the importance of the Campus Buildings (including The Firwood Building) as being vital to the character of the area. The application site holds very limited significance for the conservation area.

National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

- 5.17. The revised NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF along with the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) are material considerations of significant weight and relevant to the determination of this application. Other policies and supplementary planning documents (SPDs) which are relevant are also material considerations.
- 5.18. The NPPF sets out that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development (paragraph 7). This incorporates three overarching objectives comprising economic, social and environmental considerations, with the aim of ensuring that development contributes positively, be it in terms of making effective use of land, providing accessible services to meet current and future needs or through ensuring development supports growth, innovation and improved productivity.
- 5.19. Paragraph 38 confirms that '*local planning authorities should approach decision making on proposed development in a positive and creative way*', *working proactively with applicants to secure development that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area.*'
- 5.20. Paragraph 91 considers the Government's commitment in promoting healthy and safe communities. It says that planning policy and decision-making should promote healthy, inclusive and safe places which, among other things, '*enables and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs – for example through the provision of safe and accessible green infrastructure, sport facilities, local shops, access to healthier food, allotments and layouts that encourage walking and cycling*'.
- 5.21. Paragraph 94 highlights the importance of the provision of school places noting that:

It is important that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local Planning Authorities should take a proactive,

positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement and to development that will widen choice in education. They should:

- a) give **great weight** to the need to create, expand or alter schools through the preparation of plans and decisions on applications; and*
- b) work with school promoters, delivery partners and statutory bodies to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted’ (our emphasis)*

- 5.22. Paragraph 189 sets out national policy for heritage assets. It emphasizes that the local planning authority should require an applicant to *‘describe the significance of any heritage asset affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the asset’s importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance’.*
- 5.23. Paragraph 190 obliges local authorities to *‘identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal, 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’.*
- 5.24. In determining applications, Paragraph 192 states that local planning authorities should take account of:
- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
 - b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality;*
- 5.25. The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. Paragraph 193 highlights that, *‘when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance’.*
- 5.26. The scale of impact of proposed developments is considered in Paragraph 196: *‘where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefit of the proposal, including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use’.*
- 5.27. In relation to conservation areas, Paragraph 200 advises local planning authorities to look for *‘opportunities for new development within Conservation Area and World Heritage Sites, and*

within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance'. It further states that *'proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.'*

- 5.28. Paragraph 201 recognises the fact that not all elements in a Conservation Area may contribute to its significance. It is only when the loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area *'should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 195 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 196, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area'* as a whole.

National Planning Policy Guidance

- 5.29. The NPPG comprises a number of online planning practice guidance notes. One of particular relevance to this proposal is the 'Healthy and Safe Communities' guidance which was published in July 2019. This supports the delivery of sufficient school places to meet the needs of existing and new communities.
- 5.30. This planning guidance provides recommendations in relation to supporting the delivery of sufficient school places to meet the needs of existing and new communities. It states that local authorities with education accountabilities forecast the need for new school places, taking into account birth rates, the effects of parental choice and estimate additional needs from new housing with reference to pupil numbers from recent developments and other evidence.
- 5.31. Within the guidance, it states that conservation is an active process of maintenance and managing change. It requires a flexible and thoughtful approach to get the best out of assets.
- 5.32. Local planning authority plans should *'set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment. In developing their strategy, plan making bodies should identify specific opportunities within their area for the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets, including their setting.'* It further states that *'this could include, where appropriate, the delivery of development that will make a positive contribution to, or better reveal the significance of, the heritage asset, or reflect and enhance local character and distinctiveness with particular regard to the prevailing styles of design and use of materials in a local area.'*
- 5.33. The guidance provides the definition of 'significance' in relation to heritage 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.'*
- 5.34. Significance is important in decision making because it is necessary to understand the potential impact and acceptability of development proposal which may result in heritage assets being affected by direct physical change of by change in their setting. By ensuring an understanding of the significance of the heritage asset and its setting from an early stage, it

can help to avoid or minimise harm. This should be done through the analysis of relevant information to get a clear understanding of the affected asset, the heritage interests represented in it and their relative importance. The guidance recommends an early appraisal to help identify constraints and opportunities to assist in identifying alternative development options, that will both conserve the heritage assets and deliver public benefits in a more sustainable and appropriate way.

- 5.35. The guidance states that applicants are expected to describe the significance of any heritage asset affected, including their contribution made by their setting. In addition, an analysis of the significance of the asset and its setting, and where relevant, how this has informed the development of the proposals. The level of detail should be proportionate to the asset's importance and no more than sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on its significance.
- 5.36. In relation to setting, the guidance states that all heritage assets have a setting, irrespective of the form in which they survive and whether they are designated or not. It is often expressed by reference to the visual relationship between the asset and the proposed development and associated visual/physical considerations. When considering applications which may affect the setting of a heritage asset, the local planning authority needs to consider the implications of cumulative change.

Historic England 'Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance'

- 5.37. The Historic England document 'Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance' lists the following aspects in considering significance:
 - Who values the place, and why they do so
 - How those values relate to its fabric
 - Their relative importance
 - Whether associated objects contribute to them
 - The contribution made by the setting and context of the place
 - How the place compares with others sharing similar values
- 5.38. The heritage values that contribute to the significance are varied and often interrelated. Historic England suggest that there are four distinct categories of value, which are defined as follows;
 - **Evidential** – derives from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity

- **Historical** – derives from the ways in which past people, events, and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present. It tends to be illustrative or associative
- **Aesthetic** – derives from the way in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place
- **Communal** – derives from the means of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory. Communal values tend to be closely linked with historical and aesthetic values.

5.39. There are four main categories of significance that can be measured, as well as a negative category:

Exceptional – an asset important at the highest national or international levels, including scheduled ancient monuments, Grade I and Grade II* listed buildings and World Heritage Sites. The NPPF advises that substantial harm should be wholly exceptional.

High – a designated asset important at a national level, including Grade II listed buildings and locally designated conservation areas. The NPPF advises that substantial harm should be exceptional.

Medium – an undesignated asset important at local to regional level, including buildings on a Local List (non statutory) or those that make a positive contribution to a conservation area. May also include less significant parts of listed buildings. Buildings and parts of structures in this category should be retained where possible, although there is usually scope for adaptation.

Low – structure or features of very limited heritage value and not defined as a heritage asset. Includes buildings that do not contribute positively to a conservation area and also later additional to listed buildings of much less value.

Negative – structure or feature that harms the value of a heritage asset. Wherever practicable, removal of negative features should be considered, taking account of setting and opportunities for enhancement.

No Interest – The element is historically unimportant but does not have a negative visual impact on the surrounding buildings.

6. Heritage

- 6.1. This section provides a heritage assessment for the proposed development, as well as background information of the site, its location and history as well as details of the listed buildings and Victoria Park Conservation Area. It also considers the significance of the relevant heritage assets, with a heritage impact assessment undertaken and analysis provided.
- 6.2. The analysis and assessment of the listed building and conservation area has informed the applicant's approach to the development and the sensitive design of the external and internal works to the Firwood building, to ensure that it is sensitive and responsive to its particular location and setting.

Site Location and Background Context

- 6.3. The Xaverian building known as Firwood was a former villa, located within the Victoria Park Conservation Area. Firwood was originally built in 1875 and known at the time as 'Blagdon'. It was designed and built by Alfred Waterhouse, a prolific and prominent Victorian architect, who was well known for his Gothic Revival architecture and was also responsible for designing Manchester Town Hall.
- 6.4. The original building was rectangular in design, with a wing that extends to the north and west. The building was further extended to the south by 1922 and to the west in the 1950s as can be seen on historical maps (see Design and Access Statement). It remains largely the same to this day, with some modern additions, including the attached single storey reception area and adjacent canteen. Firwood is Grade II listed.
- 6.5. The listing description notes that Firwood comprises a *"Formerly known as: No.8 Firwood LOWER PARK ROAD Rusholme. Villa, now part of 6th form college. 1874-5, by Alfred Waterhouse, for T. R. Heatherington; altered. Red brick with blue brick bands (etc), tiled roofs with cockscomb ridges. Roughly rectangular plan (plus later additions to rear). Two-and-a-half storeys plus a tower; with 2 saw-tooth bands between floors, steeply-pitched gabled roofs, (etc). At the right-hand corner, in the angle between the front range and the rear wing, is a rectangular tower which has a gabled wooden porch on its north side, with open sides and fishscale tiled roof, various small windows, a shield in the east side, a stylised Lombard freize and a steep saddleback roof with cresting to the ridge. To the left of the tower is a diagonally-set gabled bay which has 2 tall sashed windows at ground floor, 2 similar windows and a balcony with wrought-iron railings at 1st floor, and coupled smaller windows above; at the left end of the facade is another gabled bay which has 3 similar windows at ground and 1st floors and coupled windows above, the ground floor windows protected by a tiled pentice roof; and the main range between these bays has a dormer window with half-hipped roof and finial. Most windows have square-paned leaded glazing, some with stained glass. The left return wall (south front) is longer and has similar fenestration including a pentice to the ground-floor, and*

2 similar dormers. Attached to the north side is a tall 2-centred archway with steeply pitched gable and ball finial'. A copy of the listing can be found at Appendix 4.

- 6.6. The wider school site also includes two other listed buildings, Marylands and Ward Hall, both of which are Grade II listed. Both Marylands and Ward Hall are former residential villas, now in educational use. Marylands is located to the north of the school site, set back from Lower Park Road. It dates from circa 1870 and was previously known as Regent House and was Grade II listed in 1974.
- 6.7. Ward Hall is located on the opposite side of Lower Park Road to the main school campus and provide further education facilities for the school.

Victoria Park Conservation Area

- 6.8. The whole school site is located within the Victoria Park Conservation Area which was designated in 1972 by Manchester City Council.
- 6.9. The conservation area lies three kilometres to the south of the city centre and covers a large area of what was an independent township, Rusholme, a 70 acre private estate of villas. The estate was intended for wealthy merchants, with business in Manchester and were able to commute into the city.
- 6.10. The construction of the private estate began in the early 1830s, with the first houses being occupied by 1837. Firwood and Marylands were constructed during a later phase of the development in the 1870s.
- 6.11. The area became a popular location for the professional classes to live towards the end of the 19th century, with a number of notable residents including Charles Halle (founder of the Halle Orchestra) and the Pankhursts residing here.
- 6.12. A Conservation Area Appraisal has been undertaken by Manchester City Council and provides a character assessment as well as detailing the special character of the conservation area.

Significance of Heritage Assets

- 6.13. Assessing significance is a key principle for managing change to heritage assets and is set out within the NPPF. The NPPF states at Paragraph 193 that, when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be, irrespective of whether the potential harm amounts to substantial or less than substantial harm to its significance.
- 6.14. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset requires a clear and convincing justification in accordance with Paragraph 194 of the NPPF.

Heritage Values of the Listed Buildings and the Victoria Park Conservation Area

- 6.15. In accordance with the categories for significance set out in the Historic England guidance, the Firwood Building and the Victoria Park Conservation Area is considered to be 'high' as a designated heritage asset.
- 6.16. Following the Historic England methodology for understanding heritage values and preparing statements of significance the following values can be attributed to both heritage assets; archaeological interest, architectural and artistic interest and historic interest. These values recently replaced evidential, historical, aesthetic and communal values. Below we have assessed the Firwood building and the Victoria Park Conservation Area.

Archaeological interest

- 6.17. There is no known archaeological interest on the site.

Architectural and artistic interest

- 6.18. Firwood was designed and constructed by one of the most prominent architects of the Victorian period, particularly in Manchester, Alfred Waterhouse. The building also includes a number of surviving examples of Victorian stain glass and tiles.
- 6.19. Whilst the building has been significantly extended externally and altered internally over time, the 1922 extension to the south contributes to the buildings architectural interest.

Historic interest

- 6.20. The Firwood building was part of a later phase of the villas within a private park. It is a good surviving example of the residences built for the merchants of Manchester during the 19th century and this affords it high historical value. It is thought to be the only surviving Waterhouse villa in Manchester. The building was originally constructed as a residential villa for T.R.Heatherington and included both external and internal ornamentation to ensure its prominence in the streetscene.

Heritage Impact Assessment

- 6.21. The NPPF requires that planning applications affecting heritage assets should be accompanied by a reasoned justification. This should provide the local planning authority with full information to enable an assessment to be made of the likely impact of the proposals on the significance of the heritage asset and its setting. The level of detail should be no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact on the significance.

Impact Assessment of the application proposal

- 6.22. The NPPF requires that planning applications affecting heritage assets should be accompanied by a reasoned justification. This should provide the local planning authority with full information to enable an assessment to be made of the likely impact of the proposals on the significance of the heritage asset and its setting. The level of detail should be no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact on the significance.

- 6.23. As a designated heritage asset, the Victoria Park Conservation Area and the Firwood building have a 'high level' of significance in accordance with the NPPF and Historic England Conservation Area guidance.
- 6.24. The existing function of the Conservation Area is as a former parkland with residential villas. The conservation area has changed significantly from its original inception and has been further developed over time, with the subdivision of the villas, intensification of a variety of uses including educational premises.
- 6.25. The key views into and out of the conservation area are identified as the large villas set within spacious plots, with wide, gently undulating curved roads, with the majority of boundary treatments consisting of brick walls, with large gates and gate pillars. This is not impacted by the proposal.
- 6.26. The proposed works to the Firwood Building are located on the west elevation and are not visible from within the main body of the conservation area, other than from the existing access to the school. The removal of the awkward external staircase will improve the existing views of the Firwood Building and better reveal its original symmetry of windows. The proposed materials to replace the building will be chosen to match the existing, with brick detailing where necessary.
- 6.27. When considering the overall harm to the significance of the conservation area, the analysis above clearly demonstrates that the overall impact of the development will not lead to 'substantial harm' or total loss of significance of the heritage asset. The key features of the conservation area will be retained unaffected and therefore preserved.
- 6.28. In terms of the significance of the listed building, the Alfred Waterhouse part of Firwood has the most significance, with the 1920s extension also having some significance. All of the building is Grade II listed and both parts contribute to the setting of the conservation area.
- 6.29. When considering the impact upon the significance of the listed building, the removal of the staircase will better reveal the original building and therefore have a positive impact upon its significance. Aside from the insertion of door openings on the eastern elevation, the majority of the proposed works relate to the interior of the building, where there are limited original features. Where possible and in the large part, the original partitions, door openings and open spaces are being retained, with the large of the building remaining largely the same.
- 6.30. Whilst the proposal will result in the loss of some of the historic fabric of the building, notably two windows, it has been kept to a minimum. The internal alterations are necessary in order to meet the existing and future requirements of the school and allow it to continue in educational use. This is a primary objective set out at Paragraph 192 of the NPPF.
- 6.31. When considering the overall harm to the listed building and the wider conservation area, the proposal will not lead to 'substantial harm' or the total loss of the significance of the heritage

asset. The key features of the heritage asset, i.e. the Firwood building will remain broadly unchanged and will be positively improved through the removal of a later 1960s addition which currently detracts from the buildings character and appearance Any potential harm to the building is limited only to the internal alterations, with the removal of non original internal partitions and the relocation of the staircase, which requires the insertion of two new door openings onto the courtyard and is considered less than significant

6.32. In accordance with Paragraph 196 of the NPPF *‘where a development proposal will lead to a less than significant harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefit of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.’*

6.33. The key public benefits arising from the proposed scheme are:

- Addresses a clear and identified need for additional college places and facilities within Xaverian College and nationally, to which ‘great weight’ should be attributed in accordance with the NPPF;
- Improves the qualitative and quantitative provision of facilities at the College, unlocking a higher teaching quality, greater flexibility, and healthier meals for students;
- The view into and out of the college will be improved for local residents, along with the enhancement of the Conservation Area as a whole.

6.34. The proposal should therefore be considered acceptable when assessed against national and local policy and should be approved.

7. Key Planning Considerations

7.1. The key planning considerations arising from the proposed development relate to:

- The need for the development
- Compliance with relevant policy and the NPPF
- The impact of the proposal on the designated heritage assets (conservation area and listed building)
- Key benefits.

The need for the development

- 7.2. The college has increased in size since it became centrally funded. It currently hosts 2,450 students, with intake from 140 secondary schools across Greater Manchester. With the increase in student numbers, there is an increased pressure on existing infrastructure, including number of classrooms, catering facilities and student welfare.
- 7.3. The existing canteen and kitchen cannot adequately serve the number of pupils attending the school and are also unable to provide a wide range of food options. This has resulted in a limited menu, with many students choosing to eat off site.
- 7.4. Additionally, the growing number of students has led pressure on the number of classrooms and existing classrooms being too small to accommodate the existing number of pupils. These issues have been exacerbated by the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic where social-distancing measures have had to be introduced.
- 7.5. Xaverian is an academy run school and thereby funded by central government. With increasing student numbers and rising operational costs, they are required to seek additional funding to make the required changes to their facilities. Previous requests to the Condition Improvement Fund have been unsuccessful and the school are therefore self-funding the proposal. The need to create, expand or alter schools should be given great weight in accordance with Paragraph 94 of the NPPF.

Compliance with relevant policy and the NPPF

- 7.6. The proposal is supported by national and local planning policy and the need to create, expand or alter schools is supported by Paragraph 94 of the NPPF and should be given 'great weight'.

Impact on heritage assets

- 7.7. The original Grade II listed Firwood Building was built by Alfred Waterhouse in 1871. A copy of the listing can be found at **Appendix 4**. It sits, along with the wider school site within the Victoria Park Conservation Area. The conservation area is made up of a number of fine

individual residences, built during the Victorian times to accommodate merchants working in Manchester. The majority of these villas have now been converted or are in alternative uses.

- 7.8. The conservation area has changed significantly since it was designated and within the conservation area appraisal and the only mention of Firwood or Xavarian College is to note its presence within the conservation area. The college campus as a whole is largely screened from the wider conservation area through a brick boundary wall, a key feature within the conservation area as a whole, with trees and landscaping along Lower Park Road and the area of the Firwood Building being affected by the proposal is largely unseen.
- 7.9. Nevertheless, the proposal to remove of the 1960s staircase will better reveal the original extension building, removing an unsightly addition, which currently detracts from the building, the wider listed building and the conservation area. The staircase offers little significance to the heritage asset, and its removal will have a positive impact overall on the listed building as well as the conservation area through the reinsertion of original brick detailing and the symmetry of the 1920s extension being better revealed.
- 7.10. The proposal will ultimately revert the Firwood building to its original state in accordance with Core Strategy Policy EN1 and EN2 and ensure that the building contributes and enhances the conservation area in accordance with Policy CC9.
- 7.11. Internally, the original building was an open void, with internal walls and partitions added over time as the needs of the school changed. It is proposed to remove these internal partitions, with the original fireplaces exposed.
- 7.12. The new staircase will be fitted into an existing space on the south elevation of the building. The staircase will be fixed to a concrete plinth, with minimal fixings proposed on each floor to 'tie' into the original building.
- 7.13. New openings are proposed onto the existing courtyard to the east which are necessary from a fire and safety point of view and the design of the openings are such that the minimise any impact to the fabric of the listed building. In addition, it also provides a practical function to the courtyard as an external seating/dining area for students to socialise within.

Key Benefits

- 7.14. The key benefits of the proposed development include:

- Removing an unsympathetic 1960's staircase which currently detracts from the listed building and conservation area and restoring the building to match with the original façade, thereby enhancing the designated heritage assets;
- Providing the school with more flexible spaces and facilities including two new classrooms to accommodate existing students and timetables;
- Increasing the catering capability to enable healthier meals to be provided for students; and
- Integrating the 1920s extension with the adjacent courtyard, to improve access and use of both spaces.

7.15. Overall, the proposed development will introduce enhancements which are critical to Xaverian College in terms of improving teaching capability and student experience. Catering facilities will improve, and spaces enhanced which will contribute to students' wellbeing.

7.16. As set out in the NPPF at paragraph 94, it is important that Local Planning Authorities should take a positive and collaborative approach to ensuring sufficient choice in school places and that they should give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools.

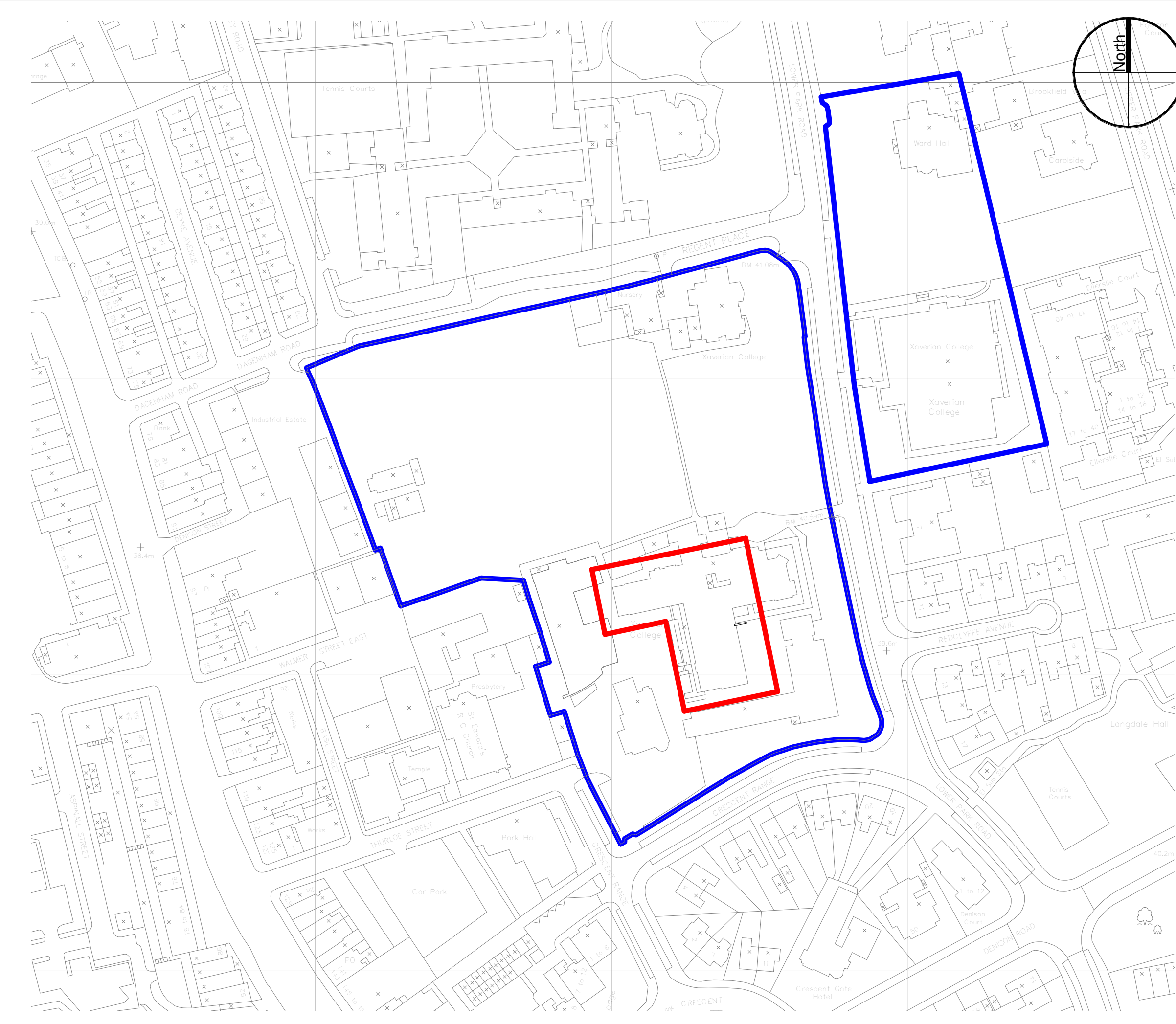
8. Conclusion

- 8.1. For the reasons set out above, the proposed development is in accordance with national and local policy and accords with Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act and should therefore be permitted unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF sets out that development proposals which accord with an up to date development plan should be approved without delay.
- 8.2. The proposal is supported through the NPPF. Paragraph 91 promotes healthy and safe communities through the provision of things, including access to healthier food. Paragraph 94 places great weight on the need to create, expand or alter schools. Moreover, NPPF sets out the position of heritage assets within policy. Paragraph 200 highlights the desirability of development proposals conserving and where possible, enhancing heritage assets. Applications that make a positive contribution to these elements, like the one at question, should be treated favourably.
- 8.3. Furthermore, the application aligns positively against local policy. This is especially apparent in Policies CC9, EN1 and EN3 which discuss the city's historic heritage features and conservation areas.
- 8.4. The site lies within a conservation area, the character of which should be preserved or enhanced. The significance of the heritage asset has been reviewed in the above Heritage section in respect of the proposed development which concludes that there will be positive impact and only limited harm caused by the proposed development, which falls squarely within the NPPF definition of 'less than significant'.
- 8.5. In accordance with Paragraph 196 of the NPPF, where a development will lead to less than significant harm, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal which, in this instance, are many and together form a compelling case in favour of granting approval. In summary, the proposed development:
 - Addresses a clear and identified need for additional college places and facilities within Xaverian College and nationally, to which 'great weight' should be attributed in accordance with the NPPF;
 - Improves the qualitative and quantitative provision of facilities at the College, unlocking a higher teaching quality, greater flexibility, and healthier meals for students;
 - The view into and out of the college will be improved for local residents, along with the enhancement of the Conservation Area as a whole.
- 8.6. The proposal is critical to improving the efficient running of the College. It will help accommodate with the recent growth in student numbers the campus has experienced and

provide important flexibility should social distancing measures be required over a longer period.

- 8.7. Ultimately, the application proposal accords with the development plan. There is a positive impact on the character of the conservation area, something that is additionally supported through the public benefits the proposal will deliver in terms of improved education facilities.
- 8.8. Overall, therefore, there are no material planning reasons why this application should not be approved and we respectfully request that planning permission is granted without delay.

Appendix 1



Notes

The Contractor is to check all dimensions and conditions on site before commencing. Do not scale from this drawing.
This drawing remains the copyright of POZZONI Architecture Ltd.

Scale Bars TO BE USED ONLY AS GUIDANCE

1:100	mm	1000	3000	5000
1:200	mm	5000	8000	
1:500	M	5	15	25
1:1250	M	10	30	50 70

Area of Ownership

Area of Development

P01	Planning Submission	TC	29.01.21
Rev	Description	By	Date
Client	Xaverian College		
Job	Xaverian College, Firwood Works		
Drawing	Planning - Location Plan		
BSRef	POZ Ref	Rev	P01
5023_1100		5023-POZ-XX-XX-DR-A-1100	
Date	10/11/20	Scale	1 : 1250 @ A3
3D CoOrd	-	2D CoOrd	JSB
Project Status	Planning	Tender	Construction
	Design	Contract	As Built

pozzoni

10-12 Emerald Street
London
WC1N 3QA

Woodville House
2 Woodville Road
Altrincham
WA14 2FH

+44 20 7078 0079
architects@pozzoni.co.uk

+44 161 928 7848
www.pozzoni.co.uk

\\altdataserver4\redir\$\trogan\Documents\5023-POZ-01-ZZ-M3-A-0001_CENTRAL_P01_trogan.rvt 29/01/2021 14:59:14

Appendix 2



View of the 1960s staircase extension to the 1920s extension proposed for removal



1960s external stair extension, proposed to be removed



1920s red-brick extension



1920s extension to left of the original listed Firwood Building



Original Grade II listed Firwood Building to be retained

Appendix 3

Reference	Date	Description	Decision	Building
Ward Hall				
F14783/LB	01/04/81	LISTED BUILDING CONSENT Demolition of buildings at rear of Ward Hall.	Refused	Ward Hall
074360/LO/2004/N2	05/04/05	LISTED BUILDING CONSENT External alterations involving installation of new entrance works and internal alterations for disabled access	Approved	Ward Hall
099894/CC/2012/S1	28/08/12	CONSERVATION AREA CONSENT for partial demolition of boundary wall adjacent to Ward Hall car park together with the widening of the vehicular entrance	Approved	Ward Hall
102300/LO/2013/S1	24/06/13	LISTED BUILDING CONSENT for the repair, alteration, refurbishment and extension of Ward Hall and conversion of a range of three associated outbuildings for educational purposes (use class D1), following the selective demolition of two existing extensions and the remains of an outbuilding	Approved	Ward Hall
105748/LO/2014/S1	25/09/14	Listed Building Consent for erection of three-storey extension to existing annexe (under construction) to form additional educational facility (Class D1), and associated hard landscaping and reconfiguration of car parking area following removal of temporary classrooms	Approved	Ward Hall
Marylands				
055854/FO/CENTL1/99	30/03/99	Refurbishment of existing building, minor demolition of later additions and new extension to form new nursery with fencing.	Approved	Marylands
106925/LO/2014/S1	29/05/15	Listed Building Consent for erection of single storey monopitch extension to form new, open plan, dining area, internal and external alterations to existing ancillary building to the Maryland's villa currently serving as a nursery to accommodate new kitchen, servery and toilets together with demolition of internal partition walls	Approved	Marylands
Sunbury				
061140/LO/NORTH2/01	23/03/01	LISTED BUILDING CONSENT Demolition of single storey lobby, and erection of a single storey extension to form student services, and erection of wings to refectory.	Approved	Sunbury
Ryken				
061265/LO/NORTH2/01	03/05/01	LISTED BUILDING CONSENT Erection of a part two/part three storey building to form an independent learning centre	Not Development	Ryken
Mayfield				
071710/FO/2004/N2	05/08/04	Erection of a three-storey building for educational purposes with parking for 21 cars following demolition of existing workshop	Approved	Mayfield
071711/CC/2004/N2	05/08/04	CONSERVATION AREA CONSENT for the demolition of workshop building at boundary next to the industrial estate to enable the erection of a 3-storey building for educational purposes	Approved	Mayfield
Redclyffe				
096375/FO/2011/S1	22/07/11	Erection of two storey extension to the Redclyffe Building to form additional educational facilities	Approved	Redclyffe
098938/CC/2012/S1	03/07/12	Conservation Area Consent for the demolition of existing boundary wall to facilitate amended landscaping works	Approved	Redclyffe
Other				
045776/FO/CENTL2/94	21/07/94	Extension to the laboratory building to form an enclosed fire escape	Approved	n/a
061999/LO/NORTH2/01	06/03/02	LISTED BUILDING CONSENT Internal refurbishment of sanitary accommodation and associated areas plus installation of platform lift to storeroom	Approved	n/a
074352/LO/2004/N2	10/05/05	LISTED BUILDING CONSENT for internal and external works to provide disabled access	Approved	n/a

095386/FO/2011/S1	29/03/11	Erection of single storey building adjacent to main entrance, elevational alterations to maintenance office and dining hall and replacement of existing main entrance gateposts and boundary wall following demolition of existing walls, gateposts and existing building adjacent to the main entrance	Approved	Maintenance Office + Firwood Building
095403/CC/2011/S1	29/03/11	CONSERVATION AREA CONSENT for the demolition of single storey building adjacent to the main entrance together with demolition of boundary wall and gate posts adjacent to the main entrance	Approved	Maintenance Office+ Firwood Building
123274/FO/2019	09/09/19	Erection of a 2-storey teaching block and re-arrangement of the associated car park	Approved	New Teaching Block

Appendix 4

Details

SJ8595 698-1/22/804 03/10/74

MANCHESTER LOWER PARK ROAD, Rusholme (West side)

No.8 Xaverian College, part of, and attached archway II

GV

Formerly known as: No.8 Firwood LOWER PARK ROAD Rusholme. Villa, now part of 6th form college. 1874-5, by Alfred Waterhouse, for T.R.Heatherington; altered. Red brick with blue brick bands (etc), tiled roofs with cockscomb ridges. Roughly rectangular plan (plus later additions to rear). Two-and-a-half storeys plus a tower; with 2 saw-tooth bands between floors, steeply-pitched gabled roofs, (etc). At the right-hand corner, in the angle between the front range and the rear wing, is a rectangular tower which has a gabled wooden porch on its north side, with open sides and fishscale tiled roof, various small windows, a shield in the east side, a stylised Lombard frieze and a steep saddleback roof with cresting to the ridge. To the left of the tower is a diagonally-set gabled bay which has 2 tall sashed windows at ground floor, 2 similar windows and a balcony with wrought-iron railings at 1st floor, and coupled smaller windows above; at the left end of the facade is another gabled bay which has 3 similar windows at ground and 1st floors and coupled windows above, the ground floor windows protected by a tiled pentice roof; and the main range between these bays has a dormer window with half-hipped roof and finial. Most windows have square-paned leaded glazing, some with stained glass. The left return wall (south front) is longer and has similar fenestration including a pentice to the ground-floor, and 2 similar dormers. Attached to the north side is a tall 2-centred archway with steeply pitched gable and ball finial.

Listing NGR: SJ 85350 95433



© Crown Copyright and database right 2021. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100024900.

© British Crown and SeaZone Solutions Limited 2021. All rights reserved. Licence number 102006.006.

Use of this data is subject to [Terms and Conditions](#).

