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Planning, Development & Heritage Consultants

**University of Manchester (Directorate of
Estates and Facilities Project Group)**

Prospect House

Planning Statement

09 September 2025

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Contents

1. Introduction
 2. Site and Surrounding Area
 3. Description of Development
 4. Pre-Application Consultation
 5. Planning Policy Context
 6. Appraisal
 7. Conclusions
-
- Appendix 1: Framework Construction Management Plan

1. Introduction

Purpose of this Statement

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Paul Butler Associates on behalf of the applicant, University of Manchester (Directorate of Estates and Facilities Project Group). The statement is submitted in support of a full planning application in relation to the Prospect House, Booth Street East, Manchester (hereafter referred to as 'the site').
- 1.2 The application seeks planning permission for the *'Proposed external alteration and refurbishment of Prospect House including the replacement of all glazing and curtain walling, replacement roofs, new folding perimeter edge protection to upper-level roofs, the installation of external down pipes and associated works'*.
- 1.3 The works proposed include the replacement of deteriorated building fabric alongside energy conservation upgrades. The works form part of the University of Manchester Long Term Maintenance programme (LTM) and Building Decarbonisation programme with buildings across the University estate programmed to benefit from retrofitting measures to improve energy efficiency. The enhancements proposed to Prospect House will assist the University of Manchester reuse the building for educational purposes and also help decarbonise their estate, thereby supporting their long-term goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2038 across all areas of their operation. Additionally, the application building forms part of a strategic project which seeks to provide additional educational space to accommodate the growth of the Department of Computer Science and Information Technology Service who intend to occupy Prospect House on completion of the proposed works.
- 1.4 This Planning Statement will provide an overview of the development proposals, and assess the proposals against adopted national and local planning policy.

Documents submitted with the Planning Application

1.5 The planning application is accompanied by the following information:

Supporting Documents

- Cover letter prepared by Paul Butler Associates, 09 September 2025;
- Completed Planning Application Form;
- Location Plan and Scheme Drawings (as referenced in cover letter) prepared by Fairhursts;
- Design and Access Statement Rev P01 prepared by Fairhursts, September 2025;
- Planning Statement prepared by Paul Butler Associates, September 2025, including Draft Construction Management Plan;
- Bat Survey - Preliminary Roost Assessment prepared by Project Ecology, 21 July 2025; and
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement, prepared by Tyler Grange, Reference 'TG Report No. 18166_R01_BV', 23rd July 2025.

Structure of this Statement

1.6 The remainder of this statement is structured as follows:

- Section 2 provides a description of the site and surrounding area including a review of the planning history;
- Section 3 presents the proposed development for which planning permission is sought;
- Section 4 briefly outlines the pre-application engagement with the local planning authority;

- Section 5 sets out the planning policy framework relevant to the site and the proposed development;
- Section 6 provides an assessment of the scheme against the development plan and considers the material planning considerations; and
- Section 7 provides a summary of the overall case for granting planning consent.

2. Site and Surrounding Area

Application Site

- 2.1 The application site is the Prospect House Building (see Figure 2.1), which is part of the University of Manchester (UoM) estate. The building is located off Booth Street East to the south of the Clifford Street and to the north of the UoM Information Technology Building. The site is bounded to the east and west by neighbouring university buildings; Crawford House on Oxford Road and Saint Peters Chaplaincy/Manchester Central Foodbank off Clifford Street and the Chemistry Building and the Henry Royce Institute and Multistorey Car Park on Rumford Street respectively.



Figure 2.1: Aerial view of application site (approximate outlined in red).

- 2.2 Prospect House was built about 25 years ago, designed by local architects Hodder Associates. The building is of three storeys designed with two wings linked by a central core. The building is constructed largely in render with steel curtain wall glazing and windows, some with decorative metal fins.
- 2.3 The building is not listed. It is not located in a conservation area, nor does it lie close to one. There are no listed buildings with intervisibility with the site. The application building was constructed in the late twentieth century and is considered not to be a Non Designated Heritage Asset.
- 2.4 The application building is located within the designated City Centre and Regional Centre, as identified on Manchester City Council (MCC)'s interactive proposals map.
- 2.5 There are no trees located within the site boundary, although there are trees to the landscaped area to the south of the building. Site levels are generally flat. The site is located within flood zone 2 although no changes are proposed to surface water discharge arrangements as the works relate to an existing building. The application site area is 950 square metres.



Figure 2.2: Prospect House viewed from Clifford Street Car Park.



Figure 2.3: Prospect House viewed from adjacent landscaped area.

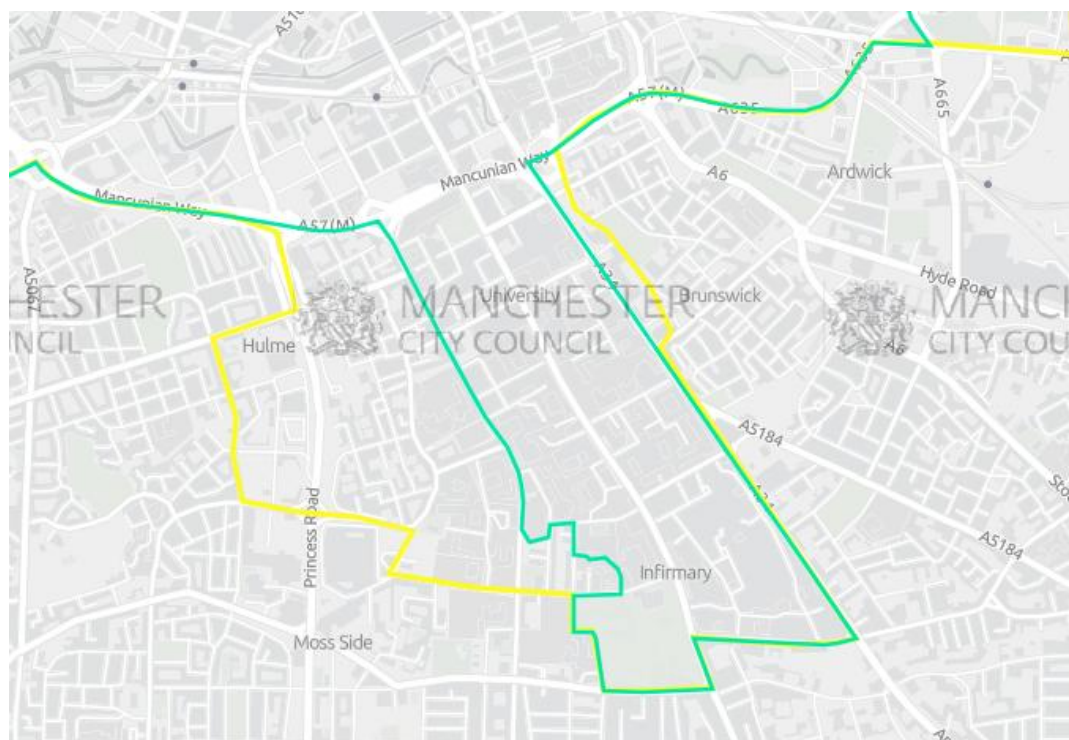


Figure 2.4: Manchester Interactive Mapping Extract showing inclusion in the City and Regional centres

Planning History

2.6 Further to analysis of Manchester City Council's Planning Application Database, the planning history relating to the site and its immediate surroundings is provided in the table below:

Reference	Proposal	Decision
061726/FO/CITY2/01	Infill extension to offices at second floor level	Approved 27 April 2001.
049745/FO/CITY2/96	Erection of a three storey building	Approved 3 October 1996
026693	Erection of a three storey building to form an information technology building	Approved 25 June 1986

Table 2.1: Planning History relating to the Application Site

The Surroundings

- 2.7 Prospect House building is located within the University of Manchester estate, and therefore the character of the surrounding area is predominantly educational in nature. Surrounding campus buildings vary in age, appearance, scale and materials creating a varied campus environment.

3. Description of Development

The Proposed Scheme

- 3.1 The application seeks full planning permission for the *'Proposed external alteration and refurbishment of Prospect House including the replacement of all glazing and curtain walling, replacement roofs, new folding perimeter edge protection to upper-level roofs, the installation of external down pipes and associated works'*.
- 3.2 The works proposed include the replacement of deteriorated building fabric alongside energy conservation upgrades. The works form part of the University of Manchester Long Term Maintenance programme (LTM) and Building Decarbonisation programme with buildings across the University estate programmed to benefit from retrofitting measures to improve energy efficiency. The enhancements proposed to Prospect House will assist the University of Manchester reuse the building for educational purposes and also help decarbonise their estate, thereby supporting their long-term goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2038 across all areas of their operation. Additionally the application building forms part of a strategic project which seeks to provide additional educational space to accommodate the growth of the Department of Computer Science and Information Technology Service who intend to occupy Prospect House on completion of the proposed works.
- 3.3 The existing building fabric of Prospect House is in need of significant overhaul/upgrade in order to accommodate continued educational use. The proposed external works are essential to achieving the continued use of the building.
- 3.4 Whilst not requiring planning permission, the upgrades to the internal fabric of the building and upgraded roof insulation have the potential to reduce the primary energy consumption associated with heating the building. In addition to carbon savings the proposals will provide staff and students with a more comfortable working environment thereby ensuring the

accommodation continues to meet the primary requirement of the building thereby helping to ensure the long-term occupation and future of the building.

- 3.5 Please refer to the submitted Design and Access Statement and architectural drawing pack prepared by Fairhursts for full details of the proposals.



Figure 3.1: Internal damp evidences the failing building envelope of Prospect House

4. Pre-Application Consultation

Overview

- 4.1 Pre-application discussions have helped shape the proposed development. Paragraphs 39-42 of the National Planning Policy Framework sets out the benefits of early engagement, including consideration of all fundamental issues associated with a proposal, which enables timely decisions to be made and reduces costs / delays to the applicant; and, enables agreement on the information required to accompany an application.
- 4.2 The design team held a site meeting with MCC planning officers prior to the submission of this application. During discussions with MCC officers, the various works proposed to the building were reviewed, and it was agreed the external alterations to the building would require planning permission together with the level of supporting information that would be required. The advice received from MCC officers has guided this application submission in terms of design and the scope of the submission.

5. Planning Policy Context

5.1 Planning policy guidance of relevance to the proposed development, and which provides the context for its assessment, is set out within national and local planning policy guidance. This includes:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF); and,
- The Development Plan for Manchester.

National Planning Policy Guidance

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

5.2 Section 38(6) of this Act states that the determination of planning applications must be made in accordance with the Development Plan, unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. This establishes the Development Plan as the primary decision-making document when considering planning applications. In this instance the development plan is the Manchester Development Plan (comprising of Places for Everyone, Manchester Core Strategy Development Plan, the Saved Policies of the Unitary Development Plan for Manchester and Supplementary Planning Documents).

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

5.3 The updated National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in December 2024 and sets out the government's planning policies and how these are expected to be applied. It replaces the Framework published in December 2023.

Chapter 2 'Achieving Sustainable Development'

- 5.4 Development proposals that accord with an up-to-date Development Plan should be approved without delay. Paragraph 11 confirms that where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date, permission should be granted unless: *'The application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the proposed development; or Any adverse impact of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination'.*
- 5.5 Paragraph 8 confirms that there are three dimensions to sustainable development; economic, social and environmental. To achieve sustainable development, economic, social and environmental gains should be pursued in mutually supportive ways through the planning system.
- 5.6 The NPPF explains that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area. These sustainable objectives should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans and the application of the policies in the framework. The NPPF is split into 17 chapters, the chapters of broad relevance to this development are discussed below.

Chapter 8 'Promoting healthy and safe communities'

- 5.7 Paragraph 96 advises that *'Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places'*, a principle which extends to include buildings.'

Chapter 11 'Making effective use of land'

- 5.8 Para. 125 of NPPF advises that planning decisions should give substantial weight to reusing brownfield land and existing buildings within settlements to meet land use needs. This principle extends to refurbishing buildings to accommodate future use.

Chapter 12 'Achieving well-designed places'

- 5.9 Paragraph 135 of NPPF advises that planning decisions should seek amongst other things to secure development which:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good design and architecture;
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change; and
- f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users'.

Local Planning Policy Guidance

Development Plan for Manchester

- 5.10 The Development Plan for Manchester comprises the following documents:
- Greater Manchester Places for Everyone (PfE) Plan (adopted 21 March 2024);
 - Manchester Core Strategy Development Plan Document (July 2012);
 - Saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan for Manchester (July 1995); and

- The Guide to Development in Manchester Supplementary Planning Document and Guidance (April 2007);

Greater Manchester Places for Everyone (PfE) Plan (adopted 21 March 2024)

- 5.11 The recently adopted Places for Everyone DPD introduces a number of new policies in respect of energy and sustainability.
- 5.12 Policy JP-S1: 'Sustainable Development' advises that 'To help tackle climate change, development should aim to maximise its economic, social and environmental benefits simultaneously, minimise its adverse impacts, utilise sustainable construction techniques and actively seek opportunities to secure net gains across each of the different objectives'.
- 5.13 Policy JP-S2: 'Carbon and Energy' advises that 'The aim of delivering a carbon neutral Greater Manchester no later than 2038, with a dramatic reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, will be supported through a range of measures including amongst other things 'Promoting the retrofitting of existing buildings with measures to improve energy'.
- 5.14 Policy JP-S6: 'Resource Efficiency' encourages the use of sustainable design and construction techniques to reduce carbon emissions, adapt and future proof to the impact of climate change, reduce and recycle waste and minimise water use.
- 5.15 Policy JP-P5: 'Education, Skills and Knowledge' advises that 'Significant enhancements in education, skills and knowledge to benefit existing and new residents will be promoted, including by: Supporting the continued growth and success of the university sector, such as through: (a) Enhancing the existing campuses; (b) Strengthening the world-leading research capabilities and promoting opportunities for business spin-offs; and (c) Continuing to help develop Greater Manchester as the UK's best destination for students'.
- 5.16 Policy JP-G7: 'Trees and Woodland' aims to protect existing tree cover.

Manchester Core Strategy Development Plan Document (July 2012)

- 5.17 The Core Strategy, adopted in July 2012, sets out the long-term strategic policies for Manchester's future development. The Core Strategy recognises that climate change and its impact on the environment both urban and natural is one of the most significant challenges facing Manchester. The Core Strategy advises that it is essential that the way in which Manchester develops over the plan period and beyond is set within the context of mitigating the impacts of climate change and adapting to its effects on the local environment. The document recognises that this challenge affects all areas of the city. Policy DM1 'Development Management sets out various matters that development should have regard to, including: appropriate siting, layout, scale, form, massing, materials and detail; impact on the surrounding areas and effects on amenity.

Saved Policies of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) for the City of Manchester (adopted 1995)

- 5.18 The UDP was superseded by the Core Strategy. However, a number of UDP policies have been 'saved'. Extant policies contained within the UDP which are relevant to the proposed scheme include Policy DC26 'Development and Noise' which aims to minimise the adverse impact of noise on noise-sensitive developments.

Guide to Development in Manchester Supplementary Planning Document 2007 (SPD)

- 5.19 This document aims to support and enhance the on-going shaping of the city by providing a set of reasoned principles which will guide developers, designers and residents to the sort of development that everyone wants to see in Manchester. The sections of the guide that have been considered in the development of the proposed scheme include:
- Section 1 'Creating a Sense of Place' aims to encourage the creation of places which are welcoming, inclusive, interesting and attractive.

- Section 3 'Accessibility' sets out design principles that will help to achieve accessible development and makes reference to the guidance document 'Design for Access 2' which provides detailed information on design standards.
- Section 4 'Environmental Standards' considers energy efficiency.

6. Appraisal

Introduction

- 6.1 It is a requirement of section 38(6) of the Town and Country Planning Act 2004 that where a development plan contains policies relevant to an application, the decision must be made in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 6.2 The statutory development plan therefore relating to the application site consists of the Greater Manchester PfE Document, Manchester City Council Core Strategy and the saved policies of the UDP. Material considerations relating to the application site include the National Planning Policy Framework, Planning Practice Guidance and Supplementary Planning Documents prepared by Manchester City Council.
- 6.3 The remainder of this section will examine the principle of development proposed for this site, followed by an appraisal of the scheme against all other relevant planning and environmental considerations. Having regard to the above planning policy guidance, the main material considerations against which the proposed scheme should be considered, and which are discussed in this section, include:
- Principle of Development;
 - Sustainability;
 - Design;
 - Potential Impact on Amenity; and
 - Crime and Security Issues.

Principle of Development

- 6.4 The principle of refurbishing and reusing the building for educational use is wholly acceptable in principle. NPPF Para. 125 confirms that planning decisions should give substantial weight to reusing brownfield land and existing buildings which is complied with. The development also complies with Para 161 which advises that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future by encouraging projects which use existing resources, which includes reusing existing buildings and the embodied carbon present within. Investment in the fabric of the UoM Campus aligns with the stated objectives of PfE Policy JP-P5: 'Education, Skills and Knowledge' which seeks to enhance existing campuses and the buildings within and to develop Greater Manchester as 'the UK's best destination for students'. Having regard to the adopted policies of the PfE, Core Strategy and Saved UDP noted in Section 5, it is considered that the principle of the development is appropriate.

Sustainability

- 6.5 The scheme will clearly help meet an identified need for reducing CO2 emissions by supporting low carbon development in Manchester. The Design and Access Statement (DAS) submitted in support of the application confirms that the existing roof fabric of the Prospect House building is currently inefficient, dated and in need of significant overhaul/upgrade in order to contribute toward the Universities carbon reduction objectives.
- 6.6 The DAS confirms that new roof and windows will reduce running costs and will therefore result in a reduction in carbon emissions. The fabric upgrades proposed will reduce the primary energy consumption associated with heating the building. As such, it is clear that the installation will achieve a carbon reduction over the present operational position. The replacement roof and windows will reduce CO2 emissions which is supported by PfE policies JP-S1: 'Sustainable Development'; Policy JP-S2: 'Carbon and Energy' and Policy JP-S6: 'Resource Efficiency'. The principle of development is also considered to be consistent with the policies in the NPPF, specifically: Para 8c) which advises that the planning system should encourage measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Design

- 6.7 Although the appearance of the building will be changed by the development, the changes for which planning approval are sought are relatively subtle and can be considered a light touch visually whilst nonetheless representing a comprehensive upgrade of the building. This is achieved by designing a series of interventions and works which respect and reflect the existing materiality of the building. The changes proposed therefore work with the grain of what already exists and do not seek to make radical or unnecessary changes to the appearance of the building.
- 6.8 The proposed addition of new perimeter edge protection to the upper levels of the building has been designed to be visually unobtrusive being inset and with folding edge protection proposed. Guard rails will be folded up only when personnel are actively undertaking building maintenance work. At other times the edge protection will fold flat. The guard rail is therefore judged to be recessive and the impact on the appearance of the roofline from ground level is negligible.
- 6.9 Overall, the proposed alterations are considered to be acceptable and consistent with MCC Supplementary Planning Guidance relating to design, and ethos of chapter 12 of the NPPF.

Potential Impact on Amenity

- 6.10 Core Strategy policy DM1 advises that all development should have regard to impact on amenity, including privacy, light, noise and vibration, amongst other things. The proposed external alterations will not result in any loss of amenity to neighbours by way of overlooking, overbearing impact, loss of light, glint / glare, or vibration. The proposals do not result in any adverse visual amenity as discussed above nor do the proposals alter the noise environment in the area as no additional plant is proposed. It is concluded that the proposed development is consistent with CS policy DM1, UDP policy DC26 and the relevant provisions of the NPPF with regard to acoustic considerations.

Ecological Impacts

Trees

- 6.11 The application is supported by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement, prepared by Tyler Grange, Reference 'TG Report No. 18166 R01 BV', 23rd July 2025 which confirms that no tree removals are required to implement the proposals with the development works requiring only relatively minor pruning works to the canopy volumes of two trees on land neighbour the application site as detailed in the report. Temporary fencing is proposed to the root protection areas of trees on land to the south to mitigate against any adverse impact on tree retentions. Policy JP-G7: 'Trees and Woodland' of PfE which aims to protect existing tree cover on sites is therefore complied with.

Protected Species

- 6.12 The application is accompanied by a Bat Survey - Preliminary Roost Assessment prepared by Project Ecology, 21 July 2025. This confirms the building has been the subject of a preliminary roost assessment which shows the building to offer negligible bat roost suitability. No further bat survey work or mitigation is deemed to be necessary prior to implementation of the proposed application works. The potential for the scheme to impact on protected species has been fully considered and is regarded to be acceptable.

Crime, Security and Access Issues

- 6.13 Existing access arrangements are to be retained and the proposals are acceptable from a security perspective and will be in accordance with the provisions of local and national policies which seek to achieve well designed, safe places.

Summary

- 6.14 The above assessment has evidenced that proposed refurbishment and carbon reduction benefits are proposed to an existing building in a sustainable location, with no known

adverse impacts arising from the development that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh its benefit. The application scheme is considered to be in full compliance with the adopted policies of the PfE, Core Strategy and Saved UDP. It is our view that no material planning considerations exist that would justify a refusal of planning permission. Consequently, the proposals are considered to constitute sustainable development as defined by the NPPF and the presumption in favour of sustainable development should apply in the determination of this application.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of the University of Manchester (Directorate of Estates and Facilities Project Group) in support of an application seeking full planning permission for *‘Proposed external alteration and refurbishment of Prospect House including the replacement of all glazing and curtain walling, replacement roofs, new folding perimeter edge protection to upper-level roofs, the installation of external down pipes and associated works’*.
- 7.2 The development proposed by this application will allow refurbishment and re-occupation of Prospect House for educational use, accommodate the expansion of the Department of Computer Science and achieve a carbon reduction over the building’s current operational position. This statement has provided an assessment of the various planning impacts associated with the proposals and has successfully demonstrated that there are no technical reasons that would warrant refusal of planning permission.

Summary of contribution to Sustainable Development

- 7.3 In summary, set against the three dimensions of sustainable development identified at paragraph 8 of the NPPF, the proposed development would fulfil all of the following:

Economic role: In the short term, job opportunities associated with the construction and procurement will be created. Furthermore, the reduction in annual carbon emissions will be associated with lower energy costs, enabling the applicant to make long term savings on maintaining the estate.

Social Role: The proposals will improve provide an appropriate operational environment for students and staff using the building.

Environmental: The proposed works have potential to provide up an reduction in annual carbon emissions and represent meaningful progress in the applicant's transition to a Zero Carbon estate by 2038.

- 7.4 We conclude that the benefits outlined above would not be significantly and demonstrably outweighed by any perceived adverse impacts if planning permission was granted. The proposals are therefore considered to constitute sustainable development as defined by paragraph 8 of the NPPF and consequently the presumption in favour of sustainable development should apply in the determination of this application.

Appendix 1: Framework Construction Management Plan

This appendix to the Planning Statement provides initial details in respect of how it is envisaged the construction phase will be managed. At the planning submission stage of the process, in advance of a contractor being appointed it is not feasible to submit a detailed construction management plan. A construction management plan is usually produced by the main contractor as they will have their own 'in house' procedures and regulations in place to manage the construction phase. The appointment of a contractor typically takes place once planning permission has been approved, and therefore this matter is usually the subject of a pre commencement planning condition in the Manchester City Council administrative area.

Avison Young, heading the Project Team, has opened discussions with the University Estates Dept during the pre-application stage and have gained an insight into the various issues which may face staff and students in nearby buildings. Avison Young and their appointed contractor will continue to work closely with the University Estates Dept to ensure that construction activity is managed effectively to minimise potential impacts on occupants of the surrounding buildings.

Avison Young are keen to manage this process proactively and this may include the site manager liaising with building managers/staff/students so they have a 'point contact' should they need it. It is also envisaged that the contractor will hold a consultation session with the building managers of surrounding buildings prior to construction commencing. As mentioned above the construction management plan is usually the subject of a planning condition and will likely include information with respect to the items listed below:

- Establishing a point of contact for staff/students prior to construction works commencing on site.
- Identified construction compound.
- Identified vehicular access points for all construction traffic, staff vehicles and heavy goods vehicles.
- Defined access and egress routes for demolition and construction traffic, including staff, delivery and construction vehicles, including HGVs.
- Details of dust suppression measures and measures to control dust and mud on the surrounding public highway network.
- Methodology for the undertaking of demolition, including any asbestos identified to be removed by a licensed contractor.

- Specified working hours for the site including hours for the delivery of materials.
- Identified measures for the management of on-site construction vehicles and plant machinery in order to reduce noise/emissions.
- Measures for securing the site, including on site security and lighting.

Avison Young will work proactively with the Council through the post planning approval in order to formalise the effective management of the construction phase.