

Albert Bridge House

Statement of Community Involvement

Prepared by Counter Context Ltd

JUNE 2025

Table of Contents

List of Figures	3
1. Introduction	4
Overview	4
Site Location.....	4
Overview of the Proposed Development	4
Policy Requirements	5
2. Pre-Application Public Consultation Activities	7
Introduction.....	7
Engagement with Elected Members	7
2.1.1 Deansgate Ward Members	7
Publicising the Consultation	7
2.1.2 Consultation postcard	7
2.1.3 Press release and media coverage	8
Consultation Website	8
2.1.4 Website activity	9
Consultation Drop-in Event	10
Methods for Receiving Feedback.....	11
2.1.5 Email Address.....	11
2.1.6 Online Feedback Form	11
3. Pre-Application Consultation Feedback	12
Summary of Feedback Received	12
Analysis of Feedback	12
3.1.1 Responses to Closed Questions	12
3.1.2 Benefits and priorities	13
4. Consideration of Pre-Application Consultation Feedback	14
Consideration of Issues.....	14
5. Conclusion and Influence of Consultation on the Proposals	20
6. Appendices	21
Appendix 1: Consultation event displays	21
Appendix 2: Consultation postcard	27
Appendix 3: Consultation feedback form	28

List of Figures

Figure 1	Site Location
Figure 2	Consultation postcard distribution area
Figure 3	Screenshots of the articles about the proposals that appeared on Manchester Evening News and Business Live
Figure 4	Screenshots of the consultation website
Figure 5	Graph showing the website activity during the consultation period
Figure 6	Photo from the consultation drop-in event

1. Introduction

Overview

This Statement of Community Involvement has been prepared by Counter Context Ltd on behalf of Oval Real Estate, hereby referred to as 'the Applicant', in respect of the redevelopment of the Albert Bridge House building and site. It provides:

- An account of the pre-application consultation undertaken with local residents, local community groups, local councillors and other key stakeholders about the proposals.
- A summary of the feedback received from these consultees.
- Evidence that this feedback has been considered in the development of the proposals.

The pre-application consultation strategy was designed in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024).

Site Location

The proposed site is bound by Bridge Street, St Mary's Parsonage and the River Irwell, and is currently home to an 18-storey office building occupied by HMRC and the adjoining car park and land, including Albert Bridge Garden. It was referenced in the 2020 Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) for St Mary's Parsonage as providing a key opportunity for redevelopment.

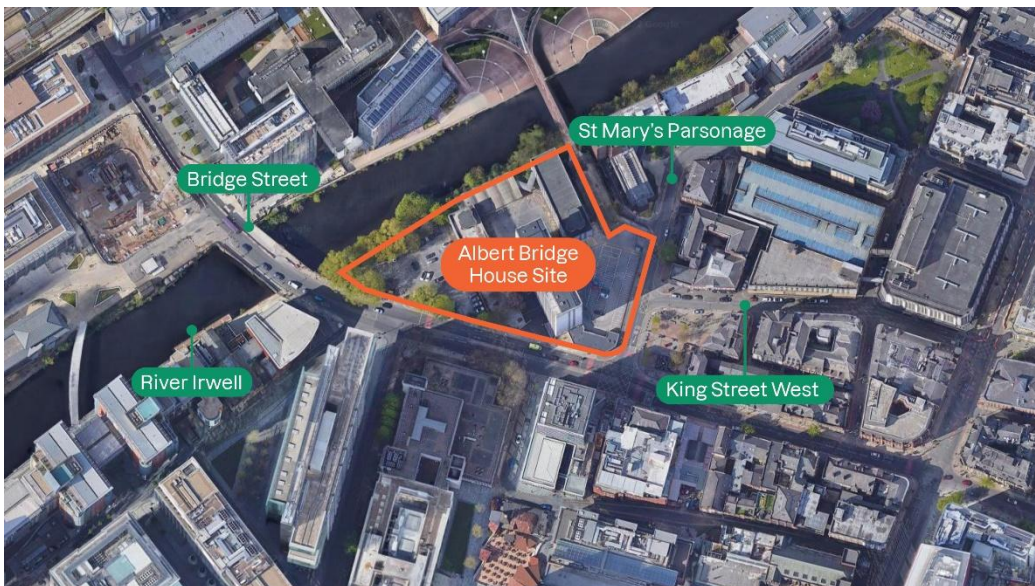


Figure 1: Site Location.

Overview of the Proposed Development

The proposals seek to deliver:

- 250,000 sq. ft of best in class, flexible Grade A office space.
- Two new residential buildings providing c.800 homes in a mix of 1-, 2-, and 3-bedroom homes, alongside amenities such as co-working areas, wellness facilities including a gym and yoga studios, cinema and a games room, rentable dining areas, and a rooftop garden.
- Dynamic commercial offering, including retail and food & beverage units.
- New pedestrian and cycle connections through the site, including enhanced access to the river

- New public realm and extensive landscaping.

Policy Requirements

Conducting an early and transparent pre-application consultation is consistent with the guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024)

Paragraph 40 of the NPPF states that:

Early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community.¹

The NPPF goes on to state that:

[Local Authorities] should also, where they think this would be beneficial, encourage any applicants who are not already required to do so by law to engage with the local community and, where relevant, with statutory and non-statutory consultees, before submitting their applications.²

...

Design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals. Early discussion between applicants, the local planning authority and local community about the design and style of emerging schemes is important for clarifying expectations and reconciling local and commercial interests. Applicants should work closely with those affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot.³

This Statement of Community Involvement also fulfils a formal recommendation of the Local Planning Authority to provide people with an opportunity to feed into the design process of a scheme at an early stage.

Manchester City Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement (2018) sets out 'how developers can ensure that there is an effective opportunity for people to comment and steer development'⁴.

In providing guidance to developers on how they should carry out pre-application consultation, Manchester City Council's Statement of Community Involvement provides recommendations on the types of methods that developers can adopt as part of their pre-application consultation strategy.

Pre-application consultation is beneficial to both the community and the developer as it allows the developer to design a proposal which takes on board the opinions of the community...

...The format of the consultation that the developer uses is likely to be discussed with us as part of pre-application discussions, to help ensure that there is an effective opportunity for people to comment and steer development. The following methods are likely to be suitable and should be used as appropriate:

¹ Secretary of State for Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, National Planning Policy Framework, 2024, paragraph 40.

² Secretary of State for Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, National Planning Policy Framework, 2024, paragraph 41.

³ Secretary of State for Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, National Planning Policy Framework, 2024, paragraph 137.

⁴ Manchester City Council's Planning and Development Statement of Community Involvement, June 2018, page 33.

- Letters sent to residents and businesses in nearby streets telling them what is proposed, how they can get more information and how they can give the developer their views
- Public exhibition in an accessible location close to the development (e.g. library or supermarket) which tells the public about what is happening and gives them an opportunity to make comments
- A website set up by the developer
- Leaflets distributed to nearby streets and placed in facilities near the proposed developments which have a tear off slip for comments
- Social media used by the developer to advertise the development and associated consultation events...

...We can't require developers to carry out pre-application consultation using the methods set out above, but it is encouraged. Where developers have not engaged with local residents and businesses, it is possible that an application could generate more objections once submitted. This could result in the developer having to amend their application to address the objections which could delay the decision-making process.⁵

From the beginning of the development process, the Applicant set out to undertake a transparent and meaningful consultation with the local community. Throughout the process, stakeholders and local people had the chance to provide feedback to the Applicant and engage in an ongoing dialogue through the consultation channels.

⁵ Manchester City Council's Planning and Development Statement of Community Involvement, June 2018, pages 33-34.

2. Pre-Application Public Consultation Activities

Introduction

This section of the Statement of Community Involvement sets out the range of activities undertaken as part of the pre-application consultation, which ran for three weeks from **Monday 3 March to Sunday 23 March 2025**.

The key aspects of the consultation are outlined below.

Engagement with Elected Members

2.1.1 Deansgate Ward Members

Prior to the launch of the consultation, an email was issued to the three councillors representing the Deansgate ward: Councillors Joan Davies, Marcus Johns, and Anthony McCaul. The email provided an introduction to the proposals and the consultation and offered a briefing session with the Applicant's team.

A meeting with Councillor McCaul was held via Microsoft Teams on Wednesday 21 May 2025. Representatives. The session consisted of a presentation by the Applicant's team on the proposals, which was followed by a Q&A segment, where Councillor McCaul was invited to ask questions, share initial impressions, and discuss any concerns directly with the team.

Publicising the Consultation

2.1.2 Consultation postcard

A consultation postcard was delivered to all residential and business addresses located within a distribution area of **1594 addresses** (see Figure 2 below) at the start of the consultation period.

The A5 sized postcard introduced the proposals for the Albert Bridge House site and directed recipients towards the consultation website to find out more and provide their feedback via the dedicated online feedback form or by email. The postcard also provided details of the in-person consultation drop-in session held during the consultation period.

The consultation postcard is provided as **Appendix 1**.

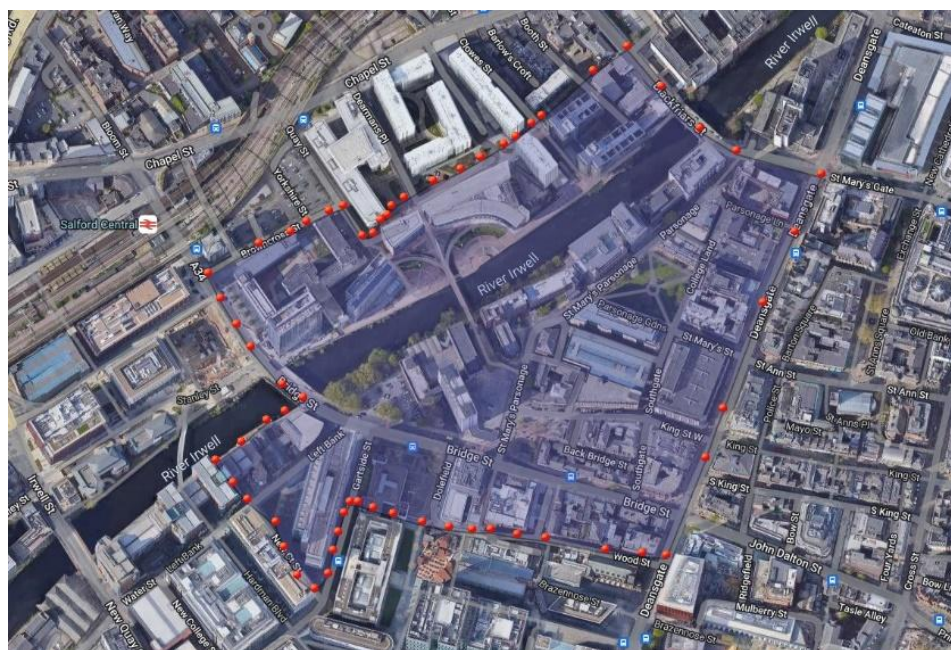


Figure 2: Consultation postcard distribution area.

2.1.3 Press release and media coverage

A press release was issued on Monday 3 March 2025 to a range of local, regional and national media publications. It provided introductory information about the proposals and details of the public consultation, including the consultation website and in person drop-in event.

Articles subsequently appeared in Manchester Evening News, Place North West, Housing Today, Business Live, Construction Enquirer, The Architects' Journal, and Building Design.

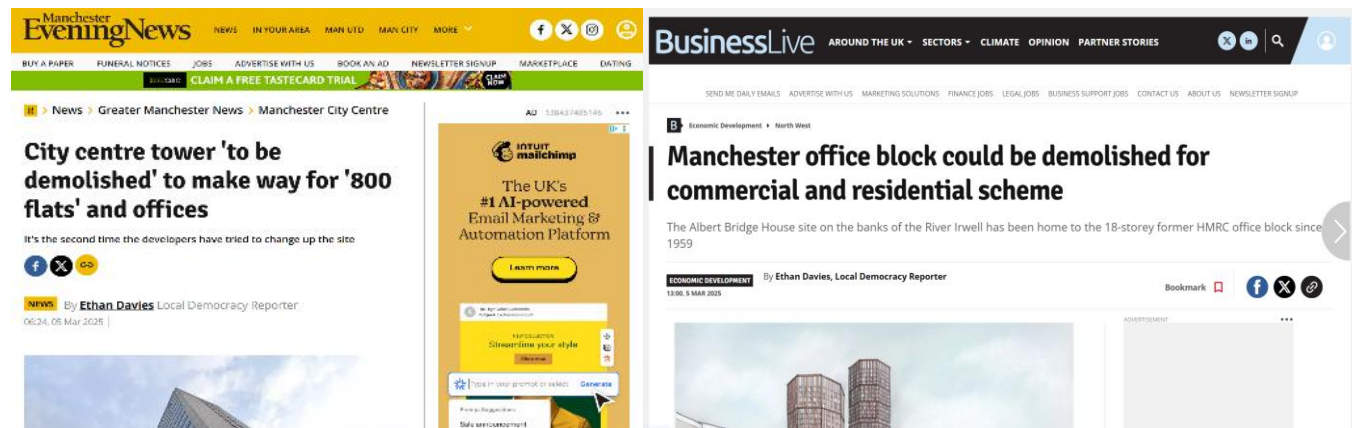
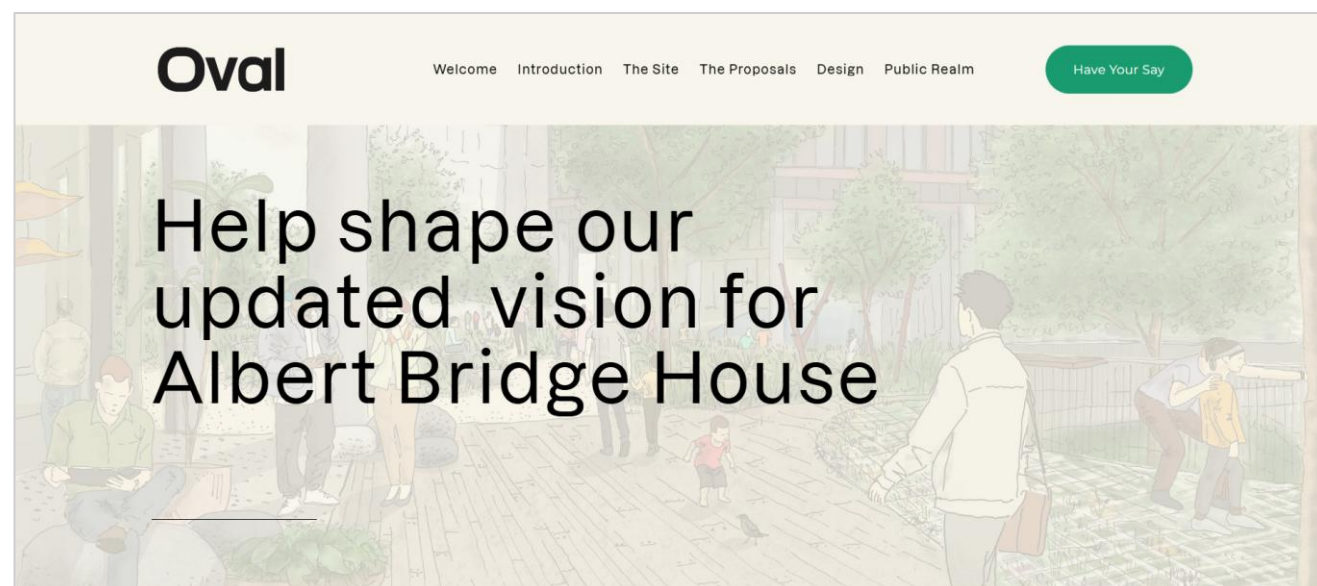


Figure 3: Screenshots of the articles about the proposals that appeared on Manchester Evening News & Business Live.

Consultation Website

A dedicated consultation website (www.albertbridgehouse-mcr.com) went live at the start of the consultation period. The site provided information about the proposals and the consultation process. It also included a 'Have your say' section with a link to an online feedback form and the project email address so that people could provide feedback. An electronic (PDF) version of the exhibition boards displayed at the in-person event was available to view and download from the site.



The Site

The Albert Bridge House site is located between Bridge Street, the River Irwell, St Mary's Parsonage and Trinity Bridge in Manchester City Centre. It is a gateway location when entering the City from Salford and a prominent location along the River Irwell.

It is currently home to a vacant 18 storey office building, formally occupied by HMRC, and an adjoining car park and land, including Albert Bridge Gardens.

The proposed site is included in the 2020 Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) for St Mary's Parsonage as providing a key opportunity for redevelopment.



Aerial view of the site

Why not reuse the existing building?

At Oval, we have a huge commitment to renovating and retrofitting old buildings. While that is always our starting point, Albert Bridge House doesn't offer the potential for a successful



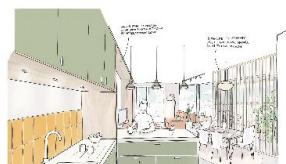
Our Updated Design



Overview aerial sketch



Sketch of the public realm



Design Approach

The proposals now feature three elegant buildings—one office building and two residential buildings—with active ground floor uses throughout, enhancing engagement at street level.

To create a landmark at a key entry point to the city, the design increases building height along the River Irwell, making a strong visual statement. Additionally, all buildings adopt an octagonal form, ensuring a cohesive and consistent architectural approach across the site.

Greater separation between the buildings provides more 'breathing space', allowing for enhanced natural light, improved views, and reduced overlooking. This also allows for better circulation and a more inviting public realm.

The building forms frame key views from all approaches, while their compact footprints improve permeability, ensuring the scheme is both responsive to the microclimate and seamlessly integrated into Manchester's evolving urban fabric.

Figure 4: Screenshots of the consultation website.

2.1.4 Website activity

The joint consultation website saw a total of **1224 visits** from **1133 unique visitors** over the consultation period.

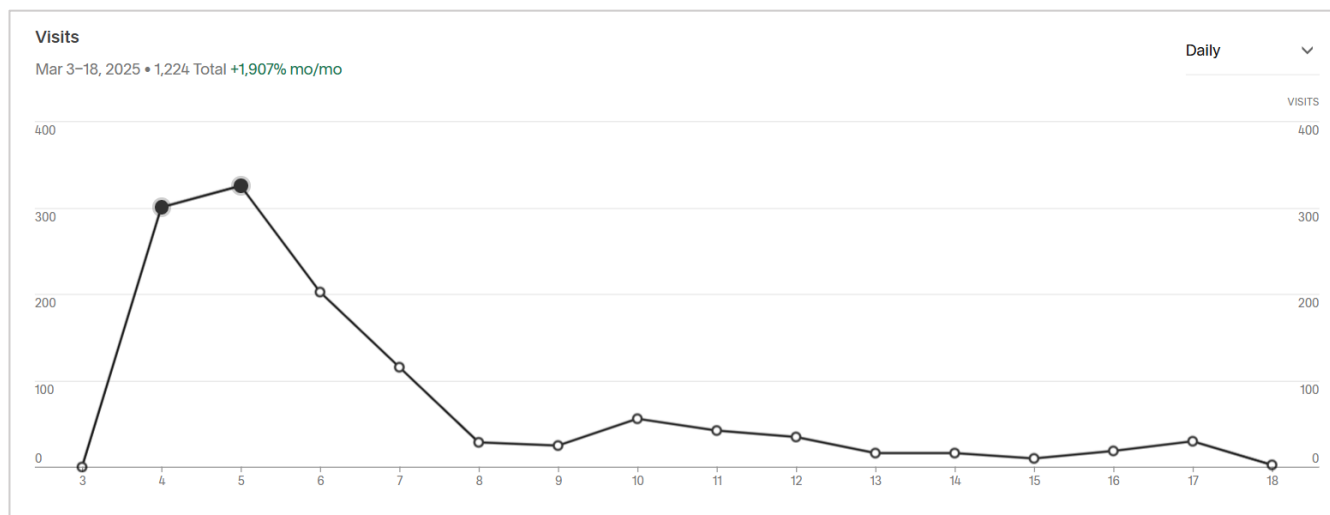


Figure 5: Graph showing the website activity during the consultation period.

Consultation Drop-in Event

As part of the consultation, a public drop-in event was held at The People's History Museum (Leftbank, Manchester M3 3ER) on **Thursday 11 March 2025** from **4pm to 7pm**. The event provided people with an opportunity to view the plans in more detail, ask questions and speak to members of the project team, and provide feedback.

Representatives from Deloitte (Planning Consultant), Savills (Project Manager), Studio Egret West (Architect) and Counter Context (Consultation and Engagement Consultant) were present at the event.

Printed copies of the online feedback form were available for attendees to submit feedback.

The event display is provided as **Appendix 2**, and the feedback form is provided as **Appendix 3**.

A total of 14 people attended the drop-in event.



Figure 6: Photo from the consultation drop-in event.

Methods for Receiving Feedback

2.1.5 Email Address

The project email address (**consult@albertbridgehouse-mcr.com**) was publicised on the consultation website, allowing people to contact the consultation team with any questions, as well as offering an alternative channel to submit feedback.

2.1.6 Online Feedback Form

An online feedback form was included on the consultation website on the **Have Your Say** page.

Paper copies of the form were available at the consultation drop-in event for attendees to complete. The feedback form is provided as **Appendix 3**.

3. Pre-Application Consultation Feedback

Summary of Feedback Received

A total of 21 responses were received during the pre-application consultation via the following channels:

Response Type	Number
Online feedback form	28
Paper feedback forms completed at consultation drop-in events	0
Emails	1
Total	29

All of the responses received during the pre-application consultation period have been logged and considered by the Applicant's team.

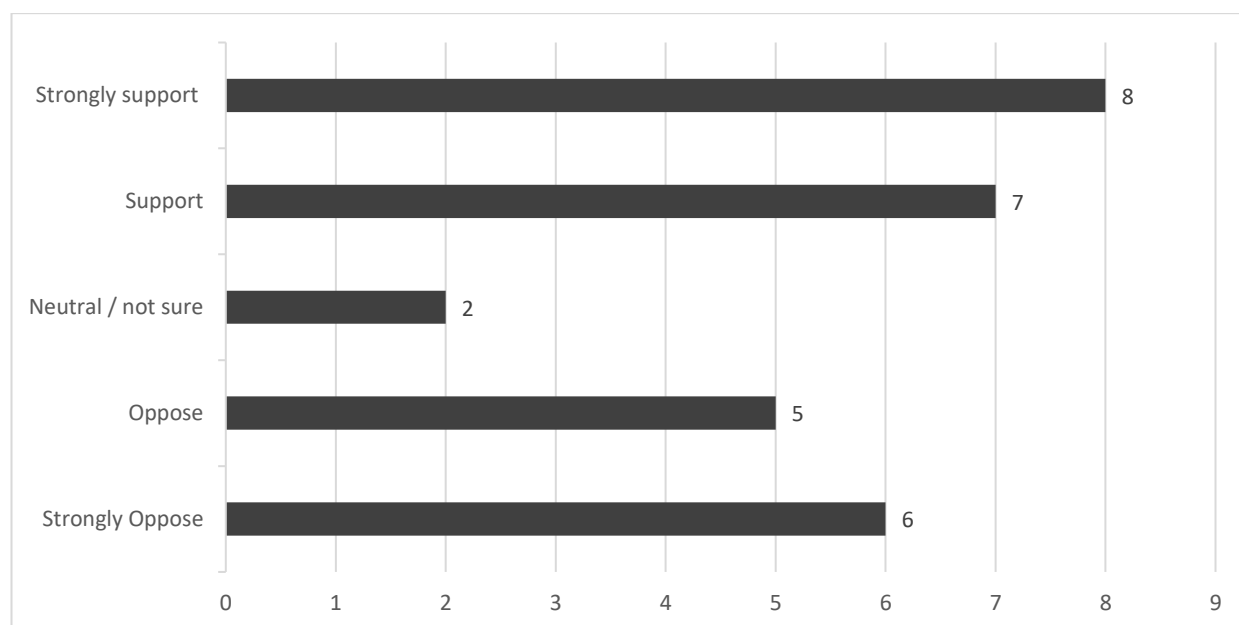
Analysis of Feedback

The feedback form included a series of multiple-choice questions and open questions about the proposals. Here follows a summary of the answers received through the multiple-choice questions asked as part of the online feedback form.

Verbal feedback received at the consultation event and comments received through the open-text questions included in the feedback form and by email are summarised and responded to in **Section 4.1**.

3.1.1 Responses to Closed Questions

Having read the information boards, what are your views on our proposals for Albert Bridge House? (28 people responded to this question).



As the chart above shows, the majority of those who answered this question indicated that they either 'Support' or 'Strongly support' the proposals (53%). 39% of respondents were 'Opposed' or 'Strongly opposed' to the proposals and 8% stated they were 'Neutral / unsure'.

3.1.2 Benefits and priorities

How would you rank each of the elements listed below in terms of how important they are to you? (1 = most important, 5 = least important). (25 people responded to this question).

As Table 1 below shows, on average, the most important element for those who responded was *Improved public access across the site, including to the riverside*, whereas *Flexible Grade A office space* was listed as least important.

Elements	Ranking
Improved public access across the site, including to the riverside	1
Enhanced public realm and landscaped outdoor amenity space	2
New high-quality homes	3
Ground floor active frontages including retail, food & beverage units	4
Flexible Grade A office space	5

4. Consideration of Pre-Application Consultation Feedback

Consideration of Issues

An extensive summary of the issues raised by respondents and how they have been considered and responded to by the Applicant is provided in the following table.

Topic	Applicant Response
Support for the proposals	
Comments expressing support for the redevelopment of the site. It was suggested that Albert Bridge House is outdated and an 'eyesore', and that the proposals will serve to regenerate a key area of Manchester city centre.	The Applicant welcomes these comments of support.
Support for the provision much-needed new homes in the city centre.	
Comments that the updated proposals are much improved on the previous plans brought forward back in 2022.	
Height and massing	
Comments expressing concern in relation to the proposed heights of the buildings for the following reasons: ➤ Potential loss of daylight / sunlight and overshadowing of neighbouring buildings and residents. Specific references were made to The Bridge Apartments and the Century Buildings. It was suggested that this would have a negative impact on their quality of life. It was also noted that neighbouring residents have a 'right to light'. ➤ Potential loss of daylight / sunlight to public spaces around the site, including the River Irwell and Parsonage Gardens. ➤ Concern that the size and proximity of the buildings could compromise the privacy of neighbouring residents. ➤ Suggestions that the proposed height is not in keeping with the character of the surrounding area.	The buildings have been positioned to maximise separation distances to each other and surrounding buildings, while the octagonal form of the buildings will enhance sunlight and daylight in public spaces and ensure well-lit homes and workspaces. Throughout the design development process daylighting levels and potential impacts as a result of overshadowing have been reviewed, with impacts assessed minimal, and compliant with Building Research Establishment (BRE) best practise guidelines – the standard by which build proposals are reviewed within the UK. The location of the Site, relative to the Century buildings, and Parsonage gardens, is West-Southwest, and a distance of over 130m. Impacts of sunlight onto Parsonage gardens will therefore be minimal. The Daylight/Sunlight assessment included with the planning application concludes that the vertical sky component (VSC) and no skyline (NSL) assessment criteria a negligible adverse change will be experienced as a result of the Proposed Scheme. At present, the section of river adjacent to the site receives minimal/no sunlight throughout the year, due to the existing buildings that are in parallel alignment with, and in close proximity to the riverside. The riverside will, in fact, benefit from this development as there will be management in place upon opening of the public realm and the riverside walk.
Comments expressing support for the scale and shape of the buildings.	The Applicant welcomes these comments of support.

A comment that a Daylight / Sunlight Assessment should be undertaken.	A Daylight / Sunlight Assessment has been undertaken and has been submitted as part of this planning application. The assessment undertaken captured the before and after impacts to receptors within the local context including: The Century Buildings, 2-8 Left Bank Apartments, 29 New Bailey St., 32 Quay Street, The Bridge, 40 Dearmans Pl., Bradshaw House, Alcock House, as well as nearby public amenity spaces. The majority of adverse impacts sited in the report are minor or negligible.
Suggestions that the proposed height and massing is not in keeping with the character and scale of the surrounding area.	The height and massing of all the buildings respond to the context of the emerging skyline in this fast-changing part of the city centre, with the landmark design contributing to its character and sense of place. The height is in keeping with a number of other buildings that are proposed or currently underway, within the surrounding and wider context, such as Greengate Park, One Heritage Tower (E), St Michaels (S), Riverview Apartments (N), and Trinity Islands (W)
A comment expressing concern that views of the courthouse for existing residents will be blocked by the new buildings.	The Civil Justice Centre will remain visible for the majority of those that can see it at present, as most buildings to the East of the site are currently obscured by the existing Albert Bridge House, due to its height and massing in relation to neighbouring buildings. The development proposals introduce view corridors that are not currently available on the site due to the massing and orientations of the existing 18 storey ABH building.
A comment noting that the height of the buildings was not disclosed in the project's plans.	The exhibition boards linked on the website and displayed at the in-person event included a dedicated board (<i>A landmark design</i>) detailing the height and massing of the buildings.
A suggestion that the sketches shown as part of the consultation do not show enough detail.	At the time of the consultation, the design for the scheme was still in development. As such, sketch designs were presented to provide an early indication of the design direction and key principles being explored. More detailed and refined designs have since been developed, taking into account the comments received during the consultation process.
Design	
Comments expressing support for the buildings' updated design. The design was praised for offering something unique and different to a perceived standard design style for other developments that have been brought forward in Manchester city centre in recent years.	The Applicant welcomes these comments of support.

A comment that the buildings are positioned too close to the River Irwell. It was suggested that the taller buildings should be set back further away from the river. Another respondent questioned whether it was sensible positioning buildings close to the river on the grounds that it is prone to flooding.	Building locations and Impacts to the river have been assessed at numerous stages throughout the design development process, including through Site investigations into ground condition and sub-soil make-up. The flooding impacts as a result of the proposal will be negligible, with the sloping river embankment to remain or be reinstated, operating as a fluvial buffer to the river below, to avoid adverse risk to the ground level proposals, or accessible public realm landscape within the scheme proposal. The arrangement of buildings within the site has been established with priority placed towards public realm improvement and creating an accessible and inviting new public place for Manchester.
One response criticised the internal layouts of the apartments, suggesting that there is excess space given to the internal corridors and that the size of the second bedroom in the 2-bedroom units isn't sufficient.	Apartment layouts have been produced in accordance with MCC local planning policy, as well as the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS). Several of the apartment types within the overall housing mix have been designed as 2 Bed 3 Person homes, suitable for 3 people sharing, or a couple that have the benefit of a home office. The spatial requirements for the single bedroom in these apartments are less stringent than for a 2 Bed 4 Person home.
Public realm and landscaping	
Comments of support for the landscape proposals, including the planned green space and improved access to the river.	The Applicant welcomes these comments of support.
A request to enhance the public space around the iconic bridge towards Lowry Hotel was made.	The Applicant is only seeking to conduct works within the confines of the site boundary.
A question regarding who would be responsible for maintaining the landscaped area along the river and ensure it is safe.	Maintenance for the landscaped areas and public realm will be via a Management Company appointed by the operators of each building.
Traffic	
Comments noting concern for the potential increase in traffic and additional pressure on Manchester's road network as a result of the development.	The proposal is for a car-free development – with the exception of 8 parking spaces for the mobility impaired, accessible via a secure entry and exit junction on Bridge Street. This level of parking provision should therefore not serve to exacerbate traffic in the area. Trip generation forecasts have demonstrated that there would be a decrease in vehicular trip generation for the proposed uses of the site compared to the existing development. This is because the development is car limited in nature, and the typical demographic of staff and residents are expected to favour travel by public transport, walking, cycling, or flexible working / working from home on certain days of the week. As such, any vehicular impact would be

	negligible on the surrounding area in terms of highways, traffic, and transportation.
Parking	
A comment expressing support or not including car parking within the proposals. It was noted that the city centre enjoys excellent public transport options which negates the need for car ownership.	Aligned to the Applicant's ESG objectives and Manchester City Council's goal of achieving net zero by 2028, the proposal is for a car-free development – with the exception of 8 parking spaces for the mobility impaired, accessible via a secure entry and exit junction on Bridge Street.
A question about how much parking provision within the proposals, and whether EV charging is included.	As highlighted, the site's location means that it enjoys fantastic access to the city's public transport network, which means the site is easily accessible. All accessible parking spaces provided will include active charging capabilities for electric vehicles.
Noise	
Concern for potential noise and disturbance caused by the construction of the development. It was also noted that construction should be undertaken between 9am-5pm and also not take place during weekends.	A Construction Management Plan will be submitted as part of the planning application. The CMP details the measures that will be put in place to reduce and mitigate the impacts of construction in terms of noise and vibration (including the use of silencers or mufflers, barriers and careful location of plant and deliveries). As per Manchester City Council guidelines, all works which are audible beyond the site boundary will be restricted to: Monday - Friday: 7.30am - 6pm, Saturday: 8.30am - 2pm & Sunday / Bank holidays: no work, as per the guidance.
A comment expressing concern for potential noise disturbance from the planned commercial units on the ground floor of the buildings. It was suggested that music should not be allowed.	The ES confirms that Tenant Lease Agreements will include control mechanisms for Tenant generated noise and vibration. The ES also confirms that deliveries and collections will be limited to 07:00 to 23:00 hours only and that Tenants will not be permitted to charge external/semi-external bins between 23:00 and 07:00 hours. There will be a planning condition relating to noise where this can be addressed further.
The site	
A comment expressing objection to the redevelopment on the site on the grounds that Albert Bridge House should remain due its status as a high-quality architectural landmark.	The Applicant is committed to renovating and retrofitting old buildings and while that was the starting point when developing the proposals, ultimately Albert Bridge House doesn't offer the potential for a successful renovation. The building was purpose-built in the 1950s as a tax office and was not designed with long-term

	sustainability in mind. As such, its layout and design just don't meet modern office occupier requirements. The Applicant is also keen to re-engage the site with river frontage behind Albert Bridge House. As it stands, the existing layout of the building turns its back on the river, and its retention would ultimately restrict the opportunity to open up the site and improve connections through it.
Tenure type and pricing	
A comment that the properties should be affordable for locals.	At this stage, it is not envisaged that affordable housing will be included. The proposals have been designed to realise the potential of this underused site and make significant contribute to the SRF's vision of creating a thriving and sustainable neighbourhood in this part of the city centre. Realising these wider aims of regeneration through the delivery of a high quality designed, 'best-in class', net zero new office building, two landmark residential towers and extensive public realm amenity improvements involves considerable costs to the developer. The Applicant continues to run viability appraisals and an assessment on the inclusion of affordable housing will be provided as part of their planning application.
A comment expressing concern that the apartments would be let via Airbnb. It was suggested that this could lead to antisocial behaviour and make the area less safe.	The residential units are designed as a Build to Rent (BtR) and most, if not all, BtR operators prohibit Airbnb type sub-letting.
Construction	
A question regarding how much work would be required on the foundations of the buildings and what the environmental impacts would be.	The foundation solution is not yet known but is assumed to include piled and non-piled foundations. Piling activities will be undertaken in line with guidance, such as the Environment Agency's Piling and penetrative ground improvement methods on land affected by contamination: guidance on pollution prevention. This will be led by the appointed contractor(s). Where required a piling risk assessment will be completed to understand the risk of piling activities associated with impacted soils and receptors.
Consultation	
A comment that residents of the Century Buildings weren't consulted as they didn't receive a postcard.	The Century Buildings were included within the consultation zone – the area within which the postcard publicising the consultation was issued to residents and businesses. Consultation postcards were distributed via Royal Mail ahead of the consultation opening.

	A resident of the Century Buildings who attended the consultation drop-in event reported that they had not received a postcard. After being made aware of the potential issue, the Applicant looked into the matter and found no reason as to suggest they weren't delivered. No undelivered copies were returned to sender, suggesting that there had been no issues with access to the buildings to prevent delivery. However, to ensure residents of the Century Buildings were aware of the consultation, able to take part in the consultation and provide feedback, the Applicant circulated a digital copy of the postcard to leaseholders of the building (via a resident) and extended the consultation deadline to Friday 28 March 2025.
--	--

5. Conclusion and Influence of Consultation on the Proposals

The consultation which has been undertaken is in accordance with both the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024) and with Manchester City Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement (2018). This document fulfils the requirement for a consultation supporting statement that summarises the methods used, the representations received, and the changes made to the proposals as a result of feedback submitted.

The comments received during the pre-application consultation have been considered by the Applicant's team on an ongoing basis to ensure that the issues raised could be addressed during the development of the proposals.

It was suggested that the proposed redevelopment of the site would help regenerate a key area of Manchester city centre, with several describing Albert Bridge House as outdated and an eyesore. It was also noted that the proposals would help deliver much-needed new homes in the city centre, while others suggested the updated proposals represent a significant improvement on the plans previously brought forward in 2022, particularly with regards to the design.

Some concerns were raised around the height and massing, with suggestions that the scheme would be out of keeping with the character of the area and could negatively impact residents due to loss of daylight/sunlight and privacy. These concerns have been addressed and responded to in full within the Applicant Response Table.

The Applicant would like to thank all those who have provided their feedback during the pre-application consultation and looks forward to further constructive dialogue throughout the development process.

6. Appendices

Appendix 1: Consultation event display

Welcome

Oval Real Estate is bringing its regeneration expertise to Manchester and is committed to transforming the site at Albert Bridge House. Since our previous public consultation in 2022, we have refined our proposals to better align with current market needs and community priorities, to ensure the potential of this important gateway site can be realised.

Working alongside renowned architects Studio Egret West, the new development design would seamlessly integrate with its surroundings, enhancing the cityscape while delivering a contemporary design that reflects Manchester's character and heritage.

We are now asking you to play your part in helping to shape these revised plans.



Portfolio Highlights



Oval

Introducing Oval Real Estate

We develop, manage and invest in buildings throughout the UK and across every sector.

Specialising in spaces sometimes overlooked, our mission is to leave buildings and neighbourhoods in better shape than we found them.

We place a strong emphasis on design and put our own stamp on every building. Drawing on expertise from outside the property sector, we consider everything our occupiers and visitors see, hear and touch.

Portfolio Highlights



The site today

An underutilised riverside location.

The Albert Bridge House site is located between Bridge Street, the River Irwell, St Mary's Parsonage and Trinity Bridge in Manchester City Centre.

It currently contains a vacant 18-storey office building formally occupied by HMRC and the adjoining car park and land, including Albert Bridge Gardens.

The site is not located within a conservation area and does not contain any Listed Buildings. The site is within the area covered by the St Mary's Parsonage Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF), which sets out a vision for the future development and regeneration of the area.



Why not reuse the existing building?

At Oval, we are committed to renovating and retrofitting old buildings. While that is always our starting point, Albert Bridge House doesn't offer the potential for successful regeneration.



A purpose-built building whose purpose has come to an end

Albert Bridge House was purpose built in the 1950s as a tax office and served as the home of HMRC ever since. It is an example of the Ministry for Work's fixed price contract for government projects, which meant it was constructed under a fixed budget with tight timescales. These functional contracts were necessary during the post-war period, but the buildings constructed under these contracts were not designed with long term sustainability in mind, which creates substantial costs for occupiers. Now that the building is no longer occupied, Albert Bridge House has come to the end of its logical lifespan. Put simply, its layout and design no longer meet modern office occupier requirements.



A missed opportunity to open up the site

The existing layout of Albert Bridge House turns its back on the river frontage and its retention would restrict the opportunity to open up the site and improve connections. The building is vacant and doesn't meet the requirements for modern day operators.



A building that has seen extensive remodeling

The best examples of 1950s architecture should be celebrated, but Albert Bridge House was recently assessed by Historic England to have insufficient historical or architectural significance for it to be listed. The interior has been extensively refurbished, leaving no original fixtures or features of significance. The exterior of the building has also seen changes and adaptations over time.

A clear vision for this part of the city centre



The Albert Bridge House site is identified as a key development opportunity within the Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) for the St Mary's Parsonage area, which was endorsed by Manchester City Council in July 2020.

The purpose of the SRF is to set out the Council's ambitions for the regeneration of the area and to identify opportunities for redevelopment. It identifies St Mary's Parsonage as a key opportunity area with a vision to create a commercially led mixed-use neighbourhood that is fully integrated into the rest of the city centre.

Since the SRF was endorsed, several development proposals are due to come forward in the area, including the adjacent Alberton House, the repurposing and restoration of the Kendals building, redevelopment of the adjoining multi-storey car park and proposals for Reedham House.



The SRF anticipates that the Albert Bridge House site will see some of the most significant development within the whole St Mary's Parsonage area in terms of the extent of redevelopment, as well as height and density.

"The site provides a key opportunity for an important landmark development that identifies the key connections with Salford to the west, Spinningfields commercial quarter to the south and the St Mary's Parsonage SRF and Raina SRF areas to the north."

The SRF considers the site to provide a key opportunity to simultaneously expand the city's commercial offer and deliver economic growth through a high-density development, whilst also enhancing the river frontage and surrounding streetscape.

Complementing the commercial building and public amenity space, we believe that a residential development would be the most appropriate option to deliver a successful mixed-use development and help to meet the sustained demand for high-quality new homes in the city centre.

Our New Vision for Albert Bridge House



As you may be aware, we initially brought forward plans for the site in 2022 following a public consultation and received a resolution to grant planning permission in 2023. Since then, the financial landscape has shifted significantly and while this presents challenges, it also provides the opportunity for innovative solutions and a fresh perspective. As such, our new proposals have been developed in response to this challenge and to better align with current market needs and community priorities. The proposals also represent a deliverable and viable development that will see this vacant, gateway site brought back into active use.



By refining our approach, we are ensuring the development is future-proof, financially viable, and best positioned to deliver long-term benefits to the city.



Streamlined high quality, flexible office space

We have reduced our office component to approximately 250,000 sq ft, making it more attractive to potential tenants. The newly adaptable office space will ensure a diverse range of potential occupiers and a reflection of evolving market trends, where businesses are prioritising flexibility and high-quality workspace.



Expanded and enhanced public realm

Our new vision is to create an improved and inviting public realm, where revised plans of enhanced landscaping, new play spaces, pedestrian and cycle routes and additional green areas will encourage community interaction and wellbeing. We are also prioritising better access to the River Irwell, creating a welcoming and engaging waterfront space for all.



Increased residential offering

With strong demand for high-quality homes in the city, and repurposing brownfield land for housing is high on the government's sustainable growth agenda, we are meeting these demands by expanding the residential aspect of the development and creating a new community in central Manchester.



Dynamic commercial offering

The development will feature a vibrant mix of commercial spaces, including retail units designed to activate the ground floor. This will create a lively streetscape, supporting both new and existing businesses while enhancing the overall visitor experience.



A sustainable development

Aligned to our ESG objectives, we plan to deliver a best in class sustainable development, with the office building targeting net zero in line with the Council's 2038 target.

Our updated proposals for Albert Bridge House

A dynamic, sustainable development designed to realise the potential of this gateway location.

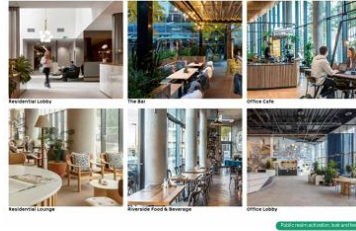
These proposals have been developed to realise the original SRF's vision of creating 'a commercially led mixed use neighbourhood that is fully integrated with the rest of the City Centre... a place where people live, work, relax and socialise.'



We are proposing to completely remodel this 2.2 acre site to open up the river frontage, create more public open space and position three new buildings more sympathetically within the site.

Our proposals include:

- 250,000 sq. ft. of best in class, flexible Grade A office space.
- Two stylish new residential apartments providing c.800 homes in a mix of 1, 2, and 3 bedroom homes.
- Dynamic commercial offering, including retail and food & beverage units to activate the ground floor.
- New pedestrian and cycle connections through the site, including enhanced access to the river.
- Residential amenities, such as co-working areas, wellness facilities including a gym and yoga studios, cinema and a games room, rentable dining areas, and a rooftop garden.
- Attractive and welcoming new public space with retained trees alongside new planting to encourage biodiversity.



A development that gives back to the city

With much of the existing site dedicated to car parking or off limits to the public, the starting point of our design was to open up the site and make a positive contribution to the city.

Landscape and public realm

Our plans for the site would provide high-quality outdoor amenity space, promoting health and wellbeing of the occupants of the buildings as well as creating an attractive, sustainable place that people want to visit and spend time in. Extensive landscaping across the ground floor public realm and roof terraces of the office building will contribute to the character of the area, as well as climate change mitigation.

The proposals include a reimagined river-edge walk to enhance the site's experience and open up the River Irwell. Thoughtfully designed landscaping, seating areas, and improved pathways will encourage movement along the river, fostering a vibrant and active public space.

The plans for the site also incorporate a variety of engaging play elements designed to create an inclusive and dynamic environment for all ages. These features would encourage social interaction, physical activity, and imaginative play while complementing the overall design of the space and creating a family-friendly atmosphere.



Ground floor activation

Ground floor retail and commercial space would help activate the surrounding public space, attracting people to the area.

All buildings would feature ground floor retail and commercial spaces, providing amenities for residents, workers and visitors alike. These amenities would mean the site is lively and well-used throughout the day and evening, helping to create a safe and sustainable neighbourhood. These uses will also help to revitalise and activate the existing public space of Motor Square, just opposite the site.



Routes and connections

We want to open up this site and celebrate a neglected part of the riverside.

Our plans build on the vision outlined in the SRF of creating new pedestrian connections through the site into the city centre, as well as opening up the riverside to more people.



A landmark design

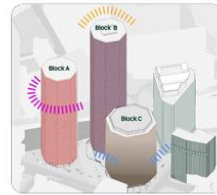


Our approach

In response to a changing commercial market, the design team has revisited the development proposal, taking a fresh approach to the design narrative while aligning with the city's public realm, residential and commercial needs.

In order to establish a landmark at a key gateway to the city, we have increased building height along the River Irwell. Additionally, all buildings feature an octagonal form, ensuring a cohesive and harmonious architectural identity across the site.

Greater separation between the buildings provides more 'breathing space', allowing for enhanced natural light, improved views, and reduced overlooking. This also allows for better circulation and a more inviting public realm.



Axonometric diagram - colour tone concept



Façade & materiality

The design team has drawn inspiration from the local context, history, and architectural fabric of both existing and emerging developments to craft a material and colour palette that seamlessly integrates with Manchester City Centre.

The overall approach embraces a warm, earthy palette, featuring brick and terracotta-toned rainscreen anodised cladding. Deep rust and clay hues define the residential character, while bronze tones distinguish the office block, echoing the historic tonality of Manchester.

Anodised metalwork and glazed elements create a contemporary composition, balancing tradition with modernity. All façades follow a modular design, enabling efficient pre-fabrication and sustainable material use.

Height & massing

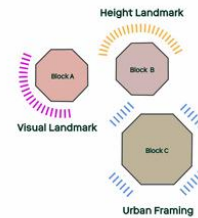
The height and massing of all the buildings respond to the context of the emerging skyline in this fast-changing part of the city centre, with the landmark design contributing to its character and sense of place.

Residential Tower A - 37 storeys

Residential Tower B - 49 storeys

Office Block C - 17 storeys

The buildings have been positioned to maximise separation distances to each other and surrounding buildings, while the octagonal form of the buildings will enhance sunlight and daylight in public spaces and ensure well-lit homes and workspaces.



High-quality, flexible office space



To help meet increasing demand in the city centre

The SRF envisaged commercial development on the Albert Bridge House site, and with demand for commercial space remaining strong, the city centre is the focus for economic growth and employment.

Occupiers are choosing to move to best-in-class, sustainable new build offices which are rich in outdoor amenity space. Wrap-around ground floor uses such as cafés and restaurants add to the offer for occupiers, whilst also helping to promote collaboration and wellbeing.



The office building will deliver c.250,000 sq ft of flexible floor space, designed to accommodate layouts for one or two tenants per floor.

The workspaces are complemented by a ground-floor lobby featuring a café area, flexible communal breakout space and collaborative lounges that foster social interaction.

Meeting rooms are integrated throughout, all designed with green and wellness principles to enhance employee health, well-being, and focus.

Additionally, the office building includes a rooftop terrace, providing panoramic views of the city and surrounding public realm.

In line with our ESG objectives, we aim to deliver a best-in-class sustainable development, with the office building targeting net-zero emissions.

Next steps



Our consultation will be open until **Sunday 23 March 2025**, so please make sure you tell us your views on our proposals before then.

You can find more information on our plans by visiting our website: www.albertbridgehouse-mcr.com, which also includes a link to a questionnaire so you can provide feedback.

If you have any questions on our proposals or the consultation process, please feel free to get in touch with us via email: consult@albertbridgehouse-mcr.com.

Once the consultation has closed, we will carefully consider all feedback received before submitting a planning application later in the year.



view from the lowry

Appendix 2: Consultation postcard

WE WANT TO HEAR YOUR VIEWS ON OUR UPDATED PLANS FOR

ALBERT BRIDGE HOUSE

Oval Real Estate is excited to share updated plans for the redevelopment of Albert Bridge House. Since our previous public consultation in 2022, we have refined our proposals to better align with current market needs and community priorities, and to ensure the potential of this important gateway site can be realised.

Our updated plans aim to bring the site back into public use by delivering a flexible Grade A office building, high-quality homes across two additional buildings, and vibrant commercial space, including retail, food & beverage units that activate the ground floor. The proposals also include an enhanced public realm with improved access to the River Irwell to create a more inviting, dynamic, and accessible space for all.

Designed by renowned architectural practice, Studio Egret West, the development would seamlessly integrate with its surroundings, enhancing the cityscape while delivering a contemporary design that reflects Manchester's character and heritage.

As we work towards finalising our plans and submitting a planning application later this year, we're keen to engage with and listen to feedback from the local community, businesses and stakeholders.



HAVE YOUR SAY



The public consultation on our updated proposals for Albert Bridge House will be open from **Monday 3 March to Sunday 23 March 2025**.

You can find more information on our plans by visiting our website, www.albertbridgehouse-mcr.com, which also includes a link to a questionnaire so you can provide feedback.

We are holding a public drop-in session on **Tuesday 11 March 2025** at **The People's History Museum** (Leftbank, Manchester, M3 3ER). The event will be open from **4pm to 7pm**. This will be an opportunity to find out more about our plans, talk to members of our team, and tell us your views.

If you have any questions on our proposals or the consultation process, please feel free to get in touch with us via email: consult@albertbridgehouse-mcr.com.

Oval

Appendix 3: Consultation feedback form

Albert Bridge House Consultation Questionnaire

Oval

We want to hear your views on our updated proposals for the redevelopment of the Albert Bridge House site.

This consultation is open until 24 March 2025.

Q1. How would you describe your interest in the proposals?

- ☐ Local resident ☐ I work in the local area ☐ I own a business in the local area ☐ I visit the area regularly
- ☐ I represent a local interest group (please specify:) ☐ Other (please specify:)

Q2. How would you rank each of the elements listed below in terms of how important they are to you?

(1 = most important, 5 = least important)

- ☐ New high-quality homes
- ☐ Flexible Grade A office space
- ☐ Ground floor active frontages, including retail and food & beverage units
- ☐ Enhanced public realm and landscaped outdoor amenity space
- ☐ Improved public access across the site, including to the riverside

Q3. Do you have any further comments on our updated plans for Albert Bridge House?

Please use this space to elaborate on any of your previous answers or let us know anything you think we should consider as we finalise our plans.

About you

Your personal details will be stored in compliance with the GDPR by Counter Context acting on behalf of Oval Real Estate. As part of any subsequent planning applications, Oval Real Estate may submit to the Local Planning Authority a complete copy of all correspondence received. This ensures all your comments are available to the LPA during the consideration of the planning application(s). Personal data will not be passed onto any other third parties.

Name:

Email: Postcode: