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HERITAGE STATEMENT 2025 SEPTEMBER

PROPOSED CHANGE OF USE OF EXISTING WAREHOUSE BUILDING FROM B2 (GENERAL INDUSTRIAL) TO F1(F) (PUBLIC WORSHIP OR RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION)

MIRAGE HOUSE, 25-27 ST CHADS STREET, MANCHESTER, M8 8QA

Prepared by RDK Civil Engineering Limited

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1. Introduction

1.1. Introduction

This Heritage Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application for the **change of use of Mirage House** from an industrial warehouse (B2) to a place of public worship (F1(f)).

The purpose of this Statement is to:

- Describe the site and its heritage context.
- Identify designated heritage assets that could be affected by the proposals.
- Assess the significance of those assets and any contribution made by the site to their setting.
- Evaluate the likely impacts of the proposed development on heritage assets, in line with statutory requirements and national/local policy.



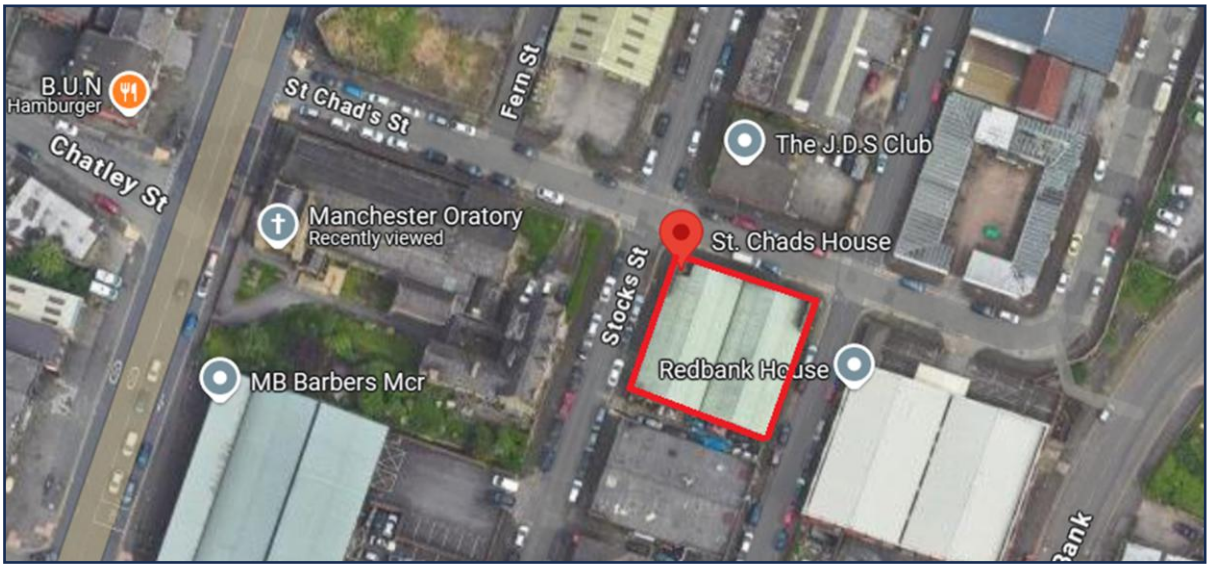
2. Site and Heritage Context

2.1. Site Description

- Mirage House is a **mid-20th century brick warehouse**, simple in construction with brick walls, concrete frame, and pitched/decked roof.
- It is located within the **Strangeways commercial district**, an area historically characterised by textile trading, wholesale businesses, and warehousing.
- The building is **not listed**, not locally listed, and does **not fall within a Conservation Area**.

2.2. Surrounding Context

- The wider neighbourhood around St Chads Street and Cheetham Hill Road has a mixed character:
  - 20th-century warehouses and light industrial premises.
  - Religious and cultural facilities serving diverse communities.
  - Scattered Victorian civic and institutional buildings, some of which are listed.
- The area is undergoing **transition**: many industrial buildings are now redundant, with gradual repurposing for cultural, faith, and community use.



2.3. Nearby Designated Heritage Assets

Within c.500 metres of Mirage House, the following **Grade II Listed Buildings** are identified:

1. **Roman Catholic Church of St Chad & Presbytery (Grade II)**
    - Gothic Revival church, 1847, by Weightman and Hadfield. Important local landmark.
2. **Churchyard Walls of St Chad (Grade II)**
    - Historic boundary walls contributing to the church's setting.
3. **Former Synagogue, Cheetham Hill Road (Grade II)**
    - Classical-style sandstone building, c.1840, later synagogue, now reused.
4. **Former Free Library, Cheetham Hill Road (Grade II)**
    - Italianate civic building, 1876, reflecting the area's civic development.
5. **Knowsley Hotel, Cheetham Hill Road (Grade II)**
    - Mid-19th century hotel/public house, typical of the Victorian urban form.
6. **Cheetham Town Hall (Former, Grade II)**
    - Mid-19th century Italianate municipal building, symbol of civic pride.
7. **Cheetham Town Hall Annexe (Former, Grade II)**
    - Built in association with the Town Hall, further illustrating Cheetham's civic past.

These assets are predominantly located along Cheetham Hill Road, forming a **loose group of religious, civic, and cultural landmarks** that tell the story of the area's 19th-century growth.

3. Policy Context

3.1. Statutory Duties

- **Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990**
  Section 66 requires decision-makers to give *special regard* to preserving listed buildings or their settings.

3.2. National Policy (NPPF, 2023)

- **Paragraph 200:** Applicants must describe the significance of heritage assets proportionately.
- **Paragraphs 205–208:** Great weight must be given to conservation of heritage assets; harm should be clearly justified and weighed against public benefits.
- **Paragraph 93:** Planning should support strong, healthy, and inclusive communities by facilitating social and cultural facilities such as places of worship.

3.3. Local Policy (Manchester Core Strategy, 2012)

- **Policy CC9 (Design and Heritage):** Development should preserve/enhance heritage assets and contribute to a coherent urban environment.
- **Policy EN3 (Heritage):** Proposals must respect and enhance heritage features of neighbourhoods.
- **Policy DM1 (Development Management):** Development must consider design, scale, access, noise, parking, and waste management.

3.4. Saved UDP Policies (1995)

- **DC18.1:** Conservation areas.
- **DC19.1:** Listed buildings.

4. History and Development of the Site

- **19th century:** The area developed as part of Manchester's industrial expansion, with dense terraced housing and factories.
- **Mid-20th century:** The site was cleared and rebuilt as a warehouse, reflecting Strangeways' role in garment/textile distribution.
- **Late 20th century:** Continued light industrial/warehouse use, eventually becoming underutilised as manufacturing declined.
- **Present:** The building remains a simple industrial shell, of no architectural or historic interest, but ripe for adaptive reuse.

5. Significance Appraisal

5.1. The Site

- Mirage House itself has **negligible heritage significance**.
- It is architecturally undistinguished and makes no positive contribution to the historic environment.

5.2. Contribution to Nearby Assets

- The listed buildings nearby draw significance from their **architectural quality**, **historic associations**, and **group value**.
- Mirage House does **not form part of their curtilage**, **is not intervisible in key views**, and does not contribute to their significance.
- Its current industrial character is neutral; it neither enhances nor detracts.

6. Heritage Impact Assessment

6.1. Direct Impacts

- No direct impact: no alteration to listed fabric, no demolition of heritage assets.

6.2. Indirect (Setting) Impacts

- The scheme retains the existing external form of Mirage House, with only minor adjustments to entrances and signage.
- There will be no change to key views or relationships between nearby heritage assets and the wider townscape.
- Consequently, the impact on setting is neutral.

6.3. Public Benefits

- Brings a vacant/underused warehouse back into productive use.
- Provides a faith and community facility meeting local needs, consistent with NPPF para 93.
- Supports the ongoing regeneration of Strangeways/Cheetham Hill by reinforcing cultural and social infrastructure.

7. Conclusion

- Mirage House has no intrinsic heritage value and contributes negligibly to the significance of nearby heritage assets.
- The proposed change of use will not cause harm to the setting of the **seven nearby Grade II Listed Buildings**, including St Chad's Church, the Former Synagogue, and the former civic buildings of Cheetham Hill.
- The impact is **neutral** in heritage terms, while the **public benefits** of community use are significant.

The proposals therefore comply with:

- **Planning (LBCA) Act 1990 (s.66)**
- **NPPF (2023), Chapter 16**
- **Manchester Core Strategy policies EN3, CC9, DM1**
- **Saved UDP policies DC18.1 and DC19.1**

On balance, the change of use represents a **sustainable reuse of a redundant industrial building**, with **neutral heritage impact and strong social benefit**.

THIS CONCLUDES THE DOCUMENT