



APPEAL BY:
Mr Rana

AGAINST MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL'S REFUSAL TO GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION
FOR:

External elevational alterations including installation of shop front

AT
393 Dickenson Road, Manchester, M13 0WG

Manchester City Council's Reference: 142155/FO/2025

WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS: GROUNDS OF APPEAL

August 2025

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This statement has been prepared by RJS Planning, on behalf of Mr Rana, in support of the appeal lodged against the refusal of planning application reference 142155/FO/2025.
- 1.2 The application was dated 12th February 2025 and sought part retrospective planning permission for *“External elevational alterations including installation of shop front”* at no. 393 Dickenson Road in Manchester.
- 1.3 By way of background, Manchester City Council initially issued a decision notice dated 8th April 2025 granting planning permission for external elevational alterations and installation of a shop front at no. 393 Dickenson Road under application reference 142155/FO/2025. This decision was subsequently challenged by way of judicial review (Claim No. AC-2025-MAN-000220), on grounds that the grant of permission was irrational and procedurally flawed. The Council conceded the claim, accepting that the permission had been issued in error and should not have been granted. As a result, the High Court quashed the permission by consent on 30th June 2025.
- 1.4 Following the quashing of the original decision, the Council issued a new decision notice on 10th July 2025 refusing the application for the following reason:
- 1) *The development would be detrimental to the visual amenity of the host building and the character of the area. It would create a visually intrusive feature in the street scene by reason of the incongruous design and finish of the elevational facades and would be detrimental to the visual amenities of the street scene and would in consequence be out of character with the area generally and harmful to the Longsight District Centre. As such the proposal is contrary to the City Council's Planning Policies SP1, DM1, C5 and EN1 of the Manchester Core Strategy. DC14 and S1.2 of the Extant UDP and policies of the Places for Everyone Joint Development plan and National Planning Policy Framework.*
- 1.5 These grounds of appeal will address the central concerns raised within the council's reason for refusal, notably:
- Whether the development would be detrimental to the visual amenities of the street scene; and
 - Whether the development would be out of character with the area generally and harmful to Longsight District Centre.

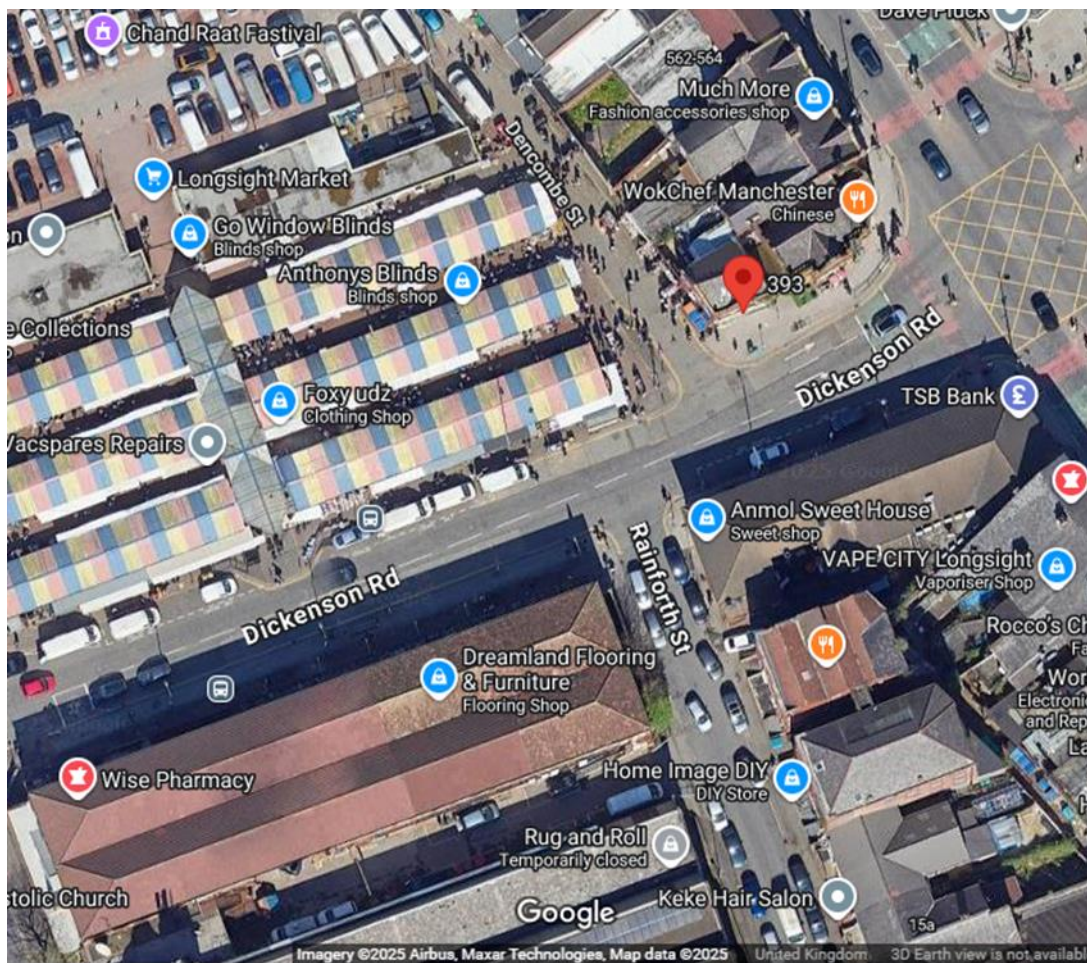
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- 1.6 Additional background information concerns the council's decision to issue Enforcement Notice reference ENF/15927/25 which is subject to a separate appeal as it materially differs from the refused proposal. The enforcement appeal is the primary objective to retain the as-built development, whereas appealing the refused scheme offers a fallback position.
- 1.7 To set some context, this statement will first provide a description of the appeal site and the proposed development. This statement will then discuss the relevant national and local planning policy before responding to the council's concerns.

2.0 THE SITE

- 2.1 The appeal site occupies a corner plot on the northern side of Dickenson Road and the eastern side of Dencombe Street, within a designated District Centre. The surrounding area is predominantly commercial in character, and the site lies immediately adjacent to Longsight Market. It is not located within a conservation area, nor does it fall within the curtilage of any listed building.



Aerial view of the appeal site and surrounding area

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- 2.2 The appeal property comprises a two-storey, end-of-terrace building, currently in commercial use across both ground and first floors.



Artists impression of proposed development at no. 393 Dickenson Road

3.0 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 The appeal proposal seeks part retrospective planning permission for “*External elevational alterations including installation of shop front*” at no. 393 Dickenson Road.
- 3.2 The works were undertaken in response to a prior infestation of rats and pigeons at the property. These issues have now been fully resolved, resulting in a structurally sound and hygienic condition.
- 3.3 The scheme involves the replacement of the existing shopfront, first-floor windows, signage, air-conditioning unit, and retractable canopy on the front elevation. On the flank elevation, the proposal replaces the existing first-floor windows, air-conditioning unit, and signage with large, clear-glazed openings designed to improve transparency and visual coherence.
- 3.4 The development retains the building’s ornate roof detailing, including gables and finials, and preserves key architectural features such as the brickwork piers at the side corners and the brick banding between ground and first-floor levels.
- 3.5 All works are to be carried out to a high standard using appropriate, durable materials that respect the character of the building and its commercial setting.

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4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

- 4.1 The reason for refusal refers to City Council's Planning Policies SP1, DM1, C5 and EN1 of the Manchester Core Strategy. DC14 and S1.2 of the Extant UDP and policies of the Places for Everyone Joint Development plan and National Planning Policy Framework.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024

- 4.2 The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. Although the NPPF was not mentioned in the given reasons for refusal, the following sections and paragraphs are relevant to this appeal.

Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

- 4.3 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF sets out that plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Decision-making

- 4.4 Paragraph 38 states that Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way.

Building a strong, competitive economy

- 4.5 Planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.

Achieving well-designed places

- 4.6 Section 12 of the NPPF refers to design, with paragraph 131 describing how the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment, stating that *"Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities."*
- 4.7 Paragraph 135 states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:
- 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 architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
 - 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 (such as increased densities);*

- d) *establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*
- e) *optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; 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; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.*

Core Strategy for the City of Manchester

- 4.8 The Manchester Core Strategy is a key planning document that guides the city's long-term development. Policies SP1, DM1, C5 and EN1 were referred to within reasons for issuing the Enforcement Notice.

Policy SP 1: Spatial Principles

- 4.9 Development in all parts of the City should:-

Make a positive contribution to neighbourhoods of choice including:-

- creating well designed places that enhance or create character.
- making a positive contribution to the health, safety and wellbeing of residents
- considering the needs of all members of the community regardless of age, gender, disability, sexuality, religion, culture, ethnicity or income.
- Protect and enhance the built and natural environment.

Policy DM 1: Development Management

- 4.10 All development should have regard to the following specific issues for which more detailed guidance may be given within a supplementary planning document:-

- Appropriate siting, layout, scale, form, massing, materials and detail.
- Impact on the surrounding areas in terms of the design, scale and appearance of the proposed development. Development should have regard to the character of the surrounding area.
- Effects on amenity, including privacy, light, noise, vibration, air quality, odours, litter, vermin, birds, road safety and traffic generation. This could also include proposals which would be sensitive to existing environmental conditions, such as noise.
- Accessibility: buildings and neighbourhoods fully accessible to disabled people, access to new development by sustainable transport modes.

Policy C5: Central Manchester District Centres – Hulme, Longsight and Rusholme

- 4.11 The improvement to the quality of the environment in Rusholme and Longsight is a priority to help retain and attract shoppers and visitors.

Policy EN 1: Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas

- 4.12 All development in Manchester will be expected to follow the seven principles of urban design, as identified in national planning guidance and listed above, while considering the strategic character area in which the development is located.

Extant UDP

- 4.13 Saved Policies DC14 and S1.2 were referred to within the reasons for issuing the Enforcement Notice.

Policy DC14: Shop fronts and related signs

- 4.14 This policy applies to all retail premises and to other commercial premises which have similar physical characteristics e.g. betting shops, banks, building society offices, opticians premises etc.

DC14.1 In determining applications relating to these premises for shop fronts, security grilles, advertisement signs, canopies and awnings, the Council will seek to ensure that proposals are in keeping with the character of the building and adjoining buildings, of adjoining shopfronts, where appropriate, and of the area within which the premises are located.

DC14.2 Shopfronts should allow full access for people whose mobility is impaired. The only exceptions which the Council will normally permit are where the cost is unreasonably high or where there are particularly difficult physical constraints, or where the architectural character of a listed building would be damaged.

Policy S1.2: Shopping provision

- 4.15 The Council in partnership with the private sector will encourage, where appropriate, the improvement and re-development of existing District Centres in order to ensure that they remain the focus for both shopping and a full range of community facilities. These centres comprise Cheetham Hill, Chorlton, Didsbury, the district centre in Sportcity, Fallowfield, Gorton, Harpurhey, Levenshulme, Longsight, Newton Heath, Northenden, Openshaw, Rusholme, Withington and Wythenshawe.

Particular emphasis will be given to improving safety and enhancing environmental quality, tackling traffic problems and increasing economic viability. Priority will be given to following centres:- Cheetham Hill, the district centre in Sportcity, Gorton, Harpurhey, Levenshulme, Longsight, Newton Heath, Openshaw, Wythenshawe.

Elsewhere, more limited measures will be taken to improve conditions for pedestrians especially those with restricted mobility, visual impairments or shopping with young children. Where possible further off street car parking will be provided as part of achieving these ends.

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New development will be particularly welcome where it replaces obsolete shopping floorspace and is in keeping with the character of the existing centre.:

Places For Everyone Joint Development Plan Document

- 4.16 In January 2019 Greater Manchester set out bold plans to give people, communities and businesses hope and confidence for the future. They described how a pioneering Greater Manchester was 'open for business' globally, how we would thrive and prosper into the future, how we would support everyone to reach their full potential, and how we would ensure that nobody was left behind - the Future of GM. Policy JP-P1 is considered relevant.

Policy JP-P1: Sustainable Places

- 4.17 The aim is to become one of the most liveable city regions in the world, consisting of a series of beautiful, healthy and varied places, each having the key attributes that all development, wherever appropriate should be consistent with:

Distinctive, with a clear identity that:

- A. Conserves and enhances the natural environment, landscape features, historic environment and local history and culture;
- B. Enables a clear understanding of how the place has developed; and
- C. Respects and acknowledges the character and identity of the locality in terms of design, siting, size, scale and materials used.

Durable, being built to last and using robust materials that reflect local character, weather well and are easily maintained.

Functional and convenient, enabling people and uses to act efficiently with minimal effort, and responding to needs relating to servicing, recycling facilities, refuse collection and storage.

Easy to move around for those of all mobility levels, particularly by walking and cycling, with enjoyable routes free from obstacles and disorientating stimuli, and with places to rest.

Well served by local shops, services and amenities, including education and health facilities.

5.0 THE APPELLANT'S CASE

Introduction

- 5.1 The appellant's case will focus on the central concerns of the reason for refusal, notably:
- a. Whether the development would be detrimental to the visual amenities of the street scene; and
 - b. Whether the development would be out of character with the area generally and harmful to Longsight District Centre.
- 5.2 The main considerations in the determination of this appeal are:
- Principle of the development
 - Design and impact on the property, street scene and wider locality

Principle of development

- 5.3 Section 6 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024) makes clear that planning policies and decisions should create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand, and adapt. It explicitly supports the sustainable growth and diversification of all types of business, including through the expansion and improvement of premises. The Framework encourages local planning authorities to be responsive to changing economic circumstances and to support development that enables commercial vitality and adaptability.
- 5.4 At the local level, Manchester's Core Strategy and the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan reinforce this national direction. Policy JP-P1 (Sustainable Places) promotes neighbourhoods that are well-served by local shops, services, and amenities, contributing to Greater Manchester's ambition to be one of the most liveable city regions globally. Policy SP1 (Spatial Principles) encourages development that enhances the character and function of local areas, supports economic resilience, and contributes positively to neighbourhoods of choice.
- 5.5 Longsight is a designated District Centre, where policies C5 and S1.2 of the Core Strategy and Extant UDP prioritise environmental improvement, commercial renewal, and the retention and attraction of shoppers and visitors. The appeal site lies adjacent to Longsight Market and occupies a prominent corner plot, making it ideally positioned to contribute to the vibrancy and legibility of the centre. The centre comprises a varied mix of shopfront designs, reflecting its organic evolution and diverse commercial offer. In this context, the replacement frontage does not

appear incongruous or harmful; rather, it contributes to the visual richness and commercial adaptability of the area.



Longsight Market adjacent to the appeal site

- 5.6 The development introduces a more open and active frontage, improving the commercial functionality of the premises and enhancing its engagement with the public realm. It supports the continued viability of the business and complements neighbouring commercial uses and contributes to a coherent and legible streetscape.
- 5.7 The development also aligns with Policy EN1, which expects development to follow national urban design principles and respond positively to the strategic character of its location. It supports the aims of Policy DC14, which seeks shopfronts that are in keeping with the character of the building and surrounding area. The revised frontage is visually coherent, materially robust, and functionally appropriate for its commercial setting. It supports accessibility and contributes to the economic vitality of the District Centre, in line with the aims of Policy S1.2.
- 5.8 In summary, the development is consistent with the overarching aims of the NPPF and local planning policy, including JP-P1, SP1, C5, EN1, DC14, and S1.2. Its retention would contribute positively to the local economy, improve the quality of the streetscape, and support the strategic objectives for Longsight District Centre. This policy alignment should be afforded significant weight in the decision-making process, and the development should be supported in principle.

Design and impact on the property, street scene and wider locality

- 5.9 Paragraph 131 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024) affirms that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, helping to create better places in which to live and work and making development acceptable to communities. Paragraph 135 goes further, requiring developments to function well and add to the quality of the area over time, be visually attractive, and be

sympathetic to local character, while not discouraging appropriate innovation or change.

- 5.10 Core Strategy Policy DM1 promotes a holistic, high-quality design approach that contributes positively to the built environment, community well-being and environmental sustainability. Policy EN1 further supports developments that reinforce local identity and visual quality through context-sensitive design. In parallel, Policy SP1 expects development to contribute to a connected, inclusive and well-planned city that balances economic opportunity, environmental quality and liveability.
- 5.11 These principles are echoed in Policy JP-P1 of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan, which seeks development that is distinctive, durable, and functional, and which respects the character and history of the locality.
- 5.12 The Council refused the application stating: *“The development would be detrimental to the visual amenity of the host building and the character of the area. It would create a visually intrusive feature in the street scene by reason of the incongruous design and finish of the elevational facades and would be detrimental to the visual amenities of the street scene and would in consequence be out of character with the area generally and harmful to the Longsight District Centre.”*
- 5.13 The appellant rejects the Council’s assertion of visual harm, which fails to account for the longstanding condition of the host property and its immediate context. Not only was the external fabric of the building in a poor state of repair, but the works were also undertaken in response to a prior infestation of rats and pigeons at the property. These issues have now been fully resolved, resulting in a structurally sound and hygienic condition.
- 5.14 While the property retained the basic form of a traditional shopfront, with central double doors and flanking glazed panels, its presentation was far from transparent or inviting. The windows were either obscured by advertisements or covered with opaque materials, preventing any views into the interior. This gave the impression that the unit was closed or inactive, undermining its contribution to the street scene and the vitality of the District Centre.
- 5.15 As shown in the following images, the frontage was further compromised by visual clutter, including a retractable canopy, oversized fascia signage, a projecting sign at first floor level, and an externally mounted air-conditioning unit. The first floor featured a blocked central window, a satellite dish, and additional signage between the left and central windows all contributing to a fragmented and incoherent elevation.

- 5.16 The flank elevation was similarly disordered, with a boarded window, a second air-conditioning unit, multiple signs of varying designs, sizes and colours, and a broadband cabinet. Google Earth imagery confirms that this condition persisted for over a decade, forming part of the established visual character of the site and its surroundings.



Pre-existing shop front and side elevation

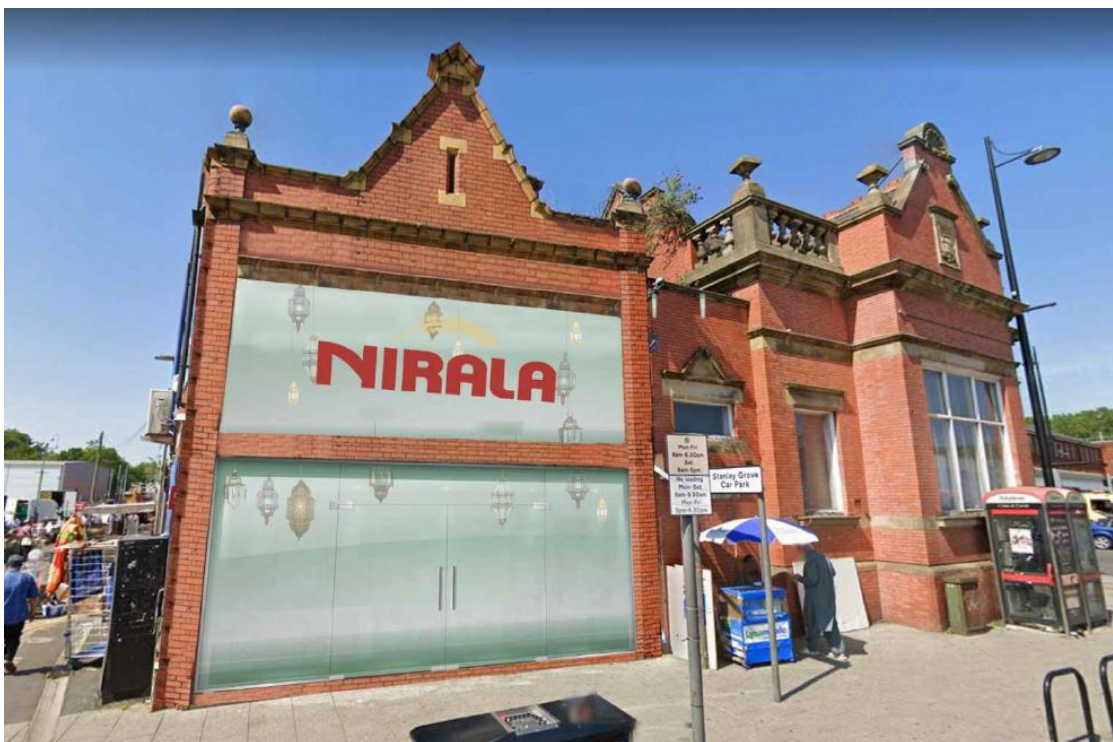
- 5.17 By comparison, the development would introduce a cohesive and well-considered form of elevation treatment across both the ground and first floors. The previously

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fragmented and cluttered façade has been rationalised through the use of high-quality materials and a streamlined design approach that enhances legibility and visual coherence. The removal of excessive signage, boarded windows, and miscellaneous fittings has significantly reduced visual clutter, allowing the building's architectural roof form to reassert itself within the street scene.

- 5.18 Importantly, the scheme retains and celebrates the building's historic features including the steeply pitched gables, decorative finials, stone detailing and cornice lines, as well as the brick corner piers and brick banding between the floors which contribute positively to the terrace row and wider townscape character. These elements have been preserved without compromise, ensuring that the development remains sensitive to its architectural context.



Artist's impression of proposed development at no. 393 Dickenson Road

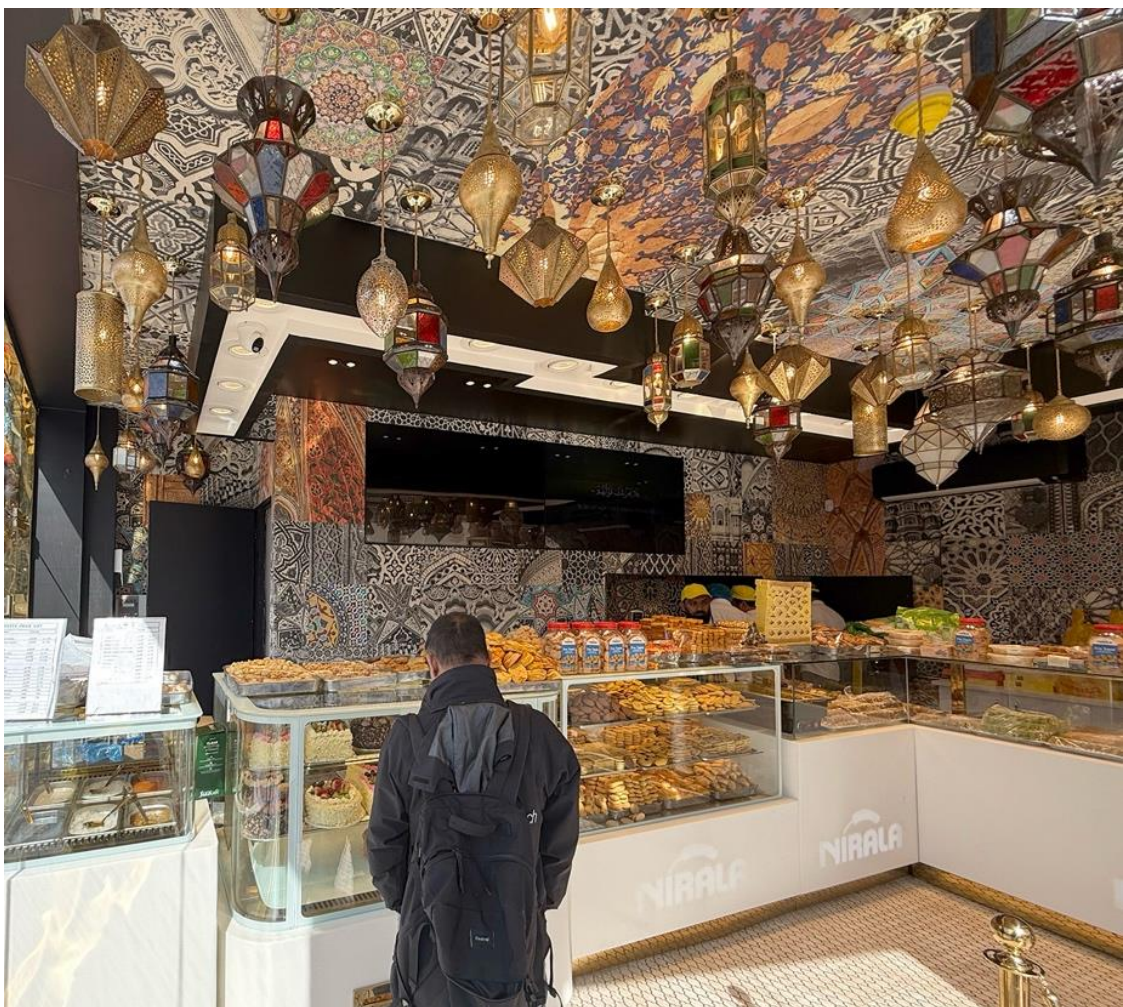
- 5.19 It is also relevant to note that the building is neither statutorily nor locally listed, and the site does not fall within a designated conservation area. As such, while heritage sensitivity remains important, there is no formal constraint requiring replication of historic materials or detailing. The use of simplified fenestration and the removal of clutter are therefore both appropriate and policy-compliant, offering a durable and maintainable solution that enhances the building's architectural legibility while respecting its historic form.
- 5.20 The property forms part of the Longsight District Centre, which is characterised by a diverse mix of architectural styles, shopfront treatments, and signage. In this

context, the development does not jar with its surroundings but rather contributes to the evolving commercial tapestry of the area.

- 5.21 The new shopfronts to both the front and side elevations enhance the commercial functionality of the unit, improving active frontage and pedestrian engagement. Crucially, the glazing is now clear and unobstructed, allowing views into the premises and signalling that the unit is open and operational. This transformation from a visually closed and cluttered frontage to one that is transparent and legible represents a significant improvement in both design quality and commercial contribution.
- 5.22 Compared to the previous obscured glazing and proliferation of signage, the development introduces transparency, legibility and a sense of order, qualities that support vibrancy and economic activity in the centre.
- 5.23 Criticism that the development is out of character fails to acknowledge that design assessments are inherently subjective and must be grounded in context. The commercial nature of the setting, the longstanding visual condition of the site, and the retention of key architectural features all point to a development that is sympathetic rather than discordant.
- 5.24 Moreover, policy JP-P1 explicitly encourages distinctiveness, durability and functionality. The development achieves all three, offering a resilient and adaptable frontage that supports commercial use while respecting the building's historic form.
- 5.25 In summary, the development is both functional and contextually sensitive. It improves the legibility and coherence of the site, retains key architectural features, and contributes positively to the character and vitality of the Longsight District Centre. The proposal aligns with the design objectives of the NPPF (paras 131 and 135), Policies DM1, C5, EN1 and SP1 of the Manchester Core Strategy, and Policy JP-P1 of the Joint Development Plan.
- 5.26 Therefore, the Council's assertion that the development is visually intrusive and out of character is not supported by the actual composition of the street scene. While the property presents as a relatively unique feature, this distinctiveness enhances the architectural diversity and commercial identity of the Longsight District Centre.
- 5.27 By way of background, the business specialises in traditional confectionery closely linked to cultural celebrations and community festivals. To reflect this festive and vibrant heritage, a distinctive retail design approach has been adopted. This includes expressive materials—such as gold cladding—and decorative elements that evoke a sense of celebration and emotional resonance with customers. The proposed

shopfront aligns with the design language of our recently developed outlets, ensuring consistency across the brand. Retaining this visual identity is vital to maintaining brand recognition and competitiveness within a crowded retail landscape.

- 5.28 Public response to the shop and its design has been overwhelmingly positive. Customers frequently comment on the decorative features, expressing genuine enthusiasm for the vibrant and celebratory aesthetic. The interior has become a popular backdrop for social media posts, with visitors regularly sharing selfies and images online. This organic promotion not only enhances the visibility of the business but also contributes to raising the profile of the wider area, encouraging footfall, fostering community pride, and supporting local economic vitality.



Internal shop floor of no. 393 Dickenson Road

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Internal shop floor and shop front at no. 393 Dickenson Road

- 5.29 In a setting defined by varied building forms and signage treatments, the development contributes positively to legibility and active frontage principles. Distinctiveness, in this context, is not a departure from character but a positive contribution to the architectural diversity and commercial vitality of the District Centre.

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- 5.30 In response to the reasons outlined in the council's decision, the appellant submits that the development does not give rise to the level of harm alleged by the Council. On the contrary, the scheme supports the continued commercial use of the premises in a high-quality and contextually sensitive form, while retaining and celebrating the building's historic architectural features. It enhances the legibility, coherence and active frontage of the site, contributing positively to the character and vitality of the Longsight District Centre.
- 5.31 Accordingly, the proposed development accords with the aims of the City Council's Planning Policies SP1, DM1, C5 and EN1 of the Manchester Core Strategy. DC14 and S1.2 of the Extant UDP and policies of the Places for Everyone Joint Development plan and National Planning Policy Framework.

6.0 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The assertion that the development is detrimental to visual amenity and out of character with the area is not supported by the actual composition of the street scene or the architectural context of the Longsight District Centre. The property, while distinctive, contributes positively to the visual diversity and commercial identity of the area. The elevational treatment introduces a clean, cohesive frontage that replaces a previously cluttered and visually fragmented façade. The use of high-quality materials, simplified signage, and clear glazing enhances legibility and supports active frontage principles, key objectives of both national and local design policy.
- 6.2 Far from being visually intrusive, the development retains and celebrates the building's most prominent architectural features, including its ornate roof form, gables, finials, and stone detailing. These elements anchor the building within its historic context and ensure continuity with the adjoining terrace row. The scheme does not erode character; it reinforces it through sensitive integration and improved coherence.
- 6.3 Moreover, the Longsight District Centre is defined by a varied mix of shopfront designs, signage styles, and building forms. In this setting, the development does not appear incongruous but rather contributes to the evolving commercial tapestry of the area. The National Planning Policy Framework explicitly supports appropriate innovation and change where it responds to local character — and in this case, the scheme achieves precisely that.
- 6.4 In summary, the development enhances the visual amenity of the host building, improves the quality of the street scene, and supports the vitality of the District Centre. The Council's claim of harm is not substantiated by the site's context or the design outcomes delivered.
- 6.5 Thus, it is stated that the council's reason for refusal is unsound as the development would be consistent with the City Council's Planning Policies SP1, DM1, C5 and EN1 of the Manchester Core Strategy. DC14 and S1.2 of the Extant UDP and policies of the Places for Everyone Joint Development plan and National Planning Policy Framework.
- 6.6 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible and that applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The proposed development

would not be contrary to national, regional or local planning policy, and, for the above reasons, it is politely requested that this appeal is allowed.

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