MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

Planning

Growth & Development

Delegated officer report for planning application

Application no.	143676/LO/2025
Date registered valid:	19 August 2025
Proposal:	Listed building consent for internal fitout works and installation of individual letter sign, internal lightbox sign and internally illuminated projecting sign.
Address:	1-5 St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7EF
Ward(s):	Deansgate Ward
Applicant:	Mr Richard Gillis URBN UK Ltd
Agent (if any):	Mr Richard Stooke Apt Design Ltd
Case officer:	Sam Elliott Tel: 0161 219 2856 Email: sam.elliott@manchester.gov.uk
Recommendation:	Approve
Date of recommendation:	24/09/2025

Application details

Type of application: Listed Building Consent

Development type: Listed building alteration

Date of site visit: 14 August 2025

Standard consultations:
Printed: 21 August 2025 Expired: 12 September 2025

Neighbour notifications
Printed: 21 August 2025 Expired: 12 September 2025

Site notice
Posted: 26 August 2025 Expired: 16 September 2025

Press advert
Published: 26 August 2025 Expired: 16 September 2025

Departure from Development Plan: No

Environmental Statement: Not required

Description of site/building

1-5 St Anns Square belongs to the Grade II listed Royal Exchange, a large rectangular former trading hall penetrated by east-west arcade at ground floor and enclosing a central atrium at first floor. The building's significance derives from its classical architectural style, featuring two attic storeys in a mansard roof, a Baroque turret and domes at corners, channelled rusticated piers, massive entablature and modillioned cornice and balustraded parapet.

The unit subject to this application is a ground floor commercial unit fronting St Ann's square, with some significance deriving from its sharing of an elevation with the internal arcade. The external facades of the ground floor shopfront are modern alterations with glazing to provide views into the units. There is a signage strategy across the Royal Exchange, with each unit featuring bronze individual lettering in the stone fascia, 1-2 no. projecting signs in a brass lightbox to house the unit's respective branding and internally mounted signs within the glazing.

Internally there is low level of remaining historic fabric within the unit following historic fitouts. At ground floor, significant historic fabric comprises decorative moulds and cornicing obscured by the modern suspended ceiling, original brickwork columns currently encased in a modern plasterboard, and examples of modern plaster.

At basement level, significant remaining historic fabric comprises, plaster motifs at high level to the stock room walls, a historic masonry wall separating the sales and new fitting rooms, the structural basement soffit and original brickwork.

Listed building: Grade II

Conservation area: St Anns Square Conservation Area 1970

Tree Preservation Order: Not applicable

Description of area

The site is positioned where Exchange Street joins St Anns Square. The route is a pedestrianised and predominantly commercial thoroughfare linking St Anns Square to Market Street. It also falls within the St Anne's Conservation Area and makes a positive contribution to the character of the area. Within its vicinity are the Grade II listed nos. 16, 18 and 20, 22 St Ann's Square, Mansfield Chambers, Boer War Memorial, and the Cobdens Statue, as well as the Grade II* listed no.25 St Ann Street.

Description of development

The applicant seeks listed building consent for internal fitout works, an internal lightbox sign, the installation of individual letter external fascia sign, and 2no. internally illuminated projecting signs.

At ground floor the internal fitout consists of new partial height timber partitions for merchandising and the construction of a new accessible changing room, the partial demolition of the non-original suspended ceiling with a level replacement, plasterboarding to the original brickwork columns, engineered timber flooring, new track and pendant lighting and replacement staircase finishes.

At basement level, the non-original suspended plasterboard ceiling would be removed, exposing the structural basement soffit. Stud partition walls would also be erected to create access to employee room and WCs. The existing structural opening between the sales area and stock room would be widened, with non-original plasterboard and a small section of original masonry removed, with a nib retained and a new concrete lintel installed. Within the sales area, the basement floor would be built up via timber floor joints,

The fascia sign would be sited on the northwestern elevation facing St Anns Square and comprised of non-illuminated individual lettering sited above the shopfront glazing on the stone fascia panel. The signage would a height of 300mm, a width of 4688mm and feature 13mm deep powder coated aluminium letters with an anodized bronze finish on matching 40mm standoffs, displaying the 'Anthropologie' branding.

2 no. vinyl graphics within the existing illuminated lightbox lights signs would be replaced, 1 no. to the fascia elevation and 1 no. to the arcade elevation. The proposed graphic replacements would consist of fret cut vinyl lettering, coloured to match RGB 130 97 64.

This application is being considered in conjunction with 143679/AO/2025: Installation of non-illuminated individual letter sign and 2 no. internally illuminated projecting signs.

Consultations & Notification Responses

<u>Notification:</u>
Occupiers of neighbouring buildings were notified of the proposal via notification letters. No representations have been received.

<u>Advertisement:</u>
The application was advertised by site notice and in the local press as affecting a listed building and the character of a conservation area. No representations have been received.

<u>Highways Services:</u>
No objections.

Environmental Health:
No objection to luminance of signs and recommended a condition restricting luminance at a maximum of 300cd/m^2.

Policy Context

The following policies are considered relevant to this application:

Places for Everyone
- JP-Strat2 – City Centre
- JP-P1 – Sustainable Places
- JP-P2 – Heritage

The Adopted Core Strategy for the City of Manchester
- SP1 – Spatial Principles
- CC2 – Retail
- CC9 – Design and Heritage
- CC10 – A Place for Everyone
- EN1 – Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas
- EN3 – Heritage
- DM1 – Development Management

The Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester
- DC14 – Shop Fronts and Related Signs
- DC18 – Conservation Areas
- DC19 – Listed Buildings

NPPF
- Section 12 (Achieving Well Designed Places)
- Section 16 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment)

Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990
- Sections 16

Shopfront and Signage Design Guide

The Royal Exchange, Manchester Shopfront & Signage Design Strategy

Issues

Impact upon the Heritage Asset

Arcade Elevation

Partial height partitions would be erected for merchandising and to construct an accessible changing room in the front northwestern corner of the unit, which would obscure views from within the arcade into the unit. While there would be some harm to the unit's relationship with the historic arcade, it is acknowledged that this harm has been somewhat mitigated by amendments to the scheme received 29/08/2025 which broke up a continuous line of partitioning across the glazing. Being broken up in the two main apertures within the arcade elevation, set back from the glazing and at partial height, some visual relationship between the arcade and unit is retained. These changes are reversible and do not constitute a permanent harm to the listed asset. Where visible from within the arcade, the partitions would be finished in a white-washed oak cladding which is considered to be of acceptable treatment and materiality.

In consideration of the above, the partial height partitions to the arcade elevation are considered to result in a low level of less than substantial harm.

Ground Floor

The existing suspended ceiling would mostly be retained and would have a neutral impact on the decorative moulds and cornicing concealed above. The small section of plasterboard ceiling and recessed lights to be removed would also have a negligible impact on this historic fabric, with a matching plasterboard ceiling level with the existing constructed. The partial height partitions do not interact with existing suspended ceiling, having no impact on this historic fabric.

The bulky modern plasterboard boxings to the original columns would be removed, with plasterboard reinstated closer to the face of the column. While this would impact some non-original cornicing that mimics the original above the suspended ceiling, new cornicing would also be implemented to match.

Where historic plaster has been exposed, it is to be retained and repaired prior to decoration. Samples of the timber floorings, modern staircase finishes and paints have been received 23/09/2025 and are not considered to result in any significant harm to the heritage value of the unit.

In consideration of the above, the remainder of the commercial fitout works at ground floor are considered to result in negligible harm, with a resulting appearance appropriate to the listed status of the building.

Basement

The non-original suspended plasterboard ceiling would be removed, exposing the structural basement soffit and allowing for greater appreciation of the basement's original ceiling height. New partitions would not unacceptably alter the understanding of the space, and their being partial height would allow the existing wall motifs and cornices to the ceiling to be left untouched.

Given the existing structural opening within the original masonry and the retention of a nib between the sales and stock rooms, the proposed widening would result in negligible harm and facilitate the further opening up of the basement level. The adjacent floor to the small sales area will be built up to match the level in the primary sales area via timber floor joints supported on adjustable pedestals, providing a temporary construction without causing any damage to the existing walls or floor.

Samples of materials and finishes received 23/09/2025 including the white oak flooring for sales areas, the sheet vinyl for employee, stock, VM and WC rooms and plasterboard paint finishes are considered to result in negligible harm.

In consideration of the above, the remainder of the commercial fitout works at ground floor are considered to result in a negligible to minor positive impact as the refurbishment of the basement level would have the public benefit of opening spaces at this level to the public.

Signage

The proposed fascia signage consists of individually mounted letters. The signage would be sensitively designed and well-integrated into the building's elevation, being of high-quality design and appropriate in its proportions and position. The fascia sign is considered to respect the architectural form of the building, not to dominate its appearance nor appear overly

prominent. The proposed vinyl signage does not alter the bracket or frame of the signage, nor their location. The graphics would be minimalist in design, featuring fret cut lettering. Overall, the proposed signage materials would be of a quality appropriate to the status of the building and its overall design is considered to be sympathetic to its listed status.

The fascia and projecting signage are therefore compliant with UDP Policy 14.5 and in line with guidance contained within the Council's Shopfront and Signage Design Guide. They moreover form part of a cohesive design strategy across the building group, with any resulting harm being negligible. On this basis, the proposed signage is considered to have a neutral impact on the significance of the listed asset.

Assessment of Harm

The erection of partial height partitions to the unit's arcade elevation would obscure views from into the unit resulting in a low level of resulting less than substantial harm to the unit's relationship with the historic arcade, with other works and signage associated with the commercial fitout having negligible to minor positive heritage impacts.

In consideration of the proposal's public benefits as per the requirements of Paragraph 215 of the NPPF, the proposal would put the unit to a viable retail use in line with Core Strategy Policies SP1 and CC2. There would also be minor positive impacts of opening up spaces within the basement level to public access.

As such, the less than substantial harm resulting from the works are at a level where the public benefits of a viable use and opening up of the basement outweigh the harm. On this basis, the proposal is considered to meet the statutory test to preserve as required by Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

In order to mitigate against the identified harms, it is recommended that conditions are attached to any approval to ensure the materials and finishes are carried out to the specification of the samples received 23/09/2025 and the strip out is carried out in accordance with documents received.

Conclusion

In consideration of the above and subject to conditions, the proposed works are considered to not have an unacceptable adverse effect on the listed asset's architectural and historic character. The overall harm is considered to be less than substantial, and the proposed works allow the building to be put to viable use and provide increased public access. The less than substantial harm resulting from the works and signage are at a level where the public benefits outweigh the harm. On this basis, the proposal is considered to meet the statutory test to preserve as required by Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

The proposal would also meet the requirements set out in Places for Everyone Policies JP-P1, JP-P2 and JP-Strat2; Policies SP1, CC9, CC10, EN1, EN3 and DM1 of the Core Strategy; saved UDP policies DC14, DC18 and DC19; and sections 12 and 16 of the NPPF as they relate to the preservation and enhancement of heritage assets.

Other Legislative Requirements
Equality Act 2010
Section 149 (Public Sector Equality Duty) of the Equality Act 2010 requires due regard to the need to: Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act and; Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a

protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The Equality Duty does not impose a legal requirement to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment. Compliance with the Equality Duty involves consciously thinking about the aims of the Equality Duty as part of the process of decision-making.

Human Rights Act 1998 considerations
This application needs to be considered against the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998. Under Article 6, the applicants (and those third parties, including local residents, who have made representations) have a right to a fair hearing and to this end the local planning authority must give full consideration to their comments.

Protocol 1 Article 1, and Article 8 where appropriate, confer(s) a right of respect for a person's home, other land and business assets. In taking account of all material considerations, including Council policy as set out in the Core Strategy and saved polices of the Unitary Development Plan, the Director of Planning, Building Control & Licensing has concluded that some rights conferred by these articles on the applicant(s)/objector(s)/resident(s) and other occupiers and owners of nearby land that might be affected may be interfered with but that that interference is in accordance with the law and justified by being in the public interest and on the basis of the planning merits of the development proposal. She believes that any restriction on these rights posed by the recommendation given is proportionate to the wider benefits of and that such a decision falls within the margin of discretion afforded to the Council under the Town and Country Planning Acts.

Recommendation:

Approve

Article 35 Declaration

Officers have worked with the applicant/agent in a positive and proactive manner based on seeking solutions to problems arising in relation to dealing with the application.

Condition(s) to be attached to decision for approval

1. Listed Building consent time limit

The development must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason - Required to be imposed pursuant to Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

2. Approved Drawings and Documents

The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following drawings and documents, received by Manchester City Council as the Local Planning Authority on 08/08/2025:

EX001
EX002

The following received 18/08/2025:

C130
D100
D200
D201
LB100
LB102
LB110
LB200
LB312
LB314
LB315
LB316
LB320
LB321
LB322
LB323
LB510
LB511
LB600
LB800
LB801
LB802
LB804
LB805
LB820
LB821
LB822
LB850
LB851
LB852
LB853
LB854
LB855
LB856
LB857
LB858
LB859
LB860
Design, Access and Heritage Statement

The following received 22/08/2025:

PL361 REV A
D101 REV A
LB311 REV A
LB313 REV A

The following received 29/08/2025:

LB101 REV B

LB111 REV B
LB201 REV B
LB310 REV B
LB803 REV B

The following received 15/09/2025:

PL310 REV B
PL360 REV A
PL362 REV A

The following received 18/09/2025:

Method Statement for the Phase 2 Soft Strip of Interior Elements within a Grade II Listed Building

And the materials and finishes schedule received 24/09/2025.

Reason - To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans. Pursuant to PfE Policies JP-P1, JP-P2 and JP-Strat2; Core Strategy policies SP1, CC2, CC9, EN1, EN3, and DM1; saved UDP policy DC19; Sections 12 and 16 of the NPPF; and Section 16 of the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990

3. Demolition

The demolitions and removals hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following plans and documents:

D100 received 18/08/2025
D200 received 18/08/2025
D201 received 18/08/2025
Design, Access and Heritage Statement received 18/08/2025

D101 REV A received 22/08/2025

Method Statement for the Phase 2 Soft Strip of Interior Elements within a Grade II Listed Building received 18/09/2025

Reason - In the interests of visual amenity and because the proposed works affect a building which is included in the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest and careful attention to building work is required to protect the character and appearance of this building and to ensure consistency in accordance with policies CC9 and EN3 of the Core Strategy and saved policy DC19.1 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester.

4. Materials and Finishes

The materials and finishes to be used for the elevations, partitions, plasterboard, flooring, and staircase hereby permitted shall match the samples received 23/09/2025 as specified in the following documents:

C130 received 18/08/2025
LB110 received 18/08/2025

LB111 REV B received 29/08/2025
Materials and finishes schedule received 24/09/2025.

Reason - In the interests of visual amenity and because the proposed works affect a building which is included in the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest and careful attention to building work is required to protect the character and appearance of this building and to ensure consistency in accordance with PfE Policies JP-P1, JP-P2 and JP-Strat2, policies CC9 and EN3 of the Core Strategy and saved policy DC19.1 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester.

Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified

Highway Services
Environmental Health
Heritage & Urban Design

Flat 4, 6A St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7HD
Flat 7, 12 St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7HW
STEPHENS PREMIER LTD, 10 St Anns Arcade, St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7HW
Barbour, 6 St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7HD
14 St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7HQ
Flat 2, 12 St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7HW
Flat 9, 12 St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7HW
Unit 4, Acresfield, 8 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7HA
Sixth Floor, Acresfield, 8 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7HA
Flat 5, 12 St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7HW
Second Floor Rooms 27 To 37, 17 St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7EF
Basement And Ground Floor, 14 St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7HQ
Flat 15, 12 St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7HW
Third Floor, Kings Court, 2 - 4 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7HA
5 Acresfield, 8 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7HA
16 - 18 Royal Exchange Arcade, Manchester, M2 7EA
3 Royal Exchange Arcade, Manchester, M2 7EA
11 Royal Exchange Arcade, Manchester, M2 7EA
10 Royal Exchange Arcade, Manchester, M2 7EA
1 Royal Exchange Arcade, Manchester, M2 7EA
4 Royal Exchange Arcade, Manchester, M2 7EA
First Floor, 15 St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7PW
Flat 6, 6A St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7HD
Flat 20, 12 St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7HW
Flat 18, 12 St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7HW
BUPA Dental Care, First Floor, 14 St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7HQ
Advertising Right JC Decaux Outside 2 To 4, Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7HA
Second Floor, Kings Court, 2 - 4 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7HA
12 Royal Exchange Arcade, Manchester, M2 7EA
STARBUCKS COFFEE, Unit 4 At, 8 - 10 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7HA
Units 2 And 3, Acresfield, 8 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7HA
Unit 5, Acresfield, 8 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7HA
Second Floor, Acresfield, 8 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7HA
Fifth Floor, Acresfield, 8 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7HA
14 Royal Exchange Arcade, Manchester, M2 7EA
10 Market Street, Manchester, M1 1PT
Flat 3, 6A St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7HD
Abelsons, 8 St Anns Arcade, St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7HW
Flat 4, 12 St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7HW
Flat 11, 12 St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7HW
Kings Court, 2 - 4 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7HA
15 Royal Exchange Arcade, Manchester, M2 7EA
9 Royal Exchange Arcade, Manchester, M2 7EA
4 Market Street, Manchester, M1 1PT
6 Market Street, Manchester, M1 1PT
Flat 1, 6A St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7HD
Flat 1, 12 St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7HW
Flat 16, 12 St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7HW

12B St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7HW
Flat 17, 12 St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7HW
First Floor, 8 - 10 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7HA
Acresfield, 10 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7HA
19 Royal Exchange Arcade, Manchester, M2 7EA
Flat 9, 6A St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7HD
Flat 5, 6A St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7HD
Flat 8, 12 St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7HW
7 St Anns Arcade, St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7HN
15 St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7PW
HSBC, 2 - 4 St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7HD
Flat 14, 12 St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7HW
Doctorcall Limited, Fifth Floor, Kings Court, 2 - 4 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7HA
Ground Floor, Acresfield, 8 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7HA
Fourth Floor And Fifth Floor, Acresfield, 10 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7HA
Third Floor, Acresfield, 10 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7HA
6 Royal Exchange Arcade, Manchester, M2 7EA
3 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7EE
Flat 7, 6A St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7HD
Flat 6, 12 St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7HW
Flat 12, 12 St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7HW
Flat 19, 12 St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7HW
1 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7EE
FRENCH CONNECTION, 7 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7EE
Third And Fourth Floors, Kings Court, 2 - 4 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7HA
Part Sixth Floor FRT, Acresfield, 10 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7HA
31 Royal Exchange Arcade, Manchester, M2 7EA
2 Market Street, Manchester, M1 1PT
18 Market Street, Manchester, M1 1PT
Flat 2, 6A St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7HD
Flat 8, 6A St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7HD
Flat 10, 12 St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7HW
Flat 13, 12 St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7HW
Ernest Jones, 16 St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7HQ
Flat 3, 12 St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7HW
Flat 21, 12 St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7HW
Fourth Floor, Kings Court, 2 - 4 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7HA
First Floor, Acresfield, 8 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7HA
Unit 1, Acresfield, 8 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7HA
8 Royal Exchange Arcade, Manchester, M2 7EA
7 Royal Exchange Arcade, Manchester, M2 7EA
20 Royal Exchange Arcade, Manchester, M2 7EA
5 Royal Exchange Arcade, Manchester, M2 7EA
8 Market Street, Manchester, M1 1PT
5 Exchange Street, Manchester, M2 7EE

Appendix 2 – Planning constraints

Article 4 Direction - City Centre PD Restriction - Class B1(a) To C3
Article 4 Direction - Removal Of PD Rights Change Of Use From Class C3 To Class C4
Coal Authority - Development Low Risk - Name: DEVELOPMENT_LOW_RISK_AREA
Conservation Area - St Anns Square Conservation Area 1970

Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Middle) -
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Middle) -
Area Team Boundary - Name: CENTRAL