

Comments for Planning Application 142986/VO/2025

Application Summary

Application Number: 142986/VO/2025

Address: Field Of Os South Of Claridge Road Manchester

Proposal: City Council Development - Erection of modular-building, including associated landscaping to provide a flexible space for youth and community activities (Class F.2)

Case Officer: Steven McCoombe

Customer Details

Name: Not Available

Address: Not Available

Comment Details

Commenter Type: Member of the Public

Stance: Customer made comments in support of the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: Support for the Proposed Youth Space on the Field of Os

I strongly support the proposed development of a youth space on the Field of Os playing field. This is a vital opportunity to provide young people with a safe, accessible, and inspiring space in an area that currently lacks facilities for youth engagement. The proposal is measured, thoughtful, and has been developed with long-term community benefit in mind.

Key Benefits of the Proposal:

Youth Engagement & Wellbeing

The building will be a creative, social and educational hub for young people aged 10-19, and up to 25 for those with SEND. Unity Arts will lead inclusive programming in arts, mentoring, wellbeing, and community development.

Community Integration

The school will use the building during the day, and the wider community will benefit from access to facilities such as toilets, tool storage, water access, and improved site infrastructure.

Modest Footprint

The building and associated areas (including the patio and small hardstanding) cover less than 40% of the field, a reasonable, sensitive footprint that leaves most of the space open and flexible.

Essential Accessibility

Two disabled parking bays are proposed. These are not optional, they are essential to ensure

equity and access for young people with disabilities. The plan also includes multiple pedestrian entry points and bike storage, encouraging sustainable travel.

Improved Access & Infrastructure

The scheme includes new gates, secure fencing, cycle stands, bin storage, and outdoor taps, small but important additions that dramatically increase the usability of the field for everyone, including forest school and community gardening groups.

Better Use of an Underused Field

The field has not been marked or used as a sports pitch in over 20 years. Meanwhile, Oswald Road Primary School has created high-quality marked sports facilities on-site. No sports space is being lost, and far more is being gained.

Sustainability

The development includes green design principles, cycle provision, EV capacity, and SuDS drainage. While there is room to explore further sustainability (e.g. solar panels), this scheme is already a strong, policy-compliant foundation.

Planning Policy Compliance

The proposal meets all relevant local and national policies, including Sport England Exceptions 4 & 5, which justify development on non-functional playing fields when greater sporting or community benefits are provided, which this project clearly delivers.

Response to Concerns Raised by the Friends of Field of O's:

I respect the efforts the Friends group have made to maintain the Pocket Park and field, but their objections should not prevent a youth and community development that addresses such a vital need. Their concerns have either been directly addressed or can be resolved constructively.

Scale of the Building

The total development footprint is under 40%. The remaining space is green, flexible, and still available for informal recreation, forest school, or events. This is not an overdevelopment.

Car Parking

There is no general parking. Only two disabled bays are included, a legal minimum and vital for accessible youth services. Dismissing this provision as unnecessary directly contradicts Manchester's accessibility and inclusion principles.

Orientation

The orientation has been shaped by site constraints, safeguarding, and function. Any perceived disconnect from the field can be addressed through landscaping and design refinement, not by halting the project.

Access

The plans introduce three new pedestrian access points and maintain existing gates. Concerns about one proposed gate near a tree can be resolved at detail stage, this is a manageable design issue.

Sustainability

The Friends' desire for more sustainable tech is welcome, but the building already includes core sustainability features (bike storage, EV provision, SuDS). Additional measures can be considered during fit-out or future upgrades.

Community Engagement

The Friends were engaged early and were initially described in planning documents as supportive. Their later objections appear to reflect a shift in priorities, but should not outweigh the city-wide importance of this youth facility.

Conclusion

This is a measured, inclusive, and community-focused proposal. It retains most of the green space, answers a clear and unmet need, and creates infrastructure that benefits young people, the school, and the wider community. It complies with planning policy and reflects Manchester's strategic goals around equity, youth inclusion, sustainability, and public health.

I urge the planning committee to support this application.