



07 October 2025

Project/File: 333101741/A5/HB

Manchester City Council
Development Management

VIA PLANNING PORTAL ONLY

Dear Sir/Madam,

Reference:

This letter has been prepared by Stantec UK Limited on behalf of the Academy Music Group (AMG) ('the Applicant'), in support of an application for full planning permission and listed building consent for the installation of 4no handling unit condensers on the existing flat roof with 2no associated acoustic attenuation units, the truncation of a redundant boiler flue pipe, and the removal of the redundant gas fired boiler within the second-floor plant room at the O2 Ritz, Manchester.

This application for full planning permission and listed building consent is accompanied by the following plans:

- Existing Roof Plan (drawing no. 201920-01-E, Rev B)
- Proposed Roof Plan (drawing no. 201920-01-P, Rev B)
- Existing Front Elevation (drawing no. 201920-02-E, Rev A)
- Proposed Front Elevation (drawing no. 201920-02-P, Rev B)
- Existing Northwest Elevation (drawing no. 201920-04-E, Rev A)
- Proposed Northwest Elevation (drawing no. 201922-04-P, Rev B)
- Existing Northeast Elevation (drawing no. 201920-03-E, Rev A)
- Proposed Northeast Elevation (drawing no. 201920-03-P, Rev, B)
- Plant Room Works Machinery- (Existing and Proposed)
- Proposed Rooftop Work Details (drawing no. FE-XX-M-GA-01, Rev, 01)
- Proposed Plant Frame Details (drawing no. 14590-BKP-22-XX-RP-5-0001)
- Proposed Manufacturing Details
- Noise Impact Assessment- September 2025
- Design, Access and Heritage Statement – October 2025

We also ask that you consider the contents of this letter when determining the application for planning permission and listed building consent. This provides a description of the Site and the proposed development and provides an assessment of the proposals against the development plan and relevant material considerations.

Site and Surrounding Area

The Site comprises the O2 Ritz, Manchester. The Site fronts onto Whitworth Street West (the B6469) and backs on to the Rochdale Canal Tow Path. The building is bordered to the northeast and southwest by residential property, with a public footpath which runs between the Site and residential building northeast. The building is located within the southern areas of Manchester City Centre.

The O2 Ritz Manchester is a Grade II Listed Building, having been built as a dance hall in 1927, there are still regular events which take place at this venue. The property features a white glazed terracotta façade with a stepped parapet and holds historic interest as rare example of a dance band venue representing early 20th century popular culture.

Reference: 333101741/A5/HB

Planning History

A desktop review of the Site's planning history has been undertaken, utilising Manchester City Council's (MCC) online planning search tool. There are several applications relating to the Site, although these date back beyond five years. For completeness, these applications are set out below:

Reference	Description	Decision	Date
094757/LO/2010/C1	Listed Building Consent for internal refurbishment works to basement, ground and first floors including installation of acoustic wall and ceiling, removal of some internal walls, installation of new partitions, and formation of new escape door to side elevation	Approved	16/02/2011
094756/FO/2010/C1	Installation of new escape door to side elevation	Approved	16/02/2011
050018/AO/CITY3/96	3no. illuminated fascia name signs	Approved	03/05/1996
051120/LO/CITY3/96	Listed Building Consent Construction of 2no. new internal escape stairs, two new stores and beer store and creation of two openings in external wall for fire exit.	Approved	24/01/1997
050929/FO/CITY3/96	New decorative treatment to external entrance elevation	Approved	11/12/1996
050050/LO/CITY3/96	Listed Building Consent Internal alterations and refurbishment and associated external works and three new signs to existing entrance canopy.	Approved	29/10/1996
051119/FO/CITY3/96	Creation of two openings in external wall for fire exits.	Approved	24/01/1997

Proposed Development

The Applicant is seeking planning permission and listed building consent for the installation of 4no handling unit condensers, measuring approximately 1600mm in height, 1200mm in width and 750mm in depth, and the removal of the redundant air duct. The units to be installed are Daikin RYYQ14U (VRF IV Continuous Heating) heat pumps. Product details are included as part of the supporting documents. Each block of 2no proposed units will be enclosed in an acoustic attenuator to ensure the noise levels requirements are met. The attenuators will comprise of power coated metal louvred units.

The 4no condenser units have been sensitively positioned to utilise the existing steelwork, and will be positioned on a big foot system, to avoid additional structural intervention. As outlined, the pipework and wiring will utilise the existing opening created by truncating the redundant air duct, adding a cone shaped cap and bracket, made of stainless steel, to the top to ensure weather resistance.

This application also seeks to remove the redundant free-standing machinery to the second-floor plant room.

The proposed works would improve the existing ventilation system within the building, enhancing the wellbeing of customers and staff, as well as the condition of the building itself.

Due to the age of the property, there is limited mechanical ventilation and cooling within the building. This proposal would improve on the existing provision. Following recent events including COVID-19 air quality has been highlighted as an increasing public health priority. Improving the quality of air is especially important within buildings such as live music venues where large numbers of people gather.

Reference: 333101741/A5/HB

Legislative and Policy Context

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The statutory development plan document relevant to the Site and proposed development is The Manchester City Council Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2012) and Places for Everyone (2024). The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024) and relevant Supplementary Planning Documents are material considerations in the determination process.

Manchester City Council Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2012)

The Core Strategy was adopted in 2012 and was updated in March 2024 after the Places for Everyone joint development plan was adopted in March 2024 and sets out the long-term strategic policies for future development in Manchester.

- City Centre (CC1-CC10)
- Regional Centre (EC3)
- Manchester City Boundary

Allocated Policy is discussed within the Principle of Development.

- Policy CC6: City Centre High Density Development
- Policy CC9: Design and Heritage
- Policy EN1: Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas
- Policy EN3: Heritage

Places for Everyone (2024)

JP-Strat1: Core Growth Area seeks to balance economic and housing development while safeguarding and enhancing heritage assets. The policy highlights the importance of integrating new developments with the historic environment to maintain cultural identity and support heritage-led regeneration. This approach ensures the area's growth respects its historical significance and promotes a unique sense of place.

JP-P2 Heritage emphasises the conservation and enhancement of Greater Manchester's heritage assets. It mandates that development proposals affecting heritage assets must provide clear justification for any potential harm or loss, ensuring that such actions are necessary and outweighed by public benefits. The policy also encourages the adaptive reuse of historic buildings, promoting their integration into new developments to maintain the region's cultural identity and support heritage-led regeneration.

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

Section 16 of the NPPF, Conserving and enhancing the historic environment, has been acknowledged within this application process, whereby the heritage and value of conserving this building has been addressed throughout.

Planning Assessment

Consideration of the Site, proposed development and planning policy background has led us to identify the main planning issues to be addressed in the determination of this application are as follows:

- Principle of development.
- Heritage considerations.

Each issue is considered in turn below.

Reference: 333101741/A5/HB

Principle of Development

The Site is seeking planning permission and listed building consent to install four handling unit condensers to the flat roofed area behind the front elevation parapet of the O2 Ritz Manchester, to improve the buildings air-conditioning facilities. The proposed works would remove the redundant air duct and utilise the existing roof opening to sensitively accommodate new piping and wiring associated with the cooling units, removing the need for new openings. Redundant plant machinery will also be removed from the second-floor plant room.

Located in Manchester City Centre, the Site supports the hosting of varying entertainment performances and holds events weekly. The Site is well known for its heritage within central Manchester, being listed as a Grade II building.

The proposal aligns with key policies outlined in the adopted Core Strategy:

- Policy CC1: City Centre – Advocates for new and improved infrastructure that strengthens the City Centre's role and connectivity with surrounding areas.
- Policy EC3: Regional Centre – Encourages employment-generating developments, including commercial enterprises, to enhance the city's economic vitality.

Heritage

The proposed development, located on a Grade II Listed Building in Manchester City Centre, has been carefully designed to respect and enhance the building's heritage. Particular attention has been given to the sensitive integration of the new roof feature, ensuring compliance with paragraph 212 of the NPPF, and as such, the proposed development causes 'no harm' to the listed building, or surrounding listed buildings. Subsequently paragraphs 213-215 are not engaged. In alignment with Core Strategy Policy CC9, and Policy EN3 the proposal preserves the heritage significance of the building, maintaining its functionality without causing harm. This approach also accords with Policy EN1 and JP-P2 of Places for Everyone, reflecting a commitment to preserving the historical and architectural significance of the Site.

Conclusion.

We have assessed the proposed development against the relevant local and national planning policies and demonstrate that it is in accordance with those policies. As such, the proposals should be approved without delay in accordance with paragraph 11 of the NPPF. We trust the above information and enclosed plans and documents are sufficient for Officers to be able to validate the application. However, please do not hesitate to get in touch should you require anything further.

Yours sincerely,

STANTEC UK LIMITED

