MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

Planning

Growth & Development

Delegated officer report for planning application

Application no.	143214/FO/2025
Date registered valid:	15 July 2025
Proposal:	Elevational alterations including infilling of first-floor windows, introduction of a new arched entrance and application of new external materials and installation of flue
Address:	453 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 4AN
Ward(s):	Withington Ward
Applicant:	Mr Ahmed Ali
Agent (if any):	Mr M Hadi Barman, Barel Architecture Ltd
Case officer:	Holly Wright Tel: 0161 219 6381 Email: holly.wright@manchester.gov.uk
Recommendation:	Refuse
Date of recommendation:	**1 September 2025**

Application details

Type of application: Full Application Consent

Development type: Minor Other

Date of site visit: 31 July 2025

Standard consultations: Printed: 23 July 2025 Expired: 13 August 2025

Neighbour notifications: Printed: 23 July 2025 Expired: 13 August 2025

Site notice: Posted: 31 July 2025 Expired: 21 August 2025

Press advert: Published: 29 July 2025 Expired: 19 August 2025

Departure from Development Plan: No

Environmental Statement: Not required

Description of site/building/area

Listed building: Not applicable

Conservation area: Withington Conservation Area 1983

Tree Preservation Order: Not applicable

The application relates to a two-storey mid-terraced modern property situated along a traditional high street in the Withington Conservation Area. The property is currently vacant but was formerly occupied by Lloyds Bank. Prior to unauthorised works taking place, the property featured a modern aluminium framed shopfront to the ground floor and large first floor horizontally proportioned first floor windows. The property has little architectural merit, however, exhibited some consistency at ground floor level with the shopfronts on the adjacent properties.

As previously noted, the application property is located within the Withington Conservation Area. Withington Conservation Area evolved primarily in the 19th century, centred on the village high street. Characterised by its architectural quality and variety, cultural vibrancy, and mixed uses, it is defined by a townscape of civic buildings, public houses, churches, banks, and a mix of grand and smaller-scale domestic dwellings that tell the story of the area’s growth and continued vitality.


ISTANBUL
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SOUTHSI
MEXICO


SOUTHSIDE
3 PINTS + FREE
CHIPS & DIPS
ISTANBUL
Restaurant









Description of development

The application seeks permission for:

- Infilling of first-floor window openings;
- Introduction of a new arched entrance at ground floor level;
- Application of sand-coloured render to the façade;
- Installation of a rear kitchen flue;
- Installation of signage including rust-effect aluminium lettering and an internally illuminated silhouette figure above fascia level.

Consultations & Notification Responses

No representations received from local residents.

A letter of objection was received from **Councillor Chris Wills, Councillor Angela Gartside, Councillor Gavin White,** and **Councillor Becky Chambers**; the comments are summarised as follows:

- Lack of detail contained within the planning submission.
- Frontage has become poor since Lloyds has vacated the premises, however, the way everything has been completely ripped out, including the frontage, is shocking.
- Withington is at the heart of a conservation area and indeed has a shop front guide which all new businesses are expected to work with, in order to ensure that their shop fronts are sympathetic with the district centre's heritage features.
- Need more information regarding the proposed final appearance of both the building and the signage.

Withington Civic Society objected to the proposal; the comments are summarised as follows:

- We welcome investment in Withington Village, especially in vacant properties.
- Substantial concerns in relation to the proposal.
- The existing shopfront has already been removed and an unauthorised roller shutter installed.
- The street tree directly in front of the property has been severely damaged with its branches hacked off.
- The proposed front elevation is shocking and inappropriate, bearing no resemblance to the heritage and architectural forms of south Manchester and Withington in particular. It would damage the Conservation Area.
- The submitted heritage statement is incoherent and inaccurate in terms of its detail, failing to meet planning policy criteria.
- There is very little render in the Conservation Area, only on the adjacent Istanbul restaurant, and the flats above Coffeelab – all of which are painted white. Sand-coloured render would be out-of-keeping.
- A first-floor plan should be provided to demonstrate the blocked up windows as well as the use of the property.
- Replacing the first-floor windows with an expanse of render would not respect the traditional proportions of the existing building or surrounding properties. Removal of these features will result in the building appearing truncated, with no relationship to the adjacent ground floor shopfronts and fascia signage.
- The frontage would be obtrusive in the street scene and out-of-character with the Conservation Area. It would also be contrary to the aims and objectives of MCC's Shopfront and Signage Design Guide.

- Concerns regarding the intended use of the upper floors of the property.
- The harm caused by the proposal would not be offset by the economic benefits of the building being re-purposed.

MCC's Environmental Health Services made no objection, requesting conditions relating to fumes, premises opening hours, delivery hours, external plant/equipment/servicing, waste storage and management, and premises sound insulation be attached to any approval.

MCC's Highways Services made no objection, requesting a condition relating to the submission of cycle storage details be attached to any approval.

Policies

The following policies are considered relevant in the consideration of this application.

Unitary Development Plan (UDP) – The UDP has been superseded by the Core Strategy Development Plan, but certain policies are still considered of relevance:
- Policy DC14 – Shopfronts and Related Signs
- Policy DC15 – Advertisements, Hoardings, and Posters
- Policy DC18 – Conservation Areas
- Policy DC26 – Development and Noise
- Policy E3.3 – Environment Improvement and Protection

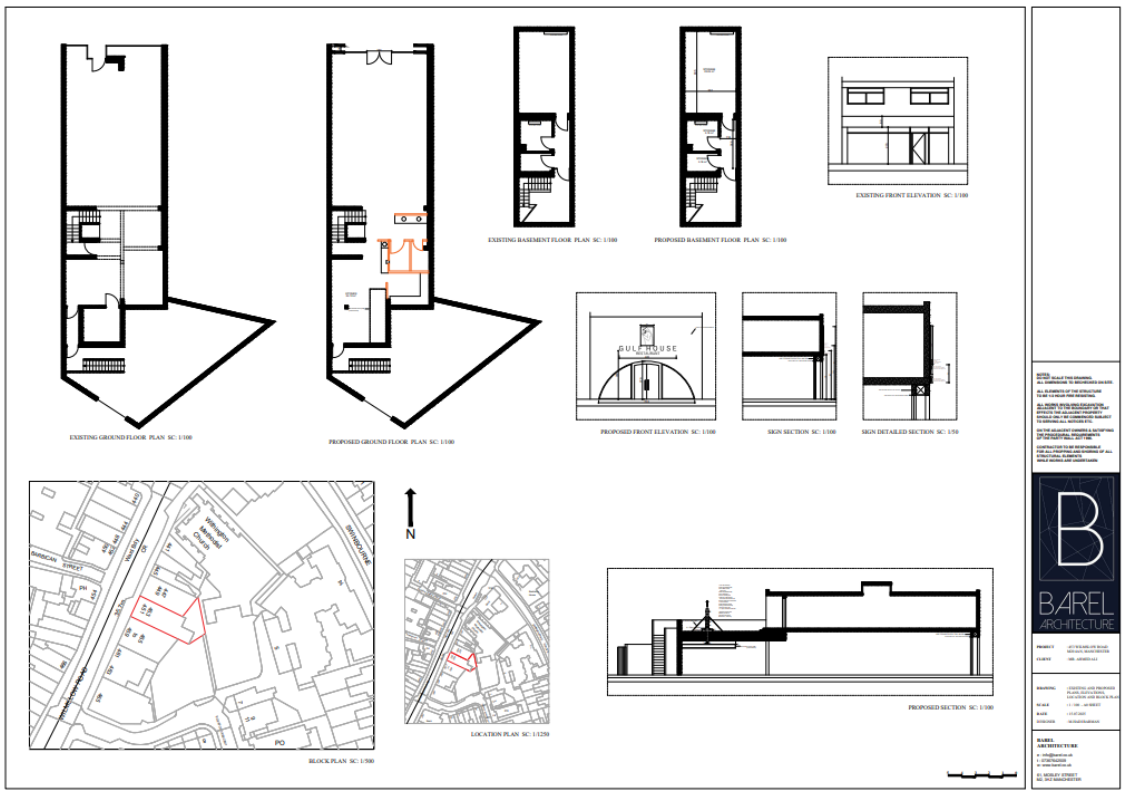
The Manchester Core Strategy – Development Plan Document 2012-2027 ("the Core Strategy") was adopted by the City Council on the 11th of July 2012:
- Policy DM1 – Development Management
- Policy SP1 – Spatial Principles
- Policy EN1 – Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas
- Policy EN3 – Heritage

Shopfront and Signage Design Guide (2024)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024)
- Chapter 12 – Achieving Well-Designed Places
- Chapter 16 – Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

Places for Everyone - is a long-term plan of nine Greater Manchester districts for jobs, new homes, and sustainable growth. It has been published by the GMCA on behalf of the nine districts and took effect and became part of the statutory development plan on March 21, 2024.

- Policy JP-P1: Sustainable Places
- Policy JP-P2: Heritage



Submitted existing and proposed plans and elevations

Issues

Principle – Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that decisions must be made in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework reinforces this requirement in paragraphs 2 and 48, whilst paragraph 12 indicates that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not alter the statutory status of the development plan as a starting point for decision-making and that, where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan, permission should not normally be granted.

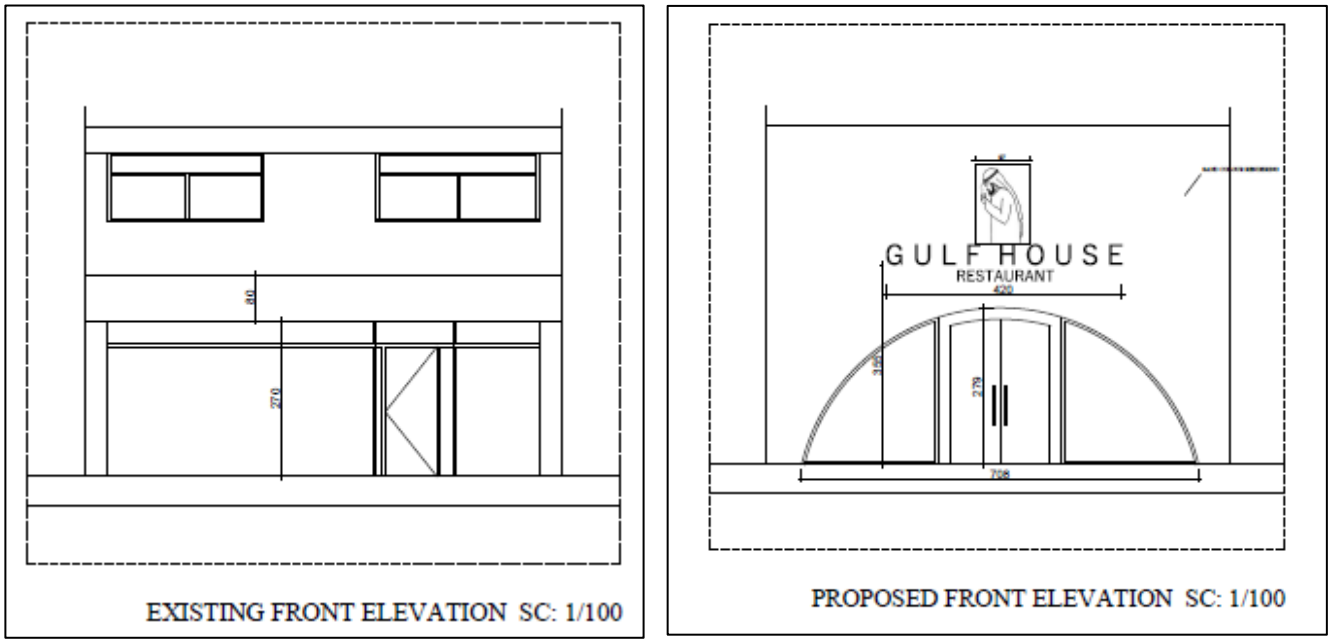
In the case of this application, the principle of the proposal is considered unacceptable and cannot be supported as it conflicts with the development plan policies and associated guidance listed in the preceding section.

It is considered that the elevational alterations (including infilling of first-floor windows, introduction of a new arched entrance and application of new external materials) would have an unduly harmful impact upon the visual amenity of the area and the character of the Withington Conservation Area, on account of their inappropriate materiality and design elements, which would be out-of-keeping and visually incongruous with the surrounding shopfronts as well as the heritage significance of the designated asset.

On balance, the proposal is deemed to conflict with saved policies E3.3, DC14, DC15, and DC18 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester, policies DM1, SP1, EN1, and EN3 of the Manchester Core Strategy, chapters 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework, MCC's Shopfront and Signage Design Guide, and policies JP-P1 and JP-P2 of Places for Everyone.

Design and visual amenity – the proposed alterations would significantly undermine the visual amenity of the surrounding area by introducing design elements that are discordant with the established character of Wilmslow Road and the application property itself.

The complete rendering of the front elevation of the property together with the removal and infilling of its first-floor windows would be visually unacceptable as these alterations would result in the loss of original elevational features that contribute to the vertical rhythm and architectural articulation and interest of the building. These alterations would therefore create a blank rendered surface which would appear visually heavy and would disrupt the established fenestration pattern along the Wilmslow Road high street. The first-floor windows in particular form an important part of the high street and should be retained.



Submitted existing and proposed front elevation



Site photograph of principal elevation of No.453 Wilmslow Road

The introduction of a new arched entrance, while intended as a focal point, represents a significant alteration that would present a stark visual contrast and disrupt the current uniformity and rhythm of the Wilmslow Road high street. It is considered that this design intervention is not reflective of and is stylistically inconsistent with the prevailing shopfront typology extant in the area as the surrounding units predominantly feature traditional linear and rectilinear shopfronts with fascia level signage, large panels of framed glazing and rectangular doorways (see below photographs). Further to this, it should be noted that the surrounding area does not exhibit a lawful precedent for interventions of this type as the arched ground floor windows present at No.461-463 Wilmslow Road do not benefit from planning permission, however, are exempt from enforcement action due to their being installed in 2016/2017.

The agent of the application cited No.424, 450, 464, and 468 Wilmslow Road as examples of properties which feature ‘arched shopfronts and window treatments’, indicating that they are already ‘a common feature’ of the street scene. However, from reviewing these examples, it is clear that No.424 features original arched windows at first-floor and second-floor level only with a rectilinear shopfront at ground floor level and, as such, does not represent a comparable

example to the current proposal. No.450 and No.464 comparatively do not feature any arched features at either ground or first floor level, whilst No.468 features original arched windows at first-floor level only with a rectilinear shopfront at ground floor level, which, again, is not comparable to the current proposal.

The new arched entrance therefore lacks contextual justification and would introduce a pastiche element that would be a jarring, incongruous and out-of-keeping with the appearance of surrounding shopfronts. The introduction of a curved form with no defined framing for signage would be at odds with the established street scene and, as such, cannot be supported.



Arched windows present at No.461-463 Wilmslow Road



Arched first-floor and second-floor windows present at No.422-428 Wilmslow Road



No.450 Wilmslow Road with no arched features present



No.464 Wilmslow Road with no arched features present



Surrounding shopfronts along Wilmslow Road



Surrounding shopfronts along Wilmslow Road



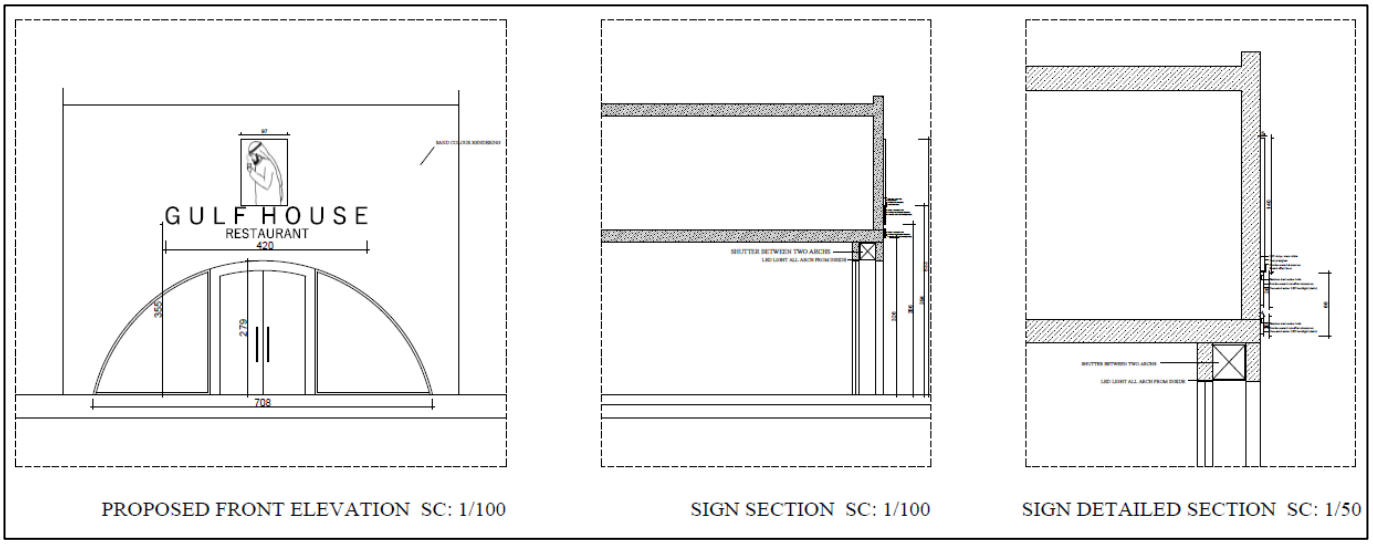
Surrounding shopfronts along Wilmslow Road



Surrounding shopfronts along Wilmslow Road

The proposed signage, including its internally illuminated elements and silhouette figure, would dominate the front-facing façade of the building due their considerable scale (with the letter sign measuring to 0.66m in height, 4.2m in width, and 0.04m in depth and the silhouette sign measuring to 1.5m in height, 0.97m in width, and 0.05m in depth) and would fail to respect traditional shopfront design principles due to their siting above the first-floor cills with no clearly defined fascia line (as specified in MCC's Shopfront and Signage Design Guide). Further to this, their thicknesses (ranging from 40mm to 50mm) would also exceed the recommended maximum depth of 30mm (as specified in MCC's Shopfront and Signage Design Guide). The internally illuminated silhouette figure would be particularly incongruous as it would introduce a modern branding element that lacks contextual reference to the surrounding shopfronts. The combination of externally and internally illuminated signage (300cd/m2), mounted directly onto a

blank sand-coloured rendered surface would result in a visually dominant/prominent and uncharacteristic intervention that would detract from the simplicity and restraint typical of signage within the Conservation Area, as well as the historic street scene and surrounding area, and would ultimately set an undesirable precedent for high level signage. The shutter grille would also have a deadening effect on the street scene when lowered.



Submitted proposed front elevation and sign section details

For these reasons, the proposal is considered to conflict with the Conservation Area Regeneration Plan for Withington which seeks to improve shopfronts and their associated signage and reinforce a sense of uniformity as well as the guidance set out in MCC's Shopfront and Signage Design Guide, which seeks to preserve the architectural integrity and visual coherence of historic commercial frontages and advises that signage should be confined to the fascia and proportionate and respectful of the host building's architecture, with internally illuminated elements strongly discouraged, particularly in Conservation Areas. It should also be noted that the degree of harm caused to the visual amenity of the area would be further exacerbated by the proposal's prominent siting adjacent to Wilmslow Road, along a key arterial route, contrary to saved policy E3.3 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester which seeks to upgrade the appearance of the city's major radial routes.

It is considered that together the above alterations would erode the visual harmony of the streetscape and diminish the quality of the public realm, contrary to the aims of saved policies E3.3, DC14 and DC15 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester, policies DM1, EN1 and SP1 of the Manchester Core Strategy, the Shopfront and Signage Design Guide, chapter 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework, and policy JP-P1 of Places for Everyone.

Impact upon designated assets – the cumulative impact of the proposed alterations would erode the building's contribution to the character and appearance of the Withington Conservation Area.

1. Loss of historic elevational features: the proposal includes the infilling of the existing first-floor window openings, which currently contribute to the vertical rhythm and architectural articulation of the building. These features are typical of early 20th-century commercial buildings in the Withington Conservation Area and help maintain a consistent streetscape. Their removal would erase original architectural detailing, create a blank, rendered upper façade that appears visually heavy and monolithic, and disrupt the established pattern of fenestration that defines the character of Wilmslow Road.

2. Incongruous arched entrance: the proposed arched entrance is not a feature commonly found on shopfronts within the Withington Conservation Area. The new arched entrance would introduce a stylistic element that is alien to the prevailing shopfront typology area, undermine the uniformity and simplicity of the surrounding traditional commercial frontage, and would create a focal point that would draw attention away from the building's original proportions and detailing. This would result in a jarring visual break in the streetscape, thereby diminishing the architectural coherence of the area.

3. Signage above fascia level and lack of fascia delineation: the proposed signage includes rust-effect aluminium lettering, an internally illuminated silhouette figure mounted above fascia level, and no clear or traditional fascia band to separate the shopfront from the upper elevation. This approach conflicts with MCC's Shopfront and Signage Design Guide, which states that signage should be confined to the fascia, fascia boards should be clearly defined and proportionate, with internally illuminated signs and projecting elements above fascia level strongly discouraged , particularly in Conservation Areas. The signage would therefore appear dominant and intrusive, disrupting the visual order of the frontage and setting a harmful precedent.

4. Use of non-traditional materials and finishes: the application proposes a sand-coloured render and powder-coated rust-effect aluminium signage. While the applicant argues these are sympathetic, it is considered that they lack the textural and tonal qualities of traditional brickwork and painted timber, introduce a contemporary palette that is not grounded in the local vernacular, and risk creating a pastiche appearance rather than a genuine enhancement of the historic environment.

5. Cumulative impact on the Withington Conservation Area: although each element may appear modest in isolation, the cumulative effect of removing traditional and original features, introducing incongruous design elements, using non-traditional materials, and installing inappropriate signage would result in a substantial erosion of the building's contribution to the Conservation Area.

The proposals are considered by virtue of their size, design, materiality and siting to appear incongruous and detract from established street scene and character of the Withington Conservation Area and, as such, are contrary to section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, paragraphs 215, 131, and chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework, saved policy DC18 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester, policy EN3 of the Manchester Core Strategy, and policy JP-P2 of Places for Everyone.

Residential amenity – the elevational alterations (including infilling of first-floor windows, introduction of a new arched entrance and application of new external materials) are not considered to give rise to unduly harmful impacts upon the residential amenity of they area. Issues associated with overshadowing, loss of light, loss of outlook, loss of privacy, or overlooking are not anticipated.

Flue – the extract flue is proposed to be installed to the rear of the building, projecting upwards from the flat roof of the existing single storey rear extension. Harmful impacts associated with the installation of the flue could be controlled and mitigated via condition, as requested by the Council's Environmental Health Services.

Parking and impact to highway – the Council's Highways Services indicated that the proposal is not expected generate an unacceptable number of vehicle trips. Cycle storage details were requested to be secured via condition, however, given that the application is not seeking permission for a change of use, to request such details would be onerous.

Waste storage and management – the Council's Environmental Health Services requested a condition relating to the submission of a waste storage and management scheme, however, given that the application is not seeking permission for a change of use, to request such details would be onerous.

Other matters – the Council's Environmental Health Services requested conditions relating to opening hours, delivery hours, external plant/equipment/servicing, and premises sound insulation, however, given that the application is not seeking permission for a change of use, to request such details would be onerous.

Conclusion – for the reasons specified above, it is considered that the proposal is unacceptable due to its inappropriate elevational alterations and design choices which would have an unduly harmful impact upon the visual amenity of the area as well as the character and appearance of the surrounding street scene and Withington Conservation Area.

The proposal is deemed to conflict with saved policies E3.3, DC14, DC15, and DC18 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester, policies DM1, SP1, EN1, and EN3 of the Manchester Core Strategy, chapters 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework, MCC's Shopfront and Signage Design Guide, and policies JP-P1 and JP-P2 of Places for Everyone.

The agent of the application was informed of the above issues and notified of the LPA's intent to refuse the proposal.

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: Refuse

Article 35 Declaration

The proposal does not improve the social and environmental conditions of the area, nor does it comply with the development plan and therefore does not comprise sustainable development. There are no conditions which could reasonably have been imposed, which would have made the development acceptable, and it is therefore not possible to approve the application.

Condition(s) to be attached to decision for approval OR Reasons for recommendation to refuse

1) The proposed elevational alterations, including the infilling of first-floor windows, introduction of a new arched entrance, application of new external materials, and installation of signage above fascia level with no clear fascia delineation, would result in a visually incongruous and obtrusive form of development, which would not be sympathetic to the appearance of the street scene or its surrounding area, to the detriment of visual amenity and, as such, is contrary to Manchester City Council's Shopfront and Signage Design Guide, saved policies DC14, DC15 and E3.3 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester, policies SP1, EN1 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy, policy JP-P1 of the Places for Everyone joint development plan document and chapter 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

2) The proposed elevational alterations, including the infilling of first-floor windows, introduction of a new arched entrance, application of new external materials, and installation of signage above fascia level with no clear fascia delineation, would remove original architectural features,

introduce elements that are out-of-keeping with the surrounding shopfronts, and would fail to respect the established character of the Withington Conservation Area causing unnecessary visual harm and detriment to its special architectural and historic interest. As such, the proposal is contrary to Manchester City Council's Shopfront and Signage Design Guide, saved policy DC18 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester, policy EN3 of the Manchester Core Strategy, policy JP-P2 of the Places for Everyone joint development plan document and chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified

Highway Services
Environmental Health
Heritage & Urban Design
Withington Civic Society
Withington Village Regeneration Partnership

443A Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 4AN
445 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 4AN
455 - 459 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 9AN
450 - 452 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 3BW
448 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 3BW
443 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 4AN
456 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 3BG
Basement, 455 - 459 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 9AN
458 - 460 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 3BG
Flat 2, 458 - 460 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 3BG
Flat 1, 458 - 460 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 3BG
445A Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 4AN
ONE STOP STORES LIMITED, Ground Floor, 455 - 459 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 4AN
450A Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 3BW
Southside Tequila Joint, 447 - 449 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 4AN
Flat 2, 441 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 4AN
459A Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 4AN
449A Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 4AN
Flat 1, 441 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 4AN
441 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 4AN
Albert Inn, 454 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 3BG

Appendix 2 – Planning constraints

Article 4 Direction - Removal Of PD Rights Change Of Use From Class C3 To Class C4
Conservation Area - Withington Conservation Area 1983
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -
Area Team Boundary - Name: SOUTH AREA