



NORTEDGE

Planning and Access Statement

20 Lord St,
Cheetham Hill,
Manchester
M4 4FP

Prepared By:

Northedge Architecture

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Introduction

This statement has been prepared on behalf of the applicant in support of a full planning application for the change of use of two vacant buildings at 20 Lord Street, Cheatham Hill, from its former use as a TV station (class E), to a Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) primary school (Use Class F.1).

The proposal seeks to bring the buildings back into active use to provide much-needed specialist primary education provision for children requiring additional social, emotional and mental health support. The application relates solely to a change of use; no external alterations or extensions are proposed, as the existing structure and layout are considered broadly suitable for the intended educational function.

The planning application is supported by this statement, which sets out the background to the proposal and provides an assessment of its compliance with relevant planning policy. Specifically, the statement includes:

- A description of the application site and its existing access;
- An overview of the proposed change of use;
- A summary of relevant local planning policy and national guidance;
- A review of comparable planning history in the local area;
- A concluding appraisal of the scheme's suitability and benefits.

This should be read in conjunction with the accompanying application documents, including the completed forms and certificates and existing / proposed drawings.

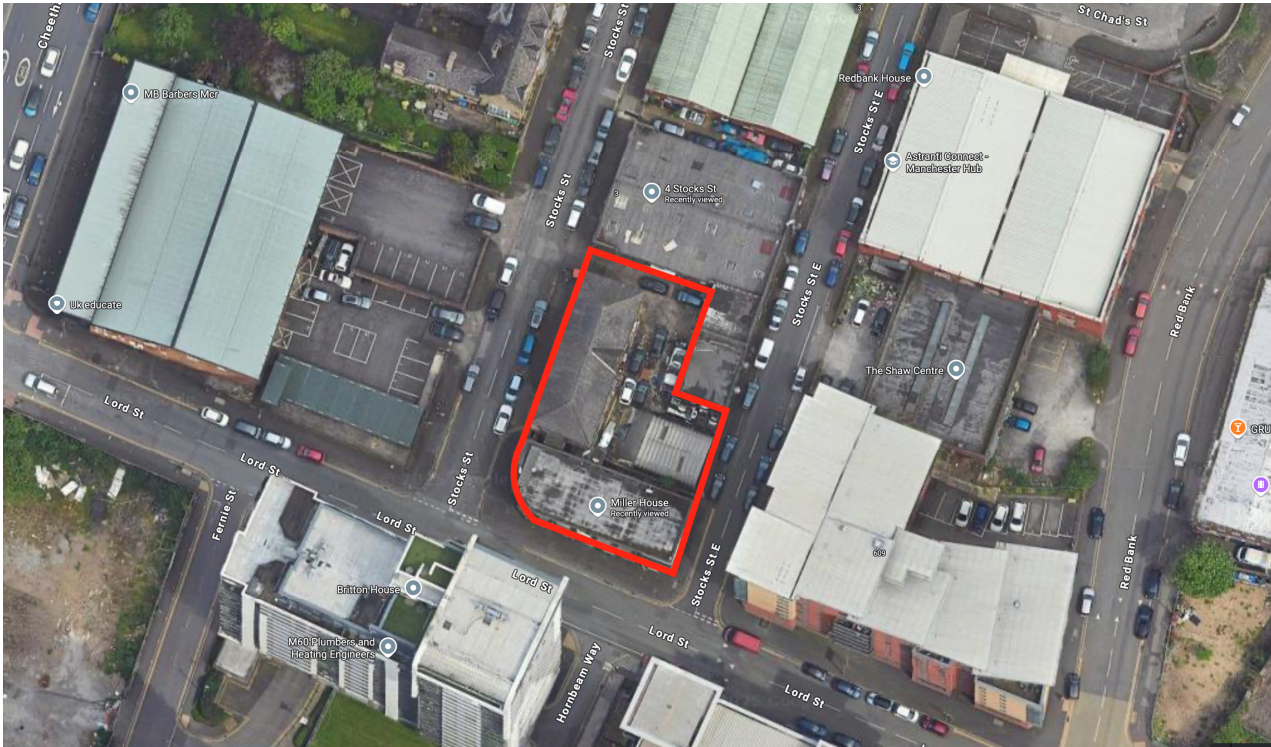
The Application Site

The application site comprises two adjoining vacant buildings, formerly part of a TV station, located at 20 Lord Street in the Cheetham Hill area of Manchester. The buildings are joined by a staircase, enabling integrated operation as a single education facility. Both structures are located on an urban plot bounded Lord Street and Stocks Street and are surrounded by a mix of commercial and residential uses.

The area is well served by local transport connections, including bus routes operating on Cheetham Hill Road and proximity to Manchester Victoria Station which is a 15-minute walk from the site. There is a rear service yard/ open area which may accommodate parking or servicing, subject to assessment.

The buildings are of brick and concrete construction, one with a pitched roof and the other with a flat roof. The surrounding context is urban, with medium density-built form typical of inner Manchester fringe areas.

Figure 1: Aerial view of the application site (outlined in red).



About SEMH Primary

SEMH (Social, Emotional and Mental Health) primary schools are dedicated educational settings for children whose learning is affected by significant social or emotional challenges. These may include trauma, anxiety, behavioural difficulties, or other neurodevelopmental needs. SEMH schools offer:

- Small group teaching and high staff-to-pupil ratios;
- Individualised learning plans aligned with each child's EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan);
- Emotional regulation support and therapeutic input;
- A structured, nurturing environment to build confidence and life skills.

This proposal supports Manchester City Council's strategic aim of increasing SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) capacity locally, particularly within the primary phase.

Use & Layout

The proposal is for a change of use only, with no changes to the external form of the buildings.

Internally, the buildings will be adapted to provide:

- Classrooms for small group teaching;
- A larger assembly hall/ multifunctional space;
- Sensory rooms;
- Staff offices and meeting rooms;
- Kitchen/dining space;
- Toilets and welfare facilities;
- Secure access points and circulation routes.

The two buildings are connected via a shared internal stairwell, enabling full operational integration while maintaining clear functional zones.

The ground floor plan includes classrooms, staff offices and facilities, and the assembly hall. The first floor includes the main entrance porch, as well as additional classrooms, sensory and intervention spaces, and toilets. The second floor also includes more classrooms, toilets and additional multifunction space. Layouts are designed to ensure clear visibility, safeguarding, and acoustic management appropriate for SEMH learners.

Amount

The proposed development has a total Gross Internal Area (GIA) of 990.0 sqm, distributed across three floors as follows:

- Ground Floor: 392.3 sqm
- First Floor: 408.4 sqm
- Second Floor: 189.3 sqm

The overall site area is 853.4 sqm, as measured within the red line boundary shown in Figure 1.

Operation

The SEMH school will operate during standard term-time hours, typically:

- Monday to Friday, 7:30am to 5:30pm, with occasional wrap-around support; School timings 9am till 3pm, with time before and after for teacher admin and school drop off/pick up.
- Term-time only, with phased integration and part-time timetables used as required for pupil needs.

The school will deliver a bespoke curriculum focused on emotional development, academic progression, and social engagement. It will be registered with Ofsted and comply with national requirements for SEND provision.

Staff

The number of full-time and part-time staff required in our SEN primary school is determined by the individual and collective needs of the children, which can vary significantly based on the complexity of their educational, emotional, and therapeutic requirements. While staffing ratios are established in line with each pupil's EHCP and risk assessments, our preferred approach is to employ all core staff on a full-time basis to provide consistency, stability, and continuity of care. This includes teachers, teaching assistants, pastoral staff, administrators, and kitchen/catering staff such as the school cook. Full-time staffing not only supports stronger relationships with pupils but also ensures a cohesive, well-trained team that can respond flexibly and effectively to the evolving needs of the school community.

Parking

The site includes a rear courtyard / yard area which will accommodate drop offs and pick ups, otherwise there is no allocated parking given the sustainable transport location. Additional provision (e.g. cycle storage or accessible bays) can be incorporated if required.

Visitors and drop-offs will be managed by staggered timings and by designated collection zones on nearby roads. There are bus routes that run along Cheetham Hill Road in both direction as well as Manchester Victoria station being located nearby.

Access

Vehicular and pedestrian access is retained from both Lord Street and Stocks Street. The primary entrance to the building is located via an entrance porch, accessed through the rear courtyard. This entrance is reached via a set of steps, with a lift provided to ensure inclusive access in accordance with accessibility requirements. The lift also serves the ground floor, ensuring step-free access for all users.

Scale and Appearance

The scale and external appearance will be maintained in keeping with the existing building as there will be no alterations or extensions, due the current structure suiting the primary school operations. The proposal is for change of use only, and all adaptations will occur within the existing structure. As such, the visual character of the building and its relationship to the surrounding context will remain unaffected.

Planning Policy

This Planning Statement has been prepared with regards to the statutory development plan and relevant national planning policy, which collectively guide the assessment of this application.

The application accords with the Manchester Core Strategy (2012), particularly with regards to:

- Promoting sustainable neighbourhoods and reuse of underused buildings.
- Supporting the delivery of education infrastructure to meet local need.
- Encouraging appropriate development that respects local character and delivers community benefits.

The proposed development also supports the aims of Greater Manchester's Places for Everyone Joint Plan (2024), specifically with regards to:

- Promoting inclusive communities and health infrastructure.
- Encouraging development in accessible locations.

The National Planning Policy Framework encourages:

- Significant weight should be given to proposals for new or expanded school facilities;
- Promoting healthy, inclusive communities;
- Supporting efficient use of land and buildings.

The proposal aligns with these goals by reactivating a vacant site for social benefit and educational need.

Planning History

A review of Manchester City Council's online planning register has been undertaken. There are no recent planning applications directly associated with 20 Lord Street. It is understood that the property was previously in use as a TV station and has remained vacant, with no material changes having taken place since its last use.

One relevant planning application was identified nearby, which may act as a material consideration in support of the proposed scheme:

- Ref: 143385/FO/2025
Description: Change of use of existing vacant office building (Use Class E) to a SEND school (Use Class F1(a)), and associated landscaping works to facilitate the use
Location: Vision House 100 Floats Road Manchester M23 9PL
Decision and Date: Awaiting decision, Application validated on 07 Jul 2025

Two older applications were also identified during the search; while not directly related to the subject site, they demonstrate a history of similar education-related development in the area:

- Ref: 129615/FO/2021
Description: Erection of a single storey extension to existing school to form SEN school provision.
Location: Mount Carmel Infant School Hunt Street Manchester M9 8BL

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Decision and Date: Approved, 06 May 2021.

- Ref: F07429/LA

Description: Application for Deemed Planning Permission Use of dwellinghouse for the further education of educationally subnormal children in association with Leacroft Special School.

Location: 33 Corelli Street, Miles Platting.

Decision and Date: Approved, 02 November 1977.

In conclusion, the planning history does not indicate any constraints that would affect the principle of development at 20 Lord Street. The comparable application at Vision House may provide useful context for the proposed change of use, supporting its acceptability in planning terms.

Conclusion

The proposed change of use of 20 Lord Street to a Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) primary school will deliver a valuable educational facility in a sustainable, accessible location.

- It brings a vacant building back into active, meaningful use;
- Delivers a much-needed SEMH provision to support Manchester's growing SEND demand;
- Involves no external works and minimal visual or environmental impact;
- Aligns with national and local planning policy objectives supporting community infrastructure.

In accordance with paragraph 99 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), significant weight should be given to proposals that support the delivery of new educational facilities, especially where they meet identified local needs. Northedge Architecture respectfully requests that planning permission is granted.