

TECHNICAL NOTE

Consulate General of Ireland - Manchester

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Introduction

This Technical Note has been prepared in support of a full planning application for the change of use of the 6th floor of the Hyphen Building, Mosley Street, Manchester from an existing office to a Consulate, with associated external alterations. This Note provides an assessment of the crime and safety issues associated with the new Irish Consulate General at its proposed new location and sets out how these will be addressed through the development.

The Hyphen Building is a contemporary, multi-tenant office development in Manchester city centre. Positioned on Mosley Street - a high footfall commercial area near Piccadilly Gardens and Manchester Art Gallery - the site benefits managed control of access, integrated security infrastructure, and on site security guarding.

Given its central urban location, Manchester's city centre is known for a higher-than-average volume of street level crime, including anti social behaviour and opportunistic offences. However, the proposed consulate presence on an upper floor offers a natural layer of physical separation and defensibility from such threats.

Crime risk context and security posture

The presence of a Consulate General is not typically associated with increased local crime. On the contrary, diplomatic institutions often help improve the security posture of their surroundings. In the case of the Irish Consulate in Manchester, the following key considerations apply:

1. **Reinforced security protocols:** As a diplomatic entity, the Irish Consulate General will be subject to elevated protective measures, including electronic access control, video surveillance system, and 24/7 monitoring supporting by building security personnel. These measures not only designed to protect consular staff and visitors but also act as a deterrent to crime in the immediate vicinity.
2. **Controlled visitor flow and screening:** Unlike public-facing commercial spaces, consular operations involve scheduled appointments, pre-screened visitors, and structured entry procedures. This limit crowding and reduces the likelihood of opportunistic crime or unauthorised access. The Irish Consulate is expected to maintain these practices, consistent with diplomatic norms and The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ireland (DFA) policy.
3. **Diplomatic privileges and local coordination:** Under the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, the host country is obliged to provide adequate protection for consular premises. In Manchester, this obligation is operationalised through local policing partnerships and liaison between the DFA and Great Manchester Police. This collaboration enhances situational awareness, ensures police responsiveness, and strengthens the overall protective posture of the area.
4. **Community and economic contribution:** The Irish Consulate serves as a focal point for the Irish community in Manchester and contributes to local engagement through cultural, educational, and business diplomacy. Its presence is likely to elevate the status of the Hyphen Building as a diplomatic and secure office hub, supporting inward investment and business confidence.
5. **No empirical link between diplomatic sites and crime:** Available data and international precedent confirm that the establishment of diplomatic missions is not associated with increased local crime. In fact these locations often benefit from enhanced protective oversight, leading to lower incidents of crime due relative to surrounding areas.

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Although the Hyphen Building is located in an area with elevated baseline risks, the sixth floor setting, combined with layered electronic security measures and procedural controls, offers a robust security environment, the DFA has previously assessed the location for exposure to crime and anti-social behaviour, and appropriate countermeasures have been embedded in the tenancy fit-out-strategy.

As an added measure, the consulate's integration into a multi-tenant building with established security protocols ensures operational discretion and avoids the vulnerabilities often associated with standalone diplomatic facilities.

Key security considerations include:

- **Access Control Systems (AACS)** - Designed in accordance with Secured by Design (SBD) guidelines, AACS are essential for controlling and restricting access to buildings and sensitive areas, thereby reducing the risk of unauthorised entry and internal threats. The system has been tailored to the consulate's specific risk profile, incorporating electronic credentials such as smart cards and / or dual authentication (i.e. PIN) supported by tamper-resistant readers and secure door hardware. All components align with national standards and SBD compliance criteria. Additionally, AACS meets requirements of the Equality Act and the building's Fire Strategy, ensuring safe and equitable access for all users, including individuals with disabilities.
- **Video Surveillance System (VSS)** – Also designed in accordance with SBD guidelines, plays a critical role in deterring crime and supporting incident investigation. VSS are strategically positioned and designed to monitor key access points and high-risk areas, with appropriate lighting and camera placement to avoid glare or shadowing that may impair image quality. VSS components support facial identification and recognition in accordance with the Home Office guidelines. For evidential purposes, systems include recording and storage capabilities of at least 31 days, using formats acceptable by law enforcement. Additionally, VSS design complies with the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice and GDPR, ensuring that footage is captured and stored lawfully
- **Intruder Detection Systems (IDS)** - Designed in accordance with SBD guidelines, IDS provide an essential layer of defence, particularly within the consulate's secure floorplate. The system has been designed to BS Grade 3 and is capable of detecting unauthorised entry or attempted intrusion, while minimising false alarms. It ensures a reliable police response when required. IDS features include zone-based detection, tamper-proof components, and integration with other building systems to support comprehensive situational awareness.
- **Integrated and layered security design** - All systems have been configured to operate in a unified and complimentary approach – consisted with SBD principles of layered defence. This integrated approach allows for rapid, automated responses to threat events. For example, detection of an intruder may automatically trigger camera repositioning, initiate lockdown of access points, and notify local law enforcement. This integration reduces both response time and human error. According to SBD guidance, the risk-based and lifecycle embedded approach ensures that security systems remain proportionate to evolving threats and continue to support the consulate's secure operation over time.