

Planning Department
Manchester City Council
PO BOX 532
Town Hall
Manchester
M60 2LA

Our ref: AL/24-02681
Your ref: PP-13466290
Date: 8th August 2025

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: FULL PLANNING APPLICATION AND LISTED BUILDING CONSENT FOR CHANGE OF USE AND EXTERNAL FACADE AND INTERNAL REFURBISHMENT WORKS TO ARCH 77 WHITWORTH STREET WEST, MANCHESTER, M1 5WQ

We act on behalf of The Arch Company (the 'Applicant') and have been instructed to submit a full planning application and listed building consent for the change of use for a mixed used development for Open Class E (Commercial, Business and Service) use and Sui Generis uses and external and internal façade refurbishment at Arch 77 Whitworth Street West, Manchester, M1 5WQ.

The description of development for the site is as follows:

"Change of use for an open Class E (Commercial, Businesses and Services) and drinking establishments with expanded food provision with associated access and parking, along with external and internal refurbishment works including façade treatments at Arch 77 Whitworth Street West, Manchester, M1 5WQ".

CONTENT OF SUBMISSION

This letter is accompanied by:

- Application Form, Certificates and CIL Questions prepared by Rapleys LLP
- A suite of planning drawings prepared by SGP Architects
- A Design and Access Statement prepared by SGP Architects
- A Heritage Assessment prepared by Smith Jenkins
- A Transport Statement prepared by Transport Planning Associates
- Noise Assessment prepared by Air and Acoustic Consultants
- This Planning Letter prepared by Rapleys LLP

A payment of £673.00 (including Planning Portal service charge) to cover the planning application fee has been paid to Manchester City Council via the Planning Portal. We would be grateful if you could consider the contents of this letter when determining the application.

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SITE AND SURROUNDING AREAS

Arch 77 Whitworth Street West comprises a commercial unit situated under a railway viaduct, with the frontage comprising a brickwork infill, powder coated aluminium shopfront with glazed window units and a painted timber fascia.

The property is located on Whitworth Street West and sits directly opposite to various different properties including residential flats, a performing arts centre and retail units. The property at 77 Whitworth Street West has a Grade II listing status. This is due to the unit being constructed underneath a viaduct which forms part of the Manchester South Junction & Altrincham Viaduct. Records believe that the Manchester South Junction & Altrincham Railway Viaduct was constructed between 1846 and 1849.

Internally the property is in a poor condition and due to the lack of emergency and disabled access the unit offers, the property is currently in an un-lettable state. The previous use of the property was for retail purposes.

The surrounding character comprises of a mix of commercial and residential and mixed used properties. The subject site is within a sustainable location within Manchester City Centre. This is reflected in the sites Greater Manchester Accessibility Level (GMAL) rating of 8 (very high). Numerous bus stops are located within close proximity to the site, including on Whitworth Street West.

The site is located in the following designations/ allocations within the Council adopted Local Plan:

- City Centre (Local Plan Policies CC1 – CC10)
- Regional Centre (Core Strategy Policy EC3)
- Manchester City Boundary

The site is not located in a Conservation Area. The site is located within Flood Zone 1 which translates to a low probability of flooding. Further to the above the subject site is not in close proximity to any listed buildings or their settings.

PLANNING HISTORY

A search of the Manchester City Council planning register returned the relevant planning application results:

- **135325/LO/2022:** Listed Building Consent for external alterations to the shop front including bringing forward entrance doors and forming new emergency exit as well as internal works – Refused 17.02.2023
- **135151/FO/2022:** Alterations to the shop front infill comprising bringing forward the entrance doors and forming a new emergency exit – Refused 17.02.2023

The above applications were refused principally on heritage matters relating to the elevational alterations, by virtue of their position, design and appearance would result in an unsympathetic alteration to the character and appearance of the frontage of the arch. The change would not be in keeping with the style, appearance and architecture of the building resulting in an unduly harmful impact on the visual amenity and significance of the listed building in the street scene. This would result in less than substantial harm to the listed building and the required public benefits do not exist to outweigh this harm. The proposal is therefore contrary to the provisions of policies SP1, EN1, EN3, CC9 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy (2012), saved policy DC19 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester (1995).

PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Planning decisions should be made in accordance with adopted national and local planning policies. As set out in Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the starting position

for any decision is the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In the context of this application, the Development Plan comprises:

- Manchester Core Strategy 2012-2027 (2012)
- Extant (remaining Unitary Development Plan Policies)
- Greater Manchester Joint Waste DPD (2012)
- Greater Manchester Joint Minerals DPD (2013)
- Proposal Map

In terms of material considerations relevant to this application, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2023) is also reviewed. Appendix 1 of this letter provides a full summary of the national, regional, and local planning policies that are relevant when assessing this proposal.

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

This proposal seeks a change of use for drinking establishments with expanded food provision (sui generis) and a flexible open E use class and external and internal refurbishment works including a new mezzanine floor at arch 77 Whitworth Street West, Manchester, M1 5WQ.

. The size and uses proposed to the arche is as follows:

- **Arch 1 (212.7m² GIA)** – Flexible Class E (Commercial, Business and Services) & drinking establishment with expanded food provision.

The exact open Class E and Sui Generis uses sought are as follows:

Use Class E (Commercial Business, Services)

- E(a) Display or retail sale of goods, other than hot food
- E(b) Sale of food and drink for consumption (mostly) on the premises
- E(d) Indoor sport, recreation, or fitness (not involving motorised vehicles or firearms or use as a swimming pool or skating rink,)
- E(e) Provision of medical or health services (except the use of premises attached to the residence of the consultant or practitioner)
- E(g) Uses which can be carried out in a residential area without detriment to its amenity:
- E(g)(i) Offices to carry out any operational or administrative functions,
- E(g)(ii) Research and development of products or processes
- E(g)(iii) Industrial processes

Use Class Sui Generis:

- Drinking establishment with expanded food provision

PLANNING CONSIDERATION

Principle of Development

The arch is located within the City Centre (Policy CC1 – CC10) and Regional Centre (Policy EC 3) which encourages employment generating uses including offices and other commercial development. It is the largest concentration of economic activity in the Manchester City Region, with the City Centre and adjacent areas providing approximately 14ha of employment land.

The proposal seeks to change the use of 1no. arch for a flexible open E use class which will include retail, office, light industrial and restaurant and café uses that are all compatible with the other commercial and residential uses within the surrounding area. The arch is located within a Greater Manchester Accessibility Level (GMAL) rating of 8 (very high) which highlights the sites excellent access to public transport services and the proposal will promote the use of sustainable transport methods, such as walking, cycling and the use of the variety of public transport options within the immediate surrounding area.

The proposal seeks to bring back into use vacant arch that will make effective use of existing brownfield land, which is supported by Section 11: Making effective use of land in the NPPF 2023. Such proposed uses within the arch are very common across the City of Manchester with many examples of the reuse of arch for flexible E class uses, allowing the smaller boutique food and beverage, retail, and leisure businesses to thrive in sustainable locations with minimal impact on the surrounding area. Considering the above the proposal is in accordance with NPPF Policies and Manchester City Core Strategy and the Council are encouraged to support this proposal.

Heritage

The property at 77 Whitworth Street West has a Grade II listing status. This is due to the unit being constructed underneath a viaduct which forms part of the Manchester South Junction & Altrincham Viaduct. Records believe that the Manchester South Junction & Altrincham Railway Viaduct was constructed between 1846 and 1849. A Heritage Impact Assessment has been prepared by Smith Jenkins and is submitted in support of this planning and listed building consent application.

In accordance with paragraph 207 of the NPPF, the significance of the designated assets which have the potential to be affected by the application proposals have been described in this Statement. A clear understanding and appreciation of the significance of the heritage asset has informed the evolution of the proposals. The proposed development will preserve the significance of the listed viaduct. It is important to note the public benefits of bring the building back into use and contributing to the social and economic vitality of the immediate area. The proposed development will greatly improve the curb appeal of the existing unit, which currently detracts from Arch 77 and its designated neighbours.

The application proposals are therefore in accordance with the statutory duties as set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, national policy set out in the NPPF (2024) and relevant regional and local policy and guidance, including Manchester's Core Strategy Development Plan (2012).

External and internal refurbishments work to Arch 77

A Design and Access Statement prepared by SGP Architects is submitted in support of this application.

The existing internal mezzanine and stairs, and associated internal walls are to be removed. All of the external elements of the front elevation within the brick arch are to be removed. The design retains a central entrance from Whitworth Street, but the new mezzanine floor is lowered to allow for an accessible entrance.

The central glazing is framed by an aluminium frame that creates two new side panels. The side panels allow for a fire exit from the new compliant staircase on the left-hand side, the panels to the right allow for the tenant to create a dedicated bin / cycle store. The existing fire door on the ground floor is removed as it is no longer usable due to the adjacent development. The existing tubular structure is removed from the rear elevation allowing the installation of 3 areas of aluminium louvres. These provide resilience for various internal layouts depending upon the tenant preferences. Behind the staircase a knockout panel provides an area for a future platform lift.

The design of the new infill of the Arch is site specific, responding to the new infills created in the adjacent uses and comments made by the planning department on a previous application. Using a varied pallet of material including curtain walling, aluminium flashings, and perforated Corten Panels.

The full arch is framed by a light grey aluminium box section that conceals the zinc flashing that forms part of the waterproof solution. The central curtain walling section is set back from the face of the arch and is framed by a second aluminium frame in a dark grey. The two side panels are pushed back a further 250mm to create an articulated façade. These panels are finished in perforated corten sheets as a rainscreen panel with back lit lighting features. The side panels can contain the secondary doors required for escape and dedicated access to the bins / cycle areas.

Further design details are contained within the Design and Access Statement which is submitted in support of this application.

Access, Parking, Servicing & Refuse

A Transport Statement has been prepared by TPA and is submitted in support of this planning and listed building consent application. The site has a Greater Manchester Accessibility Level (GMAL) rating of 8 (very high) which highlights the sites excellent access to public transport services. On this basis the proposed development will be car free and seek to retain the existing access arrangements. Blue badge holders are permitted to park in pay and display car parks free of charge with no time limitations as per MCC guidance.

The provision of cycle parking for the arches will be 5 cycle spaces which is in accordance with Local Plan Annex C Parking Standards subject to the end use. The parking provision will be the responsibility of the end user and provided within the respective arch.

Future site users will also benefit from available on-street cycle parking (circa 23 cycle parking spaces) accessible via Whitworth Street, circa 50 m west of the site, located within an open arch. Additionally, a Beryl Bike docking station is available immediately across Whitworth Street and is accessible by a circa 120 m walk via a pedestrian crossing to the west. The docking station has 12 bike docks available.

Regarding refuse, servicing, it is understood that the neighbouring existing arches along B6469 Whitworth Street are serviced by delivery vehicles and refuse collection on-street using the available parking/loading facilities. In contrast, the neighbouring arches to be delivered under the Manchester Home application⁶ will be serviced from the rear via an alternative loading bay, hence they're unlikely to generate any demand for the use of on-street facilities.

Servicing and refuse collection to the proposed development will be undertaken from the existing loading bay located 15m to the west of the site on B6469 Whitworth Street, as per the existing arrangement for the existing neighbouring uses.

Most servicing activities are expected to be made by light good vehicles (box, transit vans) and associated with supplies for the possible uses.

In consideration of the highly accessible nature of its location (by all modes and the pass-by nature of a large proportion of the trips, the trip generation associated with the proposed change of use would be sufficiently accommodated within the existing transport network. Hence it would not result

in any material impact on any modes of transport. Further details are provided within the submitted Transport Statement prepared by Transport Planning Associates.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

Noise

A Noise Assessment has been prepared by Air and Acoustics Consultants and is submitted in support of this planning and listed building consent application. The operational noise levels associated with the proposed development have been assessed using a combination of noise monitoring data and predictive noise modelling of the potential operational noise sources, using a CadnaA sound propagation model. Both the monitoring and modelling assessment have been undertaken in line with the relevant British Standards, Guidance documents and Policy.

The predicted noise rating levels at all of the noise sensitive receptors are less than the assessment criterion level of no more than 5 dB above the background sound level. The predicted day time and night-time noise rating levels are less than the background noise level at all but one of the identified noise sensitive receptor locations.

The rating level at the first-floor level of receptor R02 is predicted, under a worst-case condition to be up to 1 dB(A) above the existing background sound level.

Considering the result of the assessment and the wider context of the area, it is unlikely that the residential properties will experience any adverse noise impacts associated with the operational use of the units.

Additionally, predicted maximum sound levels are less than the WHO criterion at all of the noise sensitive receptor locations.

It can, therefore, be concluded that the impacts associated with the proposed development have been considered in line with the relevant standards and guidance and it is unlikely to conflict with the national, regional, and local planning policies. Based upon the outcome of the assessment the impacts can be classified as between NOEL and LOAEL.

Flood Risk

The sites fall entirely within Flood Zone 1 which translates to a low probability of flooding. The proposal is for a change of use with minimal external and internal alterations to the arches which will not impact on the flooding risk to the area.

CONCLUSIONS

I trust that you find this letter self-explanatory, and that the council will agree the change of use for drinking establishments with expanded food provision (Sui Generis) and a to a flexible open Class E (Commercial, Business and Services) with external and internal refurbishment of the vacant arch, which will revitalise this area and contribute to flexible and adaptable employment floorspace for a variety of end users within this sustainable town centre and opportunity area location as acceptable.

If you require any further information regarding the proposals, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

Abraham Laker

Abraham Laker (Aug 8, 2025 16:13:30 GMT+1)

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APPENDIX 1: PLANNING POLICY

The following national, and local policies summarised below are considered relevant when assessing this proposal:

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. In this context, the NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions. The sections of the NPPF particularly relevant to this application are reviewed below.

Section 4: Decision Making, highlights within paragraph 39 requires local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social, and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

Section 6: Building a strong, competitive economy, identifies that planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand, and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.

Paragraph 87 requires planning policies and decisions should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors.

Section 7: Ensuring the vitality of town centre, identifies that Planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management, and adaptation.

Paragraph 90 criteria c identifies that planning policies should retain and enhance existing markets and, where appropriate, re-introduce or create new ones.

Section 8: Promoting healthy and safe communities, requires planning policies and decision should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive, and safe places.

Paragraph 97 criteria a, states that to provide social, recreational, and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses, and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments.

Paragraph 105 states that planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails.

Section 9: Promoting sustainable transport, seeks opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions such as walking, cycling and use of public transport.

Section 11: Making effective use of land, states that planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions.

Section 12: Achieving well-design places, encourages the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

Paragraph 135 states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development.
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout, and appropriate and effective landscaping.
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities).
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming, and distinctive places to live, work and visit.
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and

- f) create places that are safe, inclusive, and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

Section 14: Meeting the challenge of climate change, flood and coastal change, states that The planning system should support the transition to net zero by 2050 and take full account of all climate impacts including overheating, water scarcity, storm and flood risks and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.

Section 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment, states that heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value⁷³. These assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.

Paragraph 207, states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

Manchester Core Strategy 2012 – 2027 (Adopted 2012)

The Manchester Core Strategy 2012-2027 (Adopted 2012) policies relevant to the proposed development are as follows.

Policy SP 1 (Spatial Principles) states that The Regional Centre will be the focus for economic and commercial development, retail, leisure, and cultural activity, alongside high-quality city living.

Policy EC 1 (Employment and Economic Growth in Manchester) identifies the Regional Centre as a key location for major employment growth.

Policy EC 2 (Existing Employment Space) highlights that the Council will seek to retain and enhance employment space and sites.

Policy EC 3 (The Regional Centre) states that within the Regional Centre development for employment generating uses including offices and other commercial development will be encouraged. Furthermore, the Regional Centre is an appropriate location for large scale leisure uses, for which City Centre sites are unsuitable.

Policy CC 5 (Transport) identifies that developers should work with public transport providers to ensure that all users are able to access development by sustainable means, especially taking account of times when developments are likely to be busiest. 5.8 Objective 2 Economy and City

Centre Manchester City Council | Manchester Core Strategy 2012 to 2027 Proposals will be supported that improve pedestrian safety, improve air quality, and increase the scope for accessible public realm improvements. Furthermore, the Council will seek to ensure that development includes adequate parking provision for cars and bicycles.

Policy EC 4 (North Manchester) identifies that North Manchester is expected to provide approximately 14ha of employment land.

Policy C 10 (Leisure and the Evening Economy) identifies that new development and redevelopment that supports the evening economy, contributes to the vitality of district centres and supports a balanced and socially inclusive evening/night-time economy will be permitted, subject to the following considerations:

1. Cumulative impact – in areas where there is already a concentration of bars (A4), hot food takeaways (A5) and other night-time uses which are detrimental to the character or vitality and viability of the centre, there will be a presumption against further facilities.
2. Residential amenity – the proposed use should not create an unacceptable impact on neighbouring uses in terms of noise, traffic, and disturbance.
3. Balance - new uses in Manchester centres should support both the daytime and evening/night-time economies whilst not undermining the role of the primary shopping area.

When considering the impact of a proposed bar or hot food take away regard will be had to the above policy and also:

- The existing number of similar establishments in the immediate area and their proximity to each other;
- The type and characteristics of other uses, such as housing, shops, and public houses;
- The existence of vacant shop units and the condition of the unit;
- The importance of the location for local shopping, and the number, function and location of shops that would remain to serve the local community;
- The character of the centre and its frontage, and the nature of the use proposed;
- The potential impacts of the proposal on the wider community; and
- Any known unresolved amenity, traffic or safety issues arising from existing uses in the area.

Policy T 1 (Sustainable Transport) identifies that the Council will support proposals that:

- Improve choice by developing alternatives to the car;
- Promote regeneration and economic vitality by relieving traffic congestion and improving access to jobs and services, particularly for those most in need and for those without a car;
- Improve access to transport services and facilities in order to enable disabled people and people with mobility impairments to participate fully in public life;
- Improve pedestrian routes and the pedestrian environment;
- Improve and develop further Manchester's cycle network (for example the Manchester Cycleway and the Trans Pennine Trail).

Policy EN3 (Heritage) identifies Throughout the City, the Council will encourage development that complements and takes advantage of the distinct historic and heritage features of its districts and neighbourhoods, including those of the City Centre.

New developments must be designed so as to support the Council in preserving or, where possible, enhancing the historic environment, the character, setting and accessibility of areas

and buildings of acknowledged importance, including scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings, registered parks and gardens, conservation areas and archaeological remains.

Proposals which enable the re-use of heritage assets will be encouraged where they are considered consistent with the significance of the heritage asset.

Policy EN 8 (Adaptation to Climate Change) requires all development will be expected to be adaptable to climate change in terms of design, layout, siting, and function.

Policy DM 1 (Development Management) requires all development should have regard to the following specific issues for which more detailed guidance may be given within a supplementary planning document:

- Appropriate siting, layout, scale, form, massing, materials, and detail;
- Impact on the surrounding areas in terms of the design, scale, and appearance of the proposed development. Development should have regard to the character of the surrounding area;
- Effects on amenity, including privacy, light, noise, vibration, air quality, odours, litter, vermin, birds, road safety and traffic generation. This could also include proposals which would be sensitive to existing environmental conditions, such as noise;
- Accessibility: buildings and neighbourhoods fully accessible to disabled people, access to new development by sustainable transport modes;
- Community safety and crime prevention;
- Design for health. Adequacy of internal accommodation and external amenity space;
- Refuse storage and collection;
- Vehicular access and car parking;
- Flood risk and drainage.