Application Number	Date of Appln	Committee Date	Ward
142671/FO/2025 and 143002/LO/2025	21st May 2025 and 11th Jun 2025	31st July 2025	Chorlton Park Ward

Proposal Change of use of a gym (Class E) to create 3 no. residential apartments, and;

Listed Building Consent for internal works associated with the change of use from a gym (Class E) to create 3 no. residential apartments together with external elevational change to remove an existing fire exit

Location 136 St Werburgh's Road, Manchester, M21 8UQ

Applicant Mr David Flanagan

Executive Summary

The applicant is seeking full planning permission under 142671/FO/2025 for the change of use of a gym (Class E) to create 3 no. residential apartments. 178 neighbouring dwellings were notified of the proposed development with 163 letters of objection received in response.

The applicant is also seeking Listed Building Consent under 143002/LO/2025 for internal works associated with the change of use from a gym (Class E) to create 3 no. residential apartments together with external elevational change to remove an existing fire exit. 9 neighbouring dwellings were notified of the proposed development with 9 letters of objection received in response.

The key issues that were raised were concerns relating to the loss of the gym and other local businesses housed by the building as a community hub and the adequacy of parking and waste storage provisions associated with the development.

Description

The application relates to a Grade II listed farmhouse dating to the late 18th century. The application property consists of a two-storey detached building, constructed in redbrick Flemish bond with a grey composition tile dual pitch roof and gable chimneys. It is rectangular and double-depth in plan, sitting at a right angle to St Werburgh's Road.

The building has been altered both internally and externally, with altered windows in small pane glazing, some of which are horizontal sashes. Its central round-headed doorway, facing south, has been blocked and infilled with brick, whilst its northern elevation features a modern porch extension, dating to the 20th century, which forms the building's primary entrance, in addition to a single storey element to its western side. The building exhibits historic and architectural significance as an early surviving farm building and features group value together with the adjacent barn building located to the north at No.130-134 St Werburgh's Road.

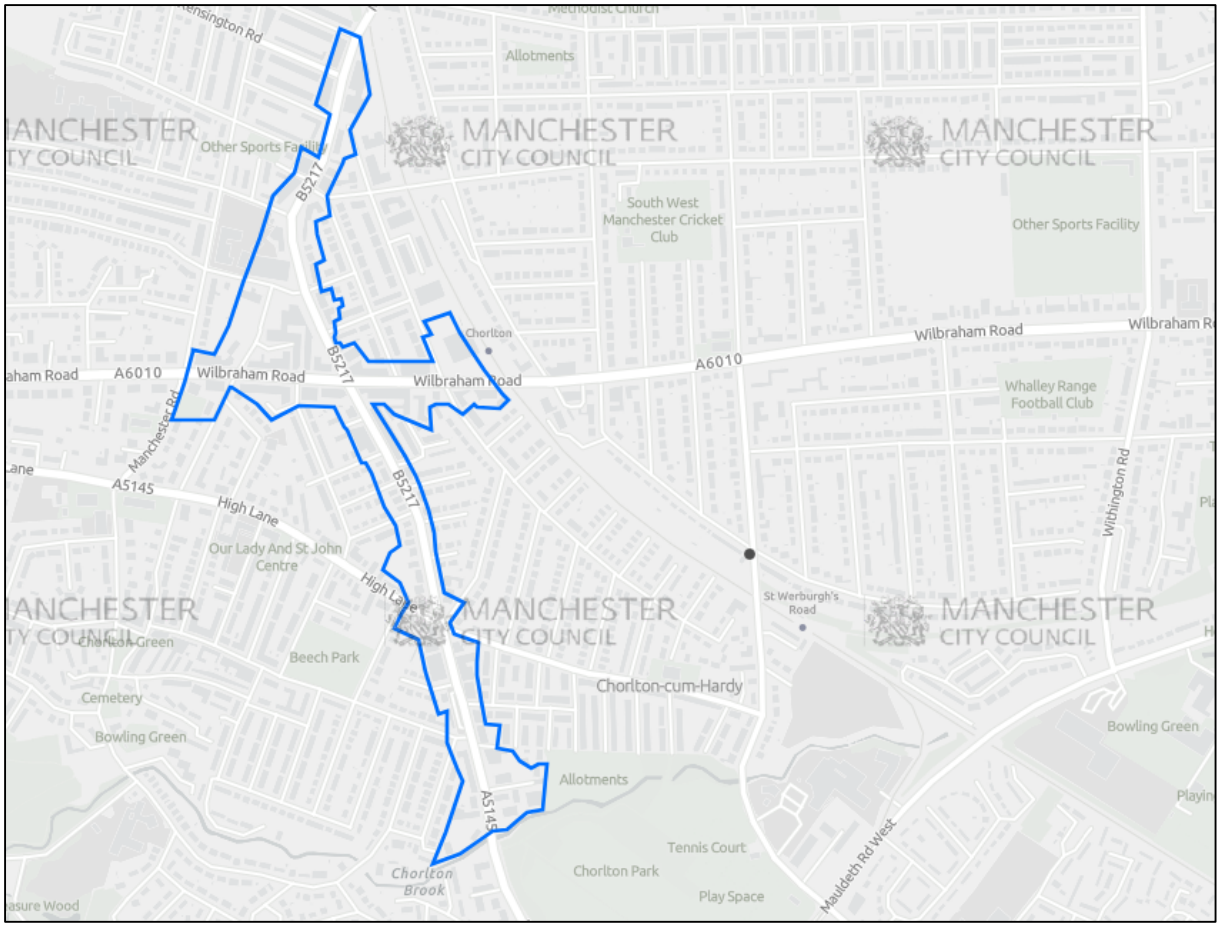
Situated in the Chorlton Park ward of Manchester, the application site is located in a predominantly residential setting, bounded by St Werburgh's Road to the east, and residential properties to the north, south, and west as well as on the opposing side of the highway. The area benefits from its proximity to Chorlton District Centre as well as nearby public outdoor amenity and green spaces, such as Chorlton Park.

Planning permission was granted for a change of use from office (Class B1) to gym (Class D2) in April 2017 and it is understood that the property continues to operate as a gym under Class E. In addition to the gym itself, there also appears to be several other small businesses operating out of the building, all of which fall under Class E, including therapy and counselling, hair and beauty, physiotherapy, singing, yoga and pilates. Although there are a range of other uses operating, these may not be authorised due to restrictive conditions relating to the use of the building as a gym attached to the previous consent 114188/FU/2016. Full planning permission is now sought to change the use of the building from a gym (Class E) to create 3no. residential apartments together Listed Building Consent for internal and external works associated with this change of use.

Relevant Planning History

114188/FU/2016 - Change of use of existing office (Class B1) to Gym (Class D2) – Approved (07.04.2017). This approval included conditions which made the use personal to the applicant and included allowing the gym to operate on an appointment basis only.

Excerpt from Google Maps showing location of application site



Map showing proximity of application site (identifiable as a black dot) to Chorlton District Centre and surrounding green spaces

Description of works

The proposals include the following:

- Change of use of the building from a gym (Class E) to 3no. residential apartments:
    - Apartment 1 on the ground floor (1-bedroom / 2-person) - 52 square metres.
    - Apartment 2 on the ground floor (2-bedroom / 3-person) – 64 square metres.
    - Apartment 3 on the first floor (2-bedroom / 4-person) – 80 square metres.

- Works to elevations of building – infilling of the existing fire escape to the western side of the building with brickwork.

- External works:
    - Provision of 3 parking bays (including 1 accessible bay).
    - Provision of a covered and sheltered cycle store (able to accommodate 3 cycles).
    - Provision of a bin storage area (accommodating 3no. 140L bins of each type).
    - Creation of amenity spaces to the front, side, and rear of the building.

- Internal works:
    - Existing floor construction be retained.
    - External walls (previously dry lined with a timber batten plasterboard system with plaster skim finish) to be retained and made good (where required) to match the existing.
    - Ceilings to ground floor (plasterboard and skim) to be retained and made good (where required) to match the existing.
    - Ceilings to first floor (suspended lay in grid ceiling tiles) to be removed, exposing the plaster ceiling.
    - Mouldings to ceilings (simple Gyproc form of cove) to be retained and made good where required.
    - Existing doors and frames (consisting of fire doors) to be replaced with new panelled fire doors, consistent throughout.
    - Existing Taurus moulded skirting boards and architraves to be retained and replaced (where required) to match the existing.
    - All existing chimney breasts to be retained.
    - Existing partition walls (constructed of timber stud work, plasterboard, and skim) to be replaced and repositioned. Replacement and new partition walls to match the existing in terms of their construction.

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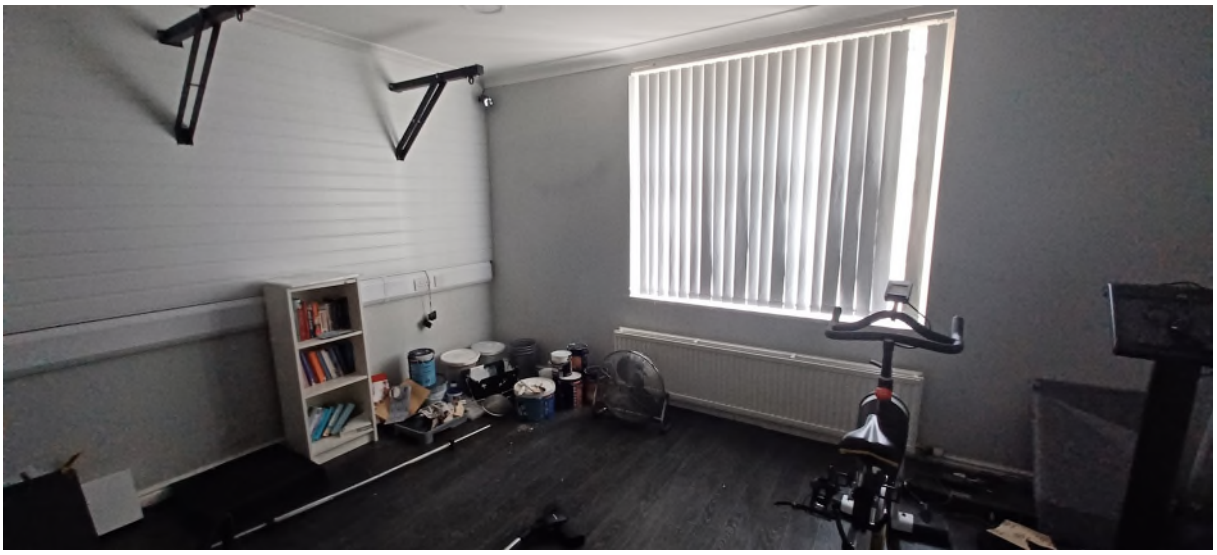


Brow Artist

Publicity

As the proposals relate to a listed building, both 142671/FO/2025 and 143002/LO/2025 were advertised in the local press (Manchester Evening News). Site notices were also displayed at the application site in relation to the planning application and listed building application. In addition, statutory consultees have been consulted, and notification letters were sent to neighbouring occupiers.

Consultations

163 letters of objection were received in response to 142671/FO/2025, with a further 9 letters of objection received in response to 143002/LO/2025, summarised as follows:

- The building is a vital and unique community hub, home to a local, family-owned gym and other small, independent businesses that offer important services to the local community.
- These businesses support the health and wellbeing of local residents and contribute to the local economy.
- Many will be forced to close or relocate if this proposal is approved.
- 136 St. Werburgh's Road is a Grade II listed building with significant heritage value. Converting it to flats would strip it of its role as a living, active part of the community.
- There are already a lot of flats in the surrounding area which cause issues associated with parking and traffic congestion.
- Losing the gym would be a huge loss to the community and would undermine the community spirit of Chorlton.
- The gym is an inclusive facility and provides a supportive and safe environment for all, including ethnic minorities, women, the elderly, LGBT, post-surgery, menopause, etc.
- There is a lack of equivalent local spaces to relocate these services or preserve this local community.

Highway Services made no objection to the proposals, indicating that, in comparison to the former use of the site, the level of trips would not be dissimilar and as such no highways concerns are expected. Further to this, it was highlighted that the site is well accessed by sustainable modes with regular bus services and Metrolink services available within walking distance of the site. 100% parking provision is shown, with 1 accessible bay, and the existing vehicular access and crossover retained.. Waste storage and collection arrangements were noted as acceptable.

Environmental Health made no objection to the proposals, requesting conditions relating to electric vehicle charging, waste, and residential sound insulation be attached to any approval. Following the receipt of additional information, further comments were received indicating the acceptability of the proposal’s waste management arrangements.

Policies

The Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2012-2027):
The "Core Strategy" was adopted by the City Council on 11th July 2012. It is the key document in Manchester's Local Development Framework. The Core Strategy replaces significant elements of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) as the document that sets out the long-term strategic planning policies for Manchester's future development. A number of UDP policies have been saved until replaced by further development plan documents to accompany the Core Strategy. Planning applications in Manchester must be decided in accordance with the Core Strategy, saved UDP policies and other Local Development Documents. Relevant policies in the Core Strategy are detailed below:

Policy SP1: Spatial Principles – Development in all parts of the City should make a positive contribution to neighbourhoods of choice including creating well designed places that enhance or create character and protect and enhance the built and natural environment.

Policy DM1: Development Management - This policy states that 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.
• Effects relating to biodiversity, landscape, archaeological or built heritage.
• Green Infrastructure including open space, both public and private.
• The use of alternatives to peat-based products in landscaping/gardens within development schemes.
• Flood risk and drainage.
• Existing or proposed hazardous installations.
• Subject to scheme viability, developers will be required to demonstrate that new development incorporates sustainable construction techniques.

Policy H1: Overall Housing Provision – This policy states that outside the ‘Inner Areas’ an emphasis on increasing the availability of family housing will be supported, therefore lower densities may be appropriate. New developments should take advantage of existing buildings where appropriate through refurbishment or rebuilding works.

Proposals for new residential development should take account of the need to:
• Contribute to creating mixed communities by providing house types to meet the needs of a diverse and growing Manchester population.
• Support growth on previously developed sites in sustainable locations and which takes into account the availability of developable sites in these areas;
• Contribute to the design principles of Manchester's Local Development Framework. The design and density of a scheme should contribute to the character of the local area. All proposals should make provision for appropriate usable amenity space. Schemes should make provision for parking cars and bicycles (in line with policy T2); and the need for appropriate levels of sound insulation.
• Prioritise sites which are in close proximity to centres or high frequency public transport routes.
• Be designed to give privacy to both its residents and neighbours.

Policy H6: South Manchester – This policy states that South Manchester will accommodate around 5% of new residential development over the lifetime of the Core Strategy. Outside the district centres priorities will be for housing which meets identified shortfalls, including family housing and provision that meets the needs of elderly people, with schemes adding to the stock of affordable housing.

Policy T1: Sustainable Transport – This policy states that to deliver a sustainable, high quality, integrated transport system to encourage modal shift away from car travel to public transport, cycling and walking, to support the needs of residents and businesses and to prepare for carbon free modes of transport, the Council will support proposals that: -
• Improve choice by developing alternatives to the car.
• Facilitate modes of transport that reduce carbon emissions (e.g., by incorporating charging points for electric vehicles, subject to their appropriate design and location).

Policy T2: Accessible Areas of Opportunity and Need – This policy states that the Council will actively manage the pattern of development to ensure that new development: -
• Is located to ensure good access to the City's main economic drivers.
• Is easily accessible by walking, cycling and public transport; connecting residents to jobs, centres, health, leisure, open space and educational opportunities.
• provides appropriate car parking facilities, including disabled and cycle parking.

Policy EN3: Heritage – This policy states that 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. Proposals which enable the re-use of heritage assets will be encouraged where they are considered consistent with the significance of the heritage asset.

Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester (1995):
The Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester was adopted in 1995 and has largely been replaced with the policies contained within the Core Strategy. However, there are a number of policies that are extant and are relevant to the current proposal. These are outlined below:

Saved policy DC5: Flat Conversions – This policy states that in determining planning applications to convert property to flats, the Council will have regard to:
a. the standard of accommodation for the intended occupiers of the premises;
b. effects on adjoining houses as a result of noise from flats passing through party walls and affecting adjoining houses;
c. adequacy of car parking, off-street car parking being normally required where practicable, and essential where there is so severe an existing on-street parking problem that unacceptable additional pressures would be created;
d. general effects on the character of the neighbourhood, including the extent to which flat conversion schemes are a new or an established feature of the immediate area, avoiding the loss of front gardens and the retention of existing trees and shrubs;
e. adequate private outdoor amenity space;
f. the desirability of achieving easy access for all;
g. the satisfactory provision of refuse storage and collection facilities

Saved policy DC19: Listed Buildings – This policy states that in determining applications for listed building consent or planning applications for development involving or having an impact on buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, the Council will have regard to the desirability of securing the retention, restoration, maintenance and continued use of such buildings and to protecting their general setting. In giving effect to this policy, the Council will:
a. not grant Listed building consent for the demolition of a listed building other than in the most exceptional circumstances, and in any case, not unless it is satisfied that every possible effort has been made to continue the present use or to find a suitable alternative use;
b. not permit a change of use of a listed building, where it would have a detrimental effect on the character or appearance of the building;
c. not permit any external or internal alteration or addition to a Listed building where, in its opinion, there would be an adverse effect on its architectural or historic character;
d. seek to preserve and enhance the settings of listed buildings by appropriate control over the design of new development in their vicinity, control over the use of adjacent land, and where appropriate, by the preservation of trees and landscape features;
e. permit demolition only where there are approved detailed plans for redevelopment and where there is evidence of a firm building contract;
f. not permit alterations to a listed building which would prevent the future use of any part of the building, in particular upper floors or basements, or where poor maintenance is likely to result

Guide to Development In Manchester:
The Guide aims to support and enhance the on-going shaping of the City by providing a set of reasoned principles which will guide developers, designers and residents to the sort of development appropriate to Manchester. It seeks to retain the essential distinctiveness of its character areas, whilst not precluding new development.

National Planning Policy Framework (2024):
The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. The NPPF was updated in December 2024 and provides a framework within which locally prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, i.e., the Core Strategy Development Plan Document and accompanying policies, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions.

Paragraph 11 states that plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development which for decision-taking this means:
- Approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or
- Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless: i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

Relevant chapters include:
- Chapter 5: Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
- Chapter 9 : Promoting sustainable transport
- Chapter 11: Making effective use of land
- Chapter 12: Achieving well-designed places
- Chapter 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Paragraph 208 states local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

Paragraph 210 states in determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:
a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to

sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Paragraph 212 states when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

Paragraph 213 states any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.

Paragraph 214 states where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:
a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

Paragraph 215 states where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document (2022-2049):
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.

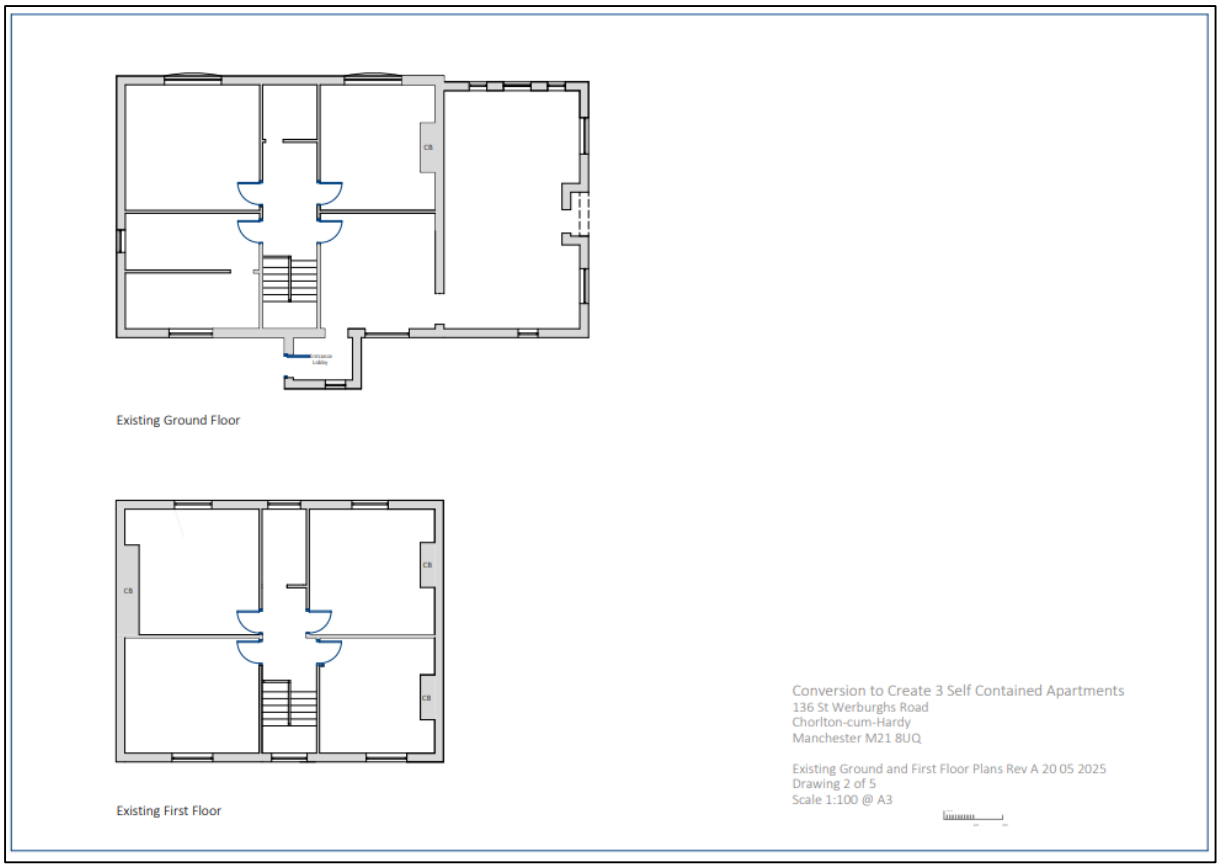
Policy JP-S1: Sustainable Development
Policy JP-P1 Sustainable Places
Policy JP-P2: Heritage
Policy JP-H1: Scale, Distribution and Phasing of New Housing Development
Policy JP-J3: Type, Size, and Design of New Housing

These policies outlines how we aim to become one of the most liveable city regions in the world, consisting of a series of beautiful, healthy, and varied places, whilst protecting and enhancing our historic environment, heritage assets, and their settings.

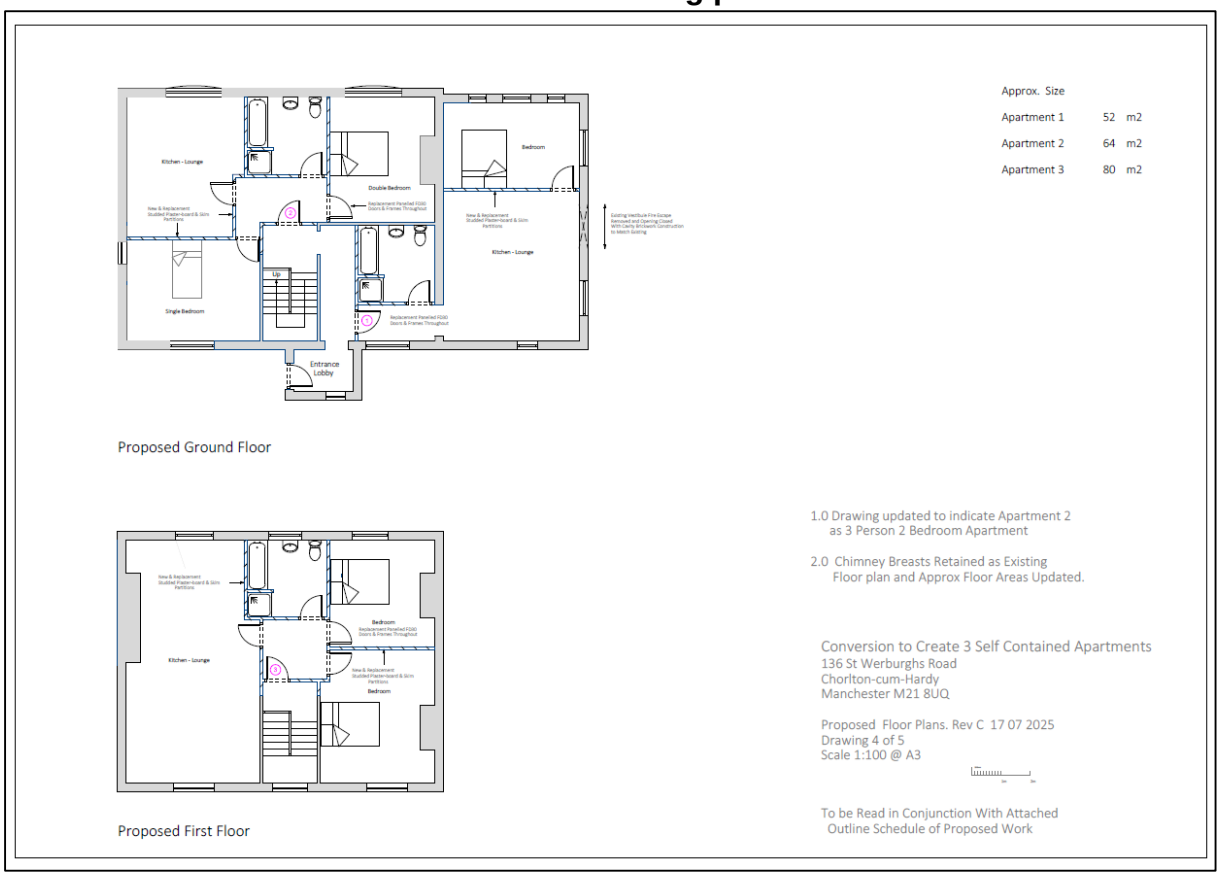
Manchester Residential Quality Guidance (2017)
Appendix - Manchester's Emerging Space Standards

Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standard (2015)

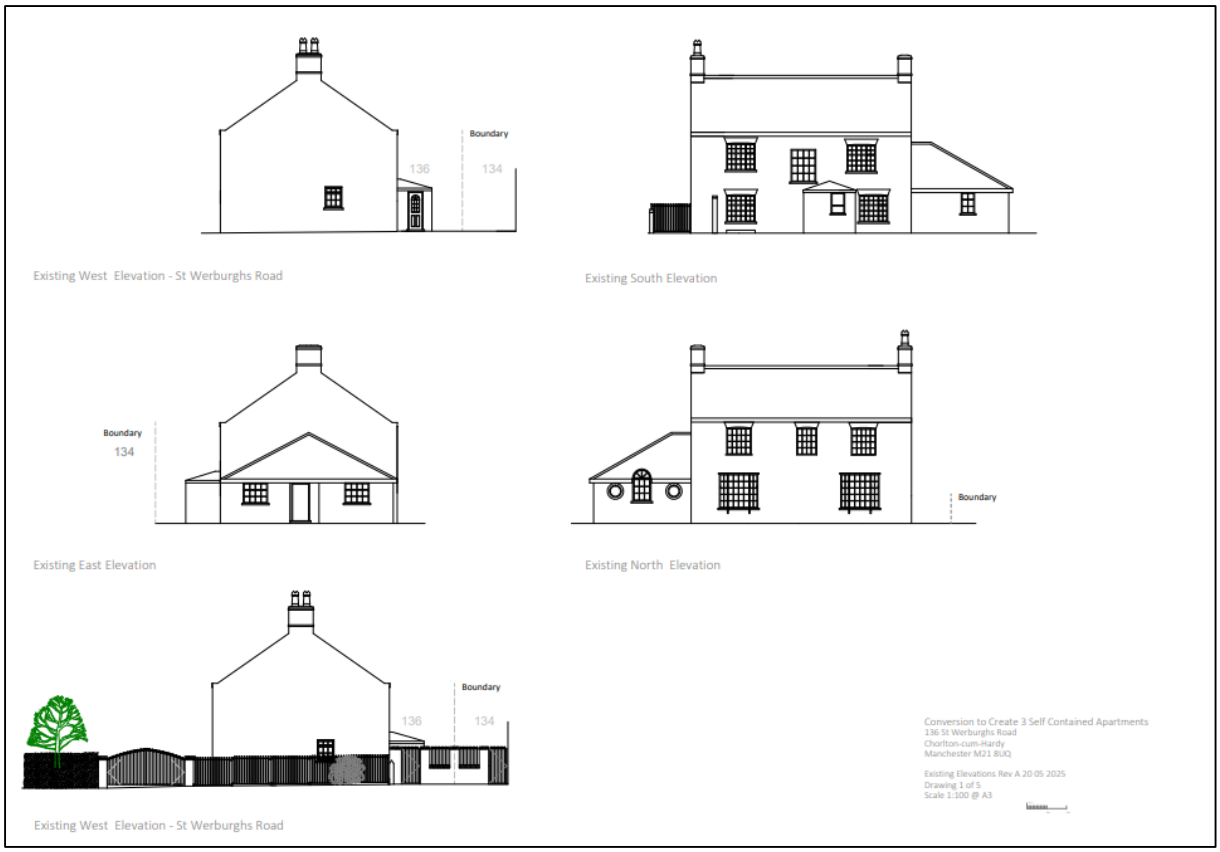
Other Legislative Requirements:
Equality Act 2010 - Section 149 (Public Sector Equality Duty) of the Equality Act 2010 requires due regard to the need to: Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act and; Advance equality of opportunity between 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.



Submitted existing plans

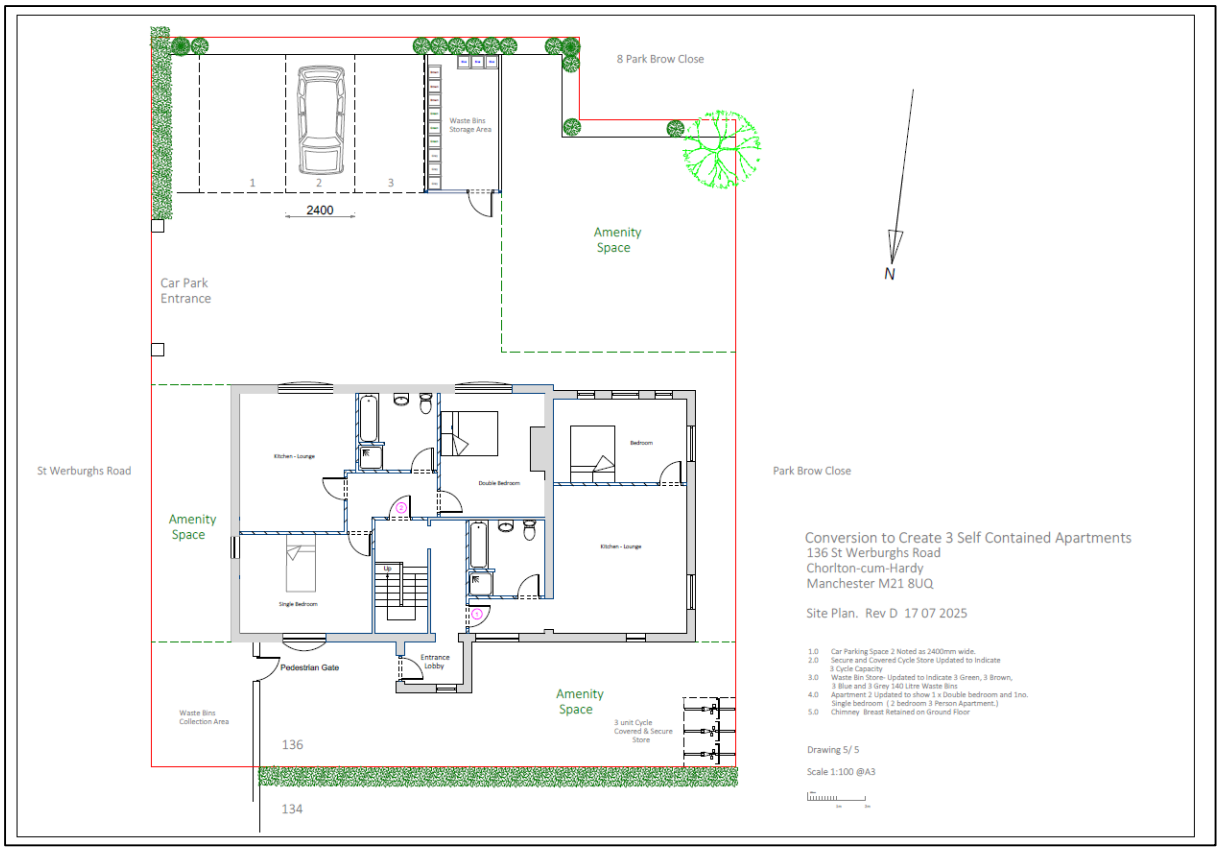


Submitted proposed plans



Submitted existing elevations

Submitted proposed elevations



Submitted proposed site plan

Issues

Principle – the principle of changing the use of a listed building from a gym (Class E) to 3no. residential apartments together with associated internal and external alterations, car parking, bin store, and landscaping is acceptable given the commitment to delivering a sufficient supply of homes (as detailed within chapter 5 of the National Planning Policy Framework) through making effective use of land (as detailed within chapter 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework). Further to this, it should also be noted that this would revert the building to its original residential use, which is considered to be more appropriate and in-keeping with the residential character of the surrounding area, in comparison to the current commercial use.

Notwithstanding this, the proposal must be assessed on a range of relevant issues including its appearance, and impact upon visual and residential amenity, impact upon the listed building, waste storage and management arrangements, cycle and car parking provisions, highways impact, space standards, landscaping and boundary treatment, etc.

Siting, scale, and massing – the siting, scale, and massing of the existing building would be unaffected by the proposal.

Appearance and visual amenity – the only external alteration to the building would be the removal of the existing fire escape access located to the western edge of the property. This would be infilled with brickwork, toothed and bonded to match the existing masonry with a Victorian handmade brick, with insulated cavity, wall ties, and internal blockwork to match the existing 20th century construction.

As this alteration would utilise materials to match the appearance and construction of the existing building and would be sited away from the public highway and footpath as well as being screened from Park Brow Close to the west by the existing high-level redbrick wall and hedging, it is considered that this alteration would have a very minimal impact upon the appearance of the building and visual amenity of the surrounding area.

Residential amenity – the proposal's impact upon the residential amenity of the area is not considered to be unduly harmful given that no extensions to the building are proposed. Issues associated with overlooking, loss of privacy, loss of outlook, loss of light, or the introduction of an overbearing feature are therefore not anticipated.

In terms of whether the proposal would lead to additional comings and goings or an intensified use of the site, these are not considered to be significant issues given the current commercial use of the site and the levels of activity associated with it. Further to this, the Council's Highways Service indicate that, in comparison to the former use of the site, the level of trips generated is not anticipated to be dissimilar. As such, it is considered that the proposal would not substantially alter the existing conditions and residential amenity of the surrounding area.

Waste storage and management – it is acknowledged that concerns were raised in relation to the adequacy of waste storage provisions included under the proposal and their potential to affect the residential amenity of the area.

However, the proposal provides details of a waste storage area located adjacent to the plot's southern boundary. This would accommodate 3no. 140L general refuse bins, 3no. 140L mixed recycling bins, 3no. 140L pulpable recycling bins, and 3no. 140L garden/food waste bins. Whilst typically the Council's Environmental Health Services would request 240L bins for mixed recycling and pulpable waste, acknowledging the constraints of the site and limited area available for external amenity space, these arrangements are considered acceptable in this instance.

The waste collection point is indicated as being to the northeastern corner of the application site, adjacent to St Werburgh's Road, as per the existing arrangements at adjacent residential properties. The Council's Highway Services confirmed the acceptability of these arrangements.

Whilst it is acknowledged that a local resident raised concerns in relation to the proximity of the bin storage area to adjacent residential properties, it should be noted that the northern elevation of the neighbouring residential property located to the south of the application site does not feature any windows that would be unduly affected by storing bins in this area. Moreover, the storage of refuse bins adjacent to plot boundaries is a relatively common practice, particularly in residential areas where external space is limited. Further to this, the bin storage area would be set away from the shared boundary by approximately 0.5m and would be separated by an area of soft planting/landscaping. The submitted plans indicate that the bin storage area would be enclosed (with details of the design and appearance of the enclosure to be secured via condition) and all refuse bins would be lidded, therefore issues associated with excessive odours are not anticipated. Impacts associated with the location of the bin storage area are therefore not considered to be unduly harmful, nor would they warrant refusal of the applications.

Parking and impact to the highway – it is acknowledged that concerns were raised in relation to the adequacy of the parking provisions included under the proposal as well as their resultant impact to the surrounding highway network.

However, the proposal provides details of 3no. parking bays (including 1 accessible bay) to the south of the building within the curtilage of the application site. These bays would scale to at least 2.4m by 4.8m, in line with Council policy, and would be accessed off St Werburgh's Road via the existing access point and vehicle crossover.

The Council's Highway Services indicated that the parking provided at a ratio of 1 bay per residential unit is acceptable. There is sufficient space available for access and manoeuvring associated with these spaces. The proposed parking area would formalise, expand, and reconfigure the existing parking area of the site, whilst utilising the existing access point and vehicular crossover. The submitted site plan also indicates that there would be adequate space to allow vehicles to access and egress the site and manoeuvre into the parking bays safely.

Cycle parking – the proposal provides details of a covered and secure cycle store located in the northwest corner of the site, adjacent to the plot's boundary, which would accommodate 3no. bicycles. Given that a ratio of 1 cycle space per residential unit has been provided and the store would be both sheltered and secure, these arrangements are considered acceptable, in line with the guidance of the Council's Highways Services.

Standard of accommodation – paragraph 135(f) of the NPPF states that planning decisions should ensure that developments create places with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

The submitted plans indicate that apartment 1 on the ground floor (1-bedroom / 2-person) would scale at 52 square metres and would include a double bedroom (serviced by 4no. windows), a kitchen/lounge area (serviced by 3no. windows), and a bathroom. Apartment 2 on the ground floor (2-bedroom / 3-person) would scale at 65 square metres and would include a double bedroom (serviced by 1no. window), a single bedroom (serviced by 2no. windows), a kitchen/lounge area (serviced by 1no. window), and a bathroom. Apartment 3 on the first floor (2-bedroom / 4-person) would scale at 83 square metres and would include a double bedroom (serviced by 1no. window), another double bedroom (serviced by 1no. window), a kitchen/lounge area (serviced by 2no. windows), and a bathroom (serviced by 1no. window).

The above details accord with Manchester's space standards..

In terms of the adequacy of light provided to the apartments, the submitted plans indicate that all habitable rooms would be serviced by at least 1no. window and, given the existing space surrounding the application building, these windows would be unobstructed by adjacent built form, receiving sufficient levels of sunlight and daylight throughout the daytime.

A shared external amenity space would also be provided to the south, north, and east of the application building, as shown on the submitted proposed site plan. Access to further outdoor amenity spaces would also be available at Chorlton Park, located nearby. These arrangements are considered acceptable.

Landscaping – the submitted site plan indicates that the proposal would include external amenity spaces to the north, south, and east of the application building, together with a hard surfaced car parking area located to the south. Areas of soft landscaping are provided along the plot's northern, southern, and eastern boundaries. Full and final details of the hard and soft landscaping of the scheme are proposed to be secured and finalised via condition discharge. This will seek to provide a high standard of accommodation for prospective occupiers of the apartments, in addition to improving the appearance of the site and ensuring it is appropriate and complements the context of the listed building.

Biodiversity net gain – as the proposal would affect less than 25 square metres of habitat, it meets the de minimis exemption requirements (development below the threshold) for biodiversity net gain. Nonetheless, the proposal offers improvements to the existing landscaping of the site which currently features areas of hard surfacing

and astroturf. Full and final details of the hard and soft landscaping of the application site are proposed to be secured and finalised via condition discharge

Boundary treatment – the submitted existing and proposed elevations and plans indicate that the plot's boundary treatment would remain as existing. However, the boundary treatment to the St Werburgh's Road frontage (consisting of black metal railings) has been removed and replaced with supports and a tarpaulin sheet. It is understood that the proposal involves the removal of the current inappropriate tarpaulin sheeting and the reinstatement of the black metal railings in this area. This would be more in-keeping with the character of the surrounding area as well as being more appropriate to the context of the listed building, matching the design of the vehicular access gates, and improving the appearance of the application site overall. There is a condition included requiring full details of the boundary treatment to be installed.

Loss of the gym – it is acknowledged that concerns were raised in relation to the loss of the gym and associated local businesses housed by the building which are understood as being an important community hub for the surrounding area.

However, from liaising with the applicant, it is understood that, though the gym is currently in operation, the amount of actual gym usage appears to be low with the applicant confirming that the occupier had been hoping for an uptake in business for some time. The loss of employment space has been estimated as being less than 200 square metres.

Further to this, the applicant has confirmed that any person, other than the leaseholder, working on the premises are operating in breach of the lease as the lease does not permit sub-letting. It must also be noted that the original grant of permission allowing the change to a gym was a personal permission granted to the applicant at the time of that approval and once the gym ceases to be occupied by that named person the use shall return to the previous office use. It is understood that the property accommodates approximately 9 businesses, all of which fall under Class E, including the gym itself, therapy and counselling, hair and beauty, physiotherapy, singing, yoga and pilates. The applicant states that this is in breach of the lease and this may also be in breach of the personal planning permission, dependent on the nature of these uses and how they operate. The proposal would result in a number of jobs being lost at the application site, with the aforementioned businesses having to relocate to alternative premises. However, it must be noted that the majority of these existing uses may be unauthorised.

Irrespective of the outcome of the planning application, the applicant has confirmed that leasing to the gym operator will be brought to an end.

Regardless of the intensity of use of the existing gym, it is considered that the change of use of the building from a gym (Class E) to 3no. residential apartments is not only in-keeping with the original residential use of the listed building but would also be more appropriate to the residential context of the surrounding area, which predominantly consists of dwellinghouses. Sited a significant distance away from Chorlton District Centre (at least 450m), the current commercial use of the building is considered to be an anomaly which is incongruous to the prevailing residential character to the area.

It must be noted that if the lawful use of the premises returns to offices, once the personal permission is no longer in use, then that use class would be Class E and that would allow other uses to operate without the need for planning permission or any control by the Local Planning Authority and these uses include retail, nursery, medical, café, financial services and others. These uses could therefore legitimately take place at the property with no control from the Council's Planning Service, which could result in unduly harmful impacts on the residential amenity of the area from increased comings and goings, an intensified use, additional noise disturbance, and demand for car parking. Permitting a residential use at the property would therefore overcome these issues as it would be more appropriate and in-keeping with the surrounding area.

For these reasons, it is considered that the loss of the gym would not be unduly harmful to the character of the area, nor would it lead to an unacceptable loss of jobs or employment space. In terms of access to gym facilities, it should also be noted that alternative facilities are available at Hough End Leisure Centre and Whalley Range Sports Centre located to the east of the site.

Impact to the listed building – it is acknowledged that concerns were raised in relation to the proposal's potential to have a harmful impact upon the listed building.

Externally, the proposal's impact upon the listed building is considered to be minimal given that the only works would be the infilling of the fire escape to the eastern side of the building, utilising matching materials. This alteration would also not be highly visible within the street scene or public realm and, as such, would have a minimal impact upon the appearance of the building overall.

The proposal would also enhance the setting and context of the listed building given that it would improve the existing conditions of the application site through the reinstatement of black metal railings to its St Werburgh's Road frontage together with the installation of hard and soft landscaping elements to the front, side, and rear (to be finalised via condition discharge). To ensure the external bin storage enclosure would not have an unduly harmful impact upon the setting of the listed building, details of its design and appearance are recommended to be secured via condition discharge.

The interior of the building has been substantially altered through historic installations and interventions, now retaining little of its original architectural and historic features, as seen in the preceding sections of the report. The internal works involve the replacement and repositioning of the modern partition walls, together with the removal of the first-floor modern grid ceiling, replacement of modern fire doors, and making good of external walls, the ground floor ceilings, mouldings to ceilings, skirting boards and architraves to match the existing. These works are not considered to have an unduly harmful impact to the listed building, given that they would not involve the removal of historic fabric and would match the existing interior of the property. All existing chimney breasts are to be retained. A condition requiring the applicant to explore opportunities to expose, retain, and reinstate the chimney breasts is recommended.

The proposal is therefore considered to accord with paragraph 210 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which stipulates "local planning authorities should take account of: a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness" as well as paragraph 215, which stipulates "where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use" as well as saved policy DC19 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester, policies EN3 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy, policy JP-P2 of Places for Everyone, and chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The proposal would provide significant benefits in the form of securing the long term economic use of the building, additional contribution to housing supply, less impacts from comings and goings, securing the continued use and maintenance of the listed

building as well as improving its external appearance, setting, and context, repairing and maintaining its internal fabric, whilst also improving its integration with the residential character of the surrounding area, which would outweigh any potential harm caused to the listed building as a result of the works. No substantial harm to the listed building is anticipated.

Conclusion – given the above issues, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable in terms of its principle, appearance, impact upon visual and residential amenity, and the listed building itself, as it broadly complies with saved policy DC5 and DC19 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester, policies SP1, DM1, H1, H6, T1, T2, EN3, and EN19 of the Manchester Core Strategy, policies JP-P1, JP-P2, JP-S1, JP-H1, and JP-H2 of Places for Everyone and chapters 5, 9, 11, 12, and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

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 the right to a fair hearing and to this end the Committee 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 of the application 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 for application 142671/FO/2025: Approve

Recommendation for application 143002/LO/2025: Approve

Article 35 Declaration

Officers have worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner based on seeking solutions to problems arising in relation to dealing with the planning application. Issues have arisen during the consideration of this application and the officer negotiated with the agent to reach a satisfactory resolution.

Condition(s) to be attached to decision for application 142671/FO/2025:

1) The development must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of permission.

Reason - Required to be imposed pursuant to Section 91 of the Town and Country Act Planning Act 1990.

2) The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following documents:

'Proposed Floor Plans Rev C', stamped as received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on the 17th July 2025.
'Site Plan Rev D', stamped as received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on the 17th July 2025.
'Proposed Elevations Rev A', stamped as received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on the 10th April 2025.
'Outline Schedule of Proposed Work Rev A', stamped as received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on the 17th July 2025.

Reason - To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans, pursuant to policies SP1 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy.

3) Notwithstanding the details included within the documents listed under condition no.2 of this approval, prior to the undertaking of the relevant section of work, full and final details, including a methodology statement, product specification and/or samples, of any proposed external materials and finishes to be used as part of the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the City Council as Local Planning Authority.

The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason - To ensure there is no resulting harm to the Listed Building, pursuant to saved policy DC19 of the Unitary Development Plan, policies DM1 and 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.

4) Notwithstanding the details included within the documents listed under condition no.2 of this approval, prior to the undertaking of the relevant section of work, full and final details, including a methodology statement, product specification and/or samples, of any proposed internal materials and finishes to be used as part of the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the City Council as Local Planning Authority.

The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason - To ensure there is no resulting harm to the Listed Building, pursuant to saved policy DC19 of the Unitary Development Plan, policies DM1 and 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.

5) The waste storage and management scheme, including the refuse bins, external bin storage area, and waste collection point, shown on the drawing labelled ‘Site Plan Rev D’, stamped as received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on the 17th July 2025, shall be implemented and be in place prior to the first occupation of the development and shall be so maintained and retained at all times thereafter.

Reason - In the interests of amenity and public health, pursuant to policies EN19, SP1 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy.

6) Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby approved, details of electric vehicle charging points shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the City Council as Local Planning Authority.

The approved electric vehicle charging points shall be implemented and be in place prior to the first occupation of the development and shall be so maintained and retained at all times thereafter.

Reason - To ensure that adequate provision is made for electric vehicle charging, pursuant to policies SP1, T1 and DM1 of the Core Strategy.

7) The cycle store, shown on the drawing labelled ‘Site Plan Rev D’, stamped as received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on the 17th July 2025, shall be implemented and be in place prior to the first occupation of the development and shall be so maintained and retained at all times thereafter.

Reason - To ensure that adequate provision is made for cycle parking, pursuant to policies SP1, T1 and DM1 of the Core Strategy.

8) Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) (or any order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no part of the development shall be used for any purpose other than the purpose(s) of Class C3(a) of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) (or in any provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification).

Reason - In the interests of residential amenity, to safeguard the character of the area and to maintain the sustainability of the local community through provision of accommodation that is suitable for people living as families pursuant to policies DM1 and H11 of the Core Strategy for Manchester and the guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

9) The car parking shown on the drawing labelled ‘Site Plan Rev D’, stamped as received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on the 17th July 2025, shall be surfaced, demarcated and made available for use before first occupation of the development hereby approved.

Reason - To ensure that there are adequate arrangements for the parking of cars pursuant to policy DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy.

10) Notwithstanding the details included within the documents listed under condition no.2 of this approval, prior to first occupation of the development, full and final details of a hard and soft landscaping scheme, including details of the materials and permeability of the car parking area, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the City Council as Local Planning Authority.

The approved scheme shall be implemented not later than 12 months from the date the building is first occupied.

If within a period of 5 years from the date of the planting of any tree or shrub, that tree or shrub or any tree or shrub planted in replacement for it, is removed, uprooted or destroyed or dies, or becomes, in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, seriously damaged or defective, another tree or shrub of the same species and size as that originally planted shall be planted at the same place.

Reason - To ensure that a satisfactory landscaping scheme for the development is carried out that respects the character and visual amenities of the area, in accordance with policies SP1, EN9 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy.

11) Notwithstanding the details included within the documents listed under condition no.2 of this approval, prior to first occupation of the development, full and final details of the boundary treatment to be installed along the St Werburgh's Road frontage of the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the City Council as Local Planning Authority.

The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason - To ensure there is no resulting harm to the Listed Building, pursuant to saved policy DC19 of the Unitary Development Plan, policies DM1 and 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.

12) Notwithstanding the details included within the documents listed under condition no.2 of this approval, prior to first occupation of the development, full and final details of the design and appearance of the external bin storage enclosure shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the City Council as Local Planning Authority.

The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason - To ensure there is no resulting harm to the Listed Building, pursuant to saved policy DC19 of the Unitary Development Plan, policies DM1 and 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.

13) Notwithstanding the details included within the documents listed under condition no.2 of this approval, prior to commencement of development, further details shall be

submitted that fully explore the opportunity to expose, retain, and reinstate the internal chimney breasts of the building. Such details shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority, including materials, final finishes and methodology for reinstatement/retention.

The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and prior to first occupation.

Reason - To ensure there is no resulting harm to the Listed Building, pursuant to saved policy DC19 of the Unitary Development Plan, policies DM1 and 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.

14) In this condition "retained tree" means an existing tree, shrub or hedge which is to be as shown as retained on the approved plans and particulars; and paragraphs (a) and (b) below shall have effect until the expiration of 5 years from the date of the occupation of the building for its permitted use.

(a) No retained tree shall be cut down, uprooted or destroyed, nor shall any retained tree be topped or lopped other than in accordance with the approved plans and particulars, without the written approval of the local planning authority. Any topping or lopping approved shall be carried out in accordance with British Standard 5387 (Trees in relation to construction)

(b) If any retained tree is removed, uprooted or destroyed or dies, another tree shall be planted at the same place and that tree shall be of such size and species, and shall be planted at such time, as may be specified in writing by the local planning authority.

(c) The erection of fencing for the protection of any retained tree shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved plans and particulars before any equipment, machinery or materials are brought on to the site for the purposes of the development, and shall be maintained until all equipment, machinery and surplus materials have been removed from the site. Nothing shall be stored or placed in any area fenced in accordance with this condition and the ground levels within those areas shall not be altered, nor shall any excavation be made, without the written consent of the local planning authority.

Reason - In order avoid damage to trees/shrubs adjacent to and within the site which are of important amenity value to the area and in order to protect the character of the area, in accordance with policies EN9 and EN15 of the Core Strategy.

Informatives

1) The applicant is advised that any requirements for licensing, hoarding / scaffolding and any associated temporary traffic management arrangements will need discussion and agreement with the council's Highways Applications and Network Resilience teams via Contact Manchester (Tel. 0161 234 5004) Email - highwaylicences@manchester.gov.uk.

Condition(s) to be attached to decision for application 143002/LO/2025:

1) The development must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason - Required to be imposed pursuant to Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

2) The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following documents:

'Proposed Floor Plans Rev C', stamped as received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on the 17th July 2025.
'Site Plan Rev D', stamped as received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on the 17th July 2025.
'Proposed Elevations Rev A', stamped as received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on the 10th April 2025.
'Outline Schedule of Proposed Work Rev A', stamped as received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on the 17th July 2025.

Reason - To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans, pursuant to policies SP1 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy.

3) Notwithstanding the details included within the documents listed under condition no.2 of this approval, prior to the undertaking of the relevant section of work, full and final details, including a methodology statement, product specification and/or samples, of any proposed external materials and finishes to be used as part of the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the City Council as Local Planning Authority.

The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason - To ensure there is no resulting harm to the Listed Building, pursuant to saved policy DC19 of the Unitary Development Plan, policies DM1 and 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.

4) Notwithstanding the details included within the documents listed under condition no.2 of this approval, prior to the undertaking of the relevant section of work, full and final details, including a methodology statement, product specification and/or samples, of any proposed internal materials and finishes to be used as part of the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the City Council as Local Planning Authority.

The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason - To ensure there is no resulting harm to the Listed Building, pursuant to saved policy DC19 of the Unitary Development Plan, policies DM1 and 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.

5) Notwithstanding the details included within the documents listed under condition no.2 of this approval, prior to commencement of development, further details shall be submitted that fully explore the opportunity to expose, retain, and reinstate the internal chimney breasts of the building. Such details shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority, including materials, final finishes and methodology for reinstatement/retention.

The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and prior to first occupation.

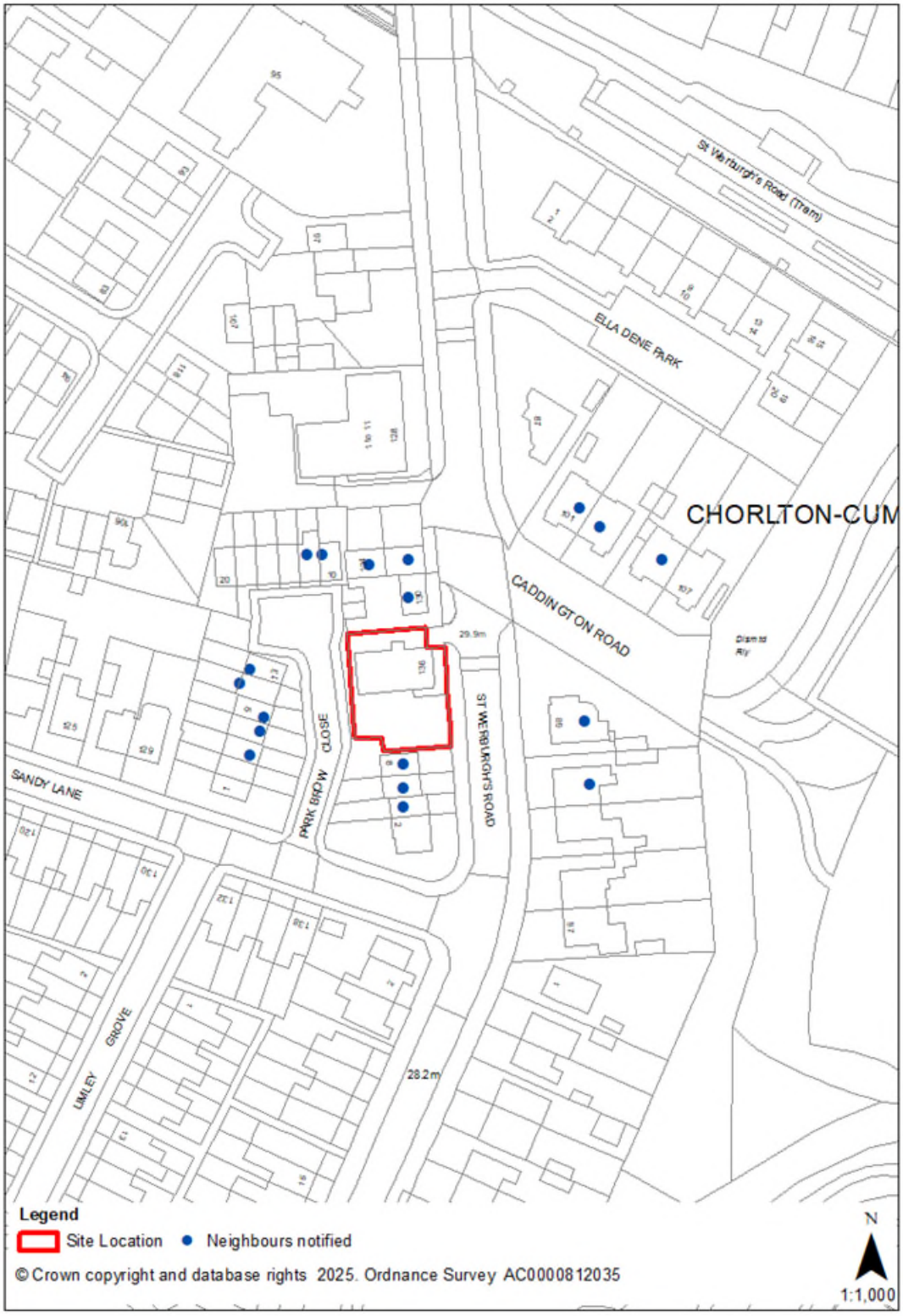
Reason - To ensure there is no resulting harm to the Listed Building, pursuant to saved policy DC19 of the Unitary Development Plan, policies DM1 and EN3 of the Manchester Core Strategy, policy JP-P2 of the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document, and chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

The documents referred to in the course of this report are either contained in the file(s) relating to application ref: 142671/FO/2025 held by planning or are City Council planning policies, the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester, national planning guidance documents, or relevant decisions on other applications or appeals, copies of which are held by the Planning Division.

A map showing the neighbours notified of the application is attached at the end of the report.

Relevant Contact Officer : Holly Wright
Telephone number : 0161 219 6381
Email : holly.wright@manchester.gov.uk


St Werburgh's Road (Tram)
ELLA DENE PARK
CHORLTON-CUM
CADDINGTON ROAD
ST WERBURGH'S ROAD
PARK BROW CLOSE
SANDY LANE
UMLEY GROVE
29.9m
28.2m
Legend
Site Location
Neighbours notified
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N
1:1,000