MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

Planning

Growth & Development

Delegated officer report for planning application

Application no.	142849/FO/2025
Date registered valid:	13 May 2025
Proposal:	Partial Change of Use of the fourth floor from office use (Use Class E) to flexible use comprising education use (Use Class F1a) or office use (Use Class E).
Address:	St James Building, Fourth Floor , 61-95 Oxford Street, Manchester , M1 6EQ
Ward(s):	Piccadilly Ward
Applicant:	Bruntwood Aviva 2 Ltd
Agent (if any):	Katie Wray Deloitte LLP
Case officer:	Michael Pearson Tel: 0161 219 2735 Email: michael.pearson@manchester.gov.uk
Recommendation:	Approve

Date of recommendation: 16/06/2025

Application details

Type of application: Full Application Consent

Development type: Change of use

Date of site visit:

Standard consultations:
Printed: 15 May 2025 Expired: 6 June 2025

Neighbour notifications
Printed: 15 May 2025 Expired: 6 June 2025

Site notice
Posted: 22 May 2025 Expired: 13 June 2025

Press advert
Published: 20 May 2025 Expired: 11 June 2025

Departure from Development Plan: No

Environmental Statement: Not required

Description of site/building

The application relates to the fourth floor of the Grade II listed St James Building, located at 61-95 Oxford Street. The St James Building itself is an Edwardian Portland stone property, completed in an ornate Neo-Baroque style. Existing uses within the building comprise of office uses (Class E(g)(i)), retail (Class E(a) and (b)), as well as educational uses (Class F1a).

Listed building: Grade II

Conservation area: Whitworth Street Conservation Area 1985

Tree Preservation Order: Not applicable

Description of area

The neighbouring area lies within the heart of Manchester City Centre, along the Oxford Road Corridor. Oxford Street is an arterial road that links with Oxford Road, Quay Street and New Quay Street, providing access to Manchester's universities, St Peters Square and Salford. Built development within the local street scene is varied, with Victorian, Edwardian, post-war and modern properties sitting shoulder to shoulder. Neighbouring uses are largely commercial and consist of office, light retail and drinking establishment uses.

Description of development

The application seeks consent for the partial change of use of the application site's fourth floor to a flexible office and/or education use (Class E(g)(i) and/or Class F1(a)).

The proposed educational use would see an existing occupier located at the eighth floor of the application site expand their offering on site. The proposed tenant, QAHE, provides foundation, undergraduate and post-graduate degree programmes in partnership with UK universities.

The proposed development would see an increase of students enrolled with QAHE on site from 850 to 1,200 – 1,400.

Waste would be stored within the site's bin store located at ground floor.

No external alterations are proposed as part of the development.

Planning History

A high number of applications are on record for the application site, the most relevant of which are shown below:

138217/FU/2023 - Change of use of Part of 5th Floor from Office Space (Use Class E) to Flexible Office Space (Use Class E) / Educational College (Use Class F1a) for 10-year period – Approved December 2023.

113842/JO/2016 - Variation of Condition 5 on planning permission 112022/FO/2016/C2 to extend the opening hours of the non-residential education & training centre to: Monday to Friday 07:00 - 21:30, Saturday and Sunday 07:00 - 18:00 – Approved October 2016.

112022/FO/2016/C2 - Listed Building Consent for internal and external alterations to part of first floor. Change of Use of part of first floor from Class B1 (Business Use) to Class D1 (Non-residential education & training centres) – Approved July 2016.

108183/FO/2015/C2 - Change of use the 8th floor from Office Use (Use Class B1) to a non-residential education and training centre (Use Class D1) – Approved June 2015.

101519/FO/2013/C2 - Change of use of part 5th floor from Class B1 (Business Use) to Business Use / non residential education and training centre (Sui Generis) – Approved April 2013.

095601/FU/2011/C2 - Change of use from office use (Use Class B1) to non-residential education and training (Use Class D1) and/or office use (Use Class B1) – Approved August 2011.

092899/FO/2010/C2 - Change of use to B1 (office) and/or D1 (non residential education and training) – Approved May 2010.

092154/FU/2010/C2 - Change of use of part of the 1st floor from B1 (Office) to D1 (Non residential institution) – Approved May 2010.

085732/FO/2008/C3 - Change of use from Class B1 to Class B1 and/or Class D1(c) (Dual Use) – Approved April 2008.

083305/FU/2007/C2 - Change of use from B1 to B1 and/or D1 (dual use) – Approved June 2007.

077841/FO/2005/C3 - Change of use of part 6th floor (block C and part block E) from Class B1 to Class B1and /or Class D1 – Approved February 2006.

072921/FU/2004/C3 - Change of use of part of second floor from office (classB1) to non residential education (class D1) – Approved September 2004.

070758/FU/2004/C3 - Change of use of 6th floor unit from class B1 office to class D1 (education) – Approved April 2004.

Consultations & Notification Responses

Environmental Health – No objection.

Highways – No objection subject to an informative relating to highway hoarding. It is requested that a travel plan is in place for staff and students.

Publicity – None received.

Policy

The Manchester Core Strategy – Development Plan Document 2012-2027 ("the Core Strategy") was adopted by the City Council on the 11th of July 2012:
- Policy SP1 – Spatial Principles
- Policy EC1 – Employment and Economic Growth in Manchester
- Policy EC2 – Existing Employment Space
- Policy EC3 – The Regional Centre
- Policy CC1 – Primary Economic Development Focus (City Centre and fringe)
- Policy CC9 – Design and Heritage
- Policy CC10 – A Place for Everyone
- Policy EN1 – Design Principle and Strategic Characters Areas
- Policy EN3 – Heritage
- Policy EN19 – Waste
- Policy DM1 – Development Management

The Unitary Development Plan for Manchester – For the reasons outlined below the following saved UDP Policies are of relevance to this application:
- Policy DC19 – Listed Buildings
- Policy DC26 – Development and Noise

The Places for Everyone Plan - Joint Development Plan Document, for nine of the 10 boroughs which make up Greater Manchester adopted on 21st of March 2024:
- Policy JP-Strat2 – City Centre
- Policy JP-P2 – Heritage

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Chapter 9 – Promoting Sustainable Transport
- Chapter 12 – Achieving Well-Designed Places
- Chapter 16 – Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

Other Legislative Requirements
Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
National Planning Policy for Waste
Corridor Manchester – Strategic Vision to 2025

Issues

Principle of the Development

The application would see the partial change of use of a Grade II listed building from office to a flexible office and/or education use (Class E(g)(i) and Class F1(a)).

The proposed tenant, QAHE, is an existing occupier within the St James Buildings who wishes to expand their offering on site providing undergraduate and post-graduate courses in partnership with multiple UK universities.

It is considered the expansion of this offering would assist in making the Oxford Road Corridor a key driver of economic growth in the City Centre and support job creation with employees with the appropriate qualifications.

The nature of the flexible use applied for would allow the site to revert back to an office use. On this basis, the proposal accords in principle with Core Strategy Policies SP1, EC1, EC2, EC3, CC1 and DM1, and Places for Everyone Plan Policy JP-Strat2 subject to the matters discussed below.

Amenity

The application site as existing, is in mixed use as offices and educational services (Class E(g)(i) and Class F1(a)). Neighbouring uses are primarily commercial. Environmental Health do not object to the proposal. It is considered that the noise level differences between the existing office use and flexible office/education use are so slight, that any impact on neighbouring amenity would be considered to be negligible. In light of this, it is considered that the development is acceptable in this regard and therefore accords with Core Strategy Policy DM1, Saved Unitary Development Policy DC26 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Visual Amenity & Heritage

No external alterations are proposed on site. Therefore, the development would not have a material impact on the appearance of the local street scene nor the setting or significance of neighbouring Grade II listed buildings to the south and west of the site. Any internal alterations would be subject to a separate application for listed building consent. The proposal therefore, is acceptable in this regard and accords with Core Strategy Policies CC9, EN1, EN3 and DM1, Saved Unitary Development Plan Policy DC19, Places for Everyone Plan Policy JP-P2, the Framework and the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Highway Safety

The application site is located in a highly sustainable location, lying within walking distance of bus, tram and rail infrastructure. Cycle storage facilities will be made available for use on site. No car parking facilities are proposed as part of the development, though public car parking is available opposite the site in the form of a multi-storey car park accessed off of Great Bridgewater Street. Highways do not object to the proposal subject to an informative relating to highway hoarding. Highways have queried what cycle storage facilities are available on site, and requested that a travel plan be in place. The submitted covering letter notes that cycle storage facilities are available on site. Furthermore, taking into account that the proposal relates to an existing occupier, with the proposed size of the development being comparatively small to other educational or office uses within the City Centre, it is considered the imposition of a travel plan is disproportionate and unreasonable and as such will not be conditioned as part of an approval. Subject to the aforementioned informative relating to highway hoarding, the proposal is acceptable in this regard and accords with Core Strategy Policy DM1 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Waste Management

The application site benefits from a dedicated waste store at ground floor, which provides space for 10no general waste bins and 3no dry recycling bins, 4no cardboard/paper bins, 1no food waste bin and 1no glass bin. Environmental Health do not object to this arrangement. Subject to a condition that would require the development to adhere to the proposed waste management arrangements, the development is acceptable in this regard and is in accordance with Core Strategy policies EN19 and DM1, and the National Planning Policy for Waste.

Conclusion

In light of the above and subject to appropriate planning condition, it has been found that the development is acceptable and is therefore in accordance with Core Strategy Policies SP1, EC1, EC2, EC3, CC1, CC9, CC10, EN1, EN3, EN19 and DM1, Saved Unitary Development Plan Policies DC19 and DC26, Places for Everyone Plan Policies, JP-Strat2 and JP-P2, National Planning Policy for Waste, the National Planning Policy Framework and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. On this basis the application is recommended for approval.

Other Legislative Requirements
Equality Act 2010
Section 149 (Public Sector Equality Duty) of the Equality Act 2010 requires due regard to the need to: Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act and; Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The Equality Duty does not impose a legal requirement to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment. Compliance with the Equality Duty involves consciously thinking about the aims of the Equality Duty as part of the process of decision-making.

Human Rights Act 1998 considerations
This application needs to be considered against the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998. Under Article 6, the applicants (and those third parties, including local residents, who have made representations) have a right to a fair hearing and to this end the local planning authority must give full consideration to their comments.

Protocol 1 Article 1, and Article 8 where appropriate, confer(s) a right of respect for a person's home, other land and business assets. In taking account of all material considerations, including Council policy as set out in the Core Strategy and saved polices of the Unitary Development Plan, the Director of Planning, Building Control & Licensing has concluded that some rights conferred by these articles on the applicant(s)/objector(s)/resident(s) and other occupiers and owners of nearby land that might be affected may be interfered with but that that interference is in accordance with the law and justified by being in the public interest and on the basis of the planning merits of the development proposal. She believes that any restriction on these rights posed by the recommendation given is proportionate to the wider benefits of and that such a decision falls within the margin of discretion afforded to the Council under the Town and Country Planning Acts.

Recommendation: Approve

Article 35 Declaration

Officers have acted positively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against relevant planning policies and all material considerations. The nature of the scheme has not

necessitated further discussions with the applicant. On this basis it is decided to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Condition(s) to be attached to decision for approval

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 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

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

- LP.04 Revision A: 4th Floor Location Plan
- LP.02: Block A, B & E 4th Floor Demise Plan
- AXI-100 3 Rev 06: Ground Floor Plan as Proposed
- Covering Letter (Prepared by Deloitte; Dated 01/05/2025)

All stamped as received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on 01/05/2025.

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

3) The application site shall be used for flexible office and/or education use (Class E(g)(i) and/or Class F1(a)), and for no other purpose (including any other purpose within Class E or Class F1 of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020 (SI 2020 No.757) or in any provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification).

Reason - The use of the premises other than in accordance with the approved use would require further consideration by the Local Planning Authority and may not be appropriate in this locality in accordance with Core Strategy Policies SP1, EC2 and DM1, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

4) The development hereby approved shall store and dispose of its waste and recycling in accordance with the submitted Waste Strategy Form (Received 01/05/2025) for the its lifetime.

Reason - In the interest of securing proper waste storage in accordance with Core Strategy Policy EN19 and DM1, and the National Planning Policy for Waste.

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 MCC Highways Applications and Network Resilience teams via Contact Manchester (Tel. 0161 234 5004) Email -highwaylicences@manchester.gov.uk / highwaynetworkmanagement@manchester.gov.uk.

Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified

Highway Services
Environmental Health

44 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 5EJ
Eighth Floor, St James Buildings, 79 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6FQ
PIZZAEXPRESS, Unit B, St James Buildings, 61 - 73 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EQ
67 - 73 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EQ
Buildings Suite 3A, Portland Buildings, 127 - 129 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4PZ
Buildings Suite 1da, Portland Buildings, 127 - 129 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4PZ
Basement Suite Ba And Ground Suite Ga, Portland Buildings, 127 - 129 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4PZ
Second Floor, Beaver House, 125 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4QD
Window Display 3, Broadhurst House, 56 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EU
Third Floor, Broadhurst House, 56 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EU
Window Display 2, Broadhurst House, 56 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EU
46 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 5EJ
47 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EQ
83 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EG
St James Court, Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6FQ
William Hill, 40 - 42 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 5EJ
First Floor Suite 7, St James Court, Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6FQ
Suite 1, St James Court, Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6FQ
131 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4PY
Basement And Ground Floor, 131 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4PY
Third Floor, 61 - 73 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EQ
Eighth Floor, St James Buildings, 61 - 73 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6FQ
Sixth Floor, St James Buildings, 61 - 73 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EQ
Fifth Floor, St James Buildings, 61 - 73 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EQ
Buildings Suite 3D, Portland Buildings, 127 - 129 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4PZ
Fourth Floor, Broadhurst House, 56 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EU
Window Display 1, Broadhurst House, 56 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EU
Third Floor, St. James Building, 79 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6FQ
Fifth Floor, St James Buildings, 79 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EQ
61 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EQ
Suite 9, 67 - 73 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EQ
Buildings Suite 1A To 1C, Portland Buildings, 127 - 129 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4PZ
Buildings Suite 3C, Portland Buildings, 127 - 129 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4PZ
Third Floor, Beaver House, 125 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4QA
87 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EG
Second Floor, Broadhurst House, 56 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EU
Cafe Nero, Unit C, St James Buildings, 61 - 73 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EQ
Seventh Floor, St. James Building, 79 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6HT
Basement Store, St James Buildings, 79 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6FQ
Seventh Floor, St James Buildings, 61 - 73 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EQ
Basement, 67 - 73 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EQ
Buildings Suite 1D To 1E And 2F04, Portland Buildings, 127 - 129 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4PZ
Fifth Floor, Broadhurst House, 56 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EU
Temple Of Convenience, Great Bridgewater Street, Manchester, M1 5JW
Fourth Floor, St. James Building, 79 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6HT
Basement Office, St James Buildings, 79 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6FQ
81 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EG

75 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EQ
Bundobust, 61 - 73 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EQ
Basement, St James Building, 61 - 65 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EQ
Buildings Suite 3F, Portland Buildings, 127 - 129 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4PZ
Buildings Suite 3E, Portland Buildings, 127 - 129 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4PZ
Portland Buildings, 127 - 129 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4PZ
Ground Floor Rear, Beaver House, 125 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4QA
Upper Ground Floor, Broadhurst House, 56 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EU
Window Display 5, Broadhurst House, 56 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EU
Window Display 4, Broadhurst House, 56 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EU
Ground Floor And Basement Elemental, 47 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EQ
First Floor Suite 2, St James Court, Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6FQ
Sixth Floor, St. James Building, 79 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6HT
133 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4PY
Ground Floor, 61 - 73 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EQ
Buildings Suites 2C And 2D And 2E, Portland Buildings, 127 - 129 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4PZ
Buildings Suites 2A 2B And 3B2, Portland Buildings, 127 - 129 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4PZ
Beaver House, 125 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4QD
Ground Floor, Broadhurst House, 56 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EU
Sixth Floor, Broadhurst House, 56 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EU
48 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 5EJ
Column 11 Opposite Portland Hotel, Portland Street, Manchester, M1 3ZZ
St. James Safe Deposit Company Ltd, 77 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EG
First Floor Suite 8-9, St James Court, Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6FQ
First Floor, St James Building, 79 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6PP
Ground Floor, St James Buildings, 79 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6FQ
Second Floor, St James Buildings, 79 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6FQ
Fourth Floor, 61 - 73 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EQ
Buildings Suite 3b1, Portland Buildings, 127 - 129 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4PZ
First Floor, Beaver House, 125 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4QA
Ground Floor Front, Beaver House, 125 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4QA
Fourth Floor And Fifth Floor, Beaver House, 125 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4QA
First Floor, Broadhurst House, 56 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EU
50 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 5EJ
85 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6ET
Ninth Floor, St James Buildings, 79 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6FQ
61 - 65 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EQ
TESCO Express, Unit A, St James Buildings, 61 - 73 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EQ
Basement, Broadhurst House, 56 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EU

Appendix 2 – Planning constraints

Article 4 Direction - City Centre PD Restriction - Class B1(a) To C3
Article 4 Direction - Removal Of PD Rights Change Of Use From Class C3 To Class C4
Coal Authority - Development Low Risk - Name: DEVELOPMENT_LOW_RISK_AREA
Conservation Area - Whitworth Street Conservation Area 1985
Area Team Boundary - Name: CENTRAL