



GMAAS
Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service

Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service
School of Science, Engineering & Environment
Room LG20
Peel Building
University of Salford
Salford M5 4WX

Angela Leckie
Principal Planner
Development Management Central Core
Planning Building Control and Licensing - Growth and Development
Manchester City Council
Floor 6 Town Hall Extension
Albert Square
Manchester M60 2LA

Date: 2nd July 2025

Dear Angela

Archaeological Consultation: 143164/FO/2025 - Creation of a mixed use development comprising three separate components: an office building of up to 18 storeys (Use Class E (g)) with ground floor commercial, leisure, food and drink uses (All Use Class E (g)) and/ or drinking establishment (Sui Generis) with rooftop plant and roof top amenity; a residential building up to 37 storeys (Use Class C3a) with roof top plant level, basement car and cycle parking; and a residential building up to 49 storeys (Use Class C3) with ground floor commercial, leisure, food and drink uses (Use Class E) and/ or drinking establishment (Sui Generis), roof top plant level and basement cycle parking, together with landscaping and public realm, drainage, sub-station, servicing and access arrangements, car parking, highway alterations and other associated works following demolition of the existing building complex - Albert Bridge House, Bridge Street, Manchester M3 5AH

Thank you for consulting GMAAS regarding the above planning application, which concerns a plot of land on the south bank of the River Irwell, adjacent to the Parsonage Gardens Conservation Area in Manchester city centre. The origins of Parsonage Gardens may be traced to 1421, when Thomas La Warre procured a licence from King Henry V to elevate St. Mary's parish church in Manchester to a collegiate church. Extensive gardens were required to cater for its pupils, and the area now known as Parsonage Gardens on the fringe of the medieval town was consequently cultivated to provide food. The application site lies adjacent to these medieval gardens and had been largely developed by the late 18th century, when it is shown on the first detailed maps of Manchester, with buildings concentrated along the bank of the river. These comprised a combination of industrial, commercial and domestic properties, together with a riding school. In 1817, part of the application site was redeveloped as Manchester's first municipal gas works, considered to have been the world's first public gasworks; this was cleared in the late 19th century and a police station erected in its place. Other 18th- and 19th-century buildings occupying the application area were cleared during the 20th century and Albert Bridge House was erected in 1962.

The application is supported by an archaeological desk-based assessment prepared by Civic Heritage (February 2025) and a Heritage Statement that was compiled in May 2025, which have been undertaken in accordance with Policy 207 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The Heritage Statement provides a thorough assessment of the historic built environment and the potential harm of the proposed development to the setting of designated heritage assets in the vicinity. The report considers that the development will cause 'less than substantial harm' to the architectural or historical interest of 26 identified heritage assets, minor benefits to five assets and no harm to the remaining 21, concluding that delivery of the proposed development will bring overall heritage benefits. GMAAS is happy to accept this conclusion, although the Conservation & Urban Design Team at Manchester City Council may wish to comment further.

The detailed assessment of the archaeological resource describes the historical development of the application site, supported by key historic map extracts. Following consultation with GMAAS, it utilises GM Historic Environment Record data and grey literature reports on relevant pieces of archaeological investigation and key publications. The report is a comprehensive and useful document that allows a clear understanding of the potential archaeological interests and an appropriate strategy to mitigate the harm of development on archaeological interests.

It is concluded in the archaeological assessment that the application area has some potential to retain below-ground remains of 18th- and 19th-century buildings, including Albert Mill, a landing stage and elements of the early gas works which, in view of their potential archaeological interest, warrant further investigation prior to development. GMAAS agrees with this conclusion, and recommends that the site is subject to intrusive archaeological investigation in advance of development. This should comprise an initial phase of evaluation trenching, followed if necessary by open-area excavation and recording. As any such remains are not going to be of national, but of regional or local significance, GMAAS would be content to see the archaeological investigation conditioned on the planning consent. The condition should be worded as follows:

'No development works (excluding demolition) shall take place until the applicant or their agents or their successors in title has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological works in accordance with a Project Design that has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The Project Design shall cover the following:

- 1. A phased programme and methodology of investigation and recording to include:
- archaeological evaluation trenching;
- pending the results of the above, targeted open-area excavation.***
- 2. A programme for post-investigation assessment to include:
- production of a final report on the results of the investigations and their significance.***
- 3. Deposition of the final report with the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record.***
- 4. Dissemination of the results of the archaeological investigations commensurate with their significance, including provision for the installation of permanent information panels.***
- 5. Provision for archive deposition of the report and records of the site investigation.***
- 6. Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the approved Project Design.***

Reason: To record and advance understanding of heritage assets impacted on by the development and to make information about the heritage interest publicly accessible pursuant to policy EN3 of the Manchester Core Strategy (2012) and in accordance with NPPF Policy 218: To record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible.

All archaeological work should be undertaken by a suitably qualified and experienced archaeological contractor, funded by the applicant. GMAAS will approve the Project Design and also monitor the implementation of the archaeological works on behalf of Manchester City Council.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted Signature]

[Redacted Name]

Heritage Management Director

[Redacted Address Line]