

Comments for Planning Application 143025/LO/2025

Application Summary

Application Number: 143025/LO/2025

Address: Sister Plot C Former Umist Campus Altrincham Street Manchester M1 7JA

Proposal: Listed building consent for alterations to Sculptural Wall (Hollaway Wall), to encapsulate the all within new office building (C2 Building), as part of mixed-use development proposals comprising offices use (Class E) and flexible commercial and community uses (Class E, F2 and/or Sui Generis- drinking establishment).

Case Officer: Jennifer Atkinson

Customer Details

Name: Not Available

Address: Not Available

Comment Details

Commenter Type: Member of the Public

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: I strongly oppose the proposed modifications to the Holloway Wall outlined in planning application 143025/LO/2025. This structure is not merely a wall; it is a rare and exceptional example of Brutalist public art-one of the largest sculptural Brutalist artworks in the UK. Conceived with both aesthetic and practical purpose, the wall reflects artist William Mitchell's groundbreaking philosophy of integrating art with function. It is not only a striking visual landmark but also serves as a sound buffer, embodying a dual-purpose design that was visionary for its time.

Over the past 15 years, I have walked past the Holloway Wall at least once a week, each time taking a moment to appreciate its powerful presence and its significance within Manchester's architectural and cultural heritage. It is an increasingly rare encounter with post-war modernist creativity in the public realm. The proposed alterations would irreparably diminish this experience, reducing a bold public artwork to a fragmented or concealed feature, stripped of its context and impact.

As a Grade II listed structure, the Holloway Wall has been formally recognised for its special architectural and historic interest. Its listing is rooted in its sculptural unity, materiality, and artistic intent. Encapsulating it within a new construction or removing key sections would effectively dismantle the very qualities that warranted its protection-undermining both Mitchell's original vision and the purpose of the heritage designation itself.

Public art of this nature is intended to be encountered as part of the urban fabric-not hidden behind glass, buried within private developments, or reduced to backdrop status. To do so would

not only compromise its accessibility but sever it from the physical and social environment for which it was designed.

Approving this application would set a troubling precedent, eroding confidence in the protection of listed structures. It would open the door to further encroachments on modernist and Brutalist landmarks across the city (and we have already lost too many), weakening the very foundations of conservation policy. Once we begin compromising on the integrity of protected works, we risk normalising their gradual erasure.

Manchester has a responsibility to protect its 20th-century heritage, especially rare and ambitious works like the Holloway Wall. Allowing this alteration would send a clear message that heritage protections are flexible, optional, or even expendable in the face of redevelopment pressures.

Rather than alter or subsume the Holloway Wall, the council should commit to its restoration, maintenance, and celebration as a significant piece of public heritage. This structure stands as a testament to an era of architectural innovation and civic ambition, and opportunities to preserve such works are increasingly scarce. Manchester is rightly celebrated for its architecture and built environment. It should be protecting, promoting, and enhancing that exceptionalism-not diminishing it.

I urge the planning committee to reject this application and uphold the integrity of the Holloway Wall in its original form. Let it continue to be experienced as it was meant to be: a bold, functional, and inspiring piece of public art that enhances Manchester's urban landscape and honours its modernist legacy.