MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

Planning
Growth & Development
Delegated officer report for planning application

Application no.	142723/LO/2025
Date registered valid:	15 April 2025
Proposal:	Listed Building Consent for the installation of air conditioning unit with ducting
Address:	Flat 9, Chapel House, 1 Turnstone Avenue, Manchester, M20 2EQ
Ward(s):	Didsbury East Ward
Applicant:	Mr Alan & Mrs Karen Simpson
Agent (if any):	Mrs Marta Diego Sainz, Stephenson Hamilton Risley Studio Ltd
Case officer:	Tracie Simpson Tel: 0161 234 4537 Email: tracie.simpson@manchester.gov.uk
Recommendation:	Approve

Date of recommendation: 16th June 2025



Application details

Type of application: Listed Building Consent
Development type: Listed building alteration
Date of site visit: 13 May 2025
Standard consultations:
Printed: 1 May 2025 Expired: 23 May 2025
Neighbour notifications
Printed: 1 May 2025 Expired: 23 May 2025
Site notice
Posted: 7 May 2025 Expired: 29 May 2025
Press advert
Published: 6 May 2025 Expired: 27 May 2025
Departure from Development Plan: No
Environmental Statement: Not required

Description of site/building

The site relates to a 2nd floor flat within the grade II listed (06.06.94) Chapel House, part of the former Manchester Metropolitan University Didsbury campus converted to 9no. residential apartments in 2015 (108541). It is set back approximately 28 metres off the eastern side of Wilmslow Road within the Didsbury St. James Conservation Area and is highly visible on approach to the vehicular and pedestrian gates adjacent to the lodge. It was originally built circa 1840-42 by Richard Lane as a Wesleyan Theological Institution, and following conversion, now lies within a wider residential complex comprising of other listed buildings and new builds. It is considered to have a high level of significance.

The building comprises of a central 2.5-storey chapel hall in red brick orientated east-west, flanked by 2-storey receding wings on the north and south elevations. The main hall is a Gothic style chapel with prominent triple lancet windows in slim aluminium frames in the original stone mullions. The original stained glass lancet windows were lost some time ago, however the replacements in situ are a good compromise which retain the impression of fixed chapel style windows.

The two receding wings are in a Tudor Gothic style, with pitched and flush parapets around their perimeter and have a more domestic aesthetic consistent with their original design and use as tutor's houses.

The residential conversion has created external roof terraces on the roof of each wing. These are set within a recess where part of the original hipped roof was demolished, and they are concealed from view at ground level by the remaining section of hipped roof and the parapets which run around each wing.



Listed building: Grade II
Conservation area: Didsbury St James Conservation Area 1970
Tree Preservation Order: Not applicable

Description of area

The area is primarily residential in nature located close to Didsbury District Centre within short distance to Fletcher Moss Botanical Gardens and Towers Business Park.

Description of development

The applicant is seeking Listed Building Consent for the installation of an air conditioning unit with ducting.

Consultations & Notification Responses

Local residents, as per Appendix 1 – Occupiers of properties surrounding the application site were notified of the proposal**. Four** letters of objection have been received in respect of this application, summary of comments as follows:

- Changes are inappropriate for a listed building, would disrupt its original character, and raise concerns about residential impact and future precedent.
- Other flats have non-opening windows.
- Apartments in the building supported by the mechanical fresh air ventilation system that was installed during the original conversion
- Each flat has its own unit that brings in air from outside and circulates it throughout the rooms, with manual controls to adjust the airflow.
- The building was designed with adequate ventilation and comfort in mind, without the need for additional interventions.

- If this application is approved, it may encourage similar requests from other residents. That would risk damaging the character of the building
- When planning permission was granted in 2015 for the building's conversion, there was a clear effort to preserve the external appearance of Chapel House
- The proposed air conditioning unit would be located on the terrace, raises concerns about increased mechanical noise
- The terrace area overlooks mature trees that are regularly visited by birds and wildlife. The introduction of mechanical noise could create unnecessary disturbance to the environment around the building.
- The proposed changes are not necessary, not in keeping with the character of the building, and not in line with the original planning approach
- Proposed development would detract from the building's architectural and historical significance
- It will damage the grade II listed building's distinct visual appearance significantly and its relationship with the surroundings
- The proposed development would cause significant socio-economic harm to the building and residents.
- Harm to the local environment, create noise and would clash with the character and appearance of the area
- Proposed alteration will directly affect the centre piece of the Chapel, where Exterior fittings of historical value and historical decorative ironwork would appear damaged
- It is also possible that while making the alterations to the windowpane, structure may get damaged
- The decking on which the unit will stand will exacerbate noise.

Environmental Health - Attach condition if approved

West Didsbury Residents Association – No comments have been received as a result of this proposal.

Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2024)

Para 8(c) - The environmental objective of sustainable development is to protect and enhance the natural, built, and historic environment, including adapting to climate change and moving to a low carbon economy.

Para 161 - The planning system should support the transition to net zero and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.

Para 167 - Local planning authorities should give significant weight to supporting energy efficiency to existing buildings. Where proposals affect conservation areas, listed buildings or other designated heritage assets, the policies in Chapter 16 should also be applied.

Para 202 - Heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.

Para 207 - Local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

Para 208 - LPAs should ensure that any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal is avoided or minimised.

Para 210 - In determining applications, LPAs should take account of, the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Para 212 - 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.

Para 213 - Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification.

Para 215 - Proposals of less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset should be weighed against the wider public benefits of the proposal.

Para 216 - The effect of a proposal on non-designated heritage assets needs to be considered in assessing an application.

Para 219 - Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance.

Manchester City Core Strategy

The following policies are considered relevant in the consideration of this application.

Unitary Development Plan (UDP) - The UDP has been superseded by the Core Strategy Development Plan. DC18 for Conservation Areas is still considered of relevance.

Policy DM1 - Development Management

Policy EN3 - Heritage

Policy EN4 - Reducing CO2 Emissions by Enabling Low and Zero Carbon Development

DC18 - Conservation Areas

DC19 – Listed Buildings

Places for Everyone (2022-2039)

Policy JP-P2 - Heritage - Positive management and integration of heritage can be achieved by exploring opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that restoration of historic buildings offer.

Policy JP-S1 - Sustainable Development - Includes the 2038 carbon neutrality objective which can be achieved by significantly upscaling solar photovoltaic energy and promoting the retrofitting of existing buildings.

Historic England guidance and Planning policy (NPPF, Core Strategy and PfE) encourage a conservation-led approach with an emphasis on the preservation of heritage assets.

Considerable weight and importance must therefore be given to preserving heritage assets, including the setting of the site within the conservation area, the impact of the development on those assets, and any public benefits arising from the proposal.

Issues

Principle of the Development

The principle of the development is considered to be acceptable. In determining whether the proposed works are acceptable, the main issue to consider is the impact these proposed works will have on the heritage asset itself and to establish whether the public benefits of the proposal will outweigh any potential less than substantial harm that might result from the proposed works being undertaken.

The NPPF para.207 requires that an applicant describes the significance of heritage assets with great weight given to their conservation (para.212). It goes on to say that any harm should be clearly and convincingly justified (para.213) and that any public benefits are weighed into the assessment (para.215).

The application is accompanied by a Design and Access Statement which includes a heritage assessment based on the original Heritage Statement submitted under the residential conversion application.

This application is accompanied by a full application reference number - 142934/FO/2025 - Recv: 13.05.2025. This application is currently pending consideration for the installation of air conditioning unit with ducting

History relating to Flat 9, Chapel House, 1 Turnstone Avenue

There are 36 applications relating to this site, however, there are two applications relating to this particular property. All other applications relating to this site vary from listed building consent to tree works and erection of residential properties around the Chapel site, conversion of the Chapel including variation of condition applications.

Assessment of Significance

The special significance of the building derives from its architectural, historic and archaeological interests, of which the windows form a large part being clearly indicative of its original use as a chapel.

Significance is also derived more widely from the group of dwellings within the former campus which includes the grade II* listed former administration building and entrance lodge, all situated within a mature landscaped setting. These combine to deliver a high level of significance to the conservation area which shares many of these characteristics.

The proposed air conditioning system would serve the two bedrooms to mitigate overheating issues. Initially, the application included an alteration to the central lower window on the front, west-facing elevation to create an inward-opening window for ventilation into a habitable room and Installation of an external air-conditioning unit on the enclosed terrace area, and associated ductwork from the unit into the building. Following raised concerns by the City Council, an amended scheme was submitted removing the alteration to the window from the scheme. The applicants still propose the installation of air conditioning unit with ducting.

Externally, the inverter heat pump would sit on the terrace floor with ducting to the interior running no higher than 1200mm which is the maximum height of the privacy fencing and will avoid more visible high-level additions to the external wall which is partially visible from within the Conservation Area.

All internal pipework runs will be contained within newly constructed structures. No details of this, the diameter of penetrations to accommodate the ducting or of the internal AC units and how these will be fixed to the internal walls, has been provided. Details of the methods of routing and fixing the AC system and the finished materials including the colour to match therefore are conditioned as part of this approval.

In terms of impacts, the equipment will be located on the floor of south-facing roof terrace, which is set down from and behind the raised parapets. As such, there will be no visibility of the air conditioning unit and associated ductwork from any external viewpoints within the setting of the building including the conservation area. This element of the proposal will preserve the special character of the building and its appearance within the Conservation Area, in accordance with NPPF para.212 and Core Strategy policy EN3.

The AC works are relatively minor interventions that incur a small degree of harm to original fabric that is at the lower end of the less than substantial harm scale in NPPF terms. Importantly, the works do not alter the special interest and significance of the building and are fully reversible interventions which do not incur any appreciable loss of historic fabric.

Impact on the Didsbury St James Conservation Area

The proposed installations will cause less than substantial harm to the designated heritage assets that are the listed building and the Conservation Area, outweighed by the benefit of the proposals.

Overall, it is not considered that the proposed installation of an air conditioning unit with ducting. would cause undue harm to the visual amenity within the area.

Conclusion

Based on the above, the AC unit will have a negligible impact on the Listed Building and Conservation Area.

This application is considered acceptable, as the works are considered to cause a low amount of less than substantial harm to the special interest and the historic character of the Grade II listed building. The proposal accords with NPPF para.202 which requires that development preserves heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance and meets the objectives of sustaining and conserving heritage assets within Core Strategy policies CC9, EN3 and DM1 and NPPF paras.208, 212, 215 and 216.

Any less than substantial harm is considered to be outweighed by the public benefit gained by the greater appreciation for the historic significance of the building that will result from these works being carried out whilst making an existing building more energy efficient thus reducing carbon emissions.

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

The local planning authority in making its decision has had due regard to paragraph 48 of the National Planning Policy Framework as well as the development plan, national planning policy and other material considerations and has approved the application subject to appropriate conditions and for the reasons outlined in the delegated report. The application has been approved with appropriate conditions as set out below, in the interests of visual amenity and preservation of the listed building and conservation area.

Condition(s) to be attached to decision for approval OR Reasons for recommendation to refuse

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 drawings and documents:

Received on 11th June 2025 numbered 7708-al (05)013 Proposed Air Conditioning Layout

Received on 11th June 2025 Design and Access Statement numbered P02

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.990.

3) Notwithstanding the details as set out in condition 2 above, prior to the commencement of works, a method statement shall be submitted to and approved by the City Council as Local Planning Authority.

For the avoidance of doubt, this method statement shall include the following;

o The diameter of penetrations to accommodate the ducting or of the internal AC units
o Please provide details of how these will be fixed to the internal walls
o Details of the methods of routing and fixing the AC system and the finished materials including the colour to match are required

The approved details shall then be implemented as part of the development.

Reason - In the interests of visual amenity and because the proposed works affect a building which is included in the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest and careful attention to building work is required to protect the character and appearance of this building and to ensure consistency in accordance with policy and EN3 of the Core Strategy and saved policy DC19.1 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester.

Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified

Environmental Health
West Didsbury Residents Association

50 Bloomesbury Avenue, Manchester, M20 2BN
12 Bloomesbury Avenue, Manchester, M20 2BN
14 Bloomesbury Avenue, Manchester, M20 2BN
16 Bloomesbury Avenue, Manchester, M20 2BN
18 Bloomesbury Avenue, Manchester, M20 2BN
20 Bloomesbury Avenue, Manchester, M20 2BN
22 Bloomesbury Avenue, Manchester, M20 2BN
24 Bloomesbury Avenue, Manchester, M20 2BN
26 Bloomesbury Avenue, Manchester, M20 2BN
28 Bloomesbury Avenue, Manchester, M20 2BN
42 Bloomesbury Avenue, Manchester, M20 2BN
44 Bloomesbury Avenue, Manchester, M20 2BN
40 Bloomesbury Avenue, Manchester, M20 2BN
2 Turnstone Avenue, Manchester, M20 2FN
Flat 12, Sandhurst House, 2 Walkershall Way, Manchester, M20 2HW
Flat 11, Sandhurst House, 2 Walkershall Way, Manchester, M20 2HW
Flat 10, Sandhurst House, 2 Walkershall Way, Manchester, M20 2HW
Flat 9, Sandhurst House, 2 Walkershall Way, Manchester, M20 2HW
Flat 8, Sandhurst House, 2 Walkershall Way, Manchester, M20 2HW
Flat 7, Sandhurst House, 2 Walkershall Way, Manchester, M20 2HW
Flat 6, Sandhurst House, 2 Walkershall Way, Manchester, M20 2HW
3 Firecrest Drive, Manchester, M20 2FD
7 Firecrest Drive, Manchester, M20 2FD
5 Firecrest Drive, Manchester, M20 2FD
1 Firecrest Drive, Manchester, M20 2FD
52 Bloomesbury Avenue, Manchester, M20 2BN
56 Bloomesbury Avenue, Manchester, M20 2BN
54 Bloomesbury Avenue, Manchester, M20 2BN
Flat 8, Beeches Court, 48 Bloomesbury Avenue, Manchester, M20 2NF
Flat 7, Beeches Court, 48 Bloomesbury Avenue, Manchester, M20 2NF
Flat 6, Beeches Court, 48 Bloomesbury Avenue, Manchester, M20 2NF
Flat 5, Beeches Court, 48 Bloomesbury Avenue, Manchester, M20 2NF
Flat 4, Beeches Court, 48 Bloomesbury Avenue, Manchester, M20 2NF
Flat 3, Beeches Court, 48 Bloomesbury Avenue, Manchester, M20 2NF
Flat 2, Beeches Court, 48 Bloomesbury Avenue, Manchester, M20 2NF
Flat 1, Beeches Court, 48 Bloomesbury Avenue, Manchester, M20 2NF

46 Bloomesbury Avenue, Manchester, M20 2BN
38 Bloomesbury Avenue, Manchester, M20 2BN
36 Bloomesbury Avenue, Manchester, M20 2BN
34 Bloomesbury Avenue, Manchester, M20 2BN
32 Bloomesbury Avenue, Manchester, M20 2BN
30 Bloomesbury Avenue, Manchester, M20 2BN
10 Bloomesbury Avenue, Manchester, M20 2BN
7 Bloomesbury Avenue, Manchester, M20 2BN
17 Bloomesbury Avenue, Manchester, M20 2BN
15 Bloomesbury Avenue, Manchester, M20 2BN
13 Bloomesbury Avenue, Manchester, M20 2BN
11 Bloomesbury Avenue, Manchester, M20 2BN
9 Bloomesbury Avenue, Manchester, M20 2BN
3 Bloomesbury Avenue, Manchester, M20 2BN
5 Bloomesbury Avenue, Manchester, M20 2BN
1 Bloomesbury Avenue, Manchester, M20 2BN
Flat 1, Chapel House, 1 Turnstone Avenue, Manchester, M20 2EQ
Flat 2, Chapel House, 1 Turnstone Avenue, Manchester, M20 2EQ
Flat 3, Chapel House, 1 Turnstone Avenue, Manchester, M20 2EQ
Flat 4, Chapel House, 1 Turnstone Avenue, Manchester, M20 2EQ
Flat 6, Chapel House, 1 Turnstone Avenue, Manchester, M20 2EQ
Flat 7, Chapel House, 1 Turnstone Avenue, Manchester, M20 2EQ
Flat 5, Chapel House, 1 Turnstone Avenue, Manchester, M20 2EQ
Flat 8, Chapel House, 1 Turnstone Avenue, Manchester, M20 2EQ
Flat 10, Chapel House, 1 Turnstone Avenue, Manchester, M20 2EQ
Flat At, Ye Olde Cock Inn, 848 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 2RN
1 Walkershall Way, Manchester, M20 2EP
Ye Olde Cock Inn, 848 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 2RN
844 - 846 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 2RN
20 Philip Godlee Lodge, 842 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 2DS
23 Philip Godlee Lodge, 842 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 2DS
36 Philip Godlee Lodge, 842 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 2DS
Flat 5, Sandhurst House, 2 Walkershall Way, Manchester, M20 2HW
Flat 4, Sandhurst House, 2 Walkershall Way, Manchester, M20 2HW
1 Philip Godlee Lodge, 842 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 2DS
34 Philip Godlee Lodge, 842 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 2DS
35 Philip Godlee Lodge, 842 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 2DS
24 Philip Godlee Lodge, 842 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 2DS
19 Philip Godlee Lodge, 842 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 2DS
21 Philip Godlee Lodge, 842 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 2DS
22 Philip Godlee Lodge, 842 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 2DS
6 Turnstone Avenue, Manchester, M20 2FN
4 Turnstone Avenue, Manchester, M20 2FN
Flat 3, Sandhurst House, 2 Walkershall Way, Manchester, M20 2HW
Flat 2, Sandhurst House, 2 Walkershall Way, Manchester, M20 2HW
Flat 1, Sandhurst House, 2 Walkershall Way, Manchester, M20 2HW

Appendix 2 – Planning constraints

Article 4 Direction - Removal Of PD Rights Change Of Use From Class C3 To Class C4
Conservation Area - Didsbury St James Conservation Area 1970
Area Team Boundary - Name: SOUTH AREA