

Planning

Growth & Development

Delegated officer report for planning application

Application no. 141831/VO/2025
Date registered valid: 2 January 2025
Proposal: City Council application to retain of roof mounted lightning protection
Address: Hammerstone Road Depot, 1 Hammerstone Road, Gorton,
Manchester, M18 8EQ
Ward(s): Gorton & Abbey Hey Ward

Applicant: Anna Lucas, Manchester City Council
Agent (if any): Mr Andrew Thompson, Fletcher-Rae
Case officer: Sue Wills
Tel: 0161 234 4524
Email: sue.wills@manchester.gov.uk

Recommendation: Approve
Date of recommendation: 20 February 2025

Application details

Type of application: Regulation 3 Consent

Development type: Minor Other

Standard consultations:

Printed: 14 January 2025 Expired: 4 February 2025

Neighbour notifications

Printed: 14 January 2025 Expired: 4 February 2025

Site notice

No site notice has been produced

Press advert

No press advert had been published

Departure from Development Plan: No

Environmental Statement: Not required

Description of site/building

The application site is bounded by Hammerstone Road to the east, Gorton Lane to the south, Preston Street to the west and the Manchester to Glossop rail line to the north. The site is accessed from Hammerstone Road. The site is an operational Council depot, with the existing buildings currently providing accommodation for Council Services.

The overall site covers an area of 3.8 hectares and comprises a former loco shed a double height (non-designated heritage asset) which forms the western boundary to Preston Street. There are other buildings to the southwestern corner of the site at the junction of Preston Street and Gorton Lane. The main access is from Hammerstone Road in proximity to the recently erected gate house, with an existing secondary access from Hammerstone Road further to the northeast. The southern section of the site lies at a different ground level than Gorton Lane, with the current brick boundary wall treatment forming a retaining structure to this frontage of the site.

Planning History

- 063307/VO/NORTH2/01 - CITY COUNCIL DEVELOPMENT Retrospective application for modular office accommodation for a temporary period of 3 years Operational Services Depot, Hammerstone Road, Gorton Approved 23.11.2001
- 076510/FO/2005/N2 - Erection of 22.5-metre-high telecommunications monopole including 3 no. antennas, associated ancillary equipment, and 2.4 metre high palisade fencing Hammerstone Road Depot Hammerstone Road Approved 20.09.2005
- 080315/VO/2006/N2 - CITY COUNCIL DEVELOPMENT Erection of new entrance gates and alteration to building to create disabled persons access ramp and creation of disabled persons parking spaces. Manchester City Council, Hammerstone Road. Approved 09.11.2006
- 128853/VO/2020 - CITY COUNCIL DEVELOPMENT Erection of two storey office and welfare accommodation (Class E) for a temporary period of 3 years

130127/VO/2021 - Hammerstone Road Depot .1 Hammerstone Road. Approved 14.01.2021
CITY COUNCIL DEVELOPMENT: Refurbishment and reconfiguration of the existing loco shed to include office, storage, and workshop accommodation; demolition of existing ancillary buildings; erection of a new gatehouse; reconfiguration of existing parking areas; creation of a 'Winter Maintenance' area including a commercial vehicle parking garage with associated office & welfare accommodation and a grit/salt storage barn; creation of vehicle wash-down area; refurbishment of the existing vehicle refuelling area; and restoration and enhancement of the memorial garden. Approved 03.12.2021

Listed building: Not applicable

Conservation area: Not applicable

Tree Preservation Order: Not applicable

Description of area

The surrounding buildings are in warehousing/industrial use and vary in height and condition. The predominant use of the buildings across the surrounding area are Cemex Concrete plant to the west, Iceland Food Manufacturing to the east, New Smithfield wholesale market beyond the rail line to the north, with taxi and car repair garages, and industrial and warehousing units further to the east. The south of Gorton Lane is predominantly residential in nature with a large care facility set in grounds lying opposite the site, and a large area of open space on Taylor Street to the southwest of the site.

Description of development

The proposal is related to the retention of roof mounted lightning protection to the former loco shed. 9 x 2m high stainless steel air rods with associated roof fixing brackets have been installed to the roof ridge of the former loco shed which faces into the site.

Consultations & Notification Responses

Local residents and local businesses – No comments received.

Network Rail - Has no objections.

Policy Context

NPPF National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)

The NPPF sets out the Government's Planning Policies for England and how these should be applied. It states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It states that achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has 3 overarching objectives:

An economic objective - to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land, of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

A social objective - to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and

An environmental objective - to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.

Paragraph 10 confirms that a presumption in favour of sustainable development lies at the heart of the Framework. Paragraph 11 states that for decision-making, this presumption in favour of sustainable development means "approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay."

Achieving well designed places (Section 12) – this chapter sets out that planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments: A) Will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development B) Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping; C) Are sympathetic to local character and history including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation; D) Establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit; E) Optimise the potential of the Site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development and support local facilities and transport networks; and F) Create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being.

Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change (Chapter 14) – seeks that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure. (Paragraph 187).

Manchester's Local Development Framework: Core Strategy

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.

There are a number of relevant policies within the adopted Core Strategy relevant to the consideration of the current application in summary these are set out below. Policies SP1 (Spatial Principles) , EC1 (Employment and Economic Growth in Manchester), EC2(Existing Employment Space), EC5 (East Manchester), T2(Accessible Areas of Opportunity and Need) , EN3 (Heritage), EN 14(Flood Risk) , EN15 (Biodiversity and Geological Conservation), EN18 (Contaminated Land and Ground Stability), EN19 (Waste) and DM1 (Development Management).

Saved Policies within the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester (1995)

The UDP is contained within the City Council's Local Development Scheme as a 'saved' document. The policy that is of relevance to this proposal is Policy DC26 (Noise).

However, saved Policy AB9 relates to land to the west of Preston Street (which lies directly to the west of the application site) is allocated for economic development, specifically focused on industrial uses.

Issues

Principle

The site is situated in a predominantly commercial/industrial area to the north of Gorton Lane in Gorton. The application site comprises an existing Council depot site. The proposed development would involve the retention of 9 x 2m high stainless steel air rods with associated roof fixing brackets, which have been installed to the roof ridge of the former loco shed, which faces into the site. The retention of the air rods is considered to be acceptable in principle for the reasons set out in the report below

Need for lightning protection

The former Loco Shed building has been recently refurbished as part of the ongoing depot redevelopment works and accommodates several City Council departments and operational facilities. The large expanse of available roof space on the former Loco Shed has enabled the area to be utilized for the provision of PV panels in conjunction with reducing carbon emissions at the site.

The installation of photovoltaic (PV) panels to the roof was approved as part of planning application ref: 138157/VO/2023 on 2nd November 2023 with installation taking place early 2024. However, the upgrade required to the existing lightning protection system was not included in this application, but has been installed on the building to protect the PV panels and building from the risk of damage resulting from lightning strikes. Consent is sought to retain the installation of the upgraded lightning protection system.

The planning agent has advised in the information supporting this application, that a lightning strike risk assessment was undertaken based on a simulation of a lightning strike via a rolling sphere method which highlighted the possibility of a strike hitting the Loco Shed building. The assessment confirmed the PV on the higher roof of Shed A would receive a direct strike. Therefore, to protect the PV panels, an upgrade to the existing lightning protection system was required consisting of roof mounted air rods to safely divert the strikes away from the PV panels. The existing lightning protection system installed as part of the Loco Shed re-roofing works prior to the PV panels being added was designed to only protect the roof from strikes, with the introduction of the PV panels the extra layer of protection provided by the air rods was required.

Design /siting

Supporting information confirms that the original design for the installation of the additional lightning protection measures was reviewed, and the extent / height of the rods was reduced by utilizing the roof access system handrails as a conductor and adapting a rolling sphere design concept. The minimum height of the air rods has been established at 2m, and the minimum number of air rods have been installed.

The positioning of the air rods has been dictated by compliance with the British Standards. The air rods need to be located at the highest point of the building to be effective and provide the required protection. The highest point on the Loco Shed is the ridge line to Shed A which runs parallel to the proposed depot hard standing areas used for the parking of staff and commercial vehicles. The air rods are spaced at equal intervals along the ridge in line with the standards.

Finish / colouration

The issue of colouration of the air rods was raised with the planning agent. They have advised that the air rods can't be insulated or painted due to the high voltage current they will receive from a lightning strike. Furthermore, that they need to be exposed to reduce the risk of sparking / fire which could occur with any additional finishes.

Radio Interference

The planning agent has confirmed that the air rods will not interact with radio transmitters as they are not actively omitting energy. They remain isolated from the surrounding metal work until which time a lightning strike is intercepted.

Heritage

The site does not contain any statutory listed buildings, it is not within a Conservation Area, and it is not within a World Heritage Site. However, the loco shed is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset.

Paragraph 210 of the NPPF states that the following should be taken into account when determining applications that affect heritage assets:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation.

The proposed works to the non-designated heritage asset are considered to cause the lower end of less than substantial harm to the character of the locomotive shed, would provide a safeguard to the building from lightning strikes

- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality;

By allowing the retention of the installed air rods to the non-designated heritage asset this will contribute safeguarding the on-going occupation of the premises.

- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

The proposed development is considered to be in keeping with the character of the locomotive shed and would not detract from the character and distinctiveness of the building.

Paragraph 216 of the NPPF states, the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly and indirectly affect non designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

As stated above, it is considered that the proposed works would have less than substantial harm on the character of the non-designated heritage asset. The benefits of the scheme are considered to outweigh any limited harm. The retention of the proposed lightning protection measures to the main locomotive shed are considered to be acceptable on the basis of the submitted materials and design.

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 policies 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 worked with the applicant / agent in a positive and proactive manner to guide the application through all stages of the planning process and resolve any issues that arose in dealing with the planning application. Following the resolution of matters relating to the height and colouration of the air rods, there were no other issues to raise with the agent and the appropriate conditions have been attached.

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

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

Lightning Rod Retention Planning Application – Planning Statement ref: 18021_04_1_3 dated 10th December 2024

Electrical Service- Main Depot Lightning Protection Air Rod Layout HRD-ABE-01-00-DR-E-6903-C01

Lightning Protection Application site location plan ref: HRD-FRA-00-XX-DR-A-91--0006-C01

Lightning Protection System plan ref: M1009764-01 rev. OR

East Elevation - Lightning Protection plan ref: HRD-FRA-01-EL-DR-A-20-1216-C01

North & South Elevations - Lightning Protection plan ref: HRD-FRA-01-EL-DR-A-20-1217-C01

West Elevation - Lightning Protection plan ref: HRD-FRA-01-EL-DR-A-20-1218-C01

Received 2nd January 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 (2012).

Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified

Network Rail

Hammerstone Road Depot, Hammerstone Road, Manchester, M18 8EQ
MAC Processing Ltd, Unit 2, Excel Centre, Preston Street, Manchester, M18 8DB
New Adventures Ltd, 10 Preston Street, Manchester, M18 8DB
Mobile Library Service Units, Hammerstone Road Depot, Hammerstone Road, Manchester, M18 8EQ
B4 GM Waste, Hammerstone Road Depot, Hammerstone Road, Manchester, M18 8EQ
B2 Factory Workshops, Hammerstone Road Depot, Hammerstone Road, Manchester, M18 8EQ
BAG MAGIC UK LTD, Unit 1A, Excel Centre, Preston Street, Manchester, M18 8DB
Unit 4, Excel Centre, Preston Street, Manchester, M18 8DB
AST EXPRESS LIMITED, Unit 3, Excel Centre, Preston Street, Manchester, M18 8DB
Unit 4C, Excel Centre, Preston Street, Manchester, M18 8DB
Unit 4B, Excel Centre, Preston Street, Manchester, M18 8DB
Unit 4A, Excel Centre, Preston Street, Manchester, M18 8DB
Unit 1C, Excel Centre, Preston Street, Manchester, M18 8DB
Unit 1B, Excel Centre, Preston Street, Manchester, M18 8DB
Unit B, Delta Industrial Estate, Preston Street, Manchester, M18 8DB
Unit A, Delta Industrial Estate, Preston Street, Manchester, M18 8DB
247B Gorton Lane, Manchester, M18 8DA
Security Cabin, Hammerstone Road Depot, Hammerstone Road, Manchester, M18 8EQ
Hales Waste Control Ltd, Preston Street, Manchester, M18 8DB
R M C (north West) Ltd, Preston Street, Manchester, M18 8DB
Delta Industrial Estate, Preston Street, Manchester, M18 8DB
247 - 249 Gorton Lane, Manchester, M18 8DA
247A Gorton Lane, Manchester, M18 8DA
Taxi Maintenance House, Hammerstone Road Depot, Hammerstone Road, Manchester, M18 8EQ
Direct Works Department, Hammerstone Road, Manchester, M18 8EF

Appendix 2 – Planning constraints

Article 4 Direction - Multiple
Article 4 Direction - Removal Of PD Rights Change Of Use From Class C3 To Class C4
Aircraft Safeguarding Zone - Aircraft Safeguarding Zone - All Exceeding 90M
Coal Authority - Development Low Risk - Name: DEVELOPMENT_LOW_RISK_AREA
Flood Zones Type 2 (low to medium risk) -
Historic Landfill Site 250m Buffer -
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Middle) -
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (More) -
Area Team Boundary - Name: NORTH AREA