

Manchester City Council
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27 November 2024

Our Ref: 40375

Dear Sir / Madam

Application for Prior Approval for Demolition – Alpha House, Rowlandsway, Wythenshawe

On behalf of our client, Wythenshawe Community Housing Group Limited, we are pleased to submit an application for prior approval for demolition at Alpha House, Rowlandsway in Wythenshawe. This application is made under Schedule 2, Part 11, Class B of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended) (the “GPDO”).

The site is located adjacent to Wythenshawe Civic Centre, albeit separated by Rowlandsway to the west and is bound by Wavell Road to the north and east and a vacant building formerly occupied by Buzz Bingo to the south. The site measures approximately 0.36 hectares and is occupied by Alpha House, an 8-storey structure which is connected via cantilever link to Centron House to the north.

The site is within Flood Zone 1, not at risk of surface water flooding, not located close to any heritage assets and does not contain, or is not adjacent to any protected trees.

The Application

This application seeks confirmation as to whether prior approval for the demolition of Alpha House is required. The application was submitted via the Planning Portal on 26 November 2024 (Ref. PP-13584483) and in addition to this letter, the application comprises:

- Application Forms;
- Site Location Plan (Ref: 3995A-LB-XX-XX-D-A-110000 Rev P01);
- Existing Site Plan (Ref: 3995A-LB-XX-XX-D-A-110001 Rev P01);
- Construction Phase Plan, prepared by Connell Brothers Demolition;
- Outline Demolition Methodology, prepared by Connell Brothers Demolition;
- Preliminary Roost Assessment, prepared by E3P;
- Nocturnal Bat Survey Report, prepared by E3P;
- Tree Survey, prepared by Mulberry;
- Site Notice Statement.

The Proposed Demolition

The demolition is scheduled to take place in advance of the submission of a full planning application for the site’s redevelopment for residential purposes as discussed with planning officers at Manchester City Council.

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Alpha House is currently vacant and is in a poor condition and has and continues to attract anti-social behaviour, the effects of which have the potential to cause injury to those breaking and entering the property. Despite the building's impending redevelopment (subject to the necessary consents), WCHG is currently liable for charges relating to insurance, energy and security which is unsustainable for an organisation which specialises in the provision of safe and secure affordable housing for vulnerable people.

It is therefore in the best interests of WCHG, the local community and the Council, that the building is demolished and the site made safe and secure as soon as possible.

On completion of the demolition the site will be levelled off to match surrounding levels with imported hardcore as required. The existing sub-station will remain with temporary housing (details to be confirmed by ENW), along with those trees not listed within this letter, which have been identified as being retained.

The current Heras fencing will be put back in place with appropriate CCTV to secure the site.

The Relevant Legislation

Schedule 2, Part 11, Class B, 'Demolition of Buildings' of the GPDO states that confirmation as to whether prior approval is required should be sought from the local planning authority (LPA) before the development is carried out. Should prior approval then be required, this should also be given by the LPA before the development is carried out.

It is considered that the development meets the criteria permitted by Schedule 2, Part 11, Class B of the GPDO for the following reasons:

1. The building has not been deemed unsafe or otherwise uninhabitable by the action or inaction of any person having an interest in the land on which the buildings and it is not practicable to secure safety or health by works of repair or works for affording temporary support.
2. The building to be demolished is not listed or within the curtilage of a listed building, nor is it located within a conservation area.
3. The building is not used, or was not last used as a 'drinking establishment' or 'drinking establishment with expanded food provision' as defined by the Use Classes Order.
4. The building is not used, or was not last used for the purpose of a concert hall, a venue for live music performance, or a theatre.
5. The demolition does not relate to a statue, memorial or monument.

The GPDO also states that development should then be carried out within 5 years from the date of approval, or in any other case, the date the information is received by the relevant authority, in this case Manchester City Council.

An application to establish whether prior approval is required must be accompanied by a statement that a notice has been posted to advertise the application. A copy of this notice is supplied at Appendix A and this will be displayed on or near the site for a period of at least 21 days.

Key Considerations

The key considerations relating to this application comprise:

- **Bats:** A Preliminary Roost Assessment was undertaken by E3P in August 2024 which confirmed that Alpha House has moderate bat roosting potential, due to multiple access points leading to multiple crevices on each floor. The building was deemed as being unsuitable for high-value roosts due to the building's fluctuating

temperatures and the lack of suitable available habitat within the area. Due to the building's moderate bat roosting potential, a Nocturnal Bat Survey Report was carried out in September 2024. This confirmed that Common Pipistrelles were identified utilising the site for commuting and foraging with occasional Soprano Pipistrelle and Noctule also identified commuting. No bats however were observed emerging from the building and no bats were observed within proximity to any potential roost features. Therefore no further surveys are considered necessary for the proposed works to proceed.

- **Birds:** The Preliminary Roost Assessment confirmed that the building has nesting bird value, as feral pigeons occupy most floors. It is likely that due to the number of pigeons within the building, there is unlikely to be an absence of active nests within the March to September (inclusive) nesting season. It is therefore recommended that demolition takes place within the winter months (October to February inclusive). At any time of year, a nesting bird check will be required by a suitably qualified ecologist up to 24 hours before works commence. Should any nests be located a suitable stand off distance should be maintained until the young have fledged.
- **Trees:** A Tree Survey has been undertaken by Mulberry to assess the quality of trees currently standing on site. None of the trees are protected; and all are categorised as quality B2 or C2. The demolition will include the removal of trees all category C2 trees (T2, T3, T6, T7, G1 and G2) to facilitate development in the future. Other trees will be suitably protected.

Conclusion

WCHG hereby applies to Manchester City Council for a determination as to whether the proposed demolition of Alpha House requires prior approval. The site is subject to redevelopment plans, however in the intervening period between the current time and the site's redevelopment, the retention of the building will lead to unsafe conditions, increased anti-social behaviour and increased cost for the site owner. It is therefore of importance that the building can be demolished and the site made secure.

The relevant protected species surveys have been undertaken by specialists and mitigation measures set out. Construction and demolition methodologies have been provided which demonstrate that demolition can take place with regard to the site's surroundings and the amenity of nearby receptors.

I trust that the information enclosed is sufficient for the Council to be able to reach a determination within the statutory 28 day period, however should further information be required please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully



Jack Dickinson
Associate
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