

Our Ref: 2024.019

Your Ref:

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10 December 2024

Dear Sir / Madam,

RE: Muscle Manor, 393 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 4WA
Retrospective Planning Application: Erection of a functional training tent (Use Class E) to the rear of the main gym building at 393 Wilmslow Road, M20 4WA

On behalf of our client, Mr Zackeria Jooyandeh, please find enclosed an application for retrospective planning permission to regularise the erection of a functional training tent (Use Class E) to the rear of the main gym building at 393 Wilmslow Road.

The application has been submitted electronically on the Planning Portal (reference: **PP-13593900**), and the application fee has been paid. The full submission comprises:

- Application form;
- This supporting covering letter;
- Planning, Design and Access Statement by NADA Architects Limited
- Drawings by Nada Architects Limited
 - Existing and Proposed GA Site Plan (drawing reference (01)001 PL3)
 - Proposed GA Floor Plan (drawing reference (04)001 PL0)
- Noise Impact Assessment
- Waste Management Strategy Proforma

Introduction

Muscle Manor is a vibrant, popular and highly regarded fitness facility located at 393 Wilmslow Road. Since its opening in November 2023 the gym has become a cornerstone of the local community, offering a comprehensive range of fitness and training options to its growing membership base. Known for its welcoming atmosphere and state-of-the-art equipment, Muscle Manor caters to fitness enthusiasts of all levels.

The facility also features a multi-functional training tent to the rear of the premises, providing additional gym space offering a wider range of exercise and training methods for its members.

As well as providing additional gym space, the functional training tent has enabled the existing gym business to diversify and expand, attracting high-profile sport related businesses who have held events and photoshoots within the tent, solidifying its reputation as a dynamic and versatile fitness hub.

Planning History

In July 1995 planning permission (ref 047526/FO/SOUTH/95) was granted for alterations, extensions, and a change of use at 393 Wilmslow Road, from a nursing home to a hotel with an associated restaurant and bar. This permission was implemented and for several years the property operated as a hotel, restaurant and bar. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic operations ceased and the bar and restaurant functions were discontinued. In November 2023 the premises reopened as a commercial gymnasium trading as Muscle Manor.

Since its opening the gymnasium has become a highly popular fitness facility within the local community, offering a comprehensive range of training options to its growing membership base. To meet the diverse needs of its members, optimise training spaces and align with customer expectations, the gymnasium expanded its operations into the rear external areas of the site, creating a multi-functional training tent.

Manchester City Councils (MCC) enforcement team has been notified that the external tent does not currently benefit from a planning permission and following a site visit, requested an application is submitted to regularise the position. In response, this retrospective application is submitted to regularise the external tent, which has been a key addition to the gymnasium's operations.

MCC has also indicated that the main building, currently in use as a gym, is operating under a mixed-use consent comprising Class C1 Hotels and Class E Commercial, Business and Service uses. To regularise the position and ensure the gym use is operating lawfully, MCC has requested a change of use is submitted to the Council seeking a change from hotel and bar / restaurant use (Classes C1/E) to gymnasium (Class E) use.

In July 2024 a planning application (ref 140666/FO/2024) was submitted to MCC seeking the 'change of use from Class C1 (Hotel) & Class E (Commercial, Business & Service) to Class E (Gym), and retrospective erection of functional training tent to rear of main gym building'. However, the application was determined invalid due to the exclusion of a noise assessment, biodiversity net gain assessment and waste management plan.

Following the above a separate change of use application (LPA ref: 140666/FO/2024) has now been submitted aiming to secure Class E gym use within the main building.

To avoid any delays in formalising the change of use, the functional training tent is now applied for separately through this planning application.

Proposed Development

This application comprises the (retrospective) erection of an external training tent situated at the rear of the main gym building, within the former beer garden area at 393 Wilmslow Road, Fallowfield.

The external tent has a Gross Internal Area (GIA) of 181 sqm, measuring approximately 18 metres in length and 9.9 metres in width. Its height, from the base to the highest point, is 5.1 metres. The external tent is constructed from a steel frame with a heavy-duty PVC covering finished in a dark green colour.

The hours of operation for the tent are the same as the existing gym within the main building. The opening hours are proposed as follows:

5.00am-11pm – Monday to Friday

8.00am-10pm – Saturday

8am-6pm – Sunday and Bank Holidays

The Development Plan

Section 38(6) of the Planning Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Relevant planning policies and guidance include:

Planning Policies and Guidance	Policies
Places for Everyone (PfE)	Policies JP-P1 1 (Sustainable Places); JP-P7 (Sport and Recreation); JP-C8 (Transport Requirements of New Development)
MCC Core Strategy (CS)	Policies C6 (South Manchester District Centres); DM1 (Development Management); T1 (Sustainable Transport); T2 (Accessible areas of opportunity and need); EN 19 (Waste)
Saved MCC Unitary Development Plan	Policy DC26 (Development and Noise)
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023	Chapter 6 (Building a strong, competitive economy)
MCC Design Guide	
Greater Manchester Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2024-2029	

Planning Considerations

The main planning considerations are:

1. Principle of Development
2. Siting, Design, Scale and Massing
3. Noise
4. Transport
5. Waste Management

Principle of Development

The functional training tent is sited on an underutilised beer garden / existing hardstanding, a remnant of the building's former use as a restaurant / bar. **Paragraph 89** of the NPPF, PfE **Policy JP-P1** and CS **Policy SP1** encourage developments to make effective use of previously developed land in accessible locations.

Paragraph 85 of the NPPF sets out that planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity taking account of both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.

The addition of the functional training tent to the rear of the existing gym premises allows the Muscle Manor business to expand and diversify its offer, providing additional equipment and unique training space at the premises, which in turn has attracted additional members from the surrounding local community.

Since opening in November 2023, the business has grown from 8 employees to 14 full-time and part-time employees, a result of the increasing membership numbers attracted by the additional gym space and the variety in training options available at the facility.

CS Paragraph 10.42 sets out that there is a large resident population living in Fallowfield but there is limited community provision. **CS Policy C6** further indicates that within Fallowfield and Withington development which creates more diverse centres will be supported.

The addition of the external tent has transformed the gym from a traditional fitness facility to a leading-edge hybrid performance and wellness centre. The tent offers unique training programmes such as calisthenics, CrossFit, Hyrox which are not common in other gyms. These activities require ample open space for running and circuit-based movement, making the tent an ideal setting, as such layouts are impractical within the main gym building.

In view of the above, the gym also aims to serve as a community hub, with classes specifically addressing mental health through fitness, directly supporting the Greater Manchester Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2024-2029 by providing accessible spaces for physical activity to reduce health inequalities.

Beyond fitness benefits, the tent has attracted high-profile brands like BoohooMan Active and Gymshark for daytime photoshoots and events. These companies have partnered with the gym for multiple photoshoots within the tent and continue to use the tent as part of their campaigns, cementing the gym's reputation as a prime fitness and content creation venue.

Overall, the proposed development makes best use of underutilised brownfield land in a highly accessible location; allows the business to expand and grow in an established mixed-use area; and further establishes Muscle Manor as a community facility and community hub serving the surrounding population.

Design, Siting, Scale and Massing

PfE Policy JP-P1 1(c) states that development should respect and acknowledge the character and identity of the locality in terms of design, siting, size, scale and materials.

CS Policy DM1 states that all development should have regard to the following specific issues, including:

- Appropriate siting, layout, scale, form, massing, materials and detail.
- Impact on the surrounding areas in terms of the design, scale and appearance of the proposed development.
- Effects on amenity, including privacy, light, noise, vibration, air quality, odours, litter, vermin, birds, road safety and traffic generation.

The functional training tent comprises a steel frame with a heavy-duty PVC covering finished in a dark green colour. The tent's design is simple and functional, and its neutral colour palette ensures visual coherence with the site and surrounding environment. The heavy-duty PVC is a durable and weather-resistant material guaranteeing a well-maintained appearance throughout the tent's lifespan.

The functional training tent is sited on underutilised land in the rear yard area of 393 Wilmslow Road within its former beer garden area. The plot is well contained by existing buildings and therefore views of the tent are limited beyond its immediate built surroundings.



Figure 1 Limited views of the external tent from Brook Road

Within the immediate confines, the roof of the tent is visible from the first-floor rear bedroom window of no.2 Brook Road and partially from rear windows associated with the former hotel building fronting Mitford Road.

While visible from the upper floor bedroom window of no.2 Brook Road, the tent is erected beyond the adjoining property's rear garden area and set back within the confines of the Muscle Manor site. The separation distance, alongside the tent's scale and height (consisting of a maximum ridge height of 5.1metres and eaves height of 2.89 metres) will ensure no overshadowing or any loss of daylight / sunlight for the rear bedroom of no.2 Brook Road. Further, the functional tent does not include any windows which outlook onto surrounding premises, ensuring privacy of those surrounding residents is maintained.

Outlook for residents of no.2 Brook Road will also be improved following the reuse of a dilapidated and untidy beer garden area and its replacement with a clean, functional, and visually cohesive structure. Its neutral design and scale ensure it integrates into its surroundings without causing undue visual intrusion.

Views of the tent from the rear windows of the former annex building (now in use as short term residential accommodation for single homeless people) will also be limited and partially screened by mature tree cover at the boundaries of the Muscle Manor rear garden area.

In addition, the tent does not exceed the height of existing structures within the rear garden area of 393 Wilmslow Road (including the main gym building and the now obsolete bridge linking the former hotel buildings) and will not therefore appear over-dominant or incongruous within the site confines.

It is worth noting that planning permission was granted on 24th May 2001 (ref. 061306/FO/SOUTH1/01) for the construction of a two-storey detached dwelling in the rear garden of 395 Wilmslow Road, known as The Coach House, which immediately adjoins the application site. More recently, planning permission (ref. 132967/FH/2022) was granted on 10th June 2022, for the erection of side and rear extensions at The Coach House. The Council determined that this backland development would not result in significant harm to neighbouring amenity especially in terms of overbearing impacts, loss of privacy and overlooking. As the proposed external tent is considerably smaller in scale and massing and does not include windows for outlook compared to the approved two-storey dwellinghouse and extensions, it is considered that the tent will not result in harm to neighbouring amenities.

Overall, it is considered the siting, scale and height of the external tent does not result in any visual harm or adverse impact on the amenities of nearby residents. The tent's neutral design and siting within a well-contained rear yard area minimises visibility, while its scale and massing does not result in overshadowing or an over-dominant feature. Additionally, the absence of windows on the tent prevents overlooking to and from neighbouring properties, preserving privacy. As such, it is considered the development respects the character of the area and safeguards the amenities of its neighbours in accordance with PfE **Policy JP-P1 1(c)** and CS **Policy DM1**.

Noise

Saved UDP **Policy DC26** requires consideration of the likely generation of noise attributed to new development. It also identifies the associated need to manage the potential impact of noise through the implementation of any identified attenuation methods.

PfE **Policy JP-P7** states that recreational facilities should be located and designed to ensure that they are accessible but also minimise the potential for complaints due to disturbance to residential amenity from recreational activity.

A Noise Impact Assessment supports the planning application. The accompanying noise survey was carried out to determine the noise levels from within the gym and the functional training tent during three time periods: 05:00am - 07:00am; 07:00am – 19:00pm; and 19:00pm – 23:00pm from 6th September 2024 over a period of 36 hours.

The resulting assessment confirms there was no noticeable noise breakout from the functional training tent area at the monitoring location during these time periods, although the report recommends no amplified music should be permitted.

The tent does not utilise a central speaker system for music; users are encouraged to use earphones for personal listening only. Occasionally, individuals may bring small portable speakers, but the noise levels remain minimal and without causing disturbance to neighbouring residents at 2 Brook Road.

Additionally, the tent does not house weight machines or equipment prone to creating loud clanking or mechanical sounds. Activities focus on quieter, low-impact fitness programmes such as Hyrox, bodyweight exercises and indoor cycling exercise bikes. The tent also features rubber flooring effectively dampening sound from any movement or activity. This eliminates noise from any equipment use, ensuring the operations internally remain quiet and unobtrusive.

Given the findings of the noise assessment and applying its recommendation (do not play amplified music from the tent), the use of the training tent for gym purposes will not result in adverse noise impact for neighbouring residents in accordance with PfE **Policy JP-P7** and Saved UDP **Policy DC26**.

Transport

PfE **Policy JP-C8** requires all development to be located and designed to enable and encourage walking, cycling and public transport and to reduce the negative effects of car dependency.

CS **Policy T1** states the Council will ensure that new developments are easily accessible by walking, cycling and public transport, connecting residents to jobs, centres, health, leisure, open space and educational opportunities. CS **Policy T2** requires that appropriate car parking and cycle storage is provided.

Muscle Manor is located off Wilmslow Road in Fallowfield. Wilmslow Road is a main arterial route to Manchester City Centre and is highly accessible via public transport services. There are several bus stops within easy walking distance of the site providing access to the local and wider area.

Muscle Manor provides 7 on-site parking spaces for use by members; however, members are encouraged to walk, cycle or use public transport to access its facilities. An assessment was conducted at the gym to assess how users travel to the gym and the report confirmed that 80% of users arrive by foot. The gym includes circa 20 cycle parking spaces at the front of the main gym building to encourage active travel to and from the site.

As the majority of gym users walk to the facility, no changes are proposed to the existing car or cycle parking provisions. The current provision is considered sufficient to meet the needs of the gym and its users, in line with **CS Policy T2**. Additionally, the site's sustainable location with easy access to public transport minimises reliance on private vehicles and promotes sustainable transport modes, aligning with **PfE Policy JP-C8** and **CS Policy T1**. In view of the above, the proposals will not result in additional traffic generation or on street car parking.

Waste Management

CS Policy EN19 of the Core Strategy states that the Council will encourage communities to take responsibility for the waste they create through the provision of accessible facilities.

Within GD04 Waste Storage and Collection Guidance for New Developments (v7) there is no facility for calculating the volume of capacity required for a gym. The gym itself generates relatively small amounts of waste from the gym use and small office serving the gym.

A Waste Management Strategy has been submitted with this application, outlining the provision of internal bin stores. The main gym areas will have recycling bins and general waste bins with a general waste bin in the toilets. The office will have separate bins for general waste and mixed recycling.

External bin stores are provided next to the entrance gate to the car park. The bin storage area will be 3.2m wide and 1.2m deep and will not be visible from the road. The design allows for easy, horizontal removal of containers over smooth, continuous surfaces. The designated waste collection point on Wilmslow Road is shown on Plan A of the Waste Management Strategy. Gym staff will transport the bins to the collection point and return them to the storage area once emptied. This approach complies with **CS Policy EN19**.

Summary

This retrospective planning application seeks to regularise the external tent at Muscle Manor gym. The tent enhances the gym's ability to offer diverse fitness activities, benefiting the local community's health and well-being.

The tent's design is proportionate and well-integrated with the existing gym and improves the underutilised and unsightly rear yard. The development does not cause significant impacts to neighbouring amenity especially in terms of noise. The development aligns with local and national policies, supporting sustainable land use and promoting active lifestyles.

The proposal provides the following key benefits:

- Provision of a popular, high-quality fitness facility serving both fitness enthusiasts and high-profile fitness businesses
- Creation of new job opportunities, increasing total staff from 8 to 14, benefiting the local economy and community
- Effective redevelopment of underutilised brownfield land, transforming an unsightly area into a functional space
- Located in a sustainable location with easy accessibility via walking, cycling and public transport
- No adverse impacts on neighbouring amenity in terms of overlooking, overshadowing or any loss of daylight / sunlight
- Noise assessment confirms no significant impacts to neighbouring amenity in terms of noise, with recommendations to prevent any amplified music, further minimising any potential noise impacts

Therefore, the application is considered acceptable and in compliance with relevant planning frameworks.

We trust that the submitted information is sufficient to determine this planning application positively. We look forward to receiving confirmation of validation in due course. Should you require any further information or clarification then please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rob White', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rob White
Director

For and on behalf of White Peak Planning Ltd.