

Planning Statement

**NEPHRA Allotments,
Northfield Road, New Moston**



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Revision Record					
Rev	Description	Date	Author	Checked	Approved
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1. Introduction

Purpose of Statement

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared to accompany a full planning application for the siting of a modular building within the grounds of the NEPHRA allotment and community garden at Northfield Road, New Moston.
- 1.2 The application is submitted on behalf of NEPHRA Good Neighbours, a volunteer-based community service based in New Moston, who provide services to the local community with the aim of reducing isolation and loneliness. They run a variety of events, such as lunch clubs, coffee mornings and crafting sessions, as well as yoga sessions, iPad classes and social walks.
- 1.3 In November 2023 NEPHRA Good Neighbours were awarded The King's Award for Voluntary Service, which is highest award a local voluntary group can receive in the UK and is equivalent to an MBE.
- 1.4 This statement will assess the proposed development in the context of the adopted Development Plan and any material considerations that are deemed relevant to the determination of the application, including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Structure of Statement

- 1.1 This Planning Statement is structured as follows:
 - **Section 2** analyses the context of the site.
 - **Section 3** describes the development proposals.
 - **Section 4** sets out the relevant planning policy context.
 - **Section 5** assesses the key planning issues and considerations relating to the proposals.
 - **Section 6** draws conclusions on the overall finding of the statement.

2. Site Context

- 2.1 The application site is an existing allotment and community garden site located at Northfield Road, New Moston. The site is ran by NEPHRA Good Neighbours, who are a registered charity organisation. They run a varied weekly timetable of classes and events, such as Stitch and Knit Group, Sign Language classes and iPad classes, along with a successful meals on wheels service, befriending scheme and lunch clubs.



Figure 2.1: Location Plan

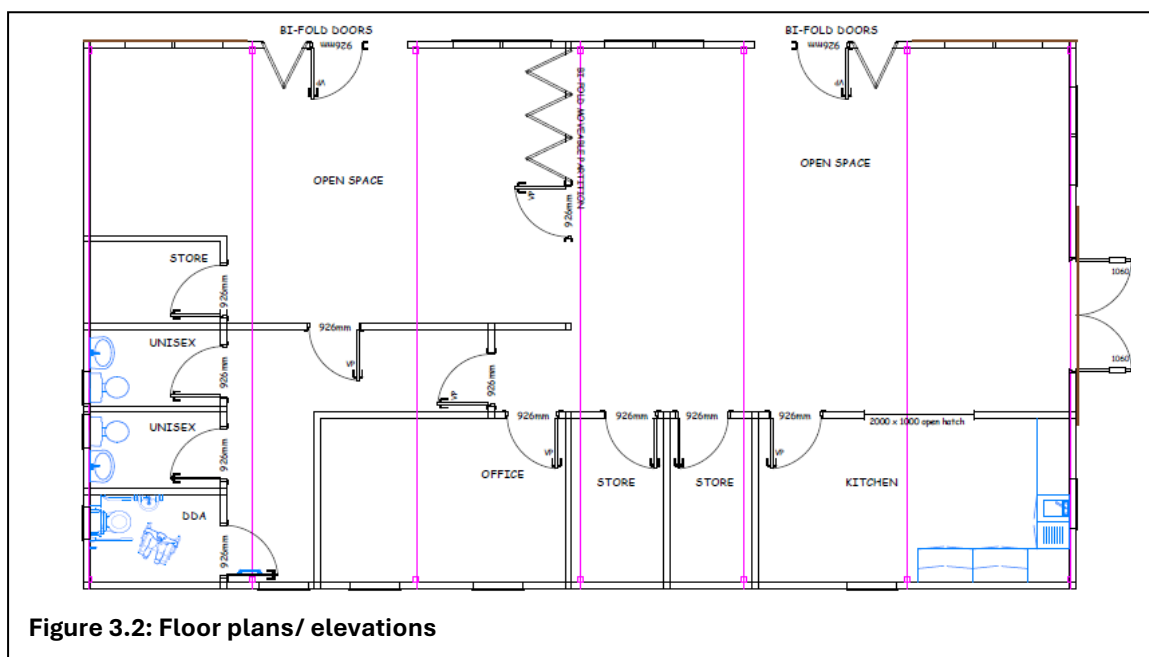
- 2.2 NEPHRA's headquarters are currently at 27 Parkfield Road North, around 300m to the south of the allotment site. However, the existing building (which is owned by Manchester City Council and leased to the charity) is in a poor state of repair, with high repair costs. It is therefore proposed to relocate the charity headquarters to the proposed modular building at their allotment site.
- 2.3 The surrounding area is predominately residential, with an apartment block adjacent to the site to the north.

Planning History

- 2.4 The site has been subject to the following planning applications:
- LPA Ref: 106648/VO/2014/N1 - Erection of new steel container to act as site hut for existing allotments and new detached building to form green toilet facility – Approved October 2014; and
 - LPA Ref: 053793/VO/NORTH1/98 – Erection of 2.4 metre high fencing – Approved March 1998

3. Development Proposals

- 3.1 The development proposals relate to the siting of a modular building to be located within the allotment/community garden. The building will serve as the new headquarters for NEPHRA Good Neighbours, a local charity, whose existing premises is no longer considered fit for purpose, owing to high repair costs of the existing building. The building will therefore serve as an important local community facility.
- 3.2 It is proposed that the new community building will operate on a like for like basis as the existing operation, which comprises of a weekly timetable of classes, a weekly luncheon club and meals on wheels service, as well as other events such as film afternoons, crafting sessions and coffee mornings. The majority of their patrons are from the local area.
- 3.3 The proposed modular building will be sited along the Northfield Road boundary of the community garden and will be set back from the boundary. The building has been carefully sited to avoid disruption to the existing operations at the site and is partially located on existing hardstanding. The hardstanding will be extended around the building to provide an outdoor seating area. There is an existing storage shed and compost toilet which will be removed as part of the proposals. The existing access from Northfield Road will be unaffected by the proposals. Planting is proposed along the boundary with Northfield Road and to the boundary with the adjacent block of flats, which will help screen the development and provide biodiversity net gain benefits.
- 3.4 The proposed community building will comprise of two community spaces, which can be opened out to create one large space, creating flexibility for the charity. There will also be an office, storerooms, kitchen area with serving hatch and toilet facilities.



- 3.5 In terms of its external appearance, the modular building will be clad in a mix of untreated red cedar and ivory plastisol to add interest to the building. There will be two sets out bi-fold doors which open into the allotment site, and a set of double doors (which will serve as the main entrance) on the site elevation closest to the existing access to the site.

- 3.6 The existing community centre at 27 Parkfield Road North (LPA Ref: 089946/FO/2009/N1) is permitted to be open from 8.30 to 21.30 Monday to Saturday and 10.00 to 16.00 on Sundays and Bank Holidays. As part of this application for a new community centre, the applicant is looking to extend these slightly to 8.00 to 22.00 Monday to Saturday and 10.00 to 17.00 on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

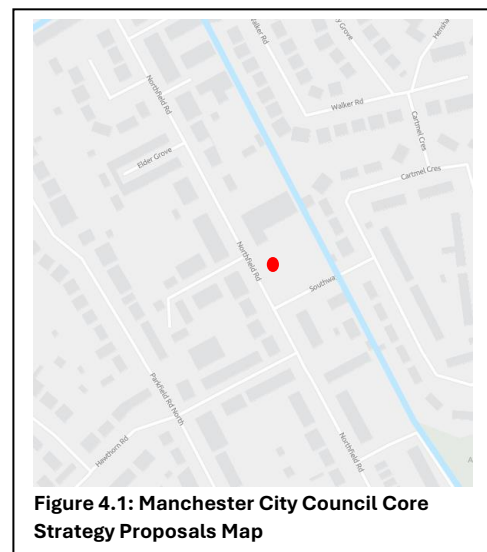
4. Planning Policy Context

The Adopted Development Plan

- 4.1 The adopted Development Plan for the area comprises of:
- The Places for Everyone Plan (adopted March 2024);
 - The Manchester Core Strategy (adopted July 2012); and
 - Saved policies from the Unitary Development Plan

- 4.2 As shown by Figure 4.1 (right) the site (broadly denoted by the red dot) is “white land” located within the Inner Area of Manchester, and also within the North Manchester Sub Area (not shown).

- 4.3 With the above in mind, the below development plan policies are considered relevant to the application proposals:



- Core Strategy Policy SP1 (Spatial Principles);
- Core Strategy Policy EC4 (North Manchester);
- Core Strategy Policy T1 (Sustainable Transport);
- Core Strategy Policy EN1 (Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas);
- Core Strategy Policy EN9 (Green Infrastructure)
- Core Strategy Policy EN10 (Safeguarding Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities);
- Core Strategy Policy EN15 (Biodiversity and Geological Conservation);
- Core Strategy Policy DM1 (Development Management); and
- Saved UDP Policy DC26 (Development and Noise)

Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.4 The revised version of the NPPF was published in December 2023 and sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they should be applied. The NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions.
- 4.5 The NPPF confirms that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and, in order to achieve this purpose, the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are independent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):
- a. **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;
 - b. **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
 - c. **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.
- 4.6 Paragraph 9 of the NPPF confirms that planning decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of an area.

4.7 At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and Paragraph 11 confirms that, for decision-taking, this means:

- Approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date Development Plan without delay; or
- Where there are no relevant Development Plan policies, or the policies that are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting planning permission unless:
 - the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
 - any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies of the Framework taken as a whole.

4.8 Paragraph 12 of the NPPF reiterates that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision-making. Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan (including any neighbourhood plans that form part of the development plan), permission should not usually be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed.

4.9 Paragraph 38 of the NPPF confirms that LPAs should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available and work proactively with applicants to secure development that will improve the social, environmental and economic conditions of the area. Decision makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development wherever possible.

4.10 Paragraph 96 sets out that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and beautiful places which promote social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other

– for example through mixed-use developments, strong neighbourhood centres, street layouts that allow for easy pedestrian and cycle connections within and between neighbourhoods, and active street frontages.

- 4.11 The relevant areas of the NPPF will be referred to throughout this Planning Statement, as appropriate.

5. Planning Assessment

5.1 Taking into account the development proposals, site context, the adopted Development Plan in force for the area and other material considerations, namely the NPPF, the key planning considerations in the assessment of the current application proposals are as follows:

- Principle of Development;
- Highways;
- Residential Amenity; and
- Design

Principle of Development

5.2 The application site relates to an existing community garden and allotment site which is ran by NEPHRA Good Neighbours, a locally based charity who run a variety of community workshops, day trips, coffee mornings and lunch clubs. Their existing headquarters operates as a community centre is located on Parkfield Road North, around 300m to the south of the application site. However, the existing building (which is owned by Manchester City Council and leased to the charity) is in a poor state of repair, with high repair costs. It is therefore proposed to relocate the charity headquarters to the proposed modular building at the allotment site.

5.3 The application site itself is not subject to any designations within the adopted Development Plan for the area. It is “white land” located within a residential area in the New Moston area of Manchester. Manchester Core Strategy Policy SP1 sets out that development in all parts of the City should make a positive contribution to neighbourhoods including creating well designed places that enhance or create character, as well as making a positive contribution to the health, safety and wellbeing of residents considering the needs of all members of the community.

5.4 Furthermore, paragraph 96 of the NPPF makes it clear that planning decisions should promote social interaction, including opportunities to meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other. One of the main aims of NEPHRA

is to combat loneliness and isolation and they run a befriending service alongside their luncheon club and weekly workshops, thereby encouraging those who might otherwise be socially isolated to meet. This is in line with one of the three overarching principles of the NPPF, as set out in paragraph 8 - to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being.

- 5.5 Whilst the application site is not allocated as Open Space by the adopted Development Plan, Core Strategy Policy EN10 is still considered to be relevant to the proposals. Policy EN10 sets out that the Council will seek to retain and improve existing open spaces, sport and recreation facilities and provide a network of diverse, multi-functional open spaces. The proposed modular building has been carefully sited within the site to have the lowest impact on greenspace; it is partially sited on existing hardstanding and will replace the existing storage shed and compost toilet on site. The existing allotments will not be impacted on by the proposals.
- 5.6 It is clear that NEPHRA provides a vital service to the local community, having recently been awarded The King's Award for Voluntary Service, which is highest award a local voluntary group can receive in the UK and is equivalent to an MBE, and as set out above, the existing building is in a poor state of repair and considered no longer fit for purpose. The relocation to the allotment site will allow them to continue to run their services for the local community and improve access to the allotment/community garden site.
- 5.7 It is considered that the relocation of the charity's headquarters to their allotment site is entirely appropriate. It will not introduce any additional uses in planning terms to the application site and ensures that the charity can remain in the heart of the community that it serves. It is therefore considered that the principle of development is supported by Core Strategy Policies SP1 and EN10. The proposals are also clearly supported by paragraphs 8 and 96 of the NPPF.

Highways Impact

- 5.8 Paragraph 115 makes it clear that development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety or the residual cumulative impact on the road network would be severe.

- 5.9 The existing charity headquarters is located at 27 Parkfield Road North, around 300m to the south of the application site. The existing community centre has no dedicated parking provision. Patrons and volunteers live within the local community and, as such, the majority of visitors to the site walk to the site, or are dropped off by taxi, with a small number opting to drive by private car and having to park on the surrounding residential streets. The proposals are simply seeking to relocate the existing community centre around 300m south to the allotment site. There are no changes expected relating to the timetable of events offered or the number of users to the community centre, which is an established use within this locality, and patrons are expected to continue to travel to the site in the same way as they currently do.
- 5.10 Given the short distance between the sites there will be no distinguishable difference in vehicle movements associated with the relocation of the community centre to the Northfield Road site. On this basis, it is evident that the proposals will not give rise to unacceptable impacts on the capacity or safe operation of the surrounding highway network. It is not therefore considered that there is any justifiable basis to withhold planning permission highway grounds in this context having regard to the relevant policies of the adopted Development Plan and guidance contained within the NPPF.

Residential Amenity

- 5.11 Core Strategy Policy DM1 sets out that development proposals should have regard to effects on amenity, including *inter alli* privacy, noise, and traffic generation. Saved UDP Policy DC26 also states that the Council intends to use the development control process to reduce the impact of noise on people living and working in the City. In particular, consideration will be given to the effect of new development proposals which are likely to be generators of noise.
- 5.12 The proposals are seeking to relocate an existing community centre to allotment site. The charity's existing community centre on Parkfield Road North is surrounded by residential properties and has been open since 2009. It is intended to operate the new community centre on a like for like basis, running a similar timetable and expecting a similar number of patrons. The existing community centre is permitted to be open from 8.30 to 21.30 Monday to Saturday and 10.00 to 16.00 on Sundays and Bank Holidays. As part of this application for a new community centre, the applicant is looking to extend these hours

slightly to 8.00 to 22.00 Monday to Saturday and 10.00 to 17.00 on Sundays and Bank Holidays, however, it is not considered that this will lead to an increase in noise and disturbance or traffic generation in the local area, given the nature of the use.

- 5.13 The building has also been carefully sited to not result in a loss of privacy, with the bi-fold doors opening into the allotment site. Whilst there will be some windows which face onto Northfield Road, these will serve the office and kitchen and will be around 18m away from the front elevation of the existing properties on Northfield Road, a separation distance which is typical for area. There will also planting along this boundary which will further screen any intervening views.
- 5.14 It is therefore considered that the proposals are suitable for a residential location and won't give rise to any unacceptable impacts on residential amenity in terms of noise or overlooking. The proposals will therefore accord with Core Strategy Policy DM1 and saved UDP Policy DC26.

Design

- 5.15 Paragraph 131 of the NPPF sets out that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Core Strategy Policy EN1 sets out that opportunities for good design to enhance the overall image of the City should be fully realised and characterise the city into 11 character areas. The application site is located in the Northern Character Area, which is described as:

'The character of this area is significantly affected by the topography, with a marked increase in height moving northwards, cut by the River Irk and its tributaries. There is a finer predominately residential mix of development, broken up by open spaces and significant tree cover also linked to the local topography. Developers should response to the underlying topography and varied townscape created by the balance between built for and tree-covered landscape.'

- 5.16 The proposed modular building will be a single storey building, and whilst it will be located on an area of existing open space, it is considered that its scale and design will ensure that it does not impact on the character of the area. The proposed material

palette is a mix of redwood cedar and ivory plastisol steel, which is entirely appropriate in this location, given the varied mix of materials in the locality.

- 5.17 The building will also be set back from the boundary of the site, in line with the adjacent apartment block at 66 Northfield Road, ensuring that the existing build line is maintained, and also providing opportunities for planting to the front of the building, softening its appearance. It is proposed to introduce some shrub planting along this boundary, as well as to the boundary with the adjacent apartment block. It is also proposed to introduce some additional tree planting within the wider site to ensure that a 10% biodiversity net gain can be achieved.
- 5.18 It is therefore considered that the proposals are a high-quality, well-designed form of development, which is entirely acceptable in this location in design terms would accord with paragraph 131 of the NPPF and Core Strategy Policy EN1.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared to accompany a full planning application for the siting of a modular building within the grounds of the NEPHRA allotment and community garden at Northfield Road, New Moston.
- 6.2 NEPHRA Good Neighbours are a volunteer-based community service based in New Moston, who provide services to the local community with the aim of reducing isolation and loneliness. They run a variety of events, such as lunch clubs, coffee mornings and crafting sessions, as well as yoga sessions, iPad classes and social walks.
- 6.3 It is clear that NEPHRA provides a vital service to the local community, having recently been awarded The King's Award for Voluntary Service, which is highest award a local voluntary group can receive in the UK and is equivalent to an MBE. The existing building is in a poor state of repair and considered no longer fit for purpose. The relocation to the allotment site will allow them to continue to run their services for the local community and improve access to the allotment/community garden site, and importantly, allow them to remain in the heart of the community that they serve.
- 6.4 It has been demonstrated through this Statement that the proposals are entirely appropriate in this location and there would not be any highway or amenity concerns arising from the proposed development.
- 6.5 We therefore respectfully request that the Council resolves to grant planning permission for this demonstrably positive and sustainable form of development, subject to any conditions that are deemed appropriate on this occasion.