

Planning Statement.

Retrospective change of use from industrial to place of worship and community centre

Dunamis International Gospel Centre, Unit 1A, New Street, Manchester, M40 8AW.

On behalf of Dunamis International Gospel Centre.

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Contents.

1.	Introduction.....	1
2.	Site, Proposals and Surrounding Area.....	2
	Site.....	2
	Planning History	4
	Surrounding Area	5
	Proposals	5
3.	Development Plan and Material Considerations.....	6
	Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan	6
	Core Strategy	7
	Saved Policies of the Unitary Development Plan	8
	National Planning Policy Framework	8
4.	Planning Appraisal.....	9
	Principle	9
	Residential Amenity	10
	Parking	10
5.	Conclusions.....	12

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared by Pegasus Group on behalf of Dunamis International Gospel Centre to support a full planning application for retrospective change of use of industrial units (Use Class B2) to place of worship and community centre (Use Class F1) at Unit 1A, New Street, Manchester, M40 8AW.
- 1.2. This Planning Statement is set out in the following sections:
 - **Section 2** provides a description of the site, its surroundings and the proposals;
 - **Section 3** identifies the relevant development plan policies and material considerations;
 - **Section 4** provides a planning appraisal of the development considering the relevant development plan policies and material considerations; and,
 - **Section 5** concludes the Planning Statement.
- 1.3. This Planning Statement should be read alongside the supporting drawings that have been submitted with the application including:
 - Location Plan
 - Ground and First Floor Plan – Existing
 - Ground and First Floor Plan – Proposed
 - Front Elevations – Existing
 - Rear Elevation – Existing
 - Left Side Elevation – Existing and Proposed
 - Section AA – Existing and Proposed
 - Acoustic Report

2. Site, Proposals and Surrounding Area

Site

- 2.1. The unit form part of a larger industrial building, formerly operated as Cohens Furniture Auctions. After Cohens vacated the building, it was subdivided into six units (Units 1 A to Unit 1F). Each of the units share a small service yard. The application site is referred to as Unit 1A.

Figure 2.1: View of Unit 1A looking North East



- 2.2. The unit is long and narrow and constructed from brick work with a corrugated cladding roof. The unit is set back from New Street behind two smaller units which front onto the road. Access into the unit is taken from New Road, via the front units and service area.

Figure 2.2: View of Unit 1A looking North West



- 2.3. The ground and first floor and of the unit have separate tenants. The ground floor in use as storage space. The existing staircase at the front of the unit leads to the first floor.

Figure 2.3: Ground Floor Unit 1A



- 2.4. The first floor in use by Dunamis International Gospel Centre. The main auditorium is a medium sized hall with dimensions of 27m by 10m by 3m. The first floor provides approximately 270sqm of floorspace.

Figure 2.4: First Floor Unit 1A



Planning History

2.5. The planning history relates to the wider building complex.

Application Reference	Address	Description	Decision
112433/FO/2016	Unit 1 Hillbit House New Street Manchester M40 8AW	Part retrospective application for the change of use of unit (Use Class B8) to plastic waste recycling unit (Use Class B2) together with the erection of a 3 metre high boundary wall to Oldham Road and New Street.	Refused and enforced 16 December 2016. Appeal dismissed.
106866/FO/2014/N1	Hillbit House New Street Miles Platting Manchester M40 8AW	Retrospective Application for the change of use of industrial unit (Use Class B8) to waste recycling for plastic (Sui Generis).	Refused and enforced 5 June 2015.
024466	Manchester Cabins Ltd., New Street, Miles Platting NEWTON HEATH	Elevational alterations to existing industrial building including roller shutter doors.	Approved 5 July 1985.
021332	Car park at the junction of New Street & Oldham Road, Miles Platting NEWTON HEATH	Use of land for the display of portable buildings	Withdrawn 2 April 1984.
F15613	Part of former Louis Edwards Complex, New Street, Miles Platting.	Use of part of factory for wholesale auction purposes.	Approved 1 July 1981.
F13875	Part of former meat manufacturing complex at New Street, Off Oldham Road, Miles Platting.	Change of use to a distribution warehouse.	Approved 22 July 1980.
F12882	New Street, Miles Platting.	Retention of incubation store and offices. (Previously given a limited approval under ref: F08645).	Approved 15 April 1980.
F08645	Meat Processing premises on New Street, Miles Platting.	Retention of single storey incubation store with offices on part first floor (Previously approved to 31.12.76 on 1.11.67 under ref. T.P. NO. 53100).	Approved 20 July 1978.

Surrounding Area

- 2.6. There are a mix of uses within the surrounding area, including a cultural events space to the south (Unit 1) and Hadfield's Transport Haulage Depot to the west on the opposite side of New Road. Beyond the commercial buildings to the south on New Street and Canada Street there are two-storey terraced properties which are occupied by military veterans.
- 2.7. The Site is in a very accessible location. It is accessed via New Street and lies approximately 160 metres south of Oldham Road (A62) which provides a key bus route to Manchester City Centre.
- 2.8. Central Park tram stop is located approximately 1km to the north east, around which there has been employment development in recent years including The Sharp Project, Greater Manchester Police Headquarters, Fujitsu offices etc.

Proposals

- 2.9. Retrospective permission is sought for the continued use of the unit as a place of worship and community centre (Use Class F1), together with associated elevational alterations.
- 2.10. The elevational alterations are limited and relate to the relocation of an access door on the left-hand side of the building, which will become a fire door. The existing door opening will be blocked-up with materials to match existing.
- 2.11. Internally, there is a proposed second staircase between ground and first floor, which would serve as a fire escape (to meet fire safety regulations) and a partition at ground floor which creates a corridor to the fire escape stair.
- 2.12. Worship services take place during the following hours:
- Wednesday: 6pm until 9pm; and,
 - Sunday: 9.30am until 12.30pm.
- 2.13. In addition, the centre also holds religious ceremonies, weddings, and other events.

3. Development Plan and Material Considerations

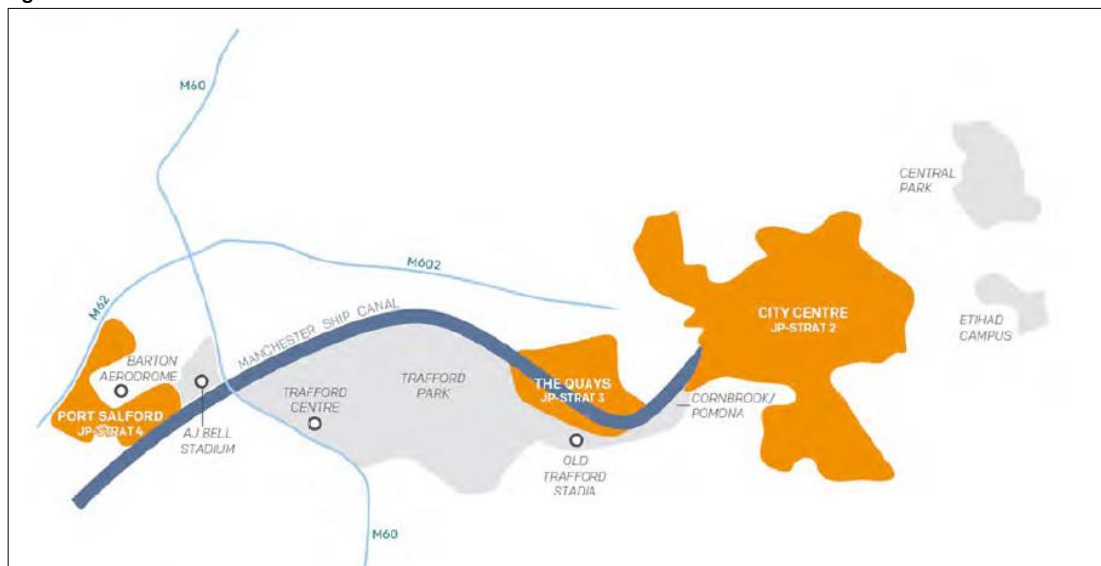
3.1. The development plan is the starting point for decision-making on planning applications. The adopted development plan comprises the:

- Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan, adopted March 2024;
- Core Strategy, adopted 2012 (CS); and,
- Saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan, adopted 1995 (UDP).

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan

3.2. The site falls within the broad Core Growth Area identified in the PFE Joint Development Plan. The Core Growth Area is an agglomeration of economic activity at the centre of Greater Manchester and a location for growth. The site is within Central Park.

Figure 3.1: Core Growth Area



Source: PFE Joint Development Plan (Figure 4.2)

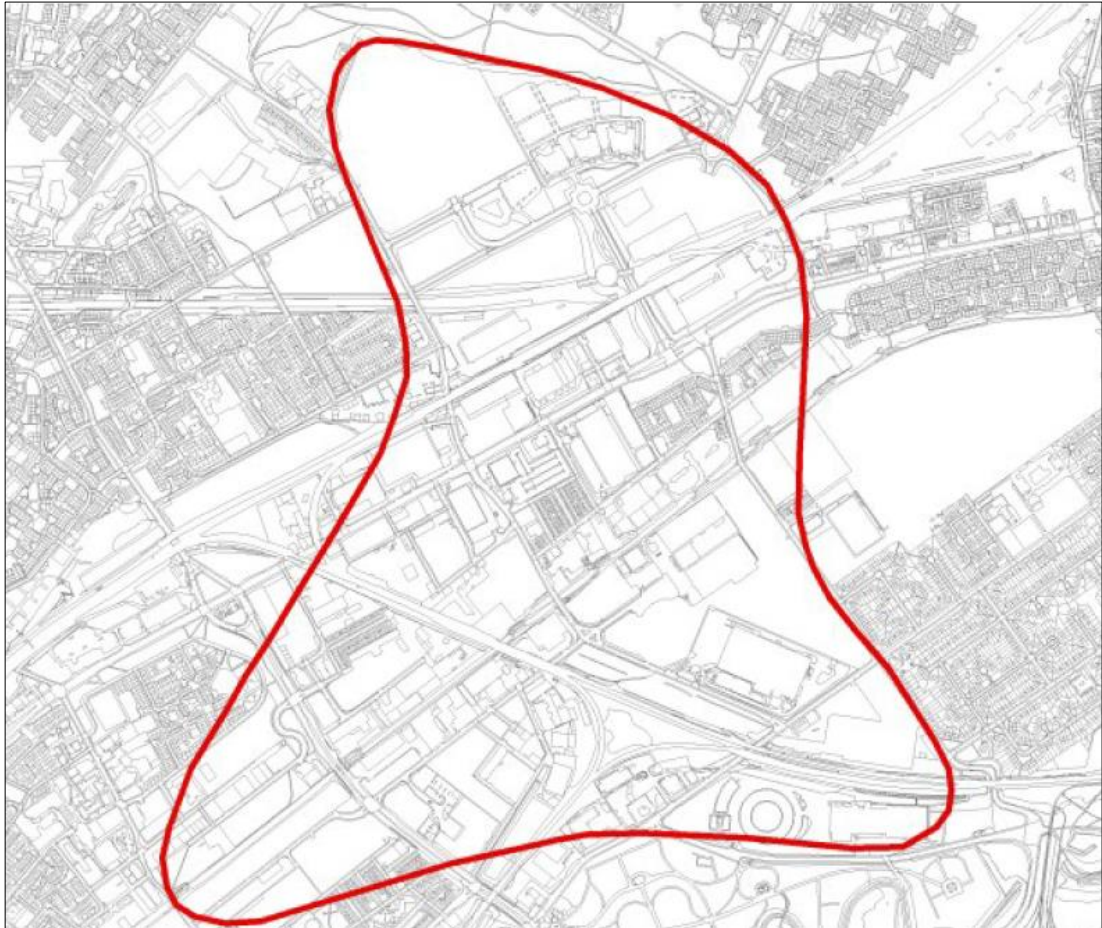
3.3. The relevant policies from the PFE Joint Development Plan are:

- **Policy JP-Strat1: Core Growth Area** – The economic role of the Core Growth Area will be protected and enhanced, with sustainable development supporting major growth in the number of jobs provided across the area providing opportunities to create jobs for local communities. Complementary to, but not at the expense of, its economic function it will see a significant increase in the number and range of homes in areas with good connections to employment, training and education facilities.
- **Policy JP-J2: Employment Sites and Premises** – Existing employment areas that are important to maintaining a strong and diverse supply of sites and will be protected from redevelopment to other uses, nurtured to ensure they remain competitive, and their accessibility improved where necessary. This will include local employment areas as well as key growth locations.

Core Strategy

- 3.4. The Proposals Map accompanying the CS shows the site within the Regional Centre and East Manchester. The site is also within the Central Park Strategic Employment Location as defined in the Core Strategy.

Figure 3.2: Central Park Strategic Employment Location



Source: Core Strategy (Figure 8.4)

- 3.5. Key relevant policies are:
- **SP1 Spatial Principles** – The Regional Centre will be the focus for economic and commercial development, retail, leisure and cultural activity, alongside high-quality city living.
 - **EC1 Employment and Economic Growth in Manchester** – Key locations for major employment growth includes Central Park.
 - **EC2 Existing Employment Space** – The Council will seek to retain and enhance existing employment space and sites. Alternative uses will only be supported on sites allocated accordingly, or if it can be demonstrated that:
 - The existing use is unviable in terms of business operations, building age and format; (our emphasis)

- The existing use is incompatible with adjacent uses;
 - The existing use is unsuitable for employment having had regard to the Manchester – Salford – Trafford SFRA; or
 - On balance, proposals are able to offer greater benefits in terms of the Core Strategy’s vision and spatial objectives than the existing use.
- **EC3 The Regional Centre** – Within the Regional Centre, development for employment generating uses including offices and other commercial development will be encouraged.
 - **EC5 East Manchester** – East Manchester is expected to provide approximately 80–85ha of employment land. The majority of this provision will be within the Regional Centre, including at Central Park (Use Class B1 and B2).
 - **EC6 Central Park Strategic Employment Location** – Central Park is a large scale employment location in East Manchester suitable for 60ha of employment uses (shown in Figure 3.2 above). A range of employment types will be encouraged across the whole of the Central Park area including Use Class B1 (b) and (c), B2, B8 and *sui generis* employment uses, with ancillary commercial services supporting the creation of a sustainable employment destination. The key sectors will be within creative and media and manufacturing.
 - **DM1 Development Management** – All development should have regard to the specific issues listed in the policy.

Saved Policies of the Unitary Development Plan

3.6. Relevant saved policies of the UDP are:

- **EM5 Central Park** – Within Central Park, development will be permitted which includes a high-quality business park comprising Use Classes B1, B2 and B8.
- **DC26 Development and Noise** – The Council intends to use the development control process to reduce the impact of noise on people living and working in, or visiting, the city.

National Planning Policy Framework

3.7. Under the heading ‘Promoting sustainable transport’ the NPPF states at paragraph 115:

“Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.”

3.8. Under the heading ‘Making effective use of land’, the NPPF states at paragraph 127:

“Local planning authorities should also take a positive approach to applications for alternative uses of land which is currently developed but not allocated for a specific purpose in plans, where this would help to meet identified development needs.”

4. Planning Appraisal

4.1. This section considers:

- Whether the site is an appropriate location in principle for the proposals, having regard to the local and national policies;
- Whether there would be an effect on the living conditions of nearby residents, with particular regard to noise and disturbance; and,
- Whether there would be any effect on on-street parking.

Principle

- 4.2. This site is within an area that has struggled to retain employment uses, as evident in the recently allowed appeal for a cultural events space immediately adjacent to this site (APP/B4215/W/22/3292608). We are also aware that other proposals to bring forward redevelopment proposals new industrial / warehousing floorspace in the vicinity have not come to fruition. For instance, two permissions for new industrial / warehousing floorspace close to the site, on the opposite side of the railway line to the north and east, have recently lapsed (128133/FO/2020 and 129444/FO/2021).
- 4.3. The Site is located within the Central Park Strategic Employment Location. Whilst Policy EC6 encourages employment uses, it does not prohibit alternative uses. In addition, Policy EC2 allows for alternative uses if, for example, it can be demonstrated that the existing use is unviable in terms of business operations, building age and format.
- 4.4. The unit is two-storey, long and narrow, and with a ceiling height of 3m. The building form and its low ceiling height is inadequate for modern storage facilities, with 4m usually being the minimum standard. Furthermore, the site is positioned at first floor with access only possible via a stairwell. This makes the site unappealing as storage space, since any goods received would have to be manually taken to the unit via stairs which would be unsustainable.
- 4.5. The site also forms part of a larger building that contains multiple units, which share a small service yard that is accessed via roller shutters from New Road. The service yard is inadequate for serving from HGVs, meaning that any servicing by large vehicles would need to be taken from New Road, which is not considered appropriate.
- 4.6. The unit had lain vacant for a number of years owing to the out-of-date floorspace, physical restrictions, and being unattractive to potential tenants. It can only be concluded that the unit is unviable as employment space.
- 4.7. It is not a policy requirement to provide evidence of marketing to demonstrate that employment use is unviable. However, we are aware that the adjoining unit was marketed, without success, prior to becoming the cultural events space.
- 4.8. For these reasons, alternative uses for the site could be supported.
- 4.9. Indeed, it is evident that the unit offers suitable space for Dunamis International Gospel Centre, with capacity for up to 200 members. The centre offers a Sunday morning and

Wednesday evening worship service, as well as religious ceremonies, weddings, and other events. The site has very good access to public transport routes particularly along Oldham Road, offering support for public transport. The centre has also brought about investment in the fabric of the site, including internal refurbishment and will improve fire safety access arrangements.

- 4.10. Policy EC2 also says that that alternative uses will be supported on allocated sites or if, for example, proposals are able to offer greater benefits in terms of the Core Strategy's vision and spatial objectives than the existing use. It is therefore relevant to note that the proposal would assist with delivering a community facility within an area that whilst having an economic focus, is interspersed with residential areas.
- 4.11. Indeed, the site is located within the Core Growth Area where Policy JP-Strat1 allows for uses that are complementary to the economic function so long as this is not at the expense of the area. In this regard it is relevant to note that the relevantly recent development of modern employment floorspace around the Central Park tram stop is boosting the economic function of the area and there are further development opportunities there which would seem a more obvious choice for investment in comparison the employment area on New Road.
- 4.12. Furthermore, the site is located in the Regional Centre where Policy SP1 seeks not only to deliver economic and commercial development but also retail, leisure and cultural activity, alongside high-quality city living. The Dunamis International Gospel Centre provides an important community facility for many living within the surrounding area.
- 4.13. There may be some conflict with Policy EM5 which aims to regenerate Central Park with employment uses, however, this could be given limited weight particularly since the development plan also includes Policy EC2 which allows for alternative uses if the existing use is unviable or achieves other objectives, as is evidently the case here.
- 4.14. In conclusion, the site is an appropriate location in principle for the centre and there is no conflict with the development plan as a whole in this regard, and in particular with Policies JP-J2, SP1, EC1, EC2, EC3, EC5 or EC6 of the CS or policies with the NPPF.

Residential Amenity

- 4.15. The planning application is supported by an Acoustic Report. A noise impact assessment was conducted, with the benefit of the centre being operational at the time of the assessment, and the findings being a true reflection of noise impact.
- 4.16. Noise levels from various activities, including music and gatherings, were measured and assessed. The results indicate that noise levels are generally within the acceptable limits and are not causing undue disturbance to the community.
- 4.17. There is no conflict with Policy DM1 and Policy DC26 which seek to ensure, amongst other things, that development has regard to effects on amenity, including noise.

Parking

- 4.18. The unit does not benefit from off-street parking provision. There are no on-street parking restrictions on New Street in the immediate vicinity of the unit and there is sufficient space

for taxis to drop off or pick up without resulting in any significant impact on the transport network.

- 4.19. The unit is in a very accessible location within walking distance of nearby residential areas and Oldham Road, where there are regular bus links to the City Centre and surrounding areas. In addition, the premises is close to the Central Park tram stop, just 1km away.
- 4.20. The centre would largely cater for worship services which operate on a Sunday and Wednesday evening, and as such there is unlikely to be conflict with surrounding uses.
- 4.21. There is no evidence which suggests that the centre is causing an issue for on-street parking and certainly not to the extent that it is causing an unacceptable impact on highway safety.
- 4.22. The proposals therefore comply with Policy SP1 and EC1 which seek to ensure that new development reduces the need to travel and has good access to sustainable transport provision. The proposals also comply with Policy DM1 which requires regard to be had, amongst other things, to road safety, traffic generation and accessibility.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.2. This Planning Statement considers the proposals against the relevant development plan documents. Consideration is also given to material considerations, but none indicate the proposals should be considered other than in accordance with the development plan.
- 5.3. This Planning Statement demonstrates that the proposals comply with development plan as a whole including the relevant policies from the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan, Core Strategy and Unitary Development Plan. The proposals should therefore be approved without delay.

Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

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