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Supporting Planning Statement

Application for Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent for works to the Grade II* listed Welsh Baptist Chapel, also known as the Upper Brook Street Chapel, The Islamic Academy and the Unitarian Chapel, in Chorlton-on-Medlock, Manchester.

'The Chapel', 43 Upper Brook Street, Manchester, M13 9JU
Applicant: Empiric (Baptists Chapel) Limited

Introduction

1. This planning statement is submitted in support of planning permission and listed building consent, on behalf of Applicant Empiric (Baptists Chapel) Limited, for the Installation of external ladder to a Grade II* Listed former Chapel, at 43 Upper Brook Street, Manchester ('the application site'). The location of the application site is shown in figure 1 below.

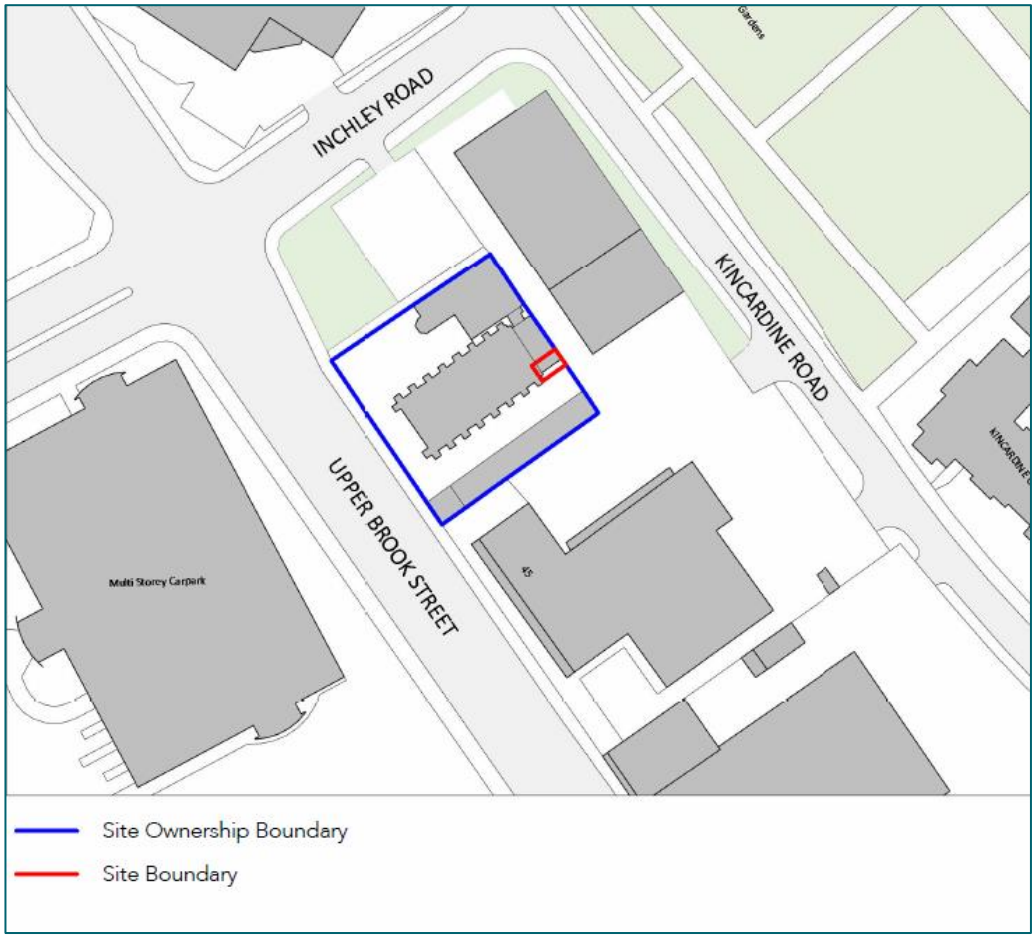


Figure 1: Site Location

Site and Surroundings

2. The Chapel comprises student accommodation operated by Hello Student, housed within the converted Welsh Baptist Church, Grade II* listed building (List Entry Number; 1270670). The Chapel was first listed on 2nd October 1974 built between 1837 and 1839 by Sir Charles Barry and is believed to be the first neogothic non-conformist chapel.

3. The site is not located within the proximity of any other designated or non-designated heritage assets and does not lie within the boundary of any conservation area. Although, the site is not within a conservation area boundary, the site is in close proximity to both the Whitworth Street Conservation Area and Victoria Park Conservation Area.

4. The immediate setting of the chapel has been largely dominated by low-rise, showroom buildings to the north, east and south, with the main arterial Upper Brook Street route into the city centre on its west side. Large scale Manchester University buildings have been developed, including a six-storey car park opposite the Chapel. The Chapel is visible in views from Kincardine Road to the east west of the site looking west and is a unique historic feature within an otherwise utilitarian mixed commercial landscape.

5. Planning permissions have been recently granted for high-rise mixed-use developments comprising of University and student accommodation buildings on sites surrounding the chapel (application references: 137401/FO/2023 and 137399/FO/2023). These developments comprise of buildings ranging from 5-9 storeys located adjacent to the application site and 6-9 storeys, 9-23 storeys located further to the south of the application site. These applications were minded to grant on 18th January 2024.Proposed Development

Site and Surroundings

6. The proposal relates to a permitted student accommodation use 102531/FO/2013/N2.

7. The planning permission and listed building consent applications propose the following description of development:

   'Installation of an external ladder onto the northeast façade of the student accommodation building'

8. As discussed in the supporting Design, Assess and Heritage Statement the proposal will allow for safe access to a small flat-roof portion of building. Alternative methods of access has been discussed by the applicant team, however, due to the approval of the neighbouring developments has removed any alternative method for safe access to the flat roof section. A significant stained glass is located on the northeast of the building. At present there is no safe access to the roof, the limited access to the roof has made it incredibly difficult to have safe means of maintenance access. It is necessary to have safe access to ensure that rooftop finishes, plant and rainwater outlets can be routinely inspected as well as carrying out cyclical maintenance to historic fabric such as cleaning of stained glass and the inspection of historic masonry.

9. Due the insufficient access to the northeast side of the building, the application proposes the installation of an external ladder for maintenance. The proposed ladder will be aluminium with a partial cage powder coated to match the RAL colour of the existing window frames and downpipe, reducing the visual impact on the elevation. The partial cage on the ladder provides basic protection against falling, which is required on all ladders over 3m in compliance with the British Standards.

10. Further information on fixing details is provided within the Design, Assess and Heritage Statement submitted with this application.

Application Plans

11. The following plans/ statements have been submitted:

- Site Location Plan: 9764-BUT-XX-XX-DR-A-01001
- Existing Site Plan: 9764-BUT-EX-ZZ-DR-A-01002
- Existing GA Elevations: 9764-BUT-EX-ZZ-DR-A-02001
- Proposed Site Plan: 9764-BUT-EX-ZZ-DR-A-04001
- Proposed GA Elevations: 9764-BUT-EX-ZZ-DR-A-05001
- Proposed Elevations 1.20: 9764-BUT-EX-ZZ-DR-A-05002
- RL42 Ladder Spec
- Design, Access and Heritage Statement
- Supporting Planning Statement (this statement)

Relevant Planning History

12. The building has relevant planning history, listed in Table 1 below.

Application Reference	Address	Description of Development	Decision
102531/FO2013/N2	Former Welsh Baptist Chapel and Islamic Academy of Manchester 19 Upper Brook Street, Ardwick, Manchester, M13 9AJ.	Repairs and alterations to the former Welsh Baptist Chapel and attached Islamic Academy building, in association with: conversion to self-contained residential units together with erection of detached single storey building to form additional residential units (93 units in total), vehicular access from Upper Brook Street and associated works.	Granted- April 2014.
102532/LO2013/N2	Former Welsh Baptist Chapel and Islamic Academy of Manchester 19 Upper Brook	LISTED BUILDING CONSENT: Repairs and alterations to the former Welsh Baptist Chapel and attached Islamic	Granted- April 2014.

	Street, Ardwick, Manchester, M13 9AJ.	Academy building, in association with: conversion to self-contained residential units together with erection of detached single storey building to form additional residential units (93 units in total), vehicular access from Upper Brook Street and associated works.	

Planning Policy Review

13. The purpose of this supporting planning letter is to outline and assess the key planning policies of relevance to the determination of this planning application and listed building consent. The relevant planning policy document for the area includes the Manchester Core strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) both adopted in 2012.

National Planning Policy Framework

14. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in December 2023, sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The framework also sets out the requirements for the planning system to the extent that it is relevant, proportionate, and necessary to do so.

15. The NPPF provides important guidance and advise in relation to conserving the historic environment, seeking to reduce the detrimental impacts to historic assets conservation and a proposal (para 195.). NPPF states that clear justification for a proposal is required where there is any harm to any existing asset.

16. The chapel was converted to the existing student accommodation use in 2017-18 with various repairs, internal and external alterations. The fabric of the building onto which this ladder is proposed to be installed was a part of the recent alterations, as detailed within section 3 of the Design, Access and Heritage Statement. Since the ladder is proposed to be placed within an area of recent construction, there will be no direct contact with the original fabric of the Chapel which may be considered to add to the architectural or historic asset of the Chapel. Therefore, the proposed external ladder will not have any impact on the listed Chapel.

17. The ladder will have a RAL colour to match the existing window frames to match the contemporary scheme without adding a new or additional colour. The position of the ladder is concealed from the principal view as indicated within the proposed elevation drawings, the area of the ladder will be restricted. The ladder will have minimal view from the south elevation of the building, as this is located within the recent construction of the Chapel and does not negatively affect the quality of the elevation of the Chapel.

18. The supporting Design, Access and Heritage (section 5.0, page 19) assesses the general principle of the proposal presenting a methodology of the Heritage Impact Assessment. The assessment conducted has

been based on the guidance of British Standards BS 7913, and the ICOMOS Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments. These assessments have found the proposed ladder is a negligible change with a neutral impact and harm to the Chapel.

19. The proposed ladder is required to facilitate safe access to the building's roof on the northeast side for the necessary maintenance of a stained-glass window. The proposed location of the ladder is largely concealed by a buttress and is not visible from the principal façade of the Chapel. Due to the reasons above, it is believed the proposal complies with the paragraphs 195 to 214.

Development Plan

20. The relevant Development Plan is the Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2012-2027 ('the Core Strategy'). The Core Strategy was adopted by Manchester City Council (MCC) in July 2012 and is the principal document in Manchester's Local Development Framework. The Core Strategy replaces significant elements of the Unitary UDP as the document that sets out long-term strategic planning policies for Manchester's future development.

Core Strategy

21. **Policy EN1 - Design, Principles and Strategic Character Areas** expects all developments within Manchester to follow several principles of urban design, as identified in National Planning Policy Framework. The Policy requires regard to the strategic character area where the development is located. The Chapel is located within the Southern Strategic Character Area as defined in the Core Strategy. The Southern Strategy Character Area is described as having a *noticeable presence of older developments.* The installation of the external ladder will be minor and will not have a detrimental effect on the character area. As discussed in para 13 to 15 of this document, the ladder will be located in an area which is not visible from the principal façade of the Chapel. The view of the ladder, the south side of the building, will be covered by the buttress which is located on the left-hand side as showcased on pg. 20 of the supporting Design, Access and Heritage Statement.

22. **Policy CC9 - Design and Heritage** states that the developments should preserve or enhance the heritage assets that have identified, including listed buildings. The ladder will be coloured to match the match the window frame of the Chapel and the contemporary materials used with the recent construction to the Chapel. Due to this, the historical feature of the Chapel (Listing No. 1270670) with not be affected by the proposed installation of the ladder. The impact of the proposal is thought to be neutral impact to the Chapel with no substantial harm.

23. The planning application is consistent with the requirements of Policy EN1 and CC9 of the Core Strategy Development Plan.

Conclusion

24. This supporting planning statement is submitted in support in support of a planning application and listed building consent for the installation of an external ladder and the maintenance of the flat roof at to the Grade II* listed, former Chapel, at 43 Upper Brook Street, Manchester. The proposed ladder will allow safe access to a part of the roof at the northeast side of the building which is required for the maintenance of a stained-glass window.

25. As stated in point 5, the development adjacent to the application site has a proposed height ranging for 5 to 9 storeys between 3 buildings and the further 6 to 23 mixed use development. The development of this size will have an impact on view of the listing building and block the visual impact of the proposed ladder. The close proximity of the neighbouring proposed development has significantly reduced the ability to accommodate alternative means of access.

26. The application has been assessed in terms of impact to heritage and historical assets of the Chapel, as required by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

27. Regarding heritage, the proposal is respectful of the site's surrounding area of the Southern Strategic Character Area and will not be overly prominent. The ladder will extend from the second to third floor and is not visible form the main façade of the building. Therefore, the ladder will not detrimentally affect visual amenity, and will have no effect on neighbouring properties. As reiterated above, the student accommodation adjacent to the application site (ref: 137401/FO/2023) and the application to the Sout (ref: 137299/FO/2023) will become a prominent visual element along Upper Brook Street. This in return will reduce the visual impact of the external ladder on the Chapel and will not impact the heritage of the building or listing.

28. As noted in the Design, Access and Heritage Statement (pg. 21), the ladder is a reversible intervention and could be removed at a later if necessary or if an alternative access solution become viable. As the ladder is fixed to the mortar joint of the new-build masonry this could be done with no damaged to the listed asset and the wall can be repointed following the ladder's removal. The RAL colour will help to reduce the potential visual impact of its installation.

29. The proposal will not have any unacceptable impacts to the heritage or historical assets to the Chapel and therefore, is compliant with NPPF and the Core Strategy.