

NXQ

Lever Street, Manchester

Tall Building Statement

Revision 01 _ April 2024



Howells

SOLLER

Tall Building Statement

Proposed Office Development at NXQ, Lever Street, Manchester
Soller Nine

April 2024

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For and on behalf of AshtonHale Limited

1. Introduction

1.1 This Tall Building Statement has been prepared by AshtonHale Ltd ("AshtonHale") for Soller Nine ("the Applicant") in support of a full planning application submitted to Manchester City Council ("MCC") for an office-led development (to be known as "NXQ") at Land Bound by Lever Street, Great Ancoats Street, Little Lever Street and Houldsworth Street, Manchester ("the Site").

1.2 The full description of development as stated on the application form is:

"Full planning application for part-retention, conversion and extension of existing buildings; selective demolition; the erection of a ground floor + 17 storey building comprising new office space (Use Class E) with ground floor reception area and ancillary uses; supporting infrastructure and ancillary facilities, roof top plant enclosures, and landscaping."

1.3 This Tall Building Statement has been produced to assess the proposal against Historic England's Advice Note 4 Tall Buildings (2nd Ed) published March 2022 (with the 1st edition having been published in December 2015), which updates the 'Guidance on Tall Buildings Document' published jointly by English Heritage (now Historic England) and CABE (updated version, July 2007). The Government and Manchester City Council still, however, endorse the CABE / Historic England guidance and its evaluation criteria, and that it is capable of being a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. Additionally, the document will assess the proposals in terms of Manchester City Council's tall building planning policy guidance.

Proposed Development

1.4 Full details of the proposed development are provided in the submitted Design and Access Statement ("DAS") and on the planning application drawings prepared by Howells architects, as well as the Planning Statement prepared by AshtonHale. However, in summary, the proposed development will incorporate:



- A standalone new Food & Beverage ("F&B") offer in the retained Bem Brasil building (549 sqm GIA) (Use Class E) (referred to as "The Heritage Hub")
- A private ground floor courtyard;
- A new-build office-led development (16,989 sqm GIA) (Use Class E) including:
 - The Tech Hub (New-Build)
 - Grade A office space (Use Class E) across flexible floorplates;
 - Amenity space and shower rooms;
 - Back of house facilities and circulation space;
 - A south-west facing terrace (on top of the Creative Hub); and
 - A Business Lounge and event space.
 - The Creative Hub (New-Build Set Behind Retained Façade)
 - Ancillary F&B uses; and
 - Informal working space.
- External landscaping improvements.

Report Structure

1.5 The following chapters of this Tall Building Statement are structured as follows:

- **Chapter 2 - Planning Policy Context:** sets out the planning policy guidance surrounding tall buildings, at both a national and local level;
- **Chapter 3 - Relationship to the Context:** provides an assessment of the proposal in relationship to its context;
- **Chapter 4 - Effect on Historic Environment:** assesses the proposal in terms of the historic context;
- **Chapter 5 - Relationship to Transport Infrastructure:** offers an assessment of the proposal regarding its relationship to transport infrastructure;
- **Chapter 6 - Architectural Quality:** demonstrates the proposal is of a high architectural quality to merit the proposed height;
- **Chapter 7 - Sustainable Design and Construction:** provides an overview of the schemes sustainable design and construction;
- **Chapter 8 - Credibility of Design:** assesses the credibility of the scheme's design;
- **Chapter 9 - Contribution to Public Space and Facilities:** provides an assessment of the scheme's contribution to public space and facilities;
- **Chapter 10 - Contribution to Permeability:** demonstrates the scheme's positive contribution to permeability;

- **Chapter 11 - Provision of a Well-Designed Environment:** assesses the schemes provision of a well-designed environment;
- **Chapter 12 - MCC Core Strategy:** specifically assesses this proposal in terms of Manchester City Council's local planning policies and guidance relating to height; and,
- **Chapter 13 - Summary and Conclusions:** this chapter provides a summary of each of the above chapters and reaches the firm conclusion that the scheme is appropriate in relation to tall building matters.



2. Planning Policy Context

- 2.1 This section of the Tall Building Statement outlines the relevant local and national planning guidance relating to tall buildings.

Historic England's Advice Note 4 Tall Buildings (2nd Ed) (March 2022)

- 2.2 Historic England's Advice Note 4 Tall Buildings (2nd Ed) was published in March 2022, this supersedes the 1st edition, published in December 2015, which in turn updates the 'Guidance on Tall Buildings Document' published jointly by English Heritage (now Historic England) and CABE (updated version, July 2007).
- 2.3 Historic England's Advice Note (2022) states when planning for tall buildings it is important to avoid or minimise impacts upon the significance of heritage assets. There are some principles to consider that will help do this:
- A plan-led approach to tall buildings to determine their location;
 - An evidence base which explores alternative options for the location and heights of tall buildings;
 - Decision making informed by understanding of place, character and historic significance;
 - Tall buildings proposals which take account of local context and historic character; and
 - Early and effective engagement at plan-making and decision-taking stages including the use of design review panels.
- 2.4 The advice note recognises that *“the development of tall buildings can have positive impacts upon an area, particularly if they are part of a wider regeneration scheme. Equally, there will be sites where the impacts upon the historic environment cannot be overcome or minimised. Such sites may be inherently unsuitable for tall buildings due to the harm they would cause to the significance of heritage assets.”*
- 2.5 In terms of development management, the Design Note states planning applications need to be supported by enough information so that the impacts of



the development upon the historic environment can be properly understood (NPPF paragraphs 43 and 200) and dealt with speedily.

- 2.6 In addition, the Advice Note emphasises the importance of good design in terms of ensuring a tall building responds positively to the character of the surrounding area and the historic environment to create high quality buildings and places.

CABE and English Heritage (now Historic England) Guidance on Tall Buildings (2007)

- 2.7 This document sets out how CABE and English Heritage evaluate proposals for tall buildings. It also offers advice on good practice in relation to tall buildings in the planning process.
- 2.8 Both organisations recommend that local planning authorities use it to inform policy making and, if necessary, to evaluate planning applications for tall buildings where the appropriate policies are not yet in place.
- 2.9 This Guidance recognises that in the right place tall buildings can make positive contributions to city life and can be excellent works of architecture. Furthermore, the guidance states that tall buildings can serve as beacons of regeneration and stimulate further investment. However, the Guidance also recognises that by virtue of their size and prominence, tall buildings can also harm the qualities that people value about a place. To account for this, the Guidance provides criteria for evaluating planning applications for tall buildings. The criteria is listed below:
- Relationship to context;
 - Effect on the historic context;
 - Effect on world heritage sites;
 - Relationship to transport infrastructure;
 - Architectural quality of the building;
 - Sustainable design and construction;
 - Credibility of design;
 - Contribution to public space and facilities;
 - The effect on the local environment;



- Contribution to permeability; and,
- The provision of a well-designed environment.

MCC's Core Strategy (2012) Policy EN2

2.10 In terms of local planning policy, Policy EN2 of the Manchester City Council's adopted Core Strategy (July 2012), states:

"Tall buildings are defined as buildings which are substantially taller than their neighbourhoods and/or which significantly change the skyline. Proposals for tall buildings will be supported where it can be demonstrated that they:

- Are of excellent design quality*
- Are appropriately located,*
- Contribute positively to sustainability,*
- Contribute positively to place making, for example as a landmark, by terminating a view, or by signposting a facility of significance, and*
- Will bring significant regeneration benefits.*

A fundamental design objective will be to ensure that tall buildings complement the City's key existing building assets and make a positive contribution to the evolution of a unique, attractive and distinctive Manchester, including to its skyline and approach views.

Suitable locations will include sites within and immediately adjacent to the City Centre with particular encouragement given to non-conservation areas and sites which can easily be served by public transport nodes.

Elsewhere within Manchester tall building development will only be supported where, in addition to the requirements listed above, it can be shown to play a positive role in a coordinated place-making approach to a wider area. Suitable locations are likely to relate to existing district centres. The height of tall buildings in such locations should relate more to the local, rather than the City Centre, urban context.

By their very size tall buildings can have a significant impact on the local environment and its micro-climate. It is therefore expected that this impact be modelled and that submissions for tall buildings also include appropriate measures to create an attractive, pedestrian friendly local environment.

It will be necessary for the applicant/developer to demonstrate that proposals for tall buildings are viable and deliverable."



The Manchester Guide to Development SPD (2007)

- 2.11 The Manchester Guide to Development SPD (2007) states the following at Page 6 with regards to tall buildings:

"It is important that new developments are of an appropriate height having regard to location, character of the area and specific site circumstances and local effects, such as microclimatic ones.

Although a street can successfully accommodate buildings of differing heights, extremes should be avoided unless they provide landmarks of the highest quality and are in appropriate locations. In established residential areas, significant variation in height may not be appropriate. Where higher structures are more appropriate, notably in and around the City Centre, they must be informed by all of the principles described in the Guide."

3. Relationship to the Context

- 3.1 This chapter assesses the relationship to context. The Historic England Advice Note 2022 states tall buildings should take account of local context and should be informed by understanding of place and character.

***"The response to local context:** understanding local context (including its evolution) is critical to achieving good design. This includes considering how the tall building relates to neighbouring buildings. It is important that the massing and scale of the building is appropriate in relation to its surroundings and responds to context to avoid or minimise harm to the significance of heritage assets. It is helpful to consider the relationship between the top, middle, and bottom sections of a tall building with their surroundings and the potential impact on streetscape, town/cityscape and skyline. Where tall buildings are proposed in regeneration areas, there may be opportunities to improve local character through design."*

- 3.2 In addition, the CABE and English Heritage 2007 requires an assessment of the following:

***"The relationship to context,** including natural topography, scale, height, urban grain, streetscape and built form, open spaces, rivers and waterways, important views, prospects and panoramas, and the effect on the skyline. Tall buildings should have a positive relationship with relevant topographical features and other tall buildings; the virtue of clusters when perceived from all directions should be considered in this light"*

Assessment

- 3.3 The DAS prepared by Howells demonstrates how the design team have assessed the context surrounding the application site while formulating the proposals.
- 3.4 In addition to the context provided within the DAS, the application is also supported by an Environmental Statement which contains a Townscape and Visual Impact chapter, which has been prepared by Re-form. This report assesses key townscape and visual impacts relating to the redevelopment of the site through reviewing nearby Townscape Character Areas and 13 strategic and close up views identified by Re-form and Turley (Heritage Consultant) and subsequently agreed with Manchester City Council.



3.5 The Manchester City Centre Strategic Plan identifies local level Townscape Character Areas (TCAs). Only TCAs located within 750m of the site are assessed as part of the Townscape Visual Assessment:

- TCA1: Northern Quarter
- TCA2: Ancoats
- TCA3: New Cross
- TCA4: New Islington
- TCA5: Piccadilly
- TCA6: Retail Core
- TCA7: NOMA
- TCA8: Lower Irk Valley
- TCA9: Collyhurst

3.6 It is considered that there will be no likely perceivable change to other TCAs located fully outside of the study area as a result of the Proposed Development on site, due to the heavily urbanised nature of the city environment and resulting screening effects of buildings, and the orientation of nearby public spaces and streets, which limit visual connectivity.

3.7 Of the 13 viewpoints, as agreed, fully verified photomontages have been prepared from key locations:

- Viewpoint A: Sherratt Street
- Viewpoint D: Lever Street
- Viewpoint F: Great Ancoats Street, at the junction to Oldham Street
- Viewpoint G: Great Ancoats Street, near the corner of Blossom Street
- Viewpoint J: Cutting Room Square
- Viewpoint K: New Islington Marina
- Viewpoint M: Rochdale Road

3.8 Wireframe verified photomontages have been prepared from six distant views to demonstrate the potential change in view:

- Viewpoint B: Portland Street
- Viewpoint C: Hanover Street (NOMA)
- Viewpoint E: Rochdale Canal Path
- Viewpoint H: Junction of Princess Street and Charles Street



- Viewpoint I: Cross Key Street
- Viewpoint L: Edge of Piccadilly Gardens

Townscape Effects

- 3.9 The Proposed Development will introduce townscape effects to 9 Townscape Character Areas which have been identified and evaluated within the baseline study. The predicted townscape effects of the Proposed Development are highly varied, ranging from Negligible to Moderate-Major.
- 3.10 TCAs 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 are anticipated to experience Negligible effects to the existing townscape on account of the Proposed Development, during both the construction and operating periods. This is largely due to the distance of the TCAs from the proposed development, and these areas having mixed urban characters or precedents of other similar developments within the TCA.
- 3.11 TCA 3 is expected to experience Minor effects and TCA 4 is expected to experience Minor-Moderate effects throughout the operational period, but these are likely to be of a Neutral nature. Taking into account cumulative effects, the perceived change to the townscape in TCA 4 will be reduced to Negligible. Both these TCAs are expected to experience Negligible effects during the construction period.
- 3.12 Significant effects are those which are predicted to be Moderate and above. TCAs 1 and 2 are anticipated to experience Moderate-Major Adverse effects on account of the Proposed Development. These areas incorporate high levels of Conservation Areas and listed buildings, with more distinctive sense of place and urban fabric in comparison to their neighbouring area. Both TCA 1 and TCA 2 are anticipated to experience Moderate Adverse effects throughout the construction period. The effects during the construction period are anticipated to be lower on account of the volume mass during construction; being relatively less pronounced and obtrusive in these areas than the completed development. Both TCA 1 and 2 sit in close proximity to the Proposed Development, increasing the severity of the impact once built. The baseline conditions of these areas are



also in notable contrast to the scale of the Proposed Development, comprising generally low to mid rise developments, largely of a historic variety.

Visual Effects

- 3.13 The seven views which are included below have been selected as they are the key fully rendered viewpoints included within the TVA, which provide the reader with the most realistic imagery of the proposed from a mix of angles with cumulative developments shown where visible. The reader should refer to the TVA within the Environmental Statement for the remaining views.

Viewpoint A: Sherratt Street



Figure 1 - Existing and Proposed Development: Viewpoint A

- 3.14 The upper storeys of the Proposed Development will be visible within the view. The Proposed Development breaks with the existing rooflines. The proposed massing visually juxtaposes with the shared horizontal emphasis between the historic terraces and No.3 George Leigh Street. Although it will comprise a small portion of the view, it will be perceivable to the observer. The façade treatment of the Proposed Development is in contrast to the Ancoats Conservation Area but is somewhat analogous with No. 3 George Leigh Street. The Proposed Development will therefore incur a minor alteration to the baseline view.

Viewpoint D: Lever Street

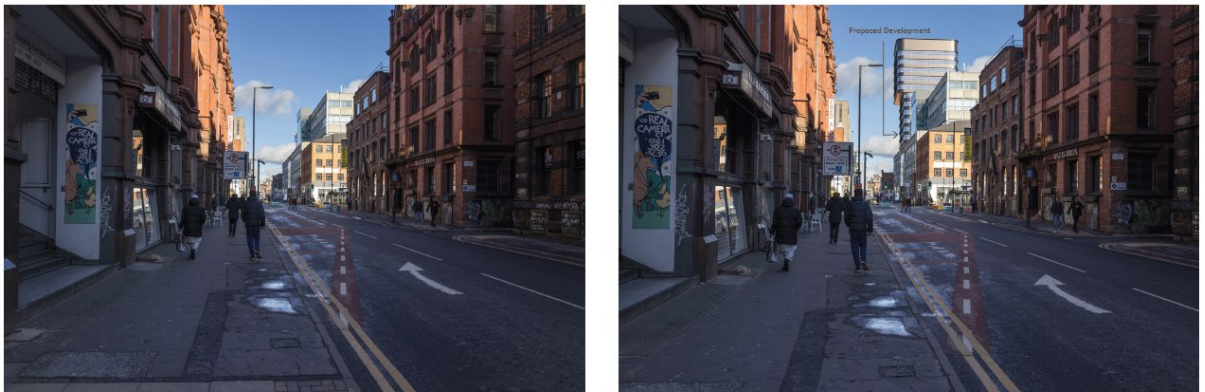


Figure 2 - Existing and Proposed Development: Viewpoint D

- 3.15 The Proposed Development will be largely visible within the view, with the upper storeys of the tower most prominent. Its perceived height will be in contrast to buildings within the area, marking a significant change to the current skyline. The Proposed Development has noticeable similarities with the horizontally expressed architecture of the buildings to the top of Lever Street but will differ from the listed buildings in the foreground and the Conservation Area around Stevenson's Square. It will however, be visually distanced from this more historic architecture on the right of the image.

Viewpoint F: Great Ancoats Street, at the junction to Oldham Street



Figure 3 - Existing and Proposed Development: Viewpoint F (with Cumulative Development)

- 3.16 The Proposed Development will break with the existing roofline. The Proposed Development will occupy a significant proportion of the view and be clearly noticeable to the observer. The high-quality architecture of the Proposed Development draws on the architectural language and materiality of the Grade II* listed Express Building, however its scale is in contrast to that of the baseline condition within the Northern Quarter.

Viewpoint G: Great Ancoats Street, near the corner of Blossom Street

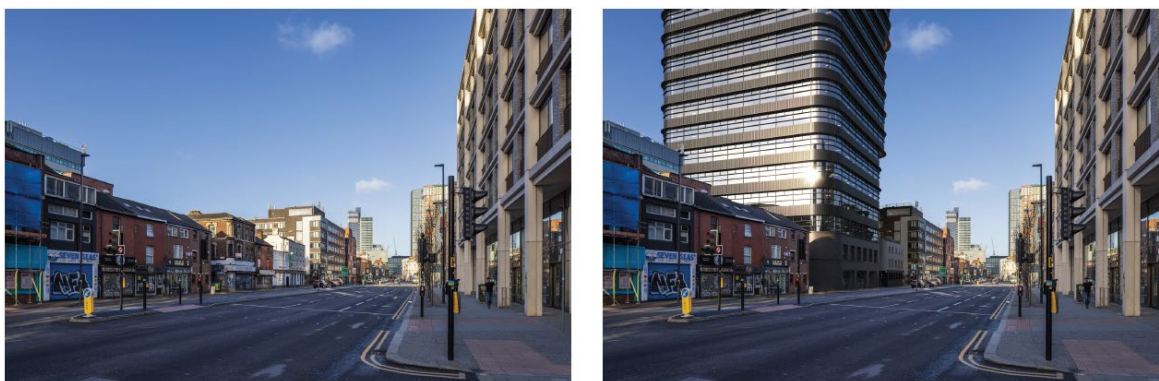


Figure 4 - Existing and Proposed Development: Viewpoint G

- 3.17 The new-build element of the Proposed Development is of a significantly different height to the buildings immediately adjacent to the Site and will occupy a large portion of the view, being distinctly perceivable and easily noticed by the observer. The office development substantially breaks with the existing roofline.
- 3.18 The first two storeys of the Proposed Development are largely in keeping with the view's architectural vernacular and the horizontal banding of the façade shows similarities to the adjacent block, however, the tower element strongly juxtaposes the existing architecture in scale. This will result in a significant change to the existing character of the view, particularly along this edge at the periphery of the Northern Quarter.

Viewpoint J: Cutting Room Square

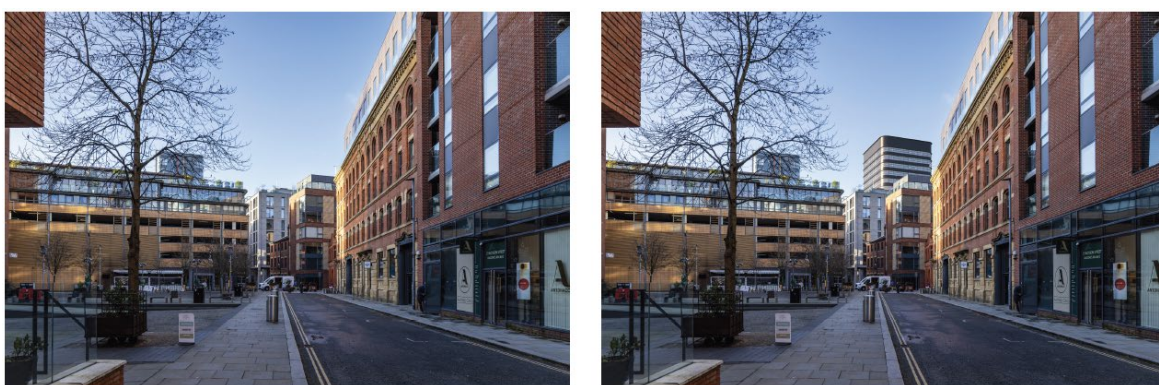


Figure 5 - Existing and Proposed Development: Viewpoint J

- 3.19 The upper storeys of the Proposed Development will be clearly visible to the observer above the existing skyline. The height of the Proposed Development will not significantly disrupt the existing roofline around the square but will

slightly increase the sense of surrounding encroachment upon this Conservation Area. It sits behind a mix of more modern developments.

- 3.20 The impact of the Proposed Development is not entirely uncharacteristic of the baseline view, on account of an existing tower building being visible from the square.

Viewpoint K: New Islington Marina



Viewpoint M: Rochdale Road



Figure 7 - Existing and Proposed Development: Viewpoint M (with Cumulative Development)

- 3.23 The Proposed Development will form a prominent feature within the view, creating a new focal point along Great Ancoats Street. It will increase the sense of urban enclosure along this edge, making a change to the existing skyline along the periphery of the Northern Quarter and Smithfield Conservation Area. Its perceived height will create a greater synergy with the buildings to the foreground, subverting the existing directional line of vision.
- 3.24 The architecture of the Proposed Development is not substantially uncharacteristic of the existing baseline, which presents a mixed urban fabric. Cumulative sites 1 and 3 are visible within viewpoint M. Site 1 will be of a comparable perceived height and scale to the Proposed Development.

Visual Summary

- 3.25 The Proposed Development will introduce visual effects to 13 verified views which have been identified and evaluated within the baseline study. The predicted visual effects during operation of the Proposed Development range from Negligible to Moderate-Major Adverse.
- 3.26 Viewpoints B, I and L will experience Negligible effects during both the construction and operational periods. Viewpoint H will experience Minor Neutral effects, during both the construction and operational phases, on account of the distance from the Proposed Development, and the capacity of the existing view to accommodate such developments and construction sites according to its baseline.

- 3.27 Viewpoint K will experience Minor-Moderate Adverse effects (downgraded to negligible when considering cumulative development). Within Viewpoint K the Proposed Development and its construction site will be visible above a conservation area, but these will not be substantially out of keeping with the overall baseline view.
- 3.28 Viewpoint M will experience Minor-Moderate Neutral effects throughout both phases (downgraded to Minor when considering cumulative development). Viewpoint M has a layered urban fabric which largely obscures impacts of the Proposed Development.
- 3.29 The effects on viewpoints B, H, I, L, K and M will not be considered significant.
- 3.30 Significant effects are those which are predicted to be Moderate and above. During operation and construction of the Proposed Development, viewpoints A and E will experience Moderate Adverse effects. Viewpoint E downgrades to Negligible when considering cumulative development.
- 3.31 Viewpoints C and J will experience Moderate Neutral effects. Viewpoints A, C and J all show Conservation Areas, with Viewpoint E showing a number of listed buildings along a key public heritage path, increasing the visual sensitivity of these viewpoints.
- 3.32 Viewpoints D, F and G will experience Moderate-Major Adverse effects during both the construction and operational periods of the Proposed Development. Viewpoints F and G are both close range views towards the site (<250m) and demonstrate the scale of the Proposed Development will bring a prominent change to the nature of its immediate streetscape.
- 3.33 Viewpoint D has a High-Medium sensitivity, on account of its high proportion of conservation areas and listed buildings within the frame. The nature of the Proposed Development, both in scale, mass and architectural aesthetic strongly contrasts with this setting and disrupts the key elements of the existing view. In viewpoints D, F and G Proposed Development is considered substantially uncharacteristic of the view, as well as being easily noticed by the observer.



Overall Summary

- 3.34 The DAS, supporting plans, and TVA demonstrate that the proposal has been designed with significant consideration to its effect on context, with regards to natural topography, scale, height, urban grain, streetscape and built form, open spaces, rivers and waterways, important views, prospects and panoramas, and the effect on the skyline. It is nonetheless recognised that the proposals, by their nature, will have an impact on the local townscape. However, it is considered that impacts on the local townscape have been kept to a minimum, whilst still needing to support the objectives of the MCC policy and address the market for delivering Grade A office space in this location.
- 3.35 As outlined in 'Embedded Mitigation' of the ES (from 6.107 onwards), the design of the development has been subject to extensive pre-application discussions to refine their form and appearance. Through this process, potential adverse townscape and visual effects have been identified, and eliminated or reduced, and positive effects enhanced. Mitigation of adverse townscape and visual effects is therefore embedded in the Proposed Development, and no "applied" mitigation or enhancement measures are proposed, however, it the high-quality architectural and retention of key heritage assets is noted.
- 3.36 The scheme will also deliver significant social, economic and environmental benefits which have been outlined further in Section 13 of this Statement submitted in support of this application, which are considered to outweigh any townscape or visual harm caused by the development.
- 3.37 The proposal is consequently considered to accord with the relevant policies of the NPPF, the policies in Manchester City Council's Local Plan Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2012) insofar as they relate to townscape and the historic environment and the relevant aspects of the CABI and English Heritage Guidance.



4. Effect on Historic Environment

- 4.1 This Chapter assesses the effect on the historic environment of the proposed development. The Historic England Advice Note (2022) requires an assessment of the following:

***“Heritage:** understanding the significance of the historic environment and the potential impact on this significance”*

- 4.2 In addition, the 2007 CABE and English Heritage Guidance requires an assessment of the following:

“The effect on the historic context, including the need to ensure that the proposal will preserve and/or enhance historic buildings, sites, landscapes and skylines. Tall building proposals must address their effect on the setting of, and views to and from historic buildings, sites and landscapes over a wide area including:

- *World Heritage Sites;*
- *Scheduled Ancient Monuments;*
- *Listed Buildings*
- *Registered Parks and Gardens, and Registered Battlefields;*
- *Archaeological Remains; and*
- *Conservation Areas.”*

Assessment

- 4.3 This application is supported by an Environmental Statement which includes comprehensive Built Heritage Assessment prepared by Turley. A summary of the assessment and conclusions is provided below. The site does not contain any statutory designated listed buildings and is not located within a conservation area.
- 4.4 The Site is located at a key intersection with the Northern Quarter and Stevenson Square Conservation area located to the west, NOMA to the North, Ancoats to the east and the Piccadilly Basin to the South. There are a number of listed

- buildings within the surrounding area including the Grade II* Daily Express Building diagonally opposite the Site on Great Ancoats Street.
- 4.5 In determining the submitted full planning application MCC has a statutory duty under s66(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the special interest and setting of listed buildings. The setting of conservation areas is not protected by primary legislation; the NPPF does, however, state that the setting of a designated heritage asset (including conservation areas) can contribute to its significance.
- 4.6 The Site was developed from the late 18th century as part of the development of the part of Manchester which is now known as the Northern Quarter, laid out on a grid pattern. By 1819 the Site was fully developed with a mixture of residential and commercial development. During the 19th century properties on the Site were changed and adapted, most notably with the addition of the tin plate manufactory as well as the late 19th century warehouses on the corner of Lever St and Houldsworth Street which remain extant today. The change from residential to commercial industrial development, often related to the textile industry, reflected wider changes within this part of Manchester.
- 4.7 Into the 20th century, the Site and its surrounding context continued to evolve. The 1930s Daily Express Building with its Streamline Moderne architecture and curtain walling marked a step change in height and scale on Great Ancoats Street and a move away from traditional construction. The Threlfalls Brewery also sought to update the Griffin Public House on the corner of the Site at Lever Street and Great Ancoats Street at this time, which was extended and clad in faience.
- 4.8 The post-war period and late 20th century saw the redevelopment and amalgamation of plots adjacent to the Site with Griffin House and the Travelodge, to the south and west respectively, dating from this period. The surrounding context has continued to evolve and today provides a varied urban environment. The buildings within the Site are in varying condition and uses with some, including the two warehouses, in a derelict state.

4.9 It is concluded that the Proposed Scheme will result in a degree of harm to the significance of a number of designated heritage assets. The following designated heritage assets will experience a reduction in their historic context arising from the demolition of 18th and 19th century buildings within the Site which contribute to their significance to varying degrees depending on the strength of the visual and physical relationship between the assets and the Site and their group value or historic associations. In each case the effect on significance is negligible or slight; limited by intervening distance/separation and the altered state of the buildings to be demolished:

- Derros House (Grade II listed building)
- Former Doctor's Surgery (Grade II listed building)
- 69 -77 Lever Street (including 10 Bradley Street) (Grade II listed building)
- 4, 6 and 8 Bradley Street and attached screen walls (Grade II listed building)
- Crown and Kettle Public House (Grade II listed building)
- 72 to 76 Newton Street (Grade II listed building)
- The City Public House (Grade II listed building)
- Stephenson Square Conservation Area
- Ancoats Conservation Area
- Smithfield Conservation Area

4.10 An adverse effect is also identified in relation to the following designated heritage assets arising from the effects of the completed and operational phase of development:

- Daily Express Building (Grade II* listed building)
- Brownsfield Mill (Grade II* listed building)
- Rochdale Canal Warehouse (Grade II* listed building)
- Sedgwick Mill including Sedgwick New Mill (Grade II listed building)
- Decker Mill and Old Mill (Grade II* listed building)
- Upper Lever Street Group (all Grade II listed buildings)
 - Watts Brothers
 - 25 and 27 Dale Street
 - 22 Dale Street
- The following buildings from the Newton Street Group (all Grade II listed buildings)
 - 45 & 47 Newton St



- 29 & 31 Dale St
- 49 Newton St
- The following buildings from the Back Piccadilly Group (all Grade II listed buildings)
 - Gardens Hotel and shops
 - Clayton House, 59 Piccadilly and 61 Piccadilly
 - St Margarets Chambers
- Stevenson Square Conservation Area
- Ancoats Conservation Area

4.11 In all cases, the level of harm is concluded to be 'less than substantial' and within that category to be on a scale between negligible and minor. Accordingly, Paragraph 208 of the NPPF is engaged which states the following:

"Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use."

4.12 The NPPF is also clear that in applying 'great weight' to the conservation of heritage assets, the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be, irrespective of the level of harm.

4.13 Planning Practice Guidance confirms that public benefits may follow from many developments and could be anything that delivers economic, social or environmental objectives as described in NPPF Paragraph 8. It also states that public benefits may include heritage benefits such as:

- Sustaining or enhancing the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting.
- Reducing or removing risks to a heritage asset.
- Securing the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long term conservation.

4.14 The following heritage benefits, arising from the Proposed Development, have been identified:

- Enhancement of the aesthetic value of Bem Brasil and maintaining its communal value as a place of gathering.

- Bringing 56 and 58 Lever Street back into use, enhancing their townscape and aesthetic value and allowing their architectural character of their principal elevations to be revealed and more readily appreciated.
- 4.15 The wider public benefits associated with the Proposed Development are set out in the accompanying Planning Statement and at Chapter 13 of this Statement.
- 4.16 In relation to non-designated heritage assets, the demolition of 40-42 Great Ancoats Street and 27 Houldsworth Street and 63 Little Lever Street, along with a number of other buildings within the Site dating from the 18th century is proposed. This would result in the complete loss of the local significance of 40-42 Great Ancoats Street and 27 Houldsworth Street and 63 Little Lever Street (non-designated heritage assets). It would also affect the townscape and group value of Bem Brasil, 58 Lever Street and 56 Lever Street (non-designated heritage assets) with which the buildings form a complete historic block and have a degree of townscape value. There will also be loss of historic fabric in relation to 56 and 58 Lever Street, albeit in weighing the impact of such changes it should be noted that the interiors of the buildings are not protected. The impact is limited given the extent of alteration the buildings proposed for demolition have undergone. To a lesser degree given the separation, it would also result in some erosion of historic context which contributes to the significance of the Hudson Buildings (non-designated heritage asset) which is situated opposite the Site on Great Ancoats Street.
- 4.17 The NPPF clearly differentiates between designated and non-designated heritage assets and the proportionate way they should be addressed within the planning process. The impact on the local significance of the above assets is a material consideration to be given limited weight in the planning balance in accordance with NPPF Paragraph 209.
- 4.18 A review of the public benefits of the proposed development and the balancing of identified harm with those benefits is also undertaken in the accompanying Planning Statement submitted with the application, bearing in mind the considerable importance and weight that must be given to the statutory duty of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. In summary, in

applying the necessary balancing judgement, it is considered that the public benefits would readily outweigh any identified harm.

- 4.19 It is therefore considered that the proposed development therefore accords with the Historic England Advice Note (2022) and the criteria outlined within the 2007 Advice Note (English Heritage and CABE) as it has fully considered the significance of the historic environment and the potential impact of the development on this significance and shown the proposals to be acceptable in terms of heritage considerations.



5. Relationship to Transport Infrastructure

- 5.1 This Chapter assesses the relationship to transport infrastructure. The 2007 CABE and English Heritage Guidance requires an assessment of the following:

"The relationship to transport infrastructure, aviation constraints, and, in particular, the capacity of public transport, the quality of links between transport and the site, and the feasibility of making improvements, where appropriate. Transport is important in relation to tall buildings because of the intensity of use, as well as density, that they represent".

- 5.2 This section of the report should be read in conjunction with the submitted Transport Statement and Travel Plan prepared by SK Transport, which fully consider the transport implications of the proposals.

Assessment

- 5.3 A Transport Statement ("TS") and a Framework Travel Plan ("FTP") have been prepared by SK Transport to advise on the transport and highways baseline and impacts of the proposed redevelopment.
- 5.4 The TS confirms that the site occupies a highly accessible location which provides opportunities for staff to access by active and sustainable modes. It is also shown that the existing routes are suitable to serve the development. The site is also shown to have a very high level of accessibility by public transport, with a GMAL of 8 and there are various opportunities for public transport access to the site from numerous interchange points. Measures are included in the proposal to support active and sustainable living practices, including a high level of cycle parking, showers and lockers, localised pedestrian route enhancements, and a Travel Plan.
- 5.5 Appropriate infrastructure is provided to enable the site to be serviced and to accommodate refuse collection. A service and delivery strategy is set out in the Travel Plan.



- 5.6 The assessment confirms that the site is a suitable location for car-free development. In the unlikely event that a parking space is required the TS shows that the site is well served by numerous public car parks, some of which provide disabled and EV parking facilities. Blue Badge holders are permitted to park without charge or duration limits in street parking bays, and the TS also shows that there are dedicated disabled street parking bays located close to the site.
- 5.7 A traffic assessment has been undertaken and this shows that the proposal will be associated with an insignificant level of trips during the peak hours. It is also shown that there are no accident hotspots on the site frontage.
- 5.8 Overall, the site is in a highly sustainable and accessible location. It has excellent accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists and has exceptional connections to public transport which supports a reduced reliance on private motor vehicles. Furthermore, the Transport Statement has concluded that the development would not have an adverse impact on the surrounding highway network. The relationship of the highway infrastructure and the quality of the links between transport and the Site is acceptable with regards to the requirements of the 2007 CABE and English Heritage Guidance for Tall Buildings.



6. Architectural Quality

- 6.1 This chapter considers the architectural quality of the proposed development in terms of its form, massing, proportion and silhouette, materials and its relationship to other structures.
- 6.2 The Historic England Advice Note 2022 recognises the importance in high quality design when assessing the acceptability of a scheme's height. The Advice Note states:

"Good design can ensure that tall buildings respond positively to the character of the surrounding area and the historic environment and can be used creatively to achieve sustainable outcomes. The NPPF gives 'significant weight' to design for proposals which promote high levels of sustainability or raise the standard of design more generally in an area 'so long as they fit with the overall form and layout of their surroundings' (NPPF, paragraph 134)."

- 6.3 Additionally, the 2007 CABE and English Heritage Guidance requires and assessment of the following:

"The architectural quality of the building including its scale, form, massing, proportion and silhouette, facing materials and relationship to other structures. The design of the top of a tall building will be of particular importance when considering the effect on the skyline. The design of the base of a tall building will also have a significant effect on the streetscape and near views".

Assessment

- 6.4 The DAS prepared by Howells provides full details of the proposed development and its context, the approach to architecture and the quality of the new buildings. The design has evolved through consultation with MCC, Historic England, Local Ward Members, key local stakeholders and public consultation. A summary of the architectural approach is provided below.
- 6.5 The vision for the design has been to take a 'heritage-led' approach to the existing buildings on-site, exploring the significance and value of each individual non-listed building with the aspiration to retain and refurbish those with the greatest value as part of a new vibrant mixed-use destination that responds to its



urban and historic context, with a bold and dramatic approach to massing which will positively contribute to Manchester's skyline.

- 6.6 As discussed in detail in the submitted Development Options Appraisal (ref: March 2024), a number of development options were explored by the Applicant in formulating its preferred scheme. An assessment is provided of the existing buildings on the site, their heritage value and structural integrity, and the various levels of intervention tested during the extensive pre-application design process to formulate the final proposals, including varying degrees of full and partial retention of existing buildings on the site. The main aim has always been to find appropriate and viable uses for the existing buildings before considering any demolition or redevelopment.
- 6.7 When the financial viability of the various options has been tested, Option 6 (the application proposals) represents the most appropriate viable proposal, and one that the Applicant is committed to deliver. This option necessitates the demolition of certain existing buildings at the site, the conservation or façade retention of others that are deemed to have the greatest significance, and a new build development to make the overall scheme viable. Notably, however, the buildings fronting Lever Street can be retained either in full or their facades, refurbished and re-used. It is these buildings that are of the most historic and architectural significance and their long-term future would be secured as a result of the proposed development.





Figure 8: *Great Ancoats Street CGI*

- 6.8 In summary, the Bem Brasil building (32 Great Ancoats Street) is to be retained alongside the facades of nos. 56 and 58 Lever Street. 32 Great Ancoats Street will be pivotal to the ground floor experience and has the opportunity to become a destination within itself, reinstated to its former glory worthy of this important corner site opposite the Express Building. The proposed design aims to retain the facades whilst removing the derelict building behind, which will be achieved by a number of structural strategies. This will look to preserve the Northern Quarters' distinct warehouse typology, part of the area's former industrial heritage. The retained façades will be achieved through an articulated exposed steel work. The steel retaining structure will look to be recessive in appearance so not to detract away from the main proposed buildings sitting behind the retained facades.



Figure 9: *Proposed Courtyard CGI – Retained Façade View*

- 6.9 The proposal aims to echo the architectural identity of the Northern Quarter through its materiality, tone and proportion. The prosperity of the many industries, such as weaving and milling brought wealth to the area which was reflected in the materials and ornamentation in the architecture. The architectural vernacular of the Northern Quarter includes red and blue brick facades, used in a mixture of English Bond, Stretcher Bond and Flemish Bond.
- 6.10 The Tech Hub base is designed to be solid, to reflect the robustness of the traditional 19th century brick buildings of the past. The base is articulated by a regular rhythm of openings to echo the 19th century warehouse rhythm of openings alongside brick corbelling along the apex of the Tech Hub 2-storey base.
- 6.11 The design of the typical floors of the Tech Hub have been articulated to echo the prominent glazing banding and horizontality of the 1930's Grade II* Listed Express Building situated along Great Ancoats Street. The typical floors of the

Tech are designed to be a mixture of glazing and metal in reference to the Express Building. The cantilevered soffits are intended to follow the materiality of the Tech Hubs typical floors with an articulated perforated metal, with the intention to provide an opportunity to be backlit to provide a drama to the Northern Quarter streetscape during the evening.

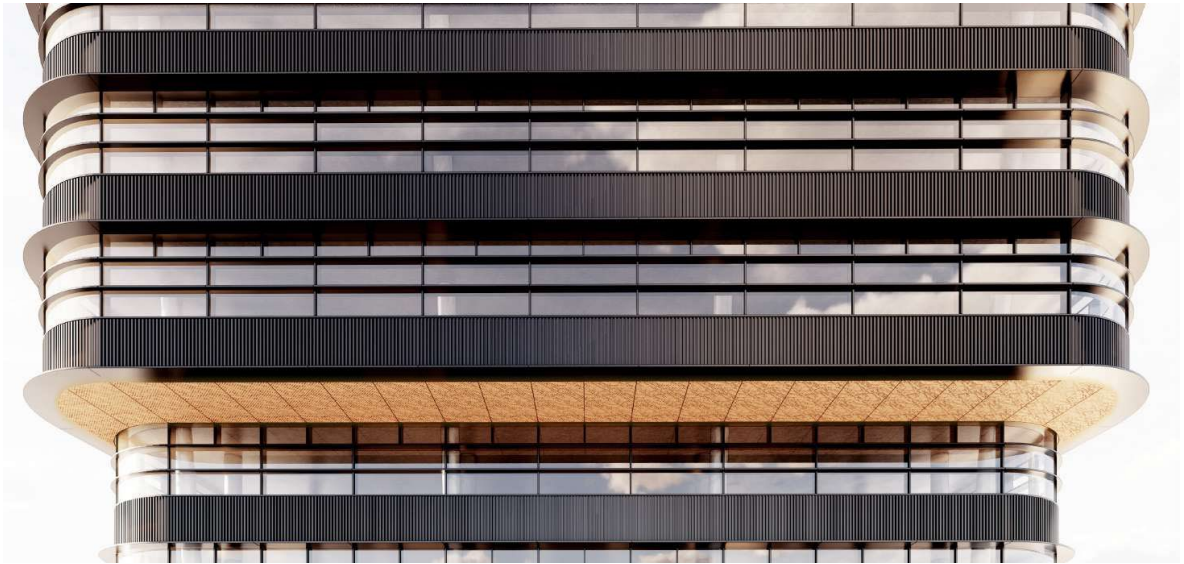


Figure 10: Office Building Typical Floor CGI

- 6.12 The first and second floor façades of No. 32, (formerly the Bem Brasil) are intended to be retained and restored to their original 1930's faience terracotta appearance, subject to its condition. Faience terracotta was commonly used to clad public houses and is synonymous with 19th and early 20th century pubs. By restoring the former terracotta façade, the design looks to preserve the identity of the old Land O' Cakes pub. The Ground Floor is designed to provide a contrast to the upper floors with a darker faience terracotta face with traditional plinth detailing and reinstating the openings seen in the 1930's renovations of the former public house.
- 6.13 Overall, the proposed development has been designed to be of an exceptional architectural quality and due consideration has been given to the use of materials to ensure that the proposal responds positively to the surrounding and emerging context. The DAS prepared by Howells fully explains the architectural and design details.

7. Sustainable Design and Construction

- 7.1 This Chapter assesses the considered of sustainable design and construction of the building. The CABE and English Heritage 2007 Guidance requires an assessment of the following:

*"The **sustainable design and construction** of the proposal. For all forms of development, good design means sustainable design. Tall buildings should set exemplary standards in design because of their high profile and local impact. Proposals should therefore exceed the latest regulations and planning policies for minimising energy use and reducing carbon emissions over the lifetime of the development. The long-term resource and energy efficiency of tall buildings will be enhanced if their design can be adapted over time."*

Assessment

- 7.2 The application is supported by an Environmental Statement which incorporates a chapter on Climate Change, and an Energy Statement which has been prepared by Atelier Ten. The key points of the Energy Strategy for the buildings, including the new-build office building, are as follows:

- U-values beyond those required for compliance
- Reasonable glazing ratios and solar control glazing
- Air permeability of 3 m³/h.m₂@ 50Pa
- High-efficiency HVRF to the office spaces
- Ventilation with heat recovery to the majority of the core spaces
- SFPs of 1.6W/l/s for supply & extract systems
- High lighting efficacy and controls
- DHW via ASHP for the shower block
- A PV array with circa 100 m² total panel area.

- 7.3 The project also targets BREEAM certification under BREEAM UK New Construction 2018 to address the wider sustainability issues. The BREEAM Pre-assessment is included in the planning application submission; the project achieves 6 credits under Ene01, exceeding the minimum requirement for 'Excellent'.



- 7.4 Additionally, the application is supported by a Circular Economy Statement prepared by BWB Consulting covering which supports the reuse and regeneration of materials or products especially as a means of continuing production in a sustainable or environmentally friendly way.
- 7.5 Overall, the Environmental Statement, Energy Strategy and the Circular Economy Statement demonstrate that sustainable design and construction methods have been implemented in order to minimise energy use and reduce carbon emissions over the lifetime of this tall building. Therefore, the buildings height should be positively considered in terms of its sustainable design and construction.



8. Credibility of Design

- 8.1 This Chapter assesses the credibility of design (technically and financially). The CABE and English Heritage (2007) Guidance requires an assessment of the following:

"The credibility of the design, both technically and financially. Tall buildings are expensive to build, so it is important to be sure that the high standard of architectural quality required is not diluted throughout the process of procurement, detailed design, and construction. Location, use, the commitment of the developer, and ability and expertise of the consultant team will have a fundamental bearing on the quality of the completed building."

Assessment

Location

- 8.2 The principle of development and regeneration at this site is further discussed within the Planning Statement, which demonstrates that a suite of planning policies at both local and national level would support the redevelopment of this brownfield, underutilised site in the City Centre. The principle of regeneration of the Site accords with Core Strategy Policies SP 1, EC 1, and EC 3 in helping to contribute to the ongoing regeneration of the City Centre. In addition, Core Strategy Policy T2 reiterates the support for development in sustainable locations and requires development to ensure good access to the City's main economic drivers.

Use

- 8.3 The proposed development will result in the high-quality redevelopment of an existing commercial site to create high quality new Grade A workspace in this area of the City Centre and will increase the retail and food and beverage offer at this important juncture of Northern Quarter / Great Ancoats Street.
- 8.4 As set out by the Manchester Economy and Employment Space Study which was used to inform the Core Strategy for Manchester, the City Centre, located at the heart of the Regional Centre, is crucial to the prosperity of the local economy. The City Centre is known for containing significant amounts of office

development, including strong concentrations of high value industries such as financial and professional services and media and creative industries, all of which drive economic activity and produce economic benefits for the City.

- 8.5 MCC recognise within the Core Strategy that the City Centre is the key economic driver largely due to the location of key assets within the City Centre including good road accessibility and access to a skilled labour force. It provides the highest proportion of jobs in Greater Manchester and forecasts indicate that during the life of the Core Strategy, growth will be disproportionately higher in Manchester than in other Greater Manchester authorities, with The Greater Manchester Forecasting Model indicating that the City will have the greatest increase in job numbers in Greater Manchester over the Core Strategy period.
- 8.6 More recently, PfE sets out the clear case for considerably strengthening the City Centre's economic role through a number of measures, including delivering a broad range of commercial accommodation, which will generally be high density. PfE states that at least 2,019,000sqm of accessible new office floorspace will be provided in the Plan area over the period 2022-2039, with a focus on the City Centre primarily, accounting for more than half of all new office floorspace in the sub-region, taking advantage of existing and proposed public transport connectivity.
- 8.7 Clearly, the need to provide additional office floorspace within Manchester City Centre will therefore be crucial to the continued growth of the employment sector throughout the City and the realisation of trends set for job numbers. There is a clear need to further expand and diversify the City's office stock to help compete with other major cities and greater levels of floorspace will allow for greater levels of inward investment from businesses.
- 8.8 The requirement for new employment floorspace within the City Centre is addressed by Policies JP-Strat1 (Core Growth Area), JP-Strat2 (City Centre), JP-J1 (Supporting Long Term Economic Growth) and JP-J3 (Office Development) of PfE. Policy EC 1 (Employment and Economic Growth in Manchester) of the Core Strategy also recognises that providing a portfolio of employment premises, across a range of employment sites, will be important to the continued economic

growth of Manchester. This Policy, alongside Policy EC 2 (Existing Employment Space) seeks to protect and enhance employment floorspace within the City Centre and particularly focuses on the growth of office floorspace whereby it is noted that there has considerable increase in this type of employment space over the years which is anticipated to continue in this manner over the Core Strategy period.

- 8.9 These policies are supported by Policies EC 3 (The Regional Centre) and CC1 (Primary Economic Development Focus: City Centre and Fringe) which further substantiate that the City Centre will remain the focus for office development. These policies identify the need for employment growth within the form of B1a high density offices (now covered by Use Class E), for which the Council state there is particular encouragement for and explain that the City Centre is the most suitable location for regional and sub-regional office growth in terms of agglomeration and ability to attract inward investment.
- 8.10 The provision of office floorspace as a result of the proposed development would not only bring the vacant parts of the site back into economic use but would also result in an increased quantum of high-quality workspace at the site, addressing the demand and need referenced earlier in this Statement, and therefore contributing positively towards meeting the objectives of Places for Everyone and the Core Strategy.
- 8.11 The principle of the food and beverage uses is already clearly established in this location by virtue of the existing uses on the site. The provision of a high-quality mix of uses in the City Centre is also supported by the adopted Core Strategy Policies CC1, CC2 and CC7.
- 8.12 The NPPF states that 'significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity', taking into account the national business needs and wider opportunities for development.

Developer Commitment

- 8.13 The proposals have been prepared by experienced Applicant and design team familiar with the issues associated with developing high-quality buildings in



urban locations, and with the commitment and funding to deliver a project of high quality which is demonstrated elsewhere in the submission. The project team includes reputable office agents who have helped to ensure the scheme has been designed to be attractive to the Manchester market and the needs of potential occupiers.

- 8.14 Soller Nine Ltd is a real estate investment and development company, operating across multiple asset classes in the UK. Soller Nine Ltd (Soller Nine), based in London have a portfolio GDV over £750,000,000 across different uses, including student housing and office developments throughout major cities in the UK.

Expertise of Consultant Team

- 8.15 The application proposals have been prepared by a consultant team with a wealth of experience and expertise of schemes in Manchester City Centre, particularly tall buildings, and are therefore familiar with the issues associated with developing high quality buildings like that proposed.

- 8.16 The experienced design team includes the following:

- Architects / Lead Designer: Howells
- Agents: Savills / Knight Frank
- Cost Consultant: AtkinsRéalis
- Project Manager: Turner and Townsend
- Planning Consultant: AshtonHale
- Heritage Consultant: Turley
- Structural/Civil Engineer: AKT II
- Facade Consultant: AKT II
- Transportation: SK Transport
- Landscape: Planit-IE
- MEP Engineer: Atelier Ten
- Sustainability & Energy: Atelier Ten
- Acoustic Engineer: Sandy Brown
- EIA Consultant: RJK Consulting
- Fire Engineer: Atelier Ten
- Wind Engineer: GIA



- Daylight/Sunlight: GIA
- Principal Designer: Project Four

8.17 The scheme designs have been subject to review and consultation meetings with Manchester City Council as well as various stakeholders, including local councillors and Historic England. Furthermore, public consultations have been undertaken prior to the submission of the application with the majority of respondents supporting the proposed development. The extent of the pre-application work has ensured a high-quality design and standard of architectural quality, all of which is detailed in the submitted Planning Statement (inc the Chapter on Pre-Application Consultation) and DAS.

8.18 Overall, this Chapter has shown that the proposed development will result in a credible technical and financial design influenced by extensive meetings prior to the applications submission, detailed and executed by an experienced consultant team.



9. Contribution to Public Space and Facilities

- 9.1 This Chapter assesses the contribution to public space and facilities. The CABE and English Heritage (2007) Guidance requires an assessment of the following:

*"The **contribution to public space and facilities**, both internal and external, that the development will make in the area, including the provision of a mix of uses, especially on the ground floor of towers, and the inclusion of these areas as part of the public realm. The development should interact with and contribute positively to its surroundings at street level; it should contribute to safety, diversity, vitality, social engagement and 'sense of place'".*

Assessment

- 9.2 The DAS prepared by Howells and Planit as Landscape Architect provides full details of the proposed development and its context, the contribution to the surrounding public realm and the ground floor uses.
- 9.3 To deliver a high-quality public realm finish to the existing footpaths surrounding the development, the design maintains the generous pedestrian routes along Great Ancoats Street and Lever Street, while enhancing further through the stepping backs of the building facade.
- 9.4 Existing footpaths are retained and resurfaced along the other streets, and all redundant vehicle access points are closed and reinstated as continuous footway in Little Lever Street. Pedestrian crossings are retained on the Lever Street and Great Ancoats Street corner. A new dropped kerb crossing point is introduced on Lever Street at the corner of Houldsworth Street. As discussed within the Design and Access Statement, unfortunately the footpaths are unsuitable for street tree planting due to the extensive below ground services that exist below all footpaths.
- 9.5 The proposed delivery of a high-end office building will complement the neighbouring developments and provides an opportunity to visually strengthen the streetscape through good design and completely re-imagined façade treatments. The building will increase activity at ground floor level and will



remove the failings of the existing buildings that are vacant which currently block out visitors and creates an unfriendly environment.

- 9.6 Overall, the development will greatly enhance the street scene by providing high quality buildings and active frontages provided by the ground floor commercial uses. The development will interact with and contribute positively to its surroundings at street level; it should contribute to safety, diversity, vitality, social engagement and 'sense of place'.



10. Contribution to Permeability

- 10.1 This Chapter assesses the contribution to permeability of the site and the wider area. The Guidance requires an assessment of the following:

"The contribution made to the permeability of a site and the wider area; opportunities to offer improved accessibility, and, where appropriate, the opening up, or effective closure, of views to improve the legibility of the city and the wider townscape."

Assessment

- 10.2 The site is situated in a highly sustainable and accessible location. It has excellent accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists and has exceptional connections to public transport which supports a reduced reliance on private motor vehicles. The site has a GMAL of 8 (score: 114.03), which is the highest level of accessibility in Greater Manchester.

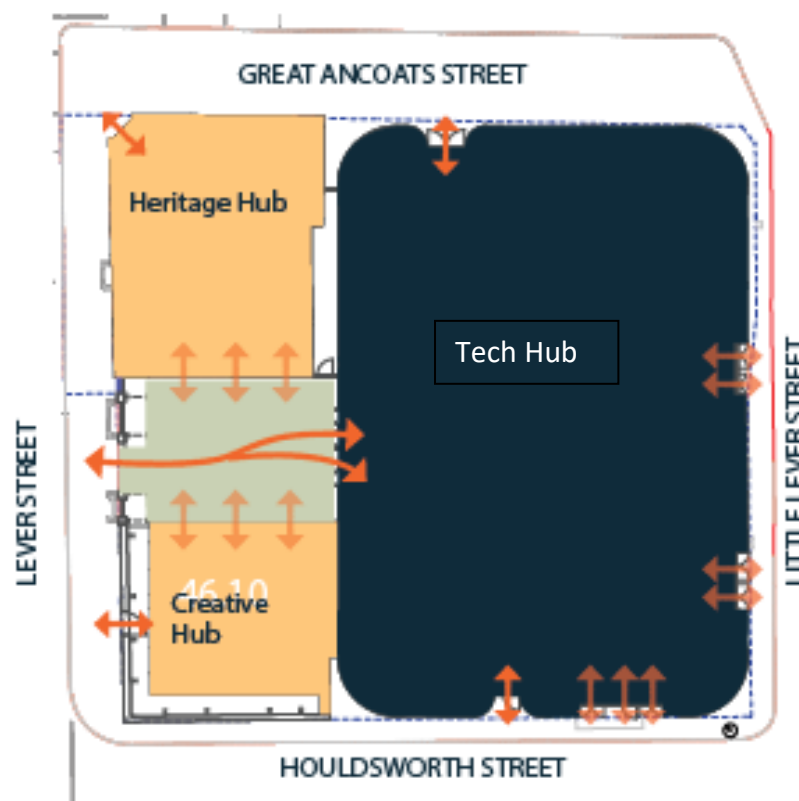


Figure 11: Proposed Development Connectivity

- 10.3 The site is surrounded by streets in four sides, allowing for multiple pedestrian accesses into the various parts of the development, as shown at **Figure 11**. The main entrance into the Tech Hub and Creative Hub is located on Lever Street via the new courtyard, with cycle access located along Houldsworth Street. The Courtyard is at the heart of the proposal, linking No. 32 Great Ancoats Street (“The Heritage Hub”), and the “Tech” and “Creative” Hubs within the new office development.
- 10.4 To deliver a high-quality public realm finish to the existing footpaths surrounding the development, the design maintains the generous pedestrian routes along Great Ancoats Street and Lever Street, while enhancing further through the stepping backs of the building facade.
- 10.5 Existing footpaths are retained and resurfaced along the other streets, and all redundant vehicle access points are closed and reinstated as continuous footway in Little Lever Street. Pedestrian crossings are retained on the Lever Street and Great Ancoats Street corner. New dropped kerb crossing point is introduced in Lever Street at the corner of Houldsworth Street. As discussed within the Design and Access Statement, unfortunately the footpaths are unsuitable for street tree planting due to the extensive below ground services that exist below all footpaths.
- 10.6 In summary, the proposed development has been designed to provide access to key pedestrian routes around the site. The development will also contribute to the delivery of public realm, landscaping, and physical upgrades to provide a safe and inviting frontage for users of the buildings.



11. Provision of a Well-Designed Environment

- 11.1 This chapter assesses the provision of a well-designed environment. The Guidance requires an assessment of the following:

"The provision of a well-designed environment, both internal and external, that contributes to the quality of life of those who use the buildings, including function, fitness for purpose and amenity."

Assessment

- 11.2 The proposal will greatly enhance the street scene by incorporating the refurbishment of key existing built fabric and providing a high-quality new building at the site. The scheme will improve the appearance of the site through the enhancement and conversion of the existing buildings that hold significance in heritage terms, and the provision of new high-quality facades and structure.
- 11.3 The buildings in their current form and condition detracts from the quality of the built environment in this area of the City Centre. The proposal will, therefore, improve visitor's perceptions of the site and this important part of the City Centre by improving the frontages and quality of uses along Lever Street / Great Ancoats Street, both of which are key pedestrian routes.
- 11.4 The proposed delivery of a high-end office building and new F&B facilities at ground floor will complement the neighbouring developments and provides an opportunity to visually strengthen the streetscape through good design and completely re-imagined façade treatments. The building will increase activity at ground floor level and will remove the failings of the existing buildings that are vacant which currently block out visitors and creates an unfriendly environment.
- 11.5 The uses at ground floor level will also draw people and businesses to this location and the office development will create footfall for both the uses at ground floor level as well as other local retail, restaurants and leisure uses within the local area. The proposals will therefore not only be beneficial for the site itself but will create wider benefits which will seep into the surrounding area.



- 11.6 In summary, the proposed development has formed part of an extensive design process to create an overall high-quality development with a well-designed environment that will contribute to the quality of life of those who use the buildings.



12. MCC Core Strategy

12.1 As stated in Chapter 2 of this Statement, Policy EN2 of Manchester City Council's Core Strategy (2012) provides local guidance relating to tall buildings. This Policy includes a list of criteria for which must be met in order for the local planning authority to support a proposal for a tall building:

"Proposals for tall buildings will be supported where it can be demonstrated that they:

- Are of excellent design quality;*
- Are appropriately located;*
- Contribute positively to sustainability;*
- Contribute positively to place making, for example as a landmark by terminating a view, or by signposting a facility of significance; and*
- Will bring significant regeneration benefits."*

12.2 Furthermore, the policy states that suitable locations for tall buildings will include sites within and immediately adjacent to the City Centre with particular encouragement given to non-conservation areas and sites which can easily be served by public transport nodes. Finally, the policy requires applications to demonstrate that proposals for tall buildings are viable and deliverable.

12.3 This section of the Tall Building Statement provides an assessment of the proposed development against the criteria included within Policy EN2.

Assessment

12.4 The first requirement for an application for a tall building to be supported by Manchester City Council is the proposal being *"of excellent design quality"*. Chapter 6 of this Tall Building Statement demonstrates that the proposal has been carefully designed to create a first-class office-led development which will set a new benchmark for design quality in this key location between the Northern Quarter and Great Ancoats Street.



- 12.5 The second requirement of Policy EN2 is that tall buildings should be *"appropriately located"*. The Site is within the City Centre and, as established within the Transport Statement, the site is in a highly sustainable location within close proximity of existing transport infrastructure. The Manchester Core Strategy supports the development and regeneration of this site as part of the ongoing improvement works to the area, as well as providing additional office accommodation and ground floor active frontage in the Regional Centre in line with strategic priorities. The Core Strategy fully supports the development and regeneration of the application site and is an important material consideration in the determination of this planning application. Furthermore, the proposed development provides an opportunity to regenerate a site with a high-quality scheme in a key location, positively contributing to place making.
- 12.6 The third requirement for an application for a tall building to be supported is that it should *"contribute positively to sustainability"*. This proposal is supported by an Energy Statement and a Circular Economy Statement which evidences that the proposal includes a range of sustainable design features. This is further evidenced at Chapter 7 of this Tall Building Statement which addresses Sustainable Design and Construction.
- 12.7 Policy EN2 also requires proposals for tall buildings to contribute positively to place making, for example as a landmark, by terminating a view, or by signposting a facility of significance. The proposed tall building will deliver a distinctive and high-quality 'landmark' development which will play a significant role in successful placemaking. The building will add visual interest to the townscape and will assist with wayfinding.
- 12.8 The final requirement in terms of MCC's support for tall buildings is that such development should *"bring significant regeneration benefits"*. As a brownfield site which is adjacent to the City Centre, partially vacant and falling into a state of dilapidation, the high-quality redevelopment of this site will bring about significant regeneration benefits. The following list considers the key benefits which this current application will bring:



Economic

- **An Economic Catalyst:** The Proposed Development would secure direct investment of c.£77m into the local economy by improving the area's aesthetics and thereby, along with committed development in the local area, catalysing the regeneration of this location creating an attractive environment for future investors;
- **Contribution of Construction Phase to Economic Output:** The Proposed Development could generate an estimated £20.7m of gross value added (GVA) per year for the three-year construction period;
- **Increase in Business Rates:** The Proposed Development will increase the revenues to Manchester City Council through business rates in the order of £1.85m per year;
- **Contribution of Permanent Employment to Economic Output:** It is estimated that once completed and fully occupied, additional annual GVA generated by the Proposed Development will equate to around £33.9m (£53.4m gross);
- **Direct and Indirect operational employment:** The Proposed Development will support an estimated additional 1,044 FTE jobs in relevant sectors compared to existing development (1,224 gross); and
- **Direct and Indirect Construction-related Employment:** The Proposed Development could support 921 "person years" of construction-related employment.

Social

- **Reducing Worklessness and Deprivation** - As above, the proposed development creates jobs and opportunities during the construction and operational phase as set out below. The creation of jobs will upskill residents and help to tackle the causes and challenges associated with deprivation;
- **Improving the Skills of Residents** - The Applicant has committed to a Local Labour Agreement which include key targets to source employment locally, thus providing opportunities for upskilling and various apprenticeship opportunities;
- **Improving Access to Employment and Education** - The site provides employment opportunities during construction and operational in a highly sustainable location, with walking, cycling and public transport genuinely realistic alternatives to private car use.
- **Removing Health Inequalities and Enabling Healthy Lifestyles** - The development will encourage future site users to walk, cycle or commute via public



transport. The creation of jobs in a sustainable location will help address health inequalities in the local area.

- **Creating Neighbourhood Focus, Facilities and Identity** - The development provides a blend of uses and spaces to support the needs of the growing economy and the existing community to create a positive and successful mixed-use neighbourhood.

Environmental

- **Regeneration of an Under-Utilised Site:** The Proposed Development would deliver the regeneration of previously developed site, which will have significant environmental benefits for the area and enhance the physical appearance of the local area;
- **Efficient Use of Land:** The Proposed Development would ensure efficient use of previously developed land by maximising its development potential whilst taking into account key site opportunities and constraints, in accordance with Chapter 11 (Making effective use of land) of the NPPF;
- **Practical and Innovative Design:** The Proposed Development has been designed to ensure that it can function effectively from an operational perspective whilst also reinforcing an exciting, high quality, and innovative design;
- **An Energy Efficient Development:** the proposal has been designed to be as energy efficient as possible. The key elements of the Energy Strategy for the development is as follows:
 - U-values beyond those required for compliance
 - Reasonable glazing ratios and solar control glazing
 - Air permeability of 3 m³/h.m²@ 50Pa
 - High-efficiency HVRF to the office spaces
 - Ventilation with heat recovery to the majority of the core spaces
 - SFPs of 1.6W/l/s for supply & extract systems
 - High lighting efficacy and controls
 - DHW via ASHP for the shower block
 - A PV array with circa 100 m² total panel area
 - The project also targets BREEAM certification under BREEAM UK New Construction 2018 to address the wider sustainability issues. The BREEAM Pre-assessment is included in the planning application submission; the project achieves 6 credits under Ene01, exceeding the minimum requirement for 'Excellent';



- **Reducing Congestion on the Roads** – The development is car-free and will be a long-term positive step to reduce congestion on the highways network, improving the reliability of public transport and reducing overcrowding; and
- **Improving the Quality of Air and Water** – In addition to the above, the drainage strategy will implement a series of sustainable drainage strategy measures to treat surface water prior to discharging into the network.

Heritage

- **Sustaining or enhancing** the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting; and
- **Reducing or removing** risks to a heritage asset.

12.9 As demonstrated above, the proposal therefore meets the five requirements included within Policy EN2 of the Manchester Core Strategy. Therefore, the proposal aligns with local planning policy with regards to tall buildings, as such its proposed height should be positively considered.



13. Summary and Conclusions

13.1 This Tall Building Statement has been prepared by AshtonHale Ltd ("AshtonHale") for Soller Nine ("the Applicant") in support of a full planning application submitted to Manchester City Council ("MCC") for an office-led development ("NXQ") at Land Bound by Lever Street, Great Ancoats Street, Little Lever Street and Houldsworth Street, Manchester ("the Site").

13.2 The full description of development as stated on the application form is:

"Full planning application for part-retention, conversion and extension of existing buildings; selective demolition; the erection of a ground floor + 17 storey building comprising new office space (Use Class E) with ground floor reception area and ancillary uses; supporting infrastructure and ancillary facilities, roof top plant, and landscaping."

13.3 This statement has assessed the new build proposals against principles of Historic England's Advice Note 4: Tall Buildings (2022), CABE and English Heritage Guidance on Tall Buildings Document (2007) and Policy EN2 of Manchester City Council's Core Strategy (2012).

13.4 It has been demonstrated that the proposed development has been formulated to respond positively to the character of the existing and emerging surrounding area. The development will revitalise the site and transform a currently underutilised site to create a high-quality development, which is considered appropriate in terms of height when considering the regeneration context, the established need for and requirements of Grade A office space.

13.5 In terms of the impact on nearby heritage assets, this Statement has established that the proposal will result in "less than substantial" harm to the significance of surrounding heritage assets and any harm caused will be outweighed by the public benefits of the proposals, in line with the necessary planning balance advocated by national and local policy.

13.6 The scheme's high quality architectural design also provides justification for the proposed heights and the buildings have been carefully designed in terms of form, massing and material. The landmark development will bring about place



making benefits transforming the site from being partly vacant and derelict to a quality new destination, which will set a new benchmark for design standards within this part of Manchester.

13.7 Furthermore, the scheme has been assessed in terms of the additional criteria included within the CABI and English Heritage (2007) Tall Buildings Guidance, and has been shown to be wholly acceptable in terms of:

- Sustainable design and construction;
- Credibility of design;
- Contribution to public space and facilities, including a new retail facility and community centre at ground floor level of the building;
- Contribution to permeability; and
- Creation of a well-designed environment.

13.8 Finally, in terms of the assessment of the site against the criteria included within Manchester City Council's Core Strategy Policy EN2, the proposal has been evidenced to meet the 5 requirements for the local planning authority to support this planning application.

13.9 Overall, the height of the scheme has been considered in accordance with relevant local and national planning policy and guidance, and it has been demonstrated that the proposed heights should be considered acceptable in planning terms.

