



Paul Butler Associates
Planning, Development & Heritage Consultants

Generation Ltd

Virgil Street, Trafford

Planning Statement

04 April 2024

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1. Introduction

Purpose of this Statement

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Paul Butler Associates on behalf of the applicant, Generation Ltd. The statement is submitted in support of a full planning application on land to the east of Virgil Street which is currently occupied by Palmer House.
- 1.2 The application seeks full planning permission for the construction of four houses with ground floor parking and associated amenity space, use of Palmer House for Class E (g) (offices – 802sqm) and the construction of a new car park and amenity space. The application site covers two local authority areas therefore a duplicate application has been submitted to Manchester City Council on the same date as this submission.
- 1.3 Previously in May / June 2023, two identical applications were submitted to Trafford Council and Manchester City Council respectively for a similar development. Trafford Council refused application 111037/FUL/23 on the 03 August 2023 whilst Manchester City Council approved application 137234/FO/2023, recognising the significant benefits associated with the scheme.
- 1.4 The application follows extensive pre-application discussions with Trafford Council over the period of October 2023 to February 2024, whereby a number of principles in respect of the development of this site have now been established.
- 1.5 This Planning Statement will provide an overview of the development proposals, assess the proposals against local and national planning policy and present the case for granting planning permission.

Documents submitted with the Planning Application

- 1.6 The planning application is accompanied by drawings prepared by Nick Moss Architects and the following documents in line with Trafford Council's adopted validation checklist (July 2023).

Supporting Documents

- Completed Application Forms and Ownership Certificates (prepared by Paul Butler Associates);
- CIL Form (prepared by Paul Butler Associates);
- Planning Statement, including Equalities Statement (prepared by Paul Butler Associates);
- Heritage Statement (prepared by Paul Butler Associates);
- Design and Access Statement (prepared by Nick Moss Architects);
- Arboricultural Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment (prepared by DEP);
- Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain (prepared by Leigh Ecology Ltd);
- Air Quality Assessment (prepared by Redmore Environmental);
- Flood Risk Assessment (prepared by Renaissance);
- Drainage Strategy (prepared by Renaissance);
- Crime Impact Statement (prepared by Greater Manchester Police);
- Highways Technical Note (prepared by Axis);
- Waste Management Strategy (prepared by Axis);
- Noise Assessment (prepared by Hann Tucker Associates).

Structure of this Statement

1.7 The remainder of this statement is structured as follows:

- Section 2 provides a description of the Site and surrounding area;
- Section 3 presents the proposed development for which planning permission is sought and an overview of the pre-application discussions;
- Section 4 outlines the relevant national and local planning policy and guidance;
- Section 5 provides an appraisal of the key planning issues which require consideration in the determination of the application;
- Section 6 concludes the statement and provides a summary of the overall case for granting planning approval.

2. The Site and Surroundings

The Application Site

- 2.1 The application site is located on the eastern side of Virgil Street and comprises Palmer House, a car park area and adjacent land.
- 2.2 Palmer House is a two storey rectangular building with a large courtyard to the front which is used for parking. The courtyard is enclosed by a brick wall with railings above (approximately 2 metres in height) which secures the site from the public highway. Access into the courtyard is taken via an existing metal gate which is located centrally within the courtyard frontage.
- 2.3 To the rear of the site is a neglected area of land that is fenced off from St George's Park to the north. The land is closed off from public access and is located within the administrative area of Manchester City Council. The application site also takes in a small part of this land between Palmer House and the public park. The land is in a poor condition and has attracted anti-social problems in the past.
- 2.4 Also within the application site is a small area of land to the south east of Palmer House, this forms the periphery of a connecting route to St George's Park from City Road to the south, historically this area was occupied by buildings. The area is away from the track to St George's Park and has attracted litter, fly tipping and anti-social problems (see figure 3.7 and 3.9 of appendix 3).
- 2.5 Palmer House is currently in use as office space at ground floor and storage space at first floor. This was approved under a temporary five year consent in January 2021 under application ref 102104/COU/20. As disclosed in planning documents at that time, the applicant pursued a temporary consent for a 'meanwhile use' whilst working with the respective local authorities for future development plans.
- 2.6 Prior to this the site experienced a period of vacancy having previously been used as a place of worship ('House of Favour'): this use was approved under change of use application 79556/COU/2012 on 23 January 2013. Prior to this the site was used for

manufacture and storage under a B2 use class. The full planning history associated with the site is set out later in this chapter.

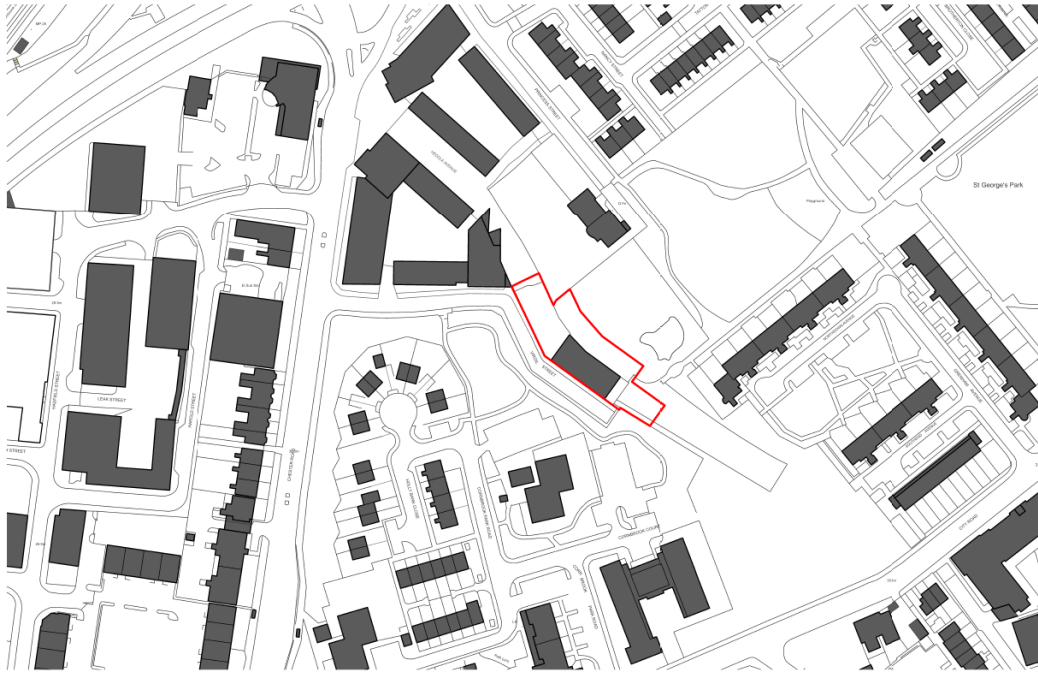


Figure 2.1: Site Location.

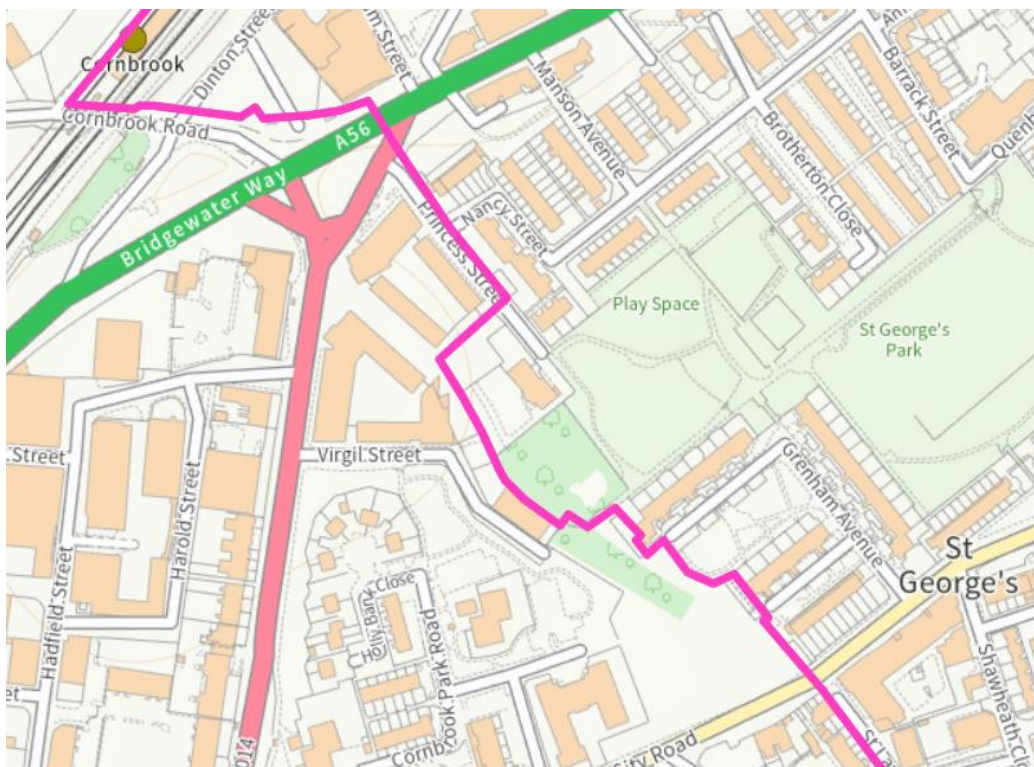


Figure 2.2: Local Authority Boundary between Trafford and Manchester.

Surrounding Area

- 2.7 The surrounding area is predominantly residential in nature, interspersed with areas of formal and informal public open space. South of the site is the Princess Court tower block on Cornbrook Park Road, this is a 15 storey building owned and managed by Trafford Housing Trust. The grounds of Princess Court border Virgil Street and there is an access from Princess Court towards the development site via an opening in the palisade fencing along the western side of Virgil Street.
- 2.8 To the east of the development site is St Georges Park, the area of land adjacent to the site is overgrown and not publicly accessible.
- 2.9 South of the park are residential properties on Northdown Avenue. In the western corner of the park and due north of the development site are the Hulme Barracks on Princess Street. The building is Grade II listed, however it appears that the building is currently vacant having last been used as apartments. Further residential properties exist north of here on Princess Street, Nancy Street and Tatton Street.
- 2.10 North-west of the development site on the northern side of Virgil Street where it meets Chester Road is the 'Botanica' development which comprises 363 residential apartments, within a number of high rise development blocks.
- 2.11 The Empress Conservation Area begins at the junction of Chester Road and Virgil Street and extends to the south taking in the Empress Distillery and surrounding terraced properties.
- 2.12 Photos of the site and surrounding area can be found in Appendix 1.

Planning History

- 2.13 In accordance with good practice, a review of the Site's planning history has been undertaken using Trafford Council's online database. The planning history identified is set out below.

Application Ref.	Description of Development	Decision and Date
H07752	Change of use from warehousing to the manufacture, storage and wholesaling of handbags, purses and similar articles.	Approved 14 September 1978
H09186	Demolition of existing buildings and erection of factory and manufacture, storage and wholesaling of leather goods.	Approved 24 May 1979
H12701	Retention of non-illuminated company name sign.	Approved 16 July 1980
79556/COU/2012	Change of use from factory (Use class B2) to Place of Worship (Use Class D1).	Approved 23 January 2012
80882/COND/2013	Application for approval of details reserved by condition of grant of planning permission 79556/COU/2012, conditions 4,5 and 6.	Approved 15 April 2013
102401/COU/20	Change of use of premises from F1 (Place of Worship to Use Class E(g) and B8 (Storage). Temporary 5 year consent.	Approved 27 January 2021
111037/FUL/23*	Erection of four houses with ground floor parking and associated amenity space along with the change of use of Palmer House to Class E (g) with associated external alterations and the construction of a new car park and amenity space.	Refused by TC 03.08.2023.
137234/FO/2023*	Erection of four houses with ground floor parking and associated amenity space. Change of use of Palmer House to Class E (g) with associated external alterations and the construction of a new car park and amenity space.	Approved by MCC 15.09.2023.

Table 2.1: Planning History. *Analysis in respect of the most recent applications is provided in the next section.

3. The Development Proposals

Description of Development

- 3.1 This statement supports an application for full planning permission for the erection of four dwellings (C3), the conversion of Palmer House to Officers (E(g)) and the construction of a new car park and associated amenity space.
- 3.2 The design proposals are presented in the supporting application plans and Design and Access Statement prepared by Nick Moss Architects.
- 3.3 The new dwellinghouses will be arranged in a linear manner in the area of the existing courtyard to Palmer House. This is a large expanse of hardstanding that is significantly under used for a site positioned in a highly sustainable and accessible location.
- 3.4 The residential element of the scheme will comprise a terraced row of four townhouses set over four storeys of accommodation, with an external roof terrace and rear yard area providing amenity space. The properties will include a garage, utility and study / workspace at ground floor, a kitchen and open plan living area at first floor and three bedrooms set over the top two floors.
- 3.5 Following pre-application discussions, the facades of the proposed townhouses will primarily comprise of two materials: red brickwork is proposed as the dominant material with powder coated metal (bronze anodised finish) providing a contrast to secondary components and cladding.
- 3.6 A proposed turning head separates the new residential section of the site from Palmer House in the southern portion of the site. A bin store for the offices in Palmer House will be provided adjacent to the turning head. Refuse access for the four houses will be provided through the garages (plots 2 and 3) and via a side gated access for plots 1 and 4.
- 3.7 Palmer House will be retained in its existing form. At present the building is in use at ground floor with offices and the first floor is used for storage (as per planning temporary approval 102401/COU/20). The proposals will see the entirety of the building in use for offices. New car parking will be provided at the south eastern end of the building on a small area of

space, previously occupied by buildings, that is currently blighted by littering and anti-social behaviour.

3.8 To the rear of Palmer House, the applicant has reached an agreement with Manchester City Council (MCC) for the use of a strip of land 10 metres wide for cycle parking and amenity space for Palmer House which currently abuts right up to this boundary.

3.9 As part of the agreement with MCC, the applicant will undertake improvement works to the remaining land adjacent to St Georges Park (north east of the site) allowing this area to become fully accessible public open space. These works are covered by a separate legal / contractual agreement between the applicant and MCC and do not form part of the proposed application due to the works not requiring planning permission. The acquisition of the strip is subject to these park access improvement works being completed.

3.10 The works will provide amenity, access and biodiversity improvements that will be of significant benefit to the local community. The intended purpose of these works is outlined below:

- Provide direct, secure access from the development to the park.
- Improve access to the park for existing and future residents in the surrounding area – the route through this area is mainly used by those travelling from Old Trafford (on the Trafford side of the boundary) to use or pass through Barracks Park.
- Increase the security and safety of those going to and from the park through this area and reduce anti-social behaviour, primarily by improving overlooking and increasing usage.
- Increase the attractiveness and biodiversity of this area.
- Make this area easier to manage and maintain in the future.

3.11 The proposed improvement works are shown in the accompanying plans (see drawing no. 5145 03A). They have been developed in consultation with residents and Councillors from both sides of the local authority boundary and include:

- Clearance of brambles and self-seeded saplings.
- Planting of bulbs and wildflowers.
- Crown lifting of trees to improve visibility.
- Introduction of more native trees, shrubs and ground flora.
- Measures to encourage the development of wildlife within these areas – bird and bat boxes, habitat piles, etc.
- Provision of formal paths with an improved surface, linking where the formal access path currently terminates, through the wooded area to the open grassed area off City Road.

3.12 The significant benefits associated with these works are discussed further in section 5.

Pre-Application with Trafford Council

3.13 The previous refusal contained reasons for refusal in respect of Heritage, Design and Amenity. Subsequently a pre-application enquiry was submitted to Trafford Council, this included a revised design, demonstration of views at roof level, a character study and clarification on a number of elements of the original application.

3.14 A pre-application meeting was held in December 2023, followed by the submission of updated elevations in January and February 2024. A second pre-application meeting was held in February 2024.

3.15 During the pre-application process a number of changes / principles were agreed with Trafford Council planners, as follows:

- Clarification regarding the constraints affecting the site including the below ground culvert.
- Re-configuration of buildings from two semi-detached dwellings to a terrace and increased gap between the proposed development and neighbouring Botanica development.

- Reduction in the height of the stairwells at roof level.
- Reduction in the parapet height to improve the proportions of the building and reduce the perceived bulk.
- Various changes to the façade / detailed design including:
 - Change to red brick to match Botanica development.
 - Additional brick detailing (solider courses) at upper level.
 - Rationalised fenestration to create order and hierarchy to windows by stacking the windows vertically and proposing Juliet balconies only at first floor level.
 - Dog tooth brickwork proposed between windows at each level.
 - Recessed brick coursing to the ground floor storey.
 - Recession of the garage doors and front doors to provide relief to the elevations.
 - Garage door to include triangular chevron patterning, powder coated in bronze to match the Botanica development.
 - Stairwell / 'chimney stacks' to include triangular chevron patterning, powder coated in bronze to match the Botanica development.
 - Window frames to be powder coated to match the Botanica development.
- Addition of further landscaping adjacent to Plots 1 and 4 with climbing plants and pleached trees.
- Review of roof level environment and re-positioning of stairwells to create screening and improve relationship to the Botanica development.
- Clarification regarding the wider improvements to the public park, when these will be delivered and the significant benefits attached to these in planning terms.

- 3.16 The above changes overcome the previous reasons for refusal stated by Trafford Council and were positively received during the pre-application stage. The design changes outlined above and as illustrated in the supporting application documents are considered to overcome the reasons for refusal in respect of 'design' and 'amenity'.
- 3.17 In respect of 'heritage', the planners confirmed their view that the scheme would still amount to less than 'substantial harm' to the setting of the listed barracks. However, with the positive improvements that are being made to the scheme and working towards an acceptable design solution, they anticipated that this harm would be outweighed by the public benefits of the development (in accordance with national policy).
- 3.18 The application is accompanied by a Heritage Statement which robustly demonstrates the acceptability of the proposed scheme.

4. Planning Policy Context

Introduction

- 4.1 This section of the statement sets out the local and national planning policy context of relevance to the determination of this planning application. An appraisal of how the proposal relates to the key planning considerations relevant to the Site is set out in section 5 of this statement.

The Development Plan

- 4.2 Section 38(6) of the Town and Country Planning Act 2004 states that applications for development should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In the case of Trafford Council, the adopted Development Plan consists of the Core Strategy (adopted 2012) and the Greater Manchester Places for Everyone (PfE) Plan (adopted 21 March 2024). Due consideration in the determination of the application will also need to be afforded to national policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which represents a significant material consideration.

Trafford Council Core Strategy (2012)

- 4.3 The policies of the Core Strategy which are considered relevant to the scheme are outlined in the following section.
- 4.4 Core Policy L1 'Land for New Homes' (note partially superseded by PfE Plan) - this policy seeks to ensure that an adequate range of sites are made available to allow a variety of housing types to come forward subject to the capacity of the urban area and infrastructure to accommodate development and protect the environment. This will be achieved through new-build, conversion and sub-division of existing properties. The Council will seek to ensure the efficient use of land, concentrating higher density housing development in appropriate and sustainable locations at lowest risk of flooding, where it can be demonstrated that it is consistent with the provisions of L2.

- 4.5 Core Policy L2 'Meeting Housing Needs' - the policy outlines the Council's requirements to ensure that sufficient land is made available to maintain a rolling five year supply of deliverable land for housing, but to also ensure that there is an adequate mix of housing types and sizes to meet the needs of the community.
- 4.6 Core Policy L3 'Regeneration and Reducing Inequalities' - within the Old Trafford Priority Regeneration Area, the policy seeks to specifically provide approximately 1,000 (net) new residential units; small scale office development; and small scale retail facilities to meet local needs.
- 4.7 Core Policy L4 'Sustainable Transport and Accessibility' (note partially superseded by PfE Plan) - this core policy recognises the importance of improving accessibility to building sustainable communities and creating a competitive and efficient labour market within the sub region. Accessibility to housing, employment, health, education, shopping, culture, sports and leisure and other essential facilities is influenced by two factors; where development is located and the quality and choice of transport links available to serve that development.
- 4.8 Core Policy L5 'Climate Change' (note partially superseded by PfE Plan) - this policy identifies the importance of the effects of climate change that will need to be considered at all stages of the development process to ensure that all development minimises impact and mitigates effects.
- 4.9 Core Policy L7 'Design' (note partially superseded by PfE Plan) - the policy identifies a number of criteria upon which proposed development must adhere to and includes: functionality and not prejudicing amenity.
- 4.10 Core Policy R1 'Historic Environment' (note partially superseded by PfE Plan) - the policy states that the significance, character and appearance of heritage assets are qualities that will be protected, maintained and enhanced.
- 4.11 Core Policy R2 'Natural Environment' - seeks to ensure the protection and enhancement of the natural environment of the Borough.

- 4.12 Core Policy R3 'Green Infrastructure' - at the strategic level, the green infrastructure network identified in the policy includes private gardens. The policy requires that all applications are accompanied by an appropriate statement to enable the Council to assess and determine the contribution made by the development to green infrastructure.
- 4.13 The detailed assessment of the scheme within the following planning appraisal section confirms that the proposal accords with the above Core Strategy policies.

The Places for Everyone (PfE) Joint Development Plan Document

- 4.14 The nine combined authorities of Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan have prepared a Strategic Plan covering the nine areas. At a meeting of Full Council on Wednesday 20th March 2024, Trafford Council adopted the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document. The PfE Plan took effect and became part of the statutory development plan for each of the nine PfE authorities on March 21, 2024.
- 4.15 The PfE policies of relevance to this application are outlined below. The GMCA is yet to publish a consolidated version of the document including minor non material amendments, therefore these should be noted as necessary when published.
- 4.16 Policy JP-Strat5: Inner Areas. This area covers the inner areas which surround the Core Growth Area in the PfE plan. In this area, the continued regeneration of the inner areas will be promoted and will be linked to reducing levels of deprivation and poverty and supporting the improved health and wellbeing of the communities. High levels of new development will be accommodated in this highly accessible and sustainable location.
- 4.17 New development will be, predominantly residential and will be integrated with existing communities, enhancing the quality of places and their local character.
- 4.18 Policy JP-Strat9: Southern Areas. The Plan explains that there will be some overlap between strategic areas. In the Southern Areas, which covers the majority of Trafford, there will be a strong emphasis on making as much use as possible of suitable previously developed (brownfield) land and promoting the roles of the areas' town centres and its other key assets,

including education and training facilities enabling people to gain access to employment opportunities.

- 4.19 Policy JP-Strat14: A Sustainable and Integrated Transport Network. Through an ambitious programme of investment, the transport network will be improved so that half of all daily trips can be made by public transport, cycling and walking, especially those shorter journeys around neighbourhoods. The policy specifically states that higher densities will typically be appropriate in locations with good access to rapid transit connections.
- 4.20 New development will have a significant role in delivering our future sustainable and integrated transport network in order to reduce car dependency and increase levels of walking, cycling and public transport.
- 4.21 Policy JP-S1: Sustainable Development. In order to address climate change, the PfE plan has an ambition to be carbon neutral by 2028. To meet this target new development will have a critical role to play and all new homes and commercial/industrial buildings will need to achieve net zero carbon by 2028. It is expected that development in the Plan area will apply a net zero carbon approach to operational emissions up until 2028, thereafter emissions in construction should be considered. Minimum carbon reduction targets will be set in line with the Future Homes Standard of 80% or until such a time this is superseded. Development will need to follow the energy hierarchy to maximise on site energy measures first. Where residential applications are accompanied by an Energy Statement then it is recommended that 20% of the ground floor area is given over to solar photovoltaics.
- 4.22 Policy JP-S2: Carbon and Energy. In order to deliver carbon neutrality by 2038, the policy supports a range of measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- 4.23 Policy JP-H1: Scale, Distribution and Phasing of New Housing Development. The policy sets out a requirement for 175,185 net additional dwellings to be delivered over the plan period. The new homes are to be of a good quality and design, adaptable, supported by the necessary infrastructure and amenities and their distribution will support the PfE strategy of reducing the need to travel.
- 4.24 Policy JP-H3: Type, Size and Design of New Housing. Development should promote a range of dwelling types and sizes to meet local needs and deliver more inclusive neighbourhoods.

Where appropriate this can include incorporating specialist housing for older persons and vulnerable people.

- 4.25 All development should meet the National Described Space Standards and be built to the 'accessible and adaptable' standard in Part M4(2) of the Building Regulations unless specific site conditions make this impracticable.
- 4.26 Policy JP-H4: Density of New Housing. The policy sets out that new housing development should be delivered at a density appropriate to the location, reflecting the relative accessibility of the site by walking, cycling and public transport and the need to achieve efficient use of land and high quality design. As the site is within 400 metres of Manchester city centre and other rail stations and metrolink stops the minimum density that should be achieved under the policy is 120 dwellings per hectare. Lower densities can be accepted if site specific or local housing market issues dictate as such.
- 4.27 Policy JP-G6: Urban Green Space. The policy sets out that to ensure there is an appropriate scale, type, quality and distribution of accessible urban green space that can support a high quality of life and other important green function, that:
- Existing urban green space will be protected and enhanced in balance with other considerations; and
 - GMCA will work with developers and other stakeholders to deliver new high quality urban green spaces.
- 4.28 Development should specifically be designed to support the positive use of nearby green spaces, such as by offering a high-quality setting, providing natural surveillance, and facilitating easy access by walking and cycling.
- 4.29 Policy JP-G8: A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity. The policy aligns with the requirement at national level to plan for a biodiversity net gain in new development.
- 4.30 Policy JP-P1: Sustainable Places. Policy JP-P1 sets 17 key attributes that all development should be consistent with. In respect of distinctiveness, development should have a clear identity that: A. Responds to conserving and enhancing the natural environment, landscape features, historic environment and local history and culture; B. Enables a clear

understanding of how the place has developed; and C. Respects and acknowledges the character and identity identify of the locality in terms of design, siting, size, scale and materials used.

- 4.31 Policy JP-P2: Heritage. The policy sets out that development proposals affecting designated and non-designated heritage assets and/or their settings will be considered having regard to national planning policy.
- 4.32 Policy JP-C8: Transport Requirements of New Development. The policy requires new development to be located and designed to enable and encourage walking, cycling and public transport use, to reduce the negative effects of car dependency and help deliver high quality, attractive, liveable and sustainable environments.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and other Planning Guidance

- 4.33 Other relevant supplementary documents that have been considered in the development of this scheme include: Supplementary Planning Document (SPD1): Revised Planning Obligations (Adopted July 2014); Supplementary Planning Document (SPD3): Parking Standards and Design (Adopted February 2012); Trafford CIL Charging Schedule (2014); and Planning Guidelines - New Residential Development (adopted September 2004). These documents will be discussed as appropriate in the planning appraisal (section 5).
- 4.34 Consultation of the Trafford Design Code is continuing with the Code not yet formally adopted. The Design Code has been discussed with officers at the pre-application stage and its compliance is reflected in the proposed application design.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.35 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was last updated in December 2023 and sets out the government's objectives for achieving sustainable development. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development which ensures that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way.
- 4.36 Development proposals that accord with an up-to-date Development Plan should be approved without delay. Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the

policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date, permission should be granted unless:

- The application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the proposed development; or
- Any adverse impact of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

4.37 Paragraph 8 confirms that there are three dimensions to sustainable development; economic, social and environmental. To achieve sustainable development, economic, social and environmental gains should be pursued in mutually supportive ways through the planning system.

Delivering Sustainable Development

4.38 The NPPF explains that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area. These sustainable objectives should be delivered through the preparation and implementation of plans and the application of the policies in the framework. The NPPF is split into 17 chapters, the chapters of relevance to this development are discussed below.

4.39 Delivering a sufficient supply of homes (Chapter 5) - paragraph 60 explains that in order to support the government's commitment to significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land comes forward for development where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay.

4.40 Where a Local Planning Authorities' Local Plan is greater than five years old, the authority should identify and update annually a housing supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth or a minimum of four years' worth if the provisions in paragraph 226 apply. To maintain the supply of housing, local planning authorities should monitor progress in building out sites which have permission. In the event that there has been under

delivery when measured against the Housing Delivery Test then the policy consequences at paragraph 79 of the NPPF should be applied.

- 4.41 The NPPF is clear at paragraph 11 that housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development and that relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up to date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply, it does not benefit from the provisions of paragraph 76, or the Housing Delivery Test indicates that the delivery of housing was below 75% of the housing requirement over the previous three years
- 4.42 Building a strong and competitive economy (Chapter 6) - emphasises that the government is committed to ensuring that the planning system should help create conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight is to be given to the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. This section also recognises that a poor environment and a lack of housing can act as a potential barrier to investment.
- 4.43 Promoting healthy communities (Chapter 8) - the planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive and safe communities. Planning decisions should aim to achieve places which promote, amongst other things, safe and accessible developments, where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion.
- 4.44 Promoting sustainable transport (Chapter 9) - to protect and exploit opportunities for the use of sustainable transport modes, development should be located and designed to give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements and have access to high quality public transport facilities; address the needs of people with disabilities by all modes of transport; create safe and secure places minimising conflicts between traffic and pedestrians; allow for the efficient delivery of goods and access by service and emergency vehicles; and be designed to enable the charging of plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles in safe, accessible and convenient locations.
- 4.45 Achieving well-designed places (Chapter 12) - this chapter sets out at paragraph 135 that planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:

- A) *Will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
 - B) *Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping;*
 - C) *Are sympathetic to local character and history including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;*
 - D) *Establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;*
 - E) *Optimise the potential of the Site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development and support local facilities and transport networks; and*
 - F) *Create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being.*
- 4.46 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment (Chapter 15) - the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services and minimising impacts of biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible.
- 4.47 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment (Chapter 16) – the NPPF builds upon the provision of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and requires at paragraph 194 that ‘in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting’.
- 4.48 ‘Significance is defined by Annex 3: Glossary of NPPF’ as: ‘The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting’. ‘Setting of a heritage asset’ is also defined by the Annex as ‘The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a

setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.’

- 4.49 Paragraph 201 of the NPPF advises that ‘Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal’.
- 4.50 Paragraph 205 of the NPPF advises that ‘When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of the highest significance (including grade I and II* listed buildings), should be wholly exceptional.’
- 4.51 Paragraph 207 advises that ‘Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss’.
- 4.52 Paragraph 208 advises that ‘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 securing its optimum viable use’.
- 4.53 Paragraph 209 states ‘The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset’.

Planning Practice Guidance

- 4.54 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) was published in March 2014 and collates guidance previously published in a number of separate documents. The guidance in the PPG has been taken into consideration in formulating development proposals for the Application Site.
- 4.55 With regard to Heritage and assessing substantial harm, National Planning Practice Guidance advises: 'Whether a proposal causes substantial harm will be a judgment for the decision taker, having regard to the circumstances of the case and the policy in the National Planning Policy Framework. In general terms, substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases... It is the degree of harm to the asset's significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed. The harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting.' (Paragraph: 017 Reference ID: 18a-017-20140306).

Historic England Guidance

- 4.56 Historic England has published guidance to assist with the management of the historic environment. This assessment has been prepared having regard to the following Historic England Guidance.
- 4.57 **Historic England Advice Note 12: Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets:** Published in October 2019, this Historic England advice note covers the NPPF requirement for applicants to describe the heritage significance in order to help local planning authorities to make decisions on the impact of proposals for development that affects heritage assets.
- 4.58 **Historic England Historic Environment Good Practice in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment:** Published in March 2015, this document provides guidance on assessing the significance of heritage assets, using appropriate expertise and heritage recording.
- 4.59 **Historic England Historic Environment Good Practice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (Second Edition, 2017):** Published in 2017, this document provides guidance

for managing change within the setting of heritage assets, including historic sites, areas and landscapes.

- 4.60 **Historic England Technical Advice Note 2: Making Changes to Heritage Assets:** Published in February 2016, this advice note illustrates the application of the policies set out in the NPPF in determining applications for planning permission and listed building consent.

5. Appraisal of key planning issues

Introduction

- 5.1 It is a requirement of Section 38(6) of the Town and Country Planning Act 2004 that where a development plan contains policies relevant to an application, the decision must be made in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.2 The statutory development plan therefore relating to the Application Site consists of the Trafford Council Core Strategy and Places for Everyone Plan. Material considerations relating to this application include the National Planning Policy Framework, Planning Practice Guidance and Supplementary Planning Documents prepared by Trafford Council.
- 5.3 Having regard to the relevant planning policy guidance in the previous section, the key material considerations against which the proposed scheme should be considered, and which are discussed in this section, include:
- Principle of Development: Conformity with the Local Plan
 - Layout, Scale, and Design
 - Residential Amenity
 - Highways and Parking
 - Ecology and Trees
 - Drainage
 - Crime and Safety
- 5.4 A Heritage Statement is provided as a standalone document.

Principle of Development: Conformity with the Local Plan

Meeting Housing Needs

- 5.5 The proposed development is considered to be in full compliance with the adopted policies of the Core Strategy, PfE Plan as well as national policies within the NPPF.
- 5.6 The proposed development contributes towards meeting the Council's housing ambitions as expressed in Core Strategy Policy L1, responds positively to Core Strategy Policy L2 and the housing needs of the Borough, as well as the wider aspirations of the Council's Sustainable Community Strategy and policies JP-H1 and H4 of the Places for Everyone Plan.
- 5.7 Strategic PfE policy JP-Strat5: 'Inner Areas' covers the inner areas which surround the Core Growth Area in the PfE plan (in this instance the city centre of Manchester). In these areas, continued regeneration will be promoted and high levels of new development are expected to be accommodated in this highly accessible and sustainable location.
- 5.8 PfE Plan policy JP-H1 requires Trafford Council to identify as a minimum 1,122 sites per annum to be delivered within the LPA area. In accordance with JP-H1 the new houses will be of a good quality of design and located in an area which reduces the need for people to travel.
- 5.9 PfE Plan policy JP-H3 sets out that Development Plans should seek to incorporate a range of dwelling types and sizes. The local housing stock is comprised of new high density apartment developments predominantly consisting of 1 and 2 bed apartments alongside smaller low rise family housing within the older neighbourhoods. The proposed development consists of four no. 3 bed houses and is therefore considered to add to the range of dwelling types in the locality in accordance with Policy JP-H3. The provision of 4 no. 3 bed family houses which will contribute to meeting the housing needs of the Borough and diversifying the new housing offer in the locality is also considered to be in full accordance with Core Strategy Policy L2 in that the dwelling type and size will maintain the provision of family homes, making a valued contribution to the creation of mixed and sustainable local communities.
- 5.10 Policy JP-H4 goes onto guide housing density and requires that within this location a minimum density of 120 dwellings per hectare should be provided. In this instance, the

below ground culvert and heritage asset to the north require re-consideration of this target as per the policy exceptions on page 148.

- 5.11 The site is also identified as falling within one of the Priority Areas for Regeneration on the proposals map. CS Policy L3 outlines the strategic objectives for the Old Trafford area which includes the delivery of 1,000 new residential units.
- 5.12 Overall the scheme is considered to be acceptable in relation to PfE policies JP-H1-H4, CS policies L1 and 2 as well as contributing towards meeting the wider Strategic and Place Objectives of the Core Strategy and PfE Plan.

Principal of Office Use

- 5.13 The proposed use of Palmer House for offices (Class E(g)) is considered appropriate given its location, the mix of uses within the surrounding area and having regard to the original industrial use of the building. Place objective OT02 of the Core Strategy notes that it is an objective to 'maximize the re-use or redevelopment of unused, under used or derelict land' and Policy L3 identifies small scale office developments as being appropriate in this area.
- 5.14 Paragraph 85 of the NPPF notes that planning policies and decisions should help create conditions on which businesses can invest, expand and adapt and this proposal aligns with this national policy objective. The proposals to use Palmer House for office use will make efficient use of this building and have a positive economic impact on the surrounding area, maintaining high quality employment space that is complementary to the existing and new residential neighbourhoods being formed. The office element of the proposed scheme is therefore compliant with adopted local and national policy.

Use of land for car parking and amenity space

- 5.15 The application proposals include the use of a small area of land as an ancillary parking area for the proposed development. This area of land was historically occupied by buildings and is currently on the periphery of the route between St Georges Park and the open space to the north of City Road. This is an untidy and unmaintained patch of land that is overgrown and inaccessible. The area is covered in litter and flytipping and presents an unattractive appearance and has evidence of anti-social use with nitrous oxide canisters and empty

alcohol bottles visible. The area is located within Trafford Council and does not appear to have been maintained by the local authority. The quality of the land is therefore extremely poor and does not perform any meaningful role as amenity space. The public will therefore still retain access to the plentiful areas of open space in the locality which are of significantly higher quality. In accordance with NPPF policy, it is considered that from a 'quantity' and 'quality' perspective the area of land is surplus to requirements and as part of a wider beneficial re-use of public land in the locality, its re-use for parking to support the development can be looked upon favourably.

Heritage

- 5.16 The application is supported by a Heritage Statement (prepared by Paul Butler Associates). The statement has been prepared to comply with the tests and requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF: 2023), specifically paragraphs 200 and 201, under which a description of the significance of a site, including any contribution made by its setting, must be provided to support any planning applications to assess the effect on significance of any proposed changes. There is also a requirement for applicants to make an informed assessment of heritage significance as part of a staged approach to decision-making.
- 5.17 The principal heritage consideration in the assessment of the application is the impact of the development upon the setting of the listed building to the north (former Barracks). In alignment with MCC's previous assessment of this issue, the statement identifies that there is a low level of less than substantial harm to the designated asset. Under NPPF policy 'any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset...requires clear and convincing justification...' and 'this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal'.
- 5.18 There are numerous public benefits of the scheme which significantly outweigh any low levels of harm. Manchester City Council's Officer Report for the previous submitted scheme agreed with this conclusion stating that 'the identified harm is considered to be on the lower scale and in this instance is considered to be outweighed by the public benefits of the development...'. The public benefits include:

- The provision of housing in a highly sustainable location, well located in relation to local services and facilities and employment opportunities throughout the Regional Centre and beyond.
- The proposed development would contribute to the supply of housing, which is a significant benefit in support of the proposal to which great weight should be attached.
- Improvement works to the land adjacent to St. George's Park (to be delivered in partnership with Manchester City Council) which will substantially improve the amenity, safety, accessibility and biodiversity of this public open space. These works will be of significant benefit to the local community within both Trafford and Manchester.
- Improvement to the setting of the listed building via the wider improvement works to St. George's Park.
- The provision of modern, attractive, high-quality family houses which will diversify the housing offer in the local area.
- The positive re-use of the existing building on site for employment purposes and the upgrading of that employment use from mixed warehouse and office to purely office to create higher quality and density of employment, thereby supporting and strengthening the local economy.
- The redevelopment of a brownfield site in a highly sustainable and accessible urban location, which will relieve pressure to build on Green Belt and greenfield sites.
- The development would increase the Council's income from council tax receipts and the new homes bonus.
- The creation of increased spending in the local area once completed and also during the construction phase.
- Creation of a new vehicle turning head to a cul-de-sac that does not currently have one, improving vehicle access, movement and safety in this location.

- 5.19 Although these benefits can be shared by the public on both sides of the municipal boundary, the NPPF does not require the public benefits to be solely within Trafford.

Delivery of Public Benefits

- 5.20 The delivery of the improvements to the public park are the subject of a legal agreement between MCC and the applicant. Condition 3 of the MCC planning permission (137234/FO/2023) also controls the delivery programme for these works. The applicant has reached an agreement with Manchester City Council (MCC) for the use of a strip of land 10 metres wide for cycle parking and amenity space for Palmer House which currently abuts right up to this boundary. As part of the agreement with MCC, the applicant will undertake improvement works to the remaining land adjacent to St Georges Park (north east of the site) allowing this area to become fully accessible public open space. These works are covered by a separate legal / contractual agreement between the applicant and MCC. The phasing of the development will see the open space improvements carried out prior to any physical works to the existing building or new housing taking place. We are of the view that the condition approach is acceptable, whilst the land is not in the site edged red, the landowner MCC have executed control over the release of this land via a legal agreement and the local authority to which the land relates (MCC) have agreed to the delivery via a condition of planning permission which also controls the timescale for implementation.

Summary in respect of Heritage Considerations and Public Benefits

- 5.21 Whilst great weight should, and has, been given to conservation, 'local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance' (para 212, NPPF 2023). This would be achieved via the benefit of improving the setting of the listed building (via the public improvement works).
- 5.22 The statement submitted with the application follows discussions and clarifications that took place during the pre-application stage. There are no areas of conflict with either Trafford's Core strategy, the PfE Plan or the NPPF in relation to heritage.

Contribution to Sustainable Development

- 5.23 In light of the NPPF being a material consideration which carries significant weight, this application needs to be considered not only against Core Strategy policy but also in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 5.24 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF requires a balancing exercise to be undertaken to assess whether the benefits of a proposed development would significantly and demonstrably outweigh any adverse impacts of granting planning permission. Inherent in this is an assessment of whether the proposal is for 'sustainable development' as defined at paragraph 8 of the Framework i.e. whether it is development which accords with the relevant advice in paragraphs 11-223 of the Framework. We have set out below our assessment of the proposals against the relevant sustainable development headings as set out in the NPPF.
- 5.25 Section 5: Delivering a sufficient supply of homes - the new residential development would boost the supply of housing in the borough. The increase in the supply of housing is a significant benefit in support of the proposals.
- 5.26 Section 6: Building a strong and competitive economy - Greater Manchester's economy is burgeoning and highly accessible locations such as Old Trafford have an important role to play in facilitating a growing workforce, supporting mobility of labour and contributing to meeting the economic growth aspirations of the Greater Manchester combined authorities. The development would also bring direct and indirect benefits through construction work, supply chain demand and increased consumer spending in the Regional Centre.
- 5.27 Section 8: Promoting healthy communities - the proposals are in full accordance with this chapter providing a safe and accessible living environment.
- 5.28 Section 9: Promoting sustainable transport - guidance in the NPPF at paragraph 116 seeks to ensure that development gives priority to pedestrian and cycle movement and has access to high quality public transport facilities. The Site is considered to be located in a highly sustainable and accessible location.
- 5.29 Section 12: achieving well designed places - the proposals offer a high quality design that will integrate well with the existing townscape. The proposed development is in accordance

with paragraph 135 of the NPPF, providing an opportunity to improve the character and quality of the area and the way it functions.

- 5.30 Section 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment - the development will not impact upon any protected species and such issues can be controlled via planning conditions. Furthermore the development will not impact upon any statutory or non-statutory sites due to the distance at which these are located from the Site.
- 5.31 Section 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment - further analysis within the supporting Heritage Statement demonstrates that the proposed development will not cause harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the low level of impact upon the setting of the listed building to the north will be substantially outweighed by the public benefits of the scheme.
- 5.32 In light of the need to balance the benefits of allowing the proposed development against any adverse impacts that may arise as a result, we conclude that the benefits outlined above would not be significantly and demonstrably outweighed by any adverse impacts if planning permission was granted. The proposals are therefore considered to be sustainable development as defined by the guidance in paragraph 8 of the NPPF and consequently the presumption in favour of sustainable development should apply in the determination of this application.

Layout, Scale and Design

- 5.33 The existing building of Palmer House is located within the southern portion of the site. The proposed works to this building consist of the installation of new doors and windows to the rear elevation. The new glazed doors at ground floor to the rear elevation will allow office workers direct access to their premises from the rear of the unit via the new car / cycle park. The arrangement will also allow users to 'breakout' into this area which will promote an attractive office environment and be of benefit to the health and wellbeing of office users. At first floor the new windows will align with the openings below to provide uniformity to the façade.
- 5.34 To the north of Palmer House, the new dwellings will infill this unattractive and underutilised space with a scheme of high design quality thereby providing a sense of 'completeness' to

the urban form. The reinstatement of dwellings in this space will provide continuity to the streetscene and re-enforce the sense of place lost through the previous clearance of the site and area in the late 20th century.

- 5.35 The new dwellings are arranged at back of pavement to respect the building line and urban grain established by Palmer House and also the Botanica scheme. The scale of the development at four storeys is considered to be appropriate as it will not compete with the scale of the Botanica apartment block, but instead will provide a transition to the two storey scale of Palmer House. At street level the provision of a front door and new windows will increase activity and natural surveillance thereby having a positive impact on the locality.
- 5.36 The detailed design and materiality of the scheme is examined in greater detail in the supporting Design and Access Statement and Façade Design Study prepared by Nick Moss Architects.
- 5.37 Furthermore, during the pre-application process Paul Butler Associates completed a Character Study, this has been updated and is included in appendix 3 of this statement for reference.
- 5.38 It is considered that the design approach employed will result in a scheme that will be a sensitive addition to the streetscene. The appropriate scale and massing of the building in relation to the site configuration and other surrounding properties means that the development will not dominate or stand out in the local area and will provide a sense of completeness to the streetscene. Overall, the scheme is of a high quality design which respects the character of the area and makes a positive contribution to the streetscene, in accordance with Policies L7 and R1 of the Trafford Borough Council Core Strategy, Saved UDP Policy ENV21 and Policy contained in the NPPF.

Accessibility and PfE Policy JP-H3

- 5.39 In addition to the above design considerations Policy JP-H3, requires that all new dwellings must:
1. Comply with the nationally described space standards (NDSS); and

2. Be built to the 'accessible and adaptable' standard in Part M4(2) of the Building Regulations unless specific site conditions make this impracticable.

- 5.40 The proposed houses meet the space standards set out in the NDSS and therefore part 1 above is complied with. In respect of part 2, where possible the development has been designed to meet the Part M4(2) standard however the constraints of the site in terms of the below ground culvert dictating the building position and the desirability of having habitable room windows at back of pavement being low (in this area) means that there are site specific conditions that make this impracticable. However, when the development is viewed holistically alongside the wider access improvements to the adjoining public park it is considered that these extensive access improvements to the surrounding public realm (which are tied into the development of the houses) means that the partial compliance with this policy is significantly outweighed by this public benefit.

Residential Amenity

- 5.41 The proposed development layout has been carefully considered in order to ensure that surrounding properties will not be materially affected by the development proposals.
- 5.42 The potential impacts are considered further below.

Garden Space

- 5.43 In terms of the garden space, the side facing windows in the first floor of Palmer House will be obscure glazed to overcome any potential for overlooking to occur. At the northern end of the proposed site, and as per the previous application, a row of pleached trees is proposed to provide some screening and break up views. The views of the nearest townhouse garden from the balconies and windows serving the corner apartments of the Botanica building will either be screened by the pleached trees or only a very small area of garden will be visible. The overlooking here will be slight and given the density and character of the area and much more direct views found between properties in the Botanica scheme we believe this impact to be acceptable. This is demonstrated in the images on page 26 of the Design and Access Statement.

- 5.44 Within the Botanica development, further to the north there are a set of two columns of habitable room windows running up the building elevation. These windows are approximately 19 metres from the nearest garden boundary. Trafford Planning guidance PG1 'the design of New Residential Development states that:

Private rear garden areas should not be closely overlooked. Distances to rear garden boundaries from main windows should be at least 10.5m for 2 storey houses and 13.5m for 2 storey flats or houses or flats with 3 or more storeys.

- 5.45 This separation therefore complies with the above policy.

Roof Terrace

- 5.46 The re-siting of the stairwells at roof level will provide a screen to the Botanica building and between the properties. In addition, under this revised application the houses are further away from Botanica. These design changes coupled with the respective angle of outlook from these balconies, which look east and south, means that the potential for a loss of privacy to occur is limited due to the acute angle. Persons in each property would have to stand and look in an unnatural position for any loss of privacy to occur. Within the Botanica scheme there are numerous instances of facing balconies which offer a much more harmful impact than that proposed here. Rather it is our view that the impacts likely to be experienced here are a common facet of city centre / high density living where the occasional view of your neighbour will be possible, but this view would be short lived and persons will have to strain awkwardly to gain such views. Please refer to the images on page 26 of the Design and Access Statement which demonstrates the above.

Highways and Parking

- 5.47 A Highways Technical Note has been prepared by Axis and is submitted in support of the application. The Note has been informed by pre-application discussions with TMBC Highways to date.
- 5.48 The Note highlights the excellent accessibility of the site by non car modes of transport. The surrounding area is located on the fringe of the city centre of Manchester, as such it is well

equipped with pedestrian and cycle infrastructure as well as being located within walking distance of a range of public transport options.

- 5.49 In terms of parking provision, the residential element of the scheme contains 1 internal space per dwelling. This level of provision is considered to be appropriate in light of the sustainable site location and the Technical Note utilises census data on car ownership and DCLG Government Research to demonstrate the appropriateness of the level of provision proposed. With respect to the commercial element of the scheme, the level of parking proposed is supported by on site user surveys which reports on the current parking take up for the ground floor as well as the modal split for journeys to work. This confirms that the level of parking proposed is again appropriate and that sustainable travel can be encouraged through a range of Travel Plan measures.
- 5.50 Section 4.6 of the Note outlines the proposed waste management strategy for the site and this is supported by the swept path analysis in Appendix E of the Note.
- 5.51 The proposed development will not have any material impact on highway safety, the evidence presented in the Note satisfies the requirement set out in paragraph 115 of the NPPF which states that development should only be prevented or refused if the traffic impact on the road network would be 'severe'. The development is therefore considered to be in accordance with policy L7 of the Core Strategy, relevant policies of the PfE Plan and Chapter 9 of the NPPF.

Ecology and Trees

- 5.52 A Preliminary Ecology Appraisal has been completed by Leigh Ecology. Due to the lack of potential roosting habitat made available by the building and habitat within the proposed site, it has been deemed negligible suitability for bats. In respect of birds, any potential removal of habitat associated with this development is regarded as relatively insignificant for birds given the abundance of similar habitat in the surrounding landscape. As breeding birds are protected via the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, any tree and vegetation clearance should be undertaken outside of the bird breeding season.

- 5.53 No other impacts in terms of protected species or habitats were identified. Accordingly, it is considered that the development is capable of proceeding and complies with Policy R2 of the Core Strategy and Chapter 15 of the NPPF.

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 5.54 A biodiversity metric is also submitted with the application, this demonstrates that a 15% net gain in terms of biodiversity enhancements will be realised via the proposals.

Drainage

- 5.55 The application is accompanied by an Outline Drainage Strategy prepared by Renaissance. Surface water drainage options have been considered in line with the drainage hierarchy in the NPPF. The ability to infiltrate into ground is likely to be restricted due to made ground deposits which may pose a risk to the mobilisation of contaminants. The development will therefore have two dedicated surface water networks that will collect the rainwater from the proposed building roofs, and impermeable external areas on the site. The systems will then discharge under gravity to the Cornbrook Culvert located beneath the site, attenuation will be provided by geocellular storage tanks in each of the networks.
- 5.56 It is considered that the strategy demonstrates compliance with the drainage hierarchy in accordance with NPPF requirements. The detailed design of the system can be dealt with via planning condition.

Crime and Safety

- 5.57 A Crime Impact Statement prepared by Greater Manchester Police is submitted in support of the application. The report confirms that this statutory consultee are supportive of the proposals.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Paul Butler Associates on behalf of Generation Ltd in support of a full planning application for the erection of four dwellings (C3), the conversion of Palmer House to Offices (E(g)) and the construction of a new car park and associated amenity space.
- 6.2 The application development is considered to be in full compliance with the adopted policies of the Core Strategy and Saved UDP Policy. The application proposals now fully address the previous reasons for refusal from Trafford Council and have been developed through two pre-application meetings with Trafford's planners.
- 6.3 The new housing is in keeping with the scale of recent development within the area and has regards to the historic context of the site which once contained houses. The use of Palmer House for office use will retain an employment presence on the site and make positive use of this building. The Application Site is in a sustainable and accessible location in close proximity to local services and facilities and public transport links thereby reducing use of the private car by all users.
- 6.4 As evidenced in this statement, the Site has been shown to be a suitable and sustainable location for the development proposed with no known adverse impact arising from the development that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh its benefits. Indeed it is our view that no material planning considerations exist that would justify a refusal of planning permission. Consequently, the proposals are considered to constitute sustainable development as defined by the guidance in paragraph 8 of the NPPF and the presumption in favour of sustainable development should apply in the determination of the application.

Appendix 1: Photographic Survey



3.1: View of Palmer House (main entrance)



3.2: View of Palmer House and adjacent courtyard.



3.3: View of application site looking east from Chester Road. Botanica development in right of frame.



3.4: View of Botanica scheme, application site is in right of the frame.



3.5: View of Botanic scheme and application site from Virgil St.



3.6: View of Virgil St looking west to Chester Road from the application site.



3.7: View of adjacent land to south east of Palmer House.



3.8: View of current termination to Virgil Street.



3.9: View of side south west of Palmer House, land where new car park is proposed is in the foreground.



3.10: View of space north of City Road, Palmer House is visible in the view.



3.11: View from St George's Park looking at the land closed off from public access to the rear of Palmer House.



3.12: View of rear elevation of Palmer House and currently inaccessible land.



3.13: View of Chester Road and starter of Empress Conservation Area.



3.14: View of Cornbrook metrolink stop to the north of the site.



3.15: View of front elevation of Palmer House (fronting Virgil Street)



3.16: View of Princes Court Tower building.



3.17: View of courtyard in application site, the Hulme Barracks building is just visible through the boundary screening.



3.18: View of the side elevation of Hulme Barracks.



3.19: View of the front of Hulme Barracks and adjacent land that is closed off from public access.



3.20: View of front elevation of Hulme Barracks and adjoining Botanica development.

Appendix 2: Equalities Statement



Job Number:	22.1826
Project:	Virgil Street
Client:	Generation Ltd
Date:	02 April 2024

Introduction

Generation Limited are progressing a revised development proposal for the redevelopment of land to at Palmer House, Virgil Street.

The description of development is as follows:

'Construction of four houses with ground floor parking and associated amenity space, use of Palmer House for Class E (g) (offices – 802sqm) and the construction of a new car park and amenity space.'

This Equalities Statement has been prepared in support of the application. It provides a summary of how the proposed scheme addresses equality issues in relation to age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Policy Context

Trafford Council's Validation Checklist includes the requirement for an Equalities Statement. It states that under the provisions of the Equality Act 2010, specifically Section 149 Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), all public bodies are required in exercising their functions to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and foster good relations. The PSED applies to Local Planning Authorities in exercising their decision-making duties in relation to planning

applications. The Equalities Statement should outline how the proposed development would advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic.

Policy L7.5 'Accessibility' of the Trafford Core Strategy states that 'development must be fully accessible and useable by all sections of the community'. The justification text for the policy states that the Council is setting out its intention for the design of developments to be considerate of access issues; and, in accordance with the Building Regulations Act 1984 Part M Approved Guidance, all new public buildings and commercial developments are to provide reasonable provision to ensure that buildings are accessible and useable.

Disability: As confirmed in the submitted Design & Access Statement prepared by Nick Moss Architects, accessibility for all is an important aim of this scheme and is fully supported by the design team and Generation Limited. The new buildings have been designed to be fully compliant with Building Regulations Approved Document M: Access to and use of buildings. Level access has been ensured at all entry points to the buildings.

This section considers the proposed scheme in relation to the relevant protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

Age: no persons will be affected by access to or use of the development due to their age.

Pregnancy and Maternity: no persons will be affected by access to or use of the development due to being pregnant or being a parent.

Race, Religion or Belief: no persons will be affected by access to or use of the development due to their race, religion or belief.

Sex, Sexual Orientation and Gender Reassignment: no persons will be affected by access to or use of the development due to their sex, sexual orientation or gender.

Summary

Paul Butler Associates have prepared this Equalities Statement on behalf of Generation Limited and in support for their proposals to redevelop a site on Virgil with a mixed use development. The statement confirms that all equality issues have been addressed in the design of the proposed scheme. Further information can be obtained from the Design and Access Statement.

Appendix 3: Character Study



Job Number:	22.1826
Project:	Palmer House, 11 Virgil Street, Old Trafford, M15 4ED
Client:	Generation Ltd
Date:	02.04.2024

1. Introduction

1.1 This Character Study has been prepared by Paul Butler Associates on behalf of Generation Ltd. The study has been prepared in order to examine the reason for refusal by Trafford Council on the 03/08/2023 for the proposed development on land at the east of Virgil Street. The study is also intended to support the revised scheme being submitted in April 2024.

1.2 The current description of development is:

'Erection of four houses with ground floor parking and associated amenity space along with the change of use of Palmer House to Class E (g) with associated external alterations and the construction of a new car park and amenity space.'

1.3 A character study has been prepared to examine the design aspects of the scheme in relation to the surrounding context and character typologies. This study is principally aimed at informing a response to the second reason for refusal on the decision notice (ref: 111037/FUL/23) which states:

'The proposed development, by virtue of its design, siting, scale and massing, materials and layout, fails to appropriately address its context and setting or enhance the character of the area. The proposal represents overdevelopment of the site and would have harmful, long term visual effects within the street scene and the surrounding area more generally. As such the proposal is contrary to Core Strategy Policy L7, adopted PG1 'New Residential Development, and relevant sections of the NPPF and NDG.'

1.4 This report investigates the local areas within roughly a 0.5km radius of the subject site looking at the characteristics and typologies of those areas to see how the site and development fits within this local context. The sites investigated comprise one or more of the following characteristics:

- A back of pavement design.
- A back of pavement design with no natural surveillance at ground floor level.
- A minimal separation to adjoining / surrounding buildings.
- High density.
- Significant height next to a Listed Building.

1.5 The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- Section 2 provides a brief description of the site, immediate surrounding context and analyses the relevant character areas within 0.5km of the subject site.
- Section 3 reviews other sites investigated within 0.5km of the subject site that comprise the characteristics identified above.
- Section 4 summaries this report and provides an outline of the key findings.

2. The Site and Immediate Surrounding Context

The Site

- 2.1 The existing building on the application site (Palmer House) is two storeys in height, the brickwork has been painted black and white. There is a large car part to the north west which extends up to the boundary with the Botanica development. To the rear of the site is a neglected area of land that is fenced off from St George's Park to the north. The land is closed off from public access and is located within the administrative area of Manchester City Council.

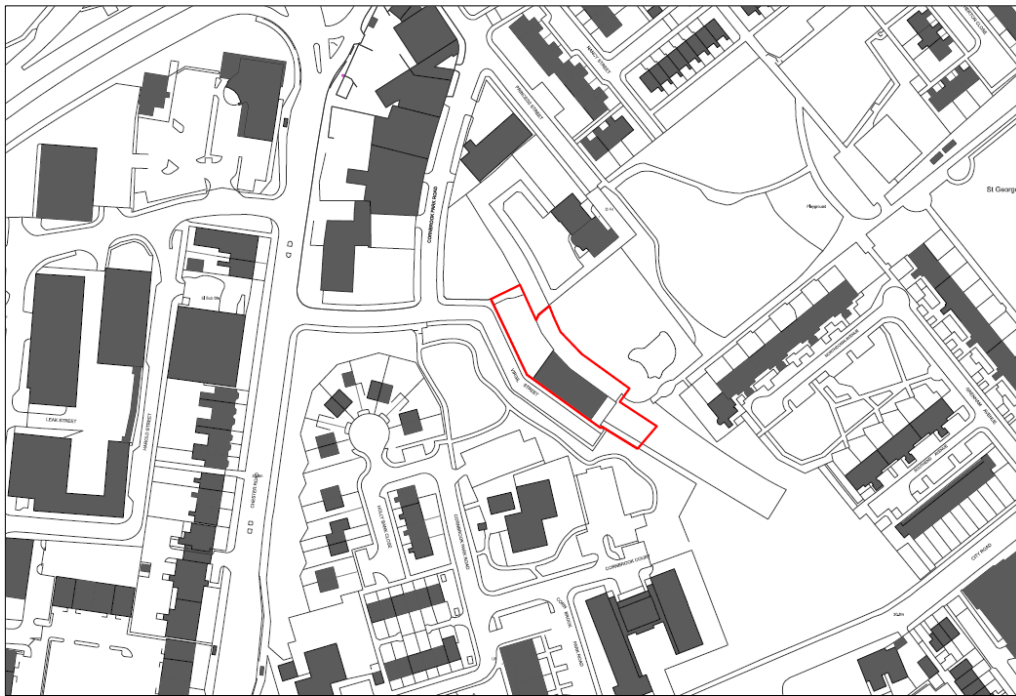


Figure 2.1: Site Location identified within red boundary area.

Immediate Surrounding Context

- 2.2 The surrounding area is predominantly residential in nature, interspersed with areas of formal and informal public open space. South of the site is the Princess Court tower block on Cornbrook Park Road, which is a 15 storey building. To the east of the development site

is St Georges Park, the area of land adjacent to the site is overgrown and not publicly accessible. South of the park are residential properties on Northdown Avenue.

- 2.3 In the western corner of the park and due north of the development site are the Grade II listed Hulme Barracks on Princess Street. North-west of the development site on the northern side of Virgil Street is the 'Botanica' development which comprises 363 residential apartments, within a number of high rise development blocks.

Character Areas Identified within 0.5km of the Site

- 2.4 There are a number of character areas which have been identified within a 0.5km distance from the site which comprise buildings which have similar characteristics to the proposed scheme. The different character areas are highlighted in the blue, orange, pink and brown boundaries.

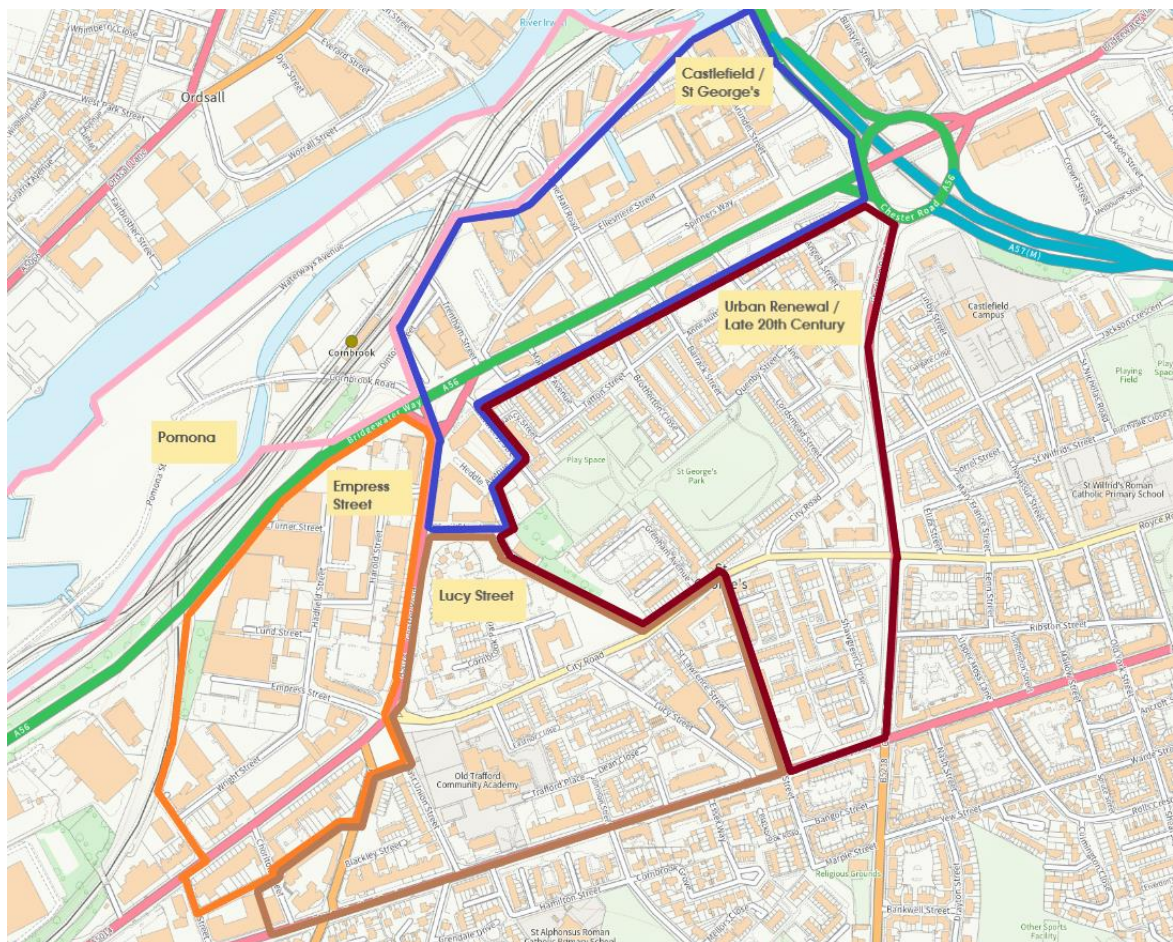


Figure 2.2: Character Area Map

Castlefield / St Georges

- 2.5 This area is characterised by old warehouse and mill buildings centred on Ellesmere Street which date back to the 1830s, some of which have been converted into residential schemes. Listed buildings in the area include the Church of St. George, the former Turville Public House and Albert Mill. New development alongside Chester Road and Ellesmere Street has assimilated with the surrounding context and includes high density development that aims to reflect the dominant mill typology in the local area. A vertical rhythm in the street wall is maintained when viewed obliquely and the height, scale, form, massing and materials of the new residential buildings relate to the older higher quality existing buildings. These include a mixture of red and dark coloured brick buildings, 3-4 storeys in height with a back of pavement design. A newer apartment scheme called The Trilogy is situated at the western side of Ellesmere Street, comprising of grey brick and 9 / 10 storeys in height. The recently constructed Botanica apartments also form part of the recent development in the area, located in close proximity to The Trilogy.

Empress Street

- 2.6 The buildings characterising Empress Street and the immediate surrounding context comprise of Victorian industrial buildings, late 19th and early 20th century terraces, and modern framed steel structures. Red brick, often in conjunction with terracotta, is the predominant building material, most notably used in the former Essence Factory, with some rendered façades as well. The character area incorporates the Trafford Council Empress Street Conservation Area boundary.

Lucy Street

- 2.7 Lucy Street is located east of Empress Street and is characterised by a mixture of apartment buildings comprising light and dark coloured brick, painted white brick and timber cladded facades, some of which have been constructed within the last 10-15 years. These are 4-5 storeys in height at the northern side of Lucy Street and up to 6 storeys at the southern end. Other development in the area consists of red and light-coloured brick terraced housing, 2-3 storeys in height which date back to the 1970s.

Pomona

- 2.8 Pomona comprises residential apartment buildings which have been constructed within the last 10-15 years. There are also new apartment buildings currently in construction to the west of this area. Apartments range from 8-11 storeys in height, consist of various coloured cladding and promote modern city centre living.

Urban Renewal / late 20th Century

- 2.9 This area consists of large amounts of terrace and semi-detached dwellings which were constructed in the late 20th Century due to urban sprawl. There are also several apartment buildings which are 3-4 storeys in height and comprise various colours of brick, namely buff brick, red brick and grey brick. There is a high concentration of residential development in this area with pockets of infill modern development built within the last 10 years. Notably towards the perimeters of this character area next to the main roads, larger tower buildings exist such as 'Empress' and Princess' close to the application site.
- 2.10 The application site is now an anomaly within what is a predominantly residential area and the current state of the site means it does not readily align with the character typologies identified above. For the purpose of this study the site is identified as within the urban renewal character area, but clearly sitting on the edge of the high density Castlefield / St Georges Area which is dominated by the 'mill' typology.

3. Character Study Assessment

- 3.1 This section identifies similar developments within 0.5km of the site which possess one or more of the following characteristics:
- A back of pavement design.
 - A back of pavement design with no natural surveillance at ground floor level.
 - A minimal separation to adjoining / surrounding buildings.
 - High density.
 - Significant height next to a Listed Building.

3.2 Comments are provided in the table below which analyse each development's design features, built form, and layout along with a photo and distance from the site.

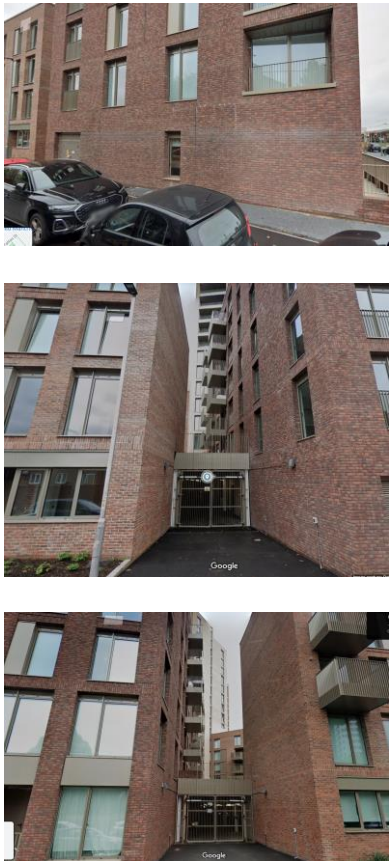
No.	Address	Comments	Photo / Distance from Site (metres)
1	The Trilogy, 27-29 Ellesmere Street Manchester M15 4LZ (Manchester LPA)	The Trilogy is a high-density apartment scheme that is located in the Castlefield / St George character area. The development features dark colour brick which contrasts with the older red bricked converted residential buildings in its immediate context. Part of the design comprises back of pavement development to Ellesmere Street and its height is significant in relation to the surrounding built form including the former Turville Public House which is a listed building.	 Distance from site: 300m
2	Castlefield Locks, 74 Ellesmere Street, Manchester, M27 0JN (Manchester LPA)	Castlefield Locks is an example of an early 2000s residential scheme located in the Castlefield / St George character area. It is constructed to fit in with the local streetscene, which comprises older red brick warehouse buildings. The design is back of pavement which reflects the 'mill' typology fronting Ellesmere Street and fits in with the existing built form in terms of layout. Castlefield Locks is also located in close proximity to the grade II listed Albert Mill building. There is minimal separation to surrounding buildings and spaces.	 Distance from site: 310m

No.	Address	Comments	Photo / Distance from Site (metres)
3	Albert Mills, Ellesmere Street, Manchester, M15 4JY (Manchester LPA)	Albert Mills is a grade II listed mill building converted into high density residential apartments, located in the Castlefield / St Georges character area. This building presents a good example of a heritage asset within the Castlefield / St Georges Area, with red brick facades, timber windows, timber beams, cast iron columns and original floors. The building is a back of pavement design and 4 storeys in height. Other development has been designed within the area to respond to certain design characteristics of Albert Mills.	 Distance from site: 355m
4	Excelsior Works, Hulme Halls Road, Manchester, M14 4LY (Manchester LPA)	Excelsior works is a high density residential scheme which was completed in 2020, located in the Castlefield / St Georges character area. The building comprises red brick and is 8 storeys in height. There are minor separation distances between its east elevation and the adjacent single storey building. It is in close proximity to the grade II Albert Mills and is significantly higher than it. The building is a back of pavement design which works well with the existing context and layout of the street and surrounding buildings.	 Distance from site: 390m
5	Britannia Mills, Ellesmere Street, Manchester, M15 4LA (Manchester LPA)	Britannia Mills is a high density residential conversion and new build development located in the Castlefield / St Georges character area. At the north end of Hulme Hall Road, the scheme comprises no natural surveillance at ground floor level. This building is another example of a back of pavement design which works well with the existing context and layout of the street and the surrounding	 Distance from site: 420m

No.	Address	Comments	Photo / Distance from Site (metres)
		buildings, reflecting the dominant 'mill' typology.	
6	St Georges Gardens, Manchester, M15 4UY (Manchester LPA)	St Georges Gardens is a good example of a high density modern apartment scheme in an area characterised by older red bricked warehouse and mill buildings. It is located in the Castlefield / St Georges character area. The lighter elevation treatment displays a pleasant contrast in relation to the darker red bricked buildings fronting Ellesmere Street. The elevation on Spinners Way showcases a good example of back of pavement design. The development is also an example of significant height next to St Georges Church, a grade II* listed building.	 Distance from site: 500m
7	Caminada House, 3 St Lawrence Street, Stretford, Manchester, M15 4DY (Manchester LPA)	Caminada House is a large 4 storey apartment scheme of high density in a medium density area, constructed of red brick in the Lucy Street character area. It is located in a residential area with a few commercial and mix-used premises nearby. It is an example of a back of pavement design which matches other high density developments on Lawrence Street. In terms of layout and massing, the design fits in with the existing context of the local area.	 Distance from site: 350m
8	Aura Court, Stretford, Manchester, M15 4AB (Trafford LPA)	Aura Court is a large part 4 storey, part 6 storey red brick mixed use development located between Lucy Street and Lawrence Street. This building is located in the Lucy Street character area and fits in with the scale and massing of similar developments on Lucy Street and Lawrence Street. The building is an example of a back of pavement design and the Lucy Street elevation comprises no	 Distance from site: 420m

No.	Address	Comments	Photo / Distance from Site (metres)
		natural surveillance at ground floor level.	
9	2-4 Browning Street, Old Trafford, M15 4GH (Trafford LPA)	This high density apartment scheme is an example of modern infill development with a back of pavement design. A car park is located at basement / ground floor level and therefore presents no natural surveillance at this level. It comprises a mixture of painted white brick and dark coloured brick which is a contrast to similar developments in the immediate surrounding context. This building is located in the Lucy Street character area and fits in with older 1970s development and more recent early 2000s development.	 Distance from site: 335m
10	2a-10a Shawheath Close, Manchester, M15 4DU (Manchester LPA)	This development comprises a group of 3 storey terraced housing with a back of pavement design and no natural surveillance at ground floor level. It is located in the Lucy Street character area. It consists of buff brick, which contrasts with the lighter red brick on adjacent developments of Caminada House and Aura Court. It is an example of 1970s development with similar style 3 storey terraced housing facing its east elevation.	 Distance from site: 360m
11	The Pulse Apartments, Chorlton Street, Old Trafford, Manchester, M16 9HN (Trafford LPA)	The Pulse Apartments is a high density 7 storey residential scheme located in the Lucy Street character area. Development in the immediate context comprises 3 storey red bricked terraced housing. Two of its elevations on Manchester Street and Northumberland Street comprise a back of pavement design with no natural surveillance at ground floor level. This newer apartment scheme is an example of higher	 Distance from site: 440m

No.	Address	Comments	Photo / Distance from Site (metres)
		density development located in close proximity to older historic development.	
12	Oscar House, 1 Cleworth Street, Manchester, M15 4YX (Manchester LPA)	Oscar House is an example of a new apartment scheme located amongst a mixture of older and more recent development. It is located in the Castlefield / St Georges character area. It comprises recessed red brick which is similar to adjacent development, and it is 5 storeys in height. It is located opposite The Trilogy apartment scheme, which is of a similar design in terms of a back of pavement layout.	 Distance from site: 240m
13	5-19 Northumberland Road, Old Trafford, Stretford, Manchester, M16 9DA (Trafford LPA)	These modern terrace town houses are located within the Lucy Street character area. They are three storeys in height with front dormers. They comprise red brick which fits with other development in the area. Due to garages, there is no natural surveillance at ground level. This is an example of modern development that is located in close proximity to the older historic development in the Empress Street character area.	 Distance from site: 350m
14	Empress St / Empress Building (Trafford LPA)	The historic Empress Building complex is an example of a historic building which occupies a position up to the back of pavement. Along with other buildings in the area these former large scale industrial complexes share a strong distinct character which aligns with the typologies found in the Castlefield / St Georges area.	 Distance from site: 245m

No.	Address	Comments	Photo / Distance from Site (metres)
15	Botanica Apartments (Trafford LPA).	This is a high density scheme formed of multiple blocks of residential development. The individual development blocks are in many cases separated by just a few metres, demonstrating that the space between buildings in this area is minimal. Some parts of the development display built form to the back of pavement and at the time it was built the development would have introduced a significantly tall and high density development adjacent to the former Barracks listed building.	 (to immediate north of site)

3.3 The table identifies 15 developments or buildings which have similar characteristics to the subject site, comprising high density schemes, often back of pavement and located close to adjacent buildings and spaces. Each development has been created to fit within the existing context of the local area, taking into consideration the character of the area and the key characteristics that each area possesses. Each development identified has its own unique identity whilst ensuring that the design, materials used, and layout fits in with neighbouring developments. Notably, the new developments are built close to the surrounding built form reflecting the dense urban grain of the area. In many instances the separation to surrounding plots is minimal however this doesn't detract from the local character.

4. Summary and Findings

4.1 This character study has been prepared by Paul Butler Associates on behalf of Generation Ltd. This study has identified different character areas within 0.5km of the subject site and illustrates similar developments and buildings which have been accepted by Manchester City Council and Trafford Council. The site at Virgil Street sits within an area of significant urban change and renewal and the form, scale and massing of the proposed development is considered to be in keeping with the character findings of this study.

4.2 The key findings of this report are outlined below:

- There are a variety of character areas within 0.5km of the site that comprise converted residential old historic buildings, modern residential development, and 1970s terraced housing. Modern development compliments historic development and the schemes identified display similar streetscapes to that proposed at Virgil Street.
- A back of pavement design often with minimal habitable rooms at street level has been identified as appropriate in a variety of different character areas, taking into consideration the size of the site to create an appropriate design in terms of layout and materials used.
- High density schemes have been approved in many cases adjacent to listed buildings, including the neighbouring Botanica development adjacent to the former Barracks listed building.

4.3 As evidenced in this report, a variety of developments have shown to be suitable within their respective context with a back of pavement design and dense urban grain evident. It is therefore Paul Butler Associates view that the current scheme is in accordance with Core Strategy Policy L7, adopted PG1 'New Residential Development', and relevant sections of the NPPF and NDG. Whilst the Council may be seeking to implement design standards via a new design code, it is not considered that these should be implemented rigidly. Each site will have its own individual constraints (such as the culverted watercourse on this site) and

context which needs to be considered accordingly. The design code explicitly states that applicants will be expected to demonstrate how their design approach has been influenced by the surrounding context, including landscape, buildings, spaces, heritage and culture. It is our assessment via this study that the proposed buildings in terms of their form, scale, layout and massing will not represent overdevelopment or be out of character with the surrounding area.