



Chartered Town Planners & Architectural Technicians

PLANNING / DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Change of use from motorcycle sales to educational use (F1a),
and all associated works.

Property Address: Units 1, 3 & 4, 1121 Ashton Old Road,
Manchester, M11 1AA.

November 2023

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Planning / Design and Access Statement is submitted on behalf of the applicant in respect of a planning application for the change of use of the premises from motorcycle sales to educational use (F1a), and all associated works. This Statement should be read in conjunction with other drawings and documents accompanying the planning application.

1.2 This Statement comprises:

- A description of the application property and surrounding area;
- A description of the proposed development;
- A summary of relevant planning history; and,
- An assessment of the proposed development against relevant planning policy.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION AND SURROUNDINGS

2.1 The planning application relates to Units 1, 3 & 4 at 1121 Ashton Old Road. It is a single storey building with a car parking area to the front and rear.

2.2 The property at present is vacant. It was last occupied by CMC Motorcycles which ceased trading here in 2020. The property has thus not been used for a number of years and in its present vacant state detracts from the area.



Figure 1: The application premises.

2.3 The area surrounding the site is mixed use in nature. Within walking distance are residential areas, commercial / industrial areas, and convenience shops. In terms of public transport, the site is very well served by public transport: along Ashton Old Road run Route No's 171, 172, 219, 221, 688, 703, 719 and 725. Gorton Train Station is approx. 500m away (approx. 5 minutes walk). With regards to cycle paths, the Fallowfield Loop (Route 60) is directly adjacent the site. This is one of the National Cycle Network routes and connects to Whalley Range in the west of the City.

2.4 The site is located within Flood Zone 1 and at low risk of flooding. There are no known risks of contamination on site.

3.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3.1 The proposed development is to use the premises as an education facility.

3.2 The applicant is UK Management College Ltd. They are a Higher Education Institute providing university courses in partnership with leading universities. They already operate from a premises nearby and within walking distance at Stanley Street. They deliver business, education, health and IT courses for mature students.

Staffing numbers will vary depending on the time of year. Many staff are part time and many move between the college's various locations.

3.3 Proposed opening hours are as follows:

Monday 8:30am - 9:30pm

Tuesday 8:30am - 9:30pm

Wednesday 8:30am - 9:30pm

Thursday 8:30am - 6:30pm

Friday 8:30am - 6:00pm

Saturday 8:30am - 5:30pm

Sunday 8:30am - 5:30pm

4.0 PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 There is no known recent/relevant planning history for the premises.

5.0 PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

5.1 The National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF) seeks to promote a balance of land uses. Para. 86 is of particular importance and it states:

“Planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation. Planning policies should:

a) define a network and hierarchy of town centres and promote their long-term vitality and viability – by allowing them to grow and diversify in a way that can respond to rapid changes in the retail and leisure industries, allows a suitable mix of uses (including housing) and reflects their distinctive characters...”

The proposed development will significantly increase footfall to the benefit of existing business in the nearby District Centre. The proposal represents a pro-active response to changing educational and commercial trends. Conventional commerce continues to struggle not least due to a combination of Brexit and Covid 19 knock on impacts.

Manchester Core Strategy (2012)

5.2 Policy EC5 (East Manchester) of the Core Strategy sets out that the area is to cater for significant employment growth in addition to much regeneration.

The proposed development would provide much employment in addition to educating students for the workforce.

5.3 Policy CC7 (Mixed Use Development) promotes mixed use development. *In this regard it is pointed out that the proposed development is within a mixed use area.*

5.4 Policy CC9 (Design and Heritage) requires that design of new buildings will need to be of the highest standard in terms of appearance and function. *No external alterations are proposed to the building.*

Extant Unitary Development Plan Policies

5.5 There are no known Unitary Development Plan policies to prevent or discourage against a development of the nature proposed at this location.

Guide to Development in Manchester Supplementary Planning Document (2007)

5.6 Para. 2.47 of this SPD deals with a variety and mix of uses. It is stated:

“One of the best ways of creating sustainable communities is by providing a balanced mix of uses. This can be achieved in a number of ways: within different parts of a neighbourhood; in different parts of a development scheme; in adjacent buildings along a street; or in buildings that accommodate a number of uses. A mix of uses also means that higher density development does not overly dominate the character of the area”.

Furthermore, para. 11.32 states:

“Wherever possible, workplaces should be located near to residential areas and other services, to support the Council's sustainable development strategy, in particular reducing the need to travel”.

The proposed development would provide employment in an area served by a variety of land uses. It is without doubt in the interests of proper planning and sustainable development to site employment and education uses near to where employees might live and near to where students can undertake multi-purpose trips.

6.0 PARKING & IMPACTS ON NEIGHBOURING RESIDENTIAL AMENITY

6.1 Appendix B of the Core Strategy does not set out parking standards for residential use. 1 parking space is required per 2 staff members (which includes parking for students). The premises has use of 7 parking spaces to the rear (north) of the building in addition to use of spaces to the front. The site is in a highly accessible location such that it is envisaged future occupants will regularly partake in sustainable travel modes. As noted above the site is very well served by public transport: along Ashton Old Road run Route No's 171, 172, 219, 221, 688, 703, 719 and 725. Gorton Train Station is approx. 500m away (approx. 5 minutes walk). With regards to cycle paths, the Fallowfield Loop (Route 60) is directly adjacent the site. This is one of the National Cycle Network routes and connects to Whalley Range in the west of the City. There is ample space on the site for provide for a significant number of bicycle stands – the applicant would be happy to provide such details by way of condition.

6.2 Policy DM1 (Development Management) requires, amongst other matters, that careful consideration be given to impact on the surrounding areas in terms of the design, scale and appearance of the proposed development and that development should have regard to the character of the surrounding area. It is not considered there would be any adverse impacts to neighbouring properties. Comings / goings of users would be akin to that associated with the extant use.

7.0 CONCLUSION

7.1 The application site is within distance of necessary day to day shops, services and facilities. The site is highly accessible and sustainable in terms of access and transport.

7.2 The premises has been vacant for some time and presently detracts significantly from the area. The proposed use would bring the site back into life and add to the local working population which would be to the betterment of helping to sustain local shops and services.

7.3 The proposed development is considered to be in compliance with NPPF policies, as well as the Core Strategy.