

Planning, Design and Access Statement

Site: Xenon House, 10 School Lane, Didsbury, Manchester, M20 6RD

Date: March 2023

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1** William McCall Architectural Services have been appointed by La Salle Corporate to submit a planning application for proposed elevational and roof alterations to the building (Xenon House) including an increase to its height. The elevational alterations include the application of render to all the external walls, the replacement / provision of some new windows and doors in the building, and the formation of a first-floor balcony area on the front elevation including a protective balustrade.
- 1.2** The current authorised use of the building is Class E (Commercial, Business and Service) and it was previously used for the retail sale of goods, with ancillary office and storage facilities. The occupier sold music and musical instruments to customers both in person at the premises and via on-line retailing services. The Council's planning records also indicate that a Certificate of Lawful Use for Existing Use as a Solicitor's Office (Former Class A2) was granted at this site in June 2013 under application Ref. 102284/LE/2013/S2.
- 1.3** La Salle Corporate intend to split the use of the building with the ground floor being used as a small production bakery who carry out ancillary retail sales, and the first floor being used as their own business offices. We consider that these uses fall within the now broad Class E designation and therefore they do not require planning permission. Class E(g)(iii) covers light industrial processes (small production bakery) which can be carried out in any residential area without causing detriment to the amenity of the area, and Class E(g)(i) covers offices that carry out any operational or administrative functions. Class E(a) covers the display or retail sale of goods, other than hot food, principally to visiting members of the public.
- 1.4** This Planning Statement comprises an assessment of the proposed development against the requirements of Manchester City Councils Core Strategy, which was adopted on 11 July 2012, the Unitary Development Plan that has a number of 'saved

policies', the Guide to Development in Manchester Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), and the National Planning Policy Framework which was revised in July 2021.

- 1.5** The purpose of this statement is to describe the local and national planning policies that are directly relevant to the application and to provide an analysis of those policies and the application site. This statement will put forward our case explaining why we believe the proposal conforms with both local and national planning policy and why planning permission should be granted.

2.0 Site Location, Context and Background

- 2.1** The application site (Xenon House) is located in the centre of Didsbury, and it lies at the junction of School Lane and William Street, approximately 70 metres to the west of Wilmslow Road (A5145). It consists of an existing two storey commercial building with a projecting single storey element on the front elevation. The building sits within its own private fenced commercial curtilage, and it benefits from having private car parking available on the forecourt frontage and access / servicing areas at the side and rear.
- 2.2** The external appearance of the existing building includes a mixture of red brick and grey timber cladding, and it has a shallow dual pitched grey profile sheet covered roof. There are numerous existing window and door openings present in the four elevations of the building and they differ in terms of their size. The front and side elevations of the building which face School Lane and William Street contain the larger and more prominent window openings, and they are visible in the wider street scene. The windows in the rear and westerly side elevations are less noticeable due to their positions and the presence of the adjoining buildings.
- 2.3** The neighbouring surrounding area consists of mixture of commercial and residential uses. There are public houses / restaurants and public car parks situated to the north and west on School Lane. To the south (at the rear) on William Street is a large Electricity North West power station building, and to the east is a four storey residential apartment block at Shapley Court. There are also residential properties to the west on Stephens Terrace and Kings Lynn Close and these are two storey terraced dwelling houses. The main Didsbury District Centre is focused mainly on Wilmslow Road, and this contains a large mixture of commercial, business and service type uses. The map, aerial photograph and site photographs provided in Figures 1 to 10 of this Statement clearly identify the site location and surroundings.



(Figure 3 – Photograph showing the application site in the wider street scene)



(Figure 4 – Photograph showing the front of the existing building and the car park area)



(Figure 5 – Close up photograph showing the front of the existing building)



(Figure 6 – Photograph showing the side of the building and the wider street scene)



Figure 7 – Close up photograph showing the side of the existing building)



Figure 8 – Close up photograph showing the rear of the existing building)



(Figure 9 – Photograph showing the street scene along School Lane)



(Figure 10 – Photograph showing the street scene along School Lane)

3.0 Planning History and site constraints

3.1 Below is a summary of the relevant planning applications that have been lodged in respect of the site address (Xenon House). This information has been obtained via the published on-line records on the Manchester City Council Planning website.

111075/AO/2016/S2 - Installation of a internally illuminated 3 metre high freestanding sign – Approved 18 Mar 2016

110912/FO/2015/S2 - Erection of two storey side extension, elevational alterations and alterations to roof including an increase in its overall height in connection with the use of the building as retail (Class A1) and associated offices – Approved 31 May 2016

102284/LE/2013/S2 - Certificate of Lawful Use for Existing Use as Solicitor's Office (A2) – Approved 04 Jun 2013

101383/FO/2013/S2 - Change of Use from vacant solicitors (Class A2) to Office (Use Class B1)/ Physiotherapy Clinic (Use Class D1) – Approved 18 Mar 2013

062810/FO/SOUTH2/01 - Formation of a 7 space car park with access from William Street – Approved 07 Nov 2001

055662/FO/SOUTH1/98 - Formation of car park – Approved 01 Oct 1999

055489/FO/SOUTH1/98 - Alterations to west elevation of building – Approved 18 Dec 1998

F/AD02021 - Illuminated box signs on front and side elevation of offices - Temporarily Approved 12 Jun 1979

3.2 Flood Risk

According to the GOV.UK and Environment Agency 'Check your flood risk' records, the property is in a Flood Zone 1 and it has a low risk of flooding from Rivers and the Sea and Surface Water.

3.3 Heritage

The application site does not contain a Listed Building, Locally Listed Building and it is not located within a Conservation Area according to the Council and Historic England on-line records.

3.4 Coal Mining Risk

The application site is **not** located within a Coal Mining Risk Area according to the Coal Authority data records.

3.5 Trees

There are no trees present on the site that are subject to a Tree Preservation Order or are protected as a result of being located within a Conservation Area. There are also no other trees located on or near to the site that would be directly affected by the proposed works.

3.6 Ecology and Biodiversity

There are no known ecology or biodiversity related concerns on the site that are a material consideration in respect of the determination of this proposal.

3.7 Local Plan Policy

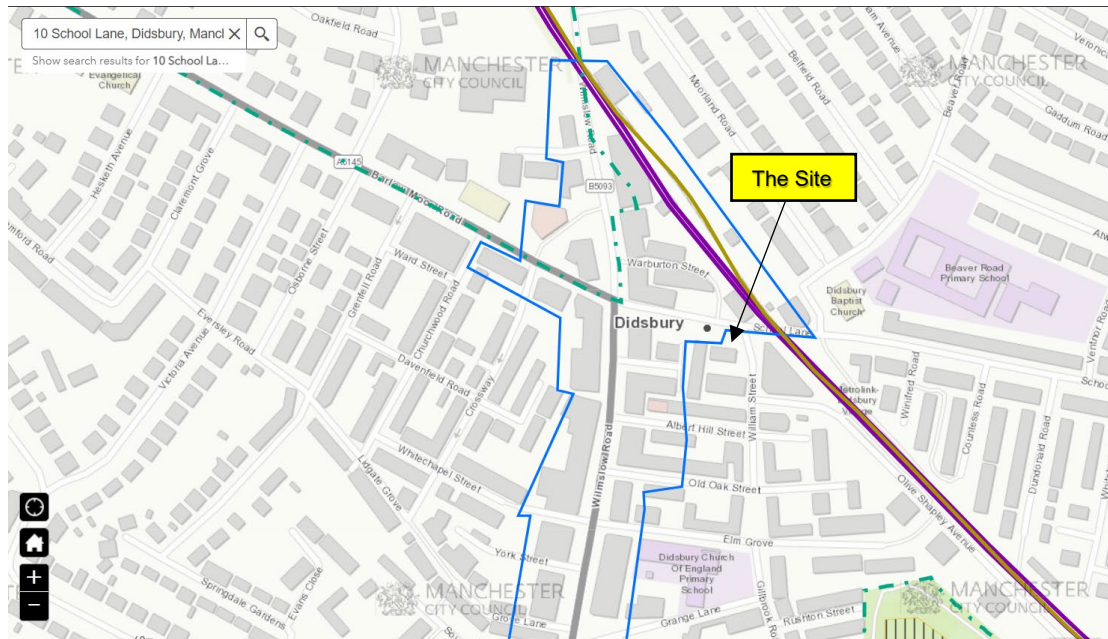
The Manchester City Council Local Development Framework Area Map Browser on the following page shows the application site designated as being within the following:

Manchester City Boundary

Didsbury District Centre

South Manchester (EC9, H6)

The building is located on the outer boundary on the defined Didsbury District Centre, but the north westerly section of the car parking area on the site frontage lies within the District Centre boundary. The blue line on the map below clearly shows the District Centre boundary.



(Figure 11 – Manchester City LDF Area Map Browser)

4.0 The Planning Application

4.1 The application seeks the grant of planning permission for proposed elevational and roof alterations to the building (Xenon House) including an increase to its height. The elevational alterations include the application of render to all the external walls, the replacement / provision of some new windows and doors in the building, the formation of a first-floor balcony area on the front elevation including the erection of a protective balustrade.

4.2 As previously mentioned in Section 2 of this statement, the current authorised use of the building is Class E (Commercial, Business and Service) and the applicants (La Salle Corporate) intend to split the use of the building with the operation of a small production bakery carrying out some ancillary retail sales operating on the ground floor, and the La Salle company offices operating on the first floor. We consider that these uses all fall within Class E and therefore this is a permitted change that does not require formal planning permission. The ability to undertake split and easily transferable type uses within buildings is the reason why the government introduced the broad ranging Class E type use category. It ensures that businesses can be started up easily without any potential delays due to the planning process and as a result buildings in the town and district centre locations can be fully utilised and occupied to support the vitality and viability of the centres. This delivers wide ranging social, economic and environment benefits.

4.3 The scheme drawings that are being submitted for the proposal have been prepared by William McCall Architectural Services and they include site location, site layout and existing and proposed elevations and floor plans.

4.4 The existing building has become quite tired and dated both internally and externally, so the applicants wish to fully modernise it to improve its functionality and its overall visual appearance in the local area. The ground floor of the building where the proposed bakery

will operate from has a larger floor area due to the presence of the projecting single storey element on the front elevation. The layout of the bakery will involve a food preparation and packaging area, kitchen / oven facilities, and storage areas. They distribute their bakery products to local businesses and use a single transit size vehicle to do this. The service entrance / exit for the business will continue to be on the east side of the building as existing. The bakery is also proposing to operate a retail counter area at the front of the building where customers can visit to purchase the bakery products on a 'Grab and Go' basis, like a 'Greggs' bakery that are commonly seen on high streets across the country. The ground floor space also includes essential WC toilet facilities and a meeting room.

- 4.5** The first-floor office space that would be occupied by La Salle Corporate includes various desk spaces, a meeting room, a kitchen / brewing area, and toilet and shower facilities. The additional roof space that would be created from increasing the height of the building would be used for general storage purposes for the offices and this space would be accessed via an internal pull-down ladder, like a basic loft space.
- 4.6** The existing external construction of the building includes a combination of red brick and grey timber cladding, and it is proposed to modernise it by covering all the external elevations with an off-white colour K Render. The existing timber and aluminium windows and doors would also be changed to new UPVC dark grey coloured frames. The windows in the front elevation would remain symmetrical on both floors, but it is proposed to increase them in size to full height to enhance the modern feel and allow more natural light into the various spaces. There are three narrow full height windows in front ground floor projecting element that would be replaced by a wider window and door opening, which would be where the bakery shop would be accessed. There is only a minor change proposed to the first-floor window in the easterly side elevation and this involves making the window slightly larger in size to match the doorway below. There are no changes proposed to the two ground floor windows in the westerly elevation. Regarding the rear

southerly elevation of the building, it is proposed to remove a window from both the ground and first floors.

4.7 The building currently has a shallow dual pitched grey profile sheet covered roof and the applicants wish to make some alterations to the roof including an increase to its height and shape. The overall roof height increase amounts to 1.17 metres and the changes include providing a hipped roof design on the westerly side and a gable design on the easterly side. The applicants wish to utilise the roof space for ancillary office storage purposes, but they also are keen to respect the adjoining neighbours at the same time, so they are proposing the hipped design closest to the dwelling houses on Stephens Terrace. It is considered that this will significantly reduce some of the bulk and mass of the roof and its overall impact. The use of grey Marley Modern roof tiles is proposed for the roof covering.

4.8 The creation of a small first-floor outside balcony space is proposed on the roof of the projecting single storey element on the front elevation. This balcony would only be used by the office staff when the weather conditions are reasonable in the Spring and Summer months. The balcony area would be accessed from the first-floor offices, and its size will be restricted via the installation of a protective balustrade. The applicant proposes to install a full height (1.8 metre) opaque privacy screen on the westerly side of the balcony to prevent any privacy and overlooking issues to the adjoining dwelling houses. Balconies are a common feature in the local area and there are various examples at commercial and residential properties nearby.

4.9 The applicants intend to make a minor change to the existing car parking and servicing arrangements at the site, which are located at the front and side of the building and accessed via two openings in the highway on William Street. The site currently has surfaced and laid out in-curtilage parking provision for 6 vehicles, and this includes 5 standard designated bays and 1 disabled bay. There are also approximately 4

undesignated parking spaces available on the easterly side of the building. The current disabled space is not of an adequate size and standard, and there is also a new doorway entrance being inserted in the side elevation of the ground floor projecting element, so the applicants require some additional space to facilitate these works. The only way this can be achieved is through the loss of an existing car parking space. There are however several public car parks immediately adjacent to the site and nearby in the district centre that can be utilised by vehicle users. For staff who do not own or choose to use a private car, the site is in a highly sustainable and accessible location being in the district centre with excellent public transport links nearby including the Metrolink and various bus services.

- 4.10** In terms of access into the building, the application site is flat and the entrance point on the front elevation will allow suitable easy access into the building for all staff and visitors including disabled persons. A DDA compliant ramp is being provided to the bakery shop and the applicants will ensure that the rest of the building is also suitably DDA compliant.
- 4.11** The hours of operation for the bakery will be 00.00 (Midnight) until 15.00, with the ancillary retail sales taking place between 07.00 and 15.00. The bakery operation and the associated equipment that they use is all carried out inside the building, and it is not noise generating, so there will be no adverse impact on the amenity of the adjoining residents. The office use will operate Monday to Friday between 08.00 to 18.00. The bakery employs 4 full time and 1 part time staff, and La Salle Corporate employs 5 full time staff.
- 4.12** In terms of boundary treatments, the applicant is not proposing to make any changes to the existing situation. There is a mature hedge and low-level metal railing in place along the front and side boundary of the site, and a concrete fence and brick walling along the westerly boundary with houses on Stephens Terrace. The tall galvanised palisade fence that runs along the rear boundary with the substation is under the control and maintenance responsibility of Electricity North West.

- 4.13** There will be in curtilage refuse and recycling storage facilities provided on the site for the businesses and the location of this is clearly shown on the submitted site plan at the rear of the building. The applicants propose to arrange a contract with either the Council or a private company who will collect the waste and recycling on a regular basis.

5.0 Local Planning Policies

- 5.1** Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.2** On 25 July 1995, Manchester City Council adopted the UDP as their Local Plan. The UDP was subsequently replaced by the Manchester Core Strategy Development Plan Document which was formally adopted on 11 July 2012, and this replaced significant elements of the UDP. There are however a number of the UDP policies that are saved. The Core Strategy sets out the Council's long term planning policies that are used to guide future development within the City, and it is the basis for determining planning applications. It contains planning policies to ensure that new development addresses the economic, environmental, and social needs of the area. Amongst other things, the Local Plan has policies relating to design with objectives that include requiring developments to be well designed to respect the character, identity and context.
- 5.3** The following policies in the Core Strategy are considered the most relevant for the determination of this application: -

Policy SP1 – Spatial Principles

Policy SP1 sets out the key spatial principles which guide the strategic development of Manchester to 2027, together with Core Development Principles. It is stated that developments in all parts of the city should create well designed places which enhance or create character, make a positive contribution to the health, safety and well-being of residents, consider the needs of all members of the community and protect and enhance the built environment. All development should have regard to the character, issues and strategy for each regeneration area as described in the Strategic Regeneration Framework and the Manchester Strategic Plan.

The policy also states that all development in the City should make a positive contribution to the health, safety and wellbeing of residents, protect and enhance the built and natural environment, seek to minimise emissions, ensure the efficient use of natural resources, reuse previously developed land wherever possible, improve access to jobs, services and open space and provide good access to sustainable transport provision.

Policy DM1 (Development Management)

Policy DM1 states that new development should have regard to more specific issues including:

- Appropriate siting, layout, scale, form, massing, materials and detail;
- Impact on the surrounding areas in terms of design, scale and appearance of the proposed development.
- Effects on amenity, including privacy, light, noise, vibration, air quality, odours, litter, vermin, birds, road safety and traffic generation.
- Accessibility, community safety and crime prevention.
- Amenity space and refuse storage/collection.

Policy EC9 – South Manchester

Policy EC9 states that South Manchester is not expected to make a significant contribution to employment provision within the City, and also mentions that the District Centres of Chorlton, Didsbury, Fallowfield, Levenshulme and Withington will be suitable for mixed use development providing local needs and services.

Policy C1 – Centre Hierarchy

Policy C1 states that development of town centre uses (as defined in national planning policy) will be prioritised in the centres identified in this policy, taking account of the different roles of the City Centre, District Centres and Local Centres. In order to maintain the vitality and viability of its centres, provide services as locally as possible and minimise the need to travel by car, Manchester's centre hierarchy is: Manchester Centre, District Centres and Local Centres. The policy mentions that District Centres have an essential role in providing key services to the City's neighbourhoods including shopping, commercial, leisure, public and community functions, ensuring that residents can access such services easily.

Policy C2 – District Centres

Policy C2 states that District Centres are a key focus for Manchester's communities, and they are a hub for activity and thrive when they attract visitors from the surrounding neighbourhoods. The policy states that development in District Centres should prioritise delivery of key 'visitor' services, including retail, public and commercial services and food and drink. The Council want to ensure that retail remains the principal use in Primary Shopping Areas, but also ensure that provision is made in District Centres for commercial and service uses, leisure and community facilities and other uses which make a positive contribution to vitality and viability of centres.

Policy C6 - South Manchester District Centres - Chorlton, Didsbury, Fallowfield, Levenshulme and Withington

Policy C6 states that in Didsbury, redevelopment opportunities for new development within and on the edge of the centre will be supported, provided they will enhance the range and quality of retail and dining and complement the overall character of the centre. The policy also mentions that South Manchester's centres are all located in highly accessible locations, adjacent to key transport corridors.

Policy T1 - Sustainable Transport

The policy aims to deliver a sustainable, high quality, integrated transport system to encourage modal shift away from car travel to public transport, cycling and walking, to support the needs of residents and businesses and to prepare for carbon free modes of transport.

UDP Saved Policies

- 5.4** The following saved policies in the UDP are also relevant to the application.

Policy DC14 – Shop fronts and related signs

The policy applies to all retail premises and to other commercial premises which have similar physical characteristics e.g. betting shops, banks, building society offices, opticians premises etc. It states that in determining applications relating to these premises for shop fronts, security grilles, advertisement signs, canopies and awnings, the Council will seek to ensure that proposals are in keeping with the character of the building and adjoining buildings, of adjoining shopfronts, where appropriate, and of the area within which the premises are located. Shopfronts should allow full access for people whose mobility is impaired. The only exceptions which the Council will normally permit are where the cost is unreasonably high or where there are particularly difficult physical constraints, or where the architectural character of a listed building would be damaged.

Policy DC26 - Development and Noise

The policy states that the Council intends to use the development control process to reduce the impact of noise on people living and working in the City. The Council will carefully consider the effect of new development proposals which are likely to be generators of noise, and the implications of new development being exposed to existing noise sources.

It mentions that developments likely to result in unacceptably high levels of noises will not be permitted in residential areas, near schools, hospitals, nursing homes and similar institutions, or near open land used frequently for recreational purposes. It further mentions that the Council will control noise levels by requiring, where necessary, high levels of noise insulation in new development as well as noise barriers where this is appropriate.

- 5.5** There are also other material considerations in respect of policies / guides that are relevant including '**The Guide to Development in Manchester**' Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) dated 2007.

This SPD provides design advice and outlines the Council's expectations and vision for developments and provides advice for developers on high quality and inclusive design.

6.0 National Planning Policy

6.1 Government guidance is set out in the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) dated July 2021. The NPPF expresses a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The NPPF is a material consideration in the determination of the application. The Planning Practice Guide (PPG) is intended to complement the NPPF and to provide a single resource for planning guidance, whilst rationalizing and streamlining the material. Almost all previous planning Circulars and advice notes have been cancelled. Specific reference will be made to the PPG or other national advice in this Planning statement, where appropriate.

6.2 The following sections of the NPPF are considered of most relevance to the application proposal: -

- Chapter 2: Achieving Sustainable Development (paras. 7-14)
- Chapter 3: Decision Making (para. 38)
- Chapter 6: Building a strong, competitive economy (paras. 81-85)
- Chapter 7: Ensuring the vitality of town centres (paras. 86-91)
- Chapter 8: Promoting healthy and safe communities (paras 92-103)
- Chapter 9: Promoting sustainable transport (paras. 104-113)
- Chapter 12: Achieving Well-Designed Places (paras. 126-136)

6.3 Central to the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and the need for the planning system to support new development. Paragraph 10 states “So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11). Paragraph 11 of the NPPF sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development and the application of the policy for decision-making: -

“Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development”.

6.4 For decision-taking this means: -

- Approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date Development Plan without delay; or
- Where there are no relevant Development Plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date, granting permission unless:
 - (i) the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
 - (ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

6.5 Paragraph 38 of Chapter 4 (Decision-making) of the NPPF confirms that Local Planning Authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

6.6 The NPPF states that the planning system has three overarching objectives to achieve sustainable development, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. The three overarching objectives are; economic, social and environmental as follows: -

Economic – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time

to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

Social – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and

Environmental – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy. to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

6.7. Paragraphs 81 – 85 in Chapter 6 (Building a strong, competitive economy) of the revised NPPF advises that planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future.

6.8 Paragraph 86 in Chapter 7 (Ensuring the vitality of town centres) advises that 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. Paragraph 88 mentions that when considering edge of centre and out of centre proposals, preference should be given to accessible sites which are well

connected to the town centre. Applicants and local planning authorities should demonstrate flexibility on issues such as format and scale, so that opportunities to utilise suitable town centre or edge of centre sites are fully explored.

6.9 Paragraph 93 d) advises that to provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are retained for the benefit of the community.

6.10 Paragraph 110 in Chapter 9 (Promoting sustainable transport) states in assessing specific applications for development, it should be ensured that appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be – or have been – taken up, given the type of development and its location; and safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users. Paragraph 111 mentions that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

6.11 Paragraphs 126 -136 in Chapter 12 (Achieving well-designed places) advocates a requirement for good design. This is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

6.12 Paragraph 130 advises that planning policies and decisions should 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, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;

- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and
- f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users; and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience.

6.13 Paragraph 134 confirms that permission should be refused for development that is not well designed and that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.

6.14 PPG: Town Centres and Retail

6.15 The Planning Practice Guidance on Town Centres and Retail highlights that Local planning authorities can take a leading role in promoting a positive vision for town centres, bringing together stakeholders and supporting sustainable economic and employment growth. They need to consider structural changes in the economy, in particular changes in shopping and leisure patterns and formats, the impact these are likely to have on individual town centres, and how the planning tools available to them can support necessary adaptation and change. A wide range of complementary uses can, if suitably located, help to support the vitality of town centres, including residential, employment, office, commercial, leisure/entertainment, healthcare and educational development.

7.0 Planning considerations

7.1 The key planning issues for consideration in the determination of this application are:

- i) Principle of development.
- ii) Design, character and appearance
- iii) Impact on Neighbouring Amenity
- iv) Accessibility

7.2 Principle

7.3 The current authorised use of the building (Xenon House) is Class E (Commercial, Business and Service) and the applicants (La Salle Corporate) intend to split the use of the building with the operation of a small production bakery carrying out ancillary retail sales operating on the ground floor, and the La Salle company offices operating on the first floor. We consider that these uses fall within Class E and therefore this is a permitted change that does not require formal planning permission. The existing building has become quite tired and dated both internally and externally, so the applicants wish to fully modernise it to improve its functionality and its overall visual appearance in the local area. The proposed scheme involves some elevational and roof alterations to the building including an increase to its height and the works are fully described in Section 4 of this Statement.

7.4 Xenon House is located on the outer boundary of the defined Didsbury District Centre, but the north westerly section of the car parking area on the site frontage lies within the District Centre boundary. We consider that Council Policy C2 which relates specifically to District Centres should therefore be relevant to this site and the proposal. The policy states that development in District Centres should prioritise delivery of key 'visitor' services, including retail, public and commercial services and food and drink. The Council want to ensure that retail remains the principal use in Primary Shopping

Areas, but also ensure that provision is made in District Centres for commercial and service uses, leisure and community facilities and other uses which make a positive contribution to vitality and viability of centres. Policy C6 (South Manchester District Centres) also states that in Didsbury, redevelopment opportunities for new development within and on the edge of the centre will be supported, provided they will enhance and complement the overall character of the centre.

7.5 The applicants are wishing to invest significant resources into their business, and they employ local people, which is a positive for the town and ensures that the premises are used and occupied. There is a growing trend nationally of vacant shops and other commercial premises on high streets in town centres due to the number of small and large businesses that have failed in recent years. This decline has a negative effect on the vitality, viability and visual appearance of the town centres, and therefore it is important that businesses are supported where possible to retain them. This is sufficiently highlighted in the NPPF and PPG guidance.

7.6 The proposed alterations to the existing building and the Class E uses that would be taking place within it are appropriate for the site location and they will respect and enhance the character of the district centre. This will deliver positive benefits to the district centre and enhance its overall vitality and viability. For these reasons, the general principle of the development would therefore appear to be acceptable, but we appreciate that it also needs to comply with the relevant policies in the development plan. The other main issues with the proposed development would be the design of the scheme and its impact on the amenity of the adjoining neighbours, and these will be considered as part of the rest of the assessment.

7.7 Design, character and appearance

7.8 The Council and Central Government require all development to be designed to a high standard in order that it makes a positive contribution to the provision of an attractive

built environment. This does not mean however that a new development needs to exactly replicate the style and character of the existing building or its locality, but it should ideally be harmonious with what is already there. The character of an area is reflected in the layout, massing, scale, height, style and materials of buildings and the spaces around them.

7.9 Full details describing the proposed elevational and roof alterations works are included in Section 4 (Planning Application). We consider that they are well designed and visually attractive and this development will provide an improvement to the street scene environment and the local area beyond the existing situation. The application of white render to all the elevations along with the installation of some new larger windows will transform its appearance and deliver a modern and attractive building to the district centre. The two-storey building sits at a prominent junction at School Lane and William Street, and it will fully respect the character of the local area. The street scene along the first section of School Lane leading from Wilmslow Road is mixed and there are commercial and residential buildings and surface level car parks visible, but it would be fair to say that the commercial buildings appear the most prominent due to their size and positioning. The commercial buildings do differ however considerably in terms of their design, appearance, and construction materials. There is a noticeable difference to the size and height of the buildings including their roofscapes, and there is also a mixture in the types and colours of brickwork and render treatments that exist in the local area. There are balcony features present on the front elevations of the commercial buildings, and on residential apartment blocks further along the street. The existing building at Xenon House is not of any architectural or historic merit and we believe that the proposed elevational and roof alterations will assimilate well with the commercial and residential uses that are situated nearby and fully respect the existing character of the local area.

7.10 The proposed overall roof height increase is not excessive at 1.17 metres, and applicants have been keen to respect the adjoining neighbours, so they are proposing the hipped roof design closest to the dwelling houses on Stephens Terrace. This will significantly reduce some of the bulk and mass of the roof and its overall impact. We would also wish to point out that the Council previously granted planning permission in May 2016 under the same development plan for a larger proposed development of this site. Planning Application Ref. 110912/FO/2015/S2 included the erection of two storey side extension, elevational alterations and alterations to roof including an increase in its overall height in connection with the use of the building as retail (Class A1) and associated offices.

7.11 The applicants are proposing to carry out a minor change to the existing car parking arrangements at the site due to them wishing to provide a disabled space of the correct size and standard and a new doorway entrance in the side elevation of the ground floor projecting element. The applicants require some additional space to facilitate these works and the only way this can be achieved is through the loss of one existing car parking space. The site can continue to be easily and safely accessed and serviced by the business employees and by any customers / visitors.

7.12 We consider that proposal complies with the expectations of Policies SP1 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy, saved UDP policy DC14, and and Chapter 12 of the revised NPPF.

7.13 Impact on Neighbouring Amenity

7.14 The nature of the new Class E uses (bakery and offices) will ensure that the business operations take place entirely within the building and they will not generate or cause unacceptable noise, disturbance, or traffic related problems, which will adversely harm the amenity of the neighbouring residents or businesses. Both uses are relatively low-

key operations that are suitable for the site location. The small production bakery on the ground floor will make their own bakery products in house and distribute them locally to business customers via a single transit type van. They also intend to carry out some ancillary retail use where customers can visit to purchase bakery products on a 'Grab and Go' basis during the hours of 7am and 3pm. It is envisaged that many of the customers will be living nearby or working in the district centre and attend site by foot. The office use on the first floor will be operated by the applicant (La Salle Corporate) as their own business offices and they employ 5no staff. Being located in a district centre location, there will inevitably always be activity and some noticeable audible noise due to the operation of the various businesses, and the associated traffic and customers etc. There are several bars, restaurants, and takeaway premises situated in close vicinity to the site that operate late into the evening and early hours. We do not consider that the business operations taking place at Xenon House will be particularly noticeable in context with these late-night type uses.

- 7.15** As mentioned earlier in this statement, the applicant is a considerate and they wish to build up good relationships with their business and residential neighbours. They were very conscious of this when they designed the proposed scheme, and they did not wish to upset anyone. The residential properties to the west at Stephens Terrace are quite close, so they have tried to minimise the roof height increase and provided a hipped design to remove significant mass and bulk. The increased roof height may have some marginal effect on sunlight to the rear elevation of the houses (Nos 1 & 3) during the early part of the day when the sun rises, but we do not consider that it will be significant with the roof height increase only being 1.17 metres. There are no new windows proposed in the westerly elevation of the building alongside Stephens Terrace and the other window changes proposed in the north and south elevations also do not directly face any of the habitable rooms in the dwelling houses. There are no changes proposed to the easterly elevation of the building facing the apartment

block at Shapley Court and there should be no privacy or overlooking concerns regarding the northerly windows in the front elevation due to the separation distance and oblique angle relationship. The closest commercial premises are located to the north (The Botanist Bar and Restaurant) and to the south (Electricity North West Sub Station) and we consider that these will be unaffected by the proposed works.

7.16 With regard to the first floor outside balcony space on the roof of the projecting single storey element on the front elevation, this balcony would only be used by the office staff when the weather conditions are reasonable in the Spring and Summer months. The balcony area would be accessed from the first-floor offices, set away from the boundary, and its size will be restricted via the installation of a protective balustrade. The applicant also proposes to install a full height (1.8 metre high) opaque privacy screen on the westerly side of the balcony to prevent any privacy and overlooking issues to the adjoining dwelling houses at Stephens Terrace.

7.17 We consider that the proposals will have no adverse impact on the living and working environment of the neighbouring residential and nearby commercial properties and it therefore complies with Core Strategy Policies DM1 and SP1, and saved UDP Policy DC26.

7.18 Design and Accessibility

7.19 The full details of the design of this proposed development are included in Section 4 (Planning Application) and at Paragraph 7.7 – 7.12 (Design, character and appearance) of this statement.

7.20 The existing main entrance point is situated on the front elevation of the projecting ground floor element of the building and there is a wheelchair standard ramp in front with handrail providing suitable disabled access for all persons. This can be seen in the photograph image included in Figure 5 of this Statement. The applicant is proposing to undertake a very minor change to the front elevation and is moving the

entrance door further to the west along with an extension to the ramp and handrail. This new door will serve as the entrance point to the bakery shop. A separate entrance point is also being inserted into the side of the ground floor projecting element and this will act as the primary entrance into the building for the bakery and office employees and any business-related visitors. Door widths will be sufficient to allow for comfortable wheelchair access. The car park is level at this point so access into the building can be easily achieved. All changes to the building will be undertaken to the necessary building regulations and DDA requirements where required.

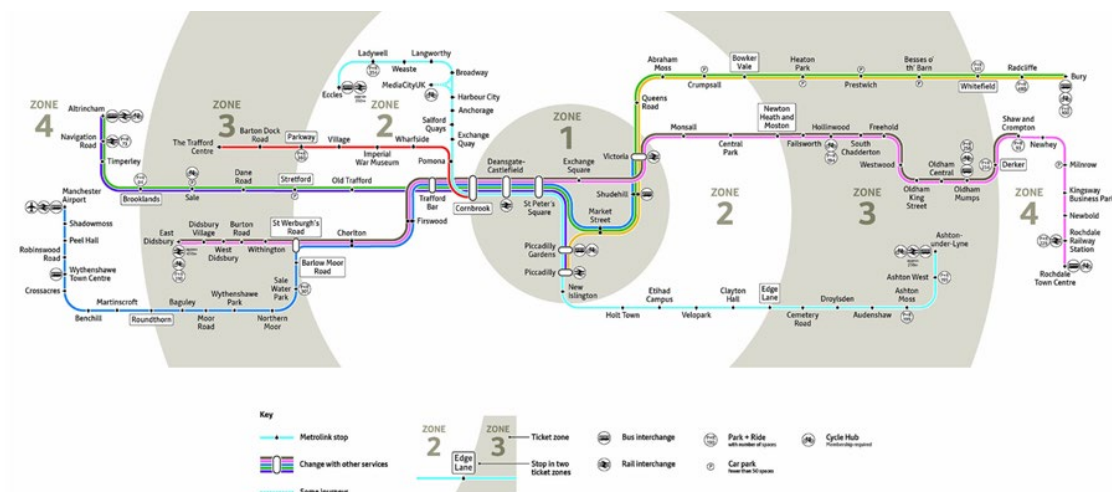
7.21 The applicants intend to make a minor change to the existing car parking and servicing arrangements at the site, which are located at the front and side of the building and accessed via two openings in the highway on William Street. The site currently has surfaced and laid out in-curtilage parking provision for 6 vehicles, and this includes 5 standard designated bays and 1 disabled bay. There are also approximately 4 undesignated parking spaces available on the easterly side of the building. The current disabled space is not of an adequate size and standard, and some room is also required in front of the new staff doorway entrance, so the applicants need to utilise some of the existing outside floor space to facilitate these works. The only way this can be achieved is through the loss of an existing car parking space. There are however several public car parks immediately adjacent to the site and nearby in the district centre that can be utilised by other vehicle users.

7.22 For staff who do not own or choose to use a private car, the site is in a highly sustainable and accessible location being in district centre with excellent public transport links nearby including the Metrolink at Didsbury Village Station on Olive Shapley Avenue and various bus services operating only a short walk away on Wilmslow Road. East Didsbury and Burnage train stations are also located within a mile of the site, and they have services that run direct to Manchester City Centre,

Manchester Airport, Liverpool, and North Wales. Included below is a list of the bus services that operate from Didsbury Village and the Metrolink Route Map.

Bus services	
23	Stockport - intu Trafford Centre/MediaCityUK Stagecoach Manchester
42	Piccadilly - Stockport Stagecoach Manchester
42A	Piccadilly - Stockport Stagecoach Manchester
42B	Piccadilly - Stockport Stagecoach Manchester
42C	Piccadilly - Stockport Stagecoach Manchester
44	Altrincham - Piccadilly Little Gem
142	Manchester - East Didsbury Stagecoach Manchester
142N	Manchester - East Didsbury Stagecoach Manchester
171	Newton Heath - East Didsbury Stagecoach Manchester

Bus services operating from Didsbury Village



Metrolink Route Map (East Didsbury to Rochdale shown in pink)

7.23 Waste Management Strategy

7.24 The applicants understand the importance of dealing with waste and recycling that is associated with the business in the correct manner and this will be relayed to the various employees at the site. They will therefore ensure that they have bins that can accommodate General Waste, Paper and Carboard, Plastic and Glass and Food Waste and use them correctly.

7.25 The applicants have a designated refuse and recycling storage facility on the site for the businesses and the location of this is clearly shown on the submitted site plan at the rear of the building. They intend to arrange a contract with either the Council or a private waste carrier company who can collect their waste and recycling. The frequency of the bin collections will need to be fully agreed with the waste contract provider and the applicants will move the respective bins to the easterly site boundary to facilitate the necessary emptying process on collection day. Once the bins have been emptied, they will be returned to the designated bin storage area by hand to prevent any highway related obstructions.

8.0 Planning Balance and Conclusion

- 8.1** At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, this requires planning applications that accord with the development plan to be approved without delay and where the development plan is absent, silent or out of date granting permission unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the framework as a whole or specific policies in the framework indicate that development should be restricted.
- 8.2** The applicants are wishing to invest significant resources into their business and the site, and they employ local people, which is a positive for the town and ensures that the premises are used and occupied.
- 8.3** The proposed elevational and roof alterations to the existing building along with the new Class E uses that would be taking place within it are appropriate for the site location and they will respect and enhance the character of the district centre. This will deliver positive benefits to the district centre and enhance its overall vitality and viability.
- 8.4** The design of the scheme is of a high standard and the proposed works will significantly improve the appearance of this existing commercial building to the benefit of the local area.
- 8.5** The proposed development will not have any adverse impact on the living and working environment of the neighbouring / adjoining properties in the area.
- 8.6** The proposals will not have any adverse impact on existing parking and servicing arrangements or highway safety.

8.7 For the reasons stated in this report, we believe our application is compliant with the NPPF, and the Manchester City Council Core Strategy. Therefore, we respectfully request that planning permission should be granted for this development.