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Manchester City Council
Planning Department
PO Box 532
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Manchester
M60 2LA

31st May 2023

RE: PP-12200829 Millennium Powerhouse, 140 Raby Street, Moss Side, Manchester, M14 4SL

Dear Sir / Madam,

Please find enclosed a planning application submitted on behalf of our client, Moss Side Millennium Powerhouse, Moss Side, Manchester. The proposed development seeks internal and external alterations to the existing youth and community centre as part of building fabric improvements.

The application is accompanied by the following drawings and documents:

- Site Location Plan
- Existing and Proposed Site Plan
- Existing and Proposed Elevations
- Existing and Proposed Floor Plans
- Existing and Proposed Internal Courtyard Elevations
- Design and Access Statement (Corstorphine & Wright Architects, May 2023)
- Thermal Imaging Report (Build IR, September 2022)
- M&E Services Visual Report (GLD, November 2022)
- Condition Survey (Struktura, March 2023)

The application form and supporting documents have been submitted electronically via the Planning Portal (Ref: PP-12200829) with the requisite fee of £702 paid online at the point of submission.

Site Description and Surrounding Context

Moss Side Millennium Powerhouse is a registered charity (Charity Number: 1077564) operating out of their existing premises on Raby Street since 2000. The charity provides a multi-service youth hub for central Manchester and is home to a range of services for young people, including mental health, careers advice and guidance, specialist programmes alongside a dedicated youth library, sports hall, and community meeting space. Powerhouse is a place where young people can feel safe, get involved in a range of activities and develop their personal and social skills.

The site is situated at the junction of Raby Street and Moss Lane East within 'Central Manchester', as defined within the Manchester Core Strategy 2012 to 2027. Vehicular access to the site is taken off Ainsty Road leading to a small car park at the side of the centre for approximately 14 vehicles (including disabled provision). Pedestrian access to the centre is directly off Raby Street.

Elsewhere, other surrounding land uses include residential, the Church of God of Prophecy Christian Centre to the east of the site and Moss Side Park to the immediate south. The youth and community centre forms an integral part of the local community.

Available online planning history confirms the site's longstanding use and recognised importance by Manchester City Council as a community facility over subsequent applications to extend and adapt the building to meet operational needs:

- *"Erection of a youth centre comprising multi-purpose hall, café, resource centre and residential accommodation after demolition of existing youth centre"* – Ref: 052128/FO/CENTL1/97. Approved 10.07.97.
- *"Two-storey extension within courtyard to form integrated connexions centre and elevational alterations including the removal of garage doors"* – Ref: 067511/VO/SOUTH1/03. Approved 15.05.03.
- *"Erection of 2 storey west wing extension with bridge link to form new training and educational spaces following the demolition of the existing outdoor seating area"* – Ref: 069173/VO/2003/S1. Approved 02.10.03.
- *"Remodelling and redesign of ground floor front elevation and entrance to building"* – Ref: 085695/VO/2008/S1. Approved 29.02.08.
- *"Installation of replacement non-illuminated fascia sign to existing building"* – Ref: 091199/AO/2009/S1. Approved 23.10.09.

Proposed Development

The proposed development has been informed by a series of assessments and reports that have been commissioned to comment on the existing building fabric (supplied as part of the application). The proposed external works respond to identified deficiencies in the building's performance from a mechanical and electrical, thermal efficiency and general maintenance perspective.

The scope of works, as illustrated on the submitted drawings, include:

- Replacement of the existing insulated render with a much higher performance self-insulating render in a warm white colour.
- Replacement of existing steel single glazed crittall windows with a high performing aluminium and UPVC system in an anthracite finish.
- Changes to window sizes.
- Like for like repair of existing blue glazed bricks.
- Existing ground floor render around the band of the building to be replaced with an engineering brick slip to give the elevations a more robust finish.
- Replacement of curtain walling with solid infill panel.

The proposals will significantly enhance the performance of the building as part of the charity's drive to become net zero in operation without compromising its identity. In response, it will ensure that the building can continue to provide much needed services and resources as a valuable facility for the Moss Side community.

Planning Policy

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 require that planning applications must accord with the provisions of the adopted Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2021) represents a material consideration where there are no relevant development plan policies or the policies that are most important for determining the application are out-of-date. The NPPF advises that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and that development in accordance with the development plan should be granted without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise (paragraph 11).

The development plan for Manchester comprises the Core Strategy (2012) and saved policies from the Unitary Development Plan. The emerging Places for Everyone joint long-term plan prepared by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority on behalf of nine Greater Manchester districts was submitted for examination in February 2022. Examination hearings took place between November 2022 and March 2023 (with a further session arranged for July 2023 to discuss specific allocations). In accordance with national policy direction, we attach a degree of moderate weight to the Places for Everyone plan.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2021)

Paragraph 81 advises that planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. National policy makes clear that 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.

With respect to the desire to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places, national planning policy encourages development that promotes social interaction, are safe and accessible and enable and support healthy lifestyles.

To provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning decisions should (paragraph 93):

- Plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces, community facilities and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities;
- Take into account and support the delivery of local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being;
- Guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services; and
- Ensure that established facilities and services are able to develop and modernise, and are ultimately retained for the benefit of the community.

Paragraph 152 confirms that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate. It should help to shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve building resilience.

The Development Plan – Core Strategy

In considering the proposals against planning policy, the following Manchester Core Strategy policies are relevant:

Policy SP1 confirms that development in all parts of the city should contribute to the neighbourhood by creating well designed places that enhance character and positively contribute to the health, safety and wellbeing of residents.

Policy EN4 advises that all development must follow the principles outlined within the Energy Hierarchy, being designed to:

- Reduce the need for energy through design features that provide passive heating, natural lighting and cooling;
- Reduce the need for energy through energy efficient features such as improved insulation and glazing; and
- Meet residual energy requirements through the use of low or zero carbon energy generating technologies.

Policy EN4 goes on to state that wherever possible, new development and retrofit projects, should be used as a mechanism to help improve energy efficiency and provide low / zero carbon energy supplies to existing building.

Policy EN8 makes clear that new development will be expected to be adaptable to climate change in terms of design, layout, siting and function. Policy encourages a need to control overheating in buildings through passive design and a choice selection of materials.

Policy DM1 confirms that all development should have regard to the appropriate siting, layout, form, massing, materials and detailing. Specifically, consideration of the impact on the surrounding areas in term of design, scale and appearance of the proposals.

The Emerging Development Plan – Places for Everyone (August 2021 Submission Version)

Draft Policy JP-P1 encourages that all development should be socially inclusive whilst responding to the needs of all parts of society, enabling all to participate equally and independently and providing opportunities for social contact and support. The draft policy goes on to state that development that promotes a sense of community should be supported.

Draft Policy JP-P3 confirms that the Greater Manchester region will protect existing cultural and community venues, facilities, and its uses.

Other Material Considerations – Climate Emergency

In July 2019, Manchester City Council declared a climate emergency with a commitment to halve their carbon emissions in the next 5 years. As part of the Council (refreshed) Climate Change Action Plan (2020), their commitments between 2022 – 2025 are to:

- *“Reduce the carbon emissions from the Council’s operational estate by at least 50% by 2025 and put in place plans for a further 50% reduction between 2025 and 2030.”*
- *Support building retrofit and energy generation across the city’s buildings and ensure all future development across the city is as close to zero carbon as possible.”*

In view of the policy background, we turn to consider the merits of the proposal against key areas of assessment.

Planning Assessment

Principle of Development

Moss Side Powerhouse is a prominent and highly regarded facility within the local community, offering a safe and welcoming place for children and young people to access help and support, health, and wellbeing initiatives and vital youth services. The building itself is however poorly performing and requires a 'deep retrofit' across several areas to reduce inefficiencies through thermal heat loss, M&E upgrades, and action to arrest further decline in the fabric of the centre.

Informed by a series of technical reports and architectural assessment, the proposed development seeks to maximise the performance of key components of the building across a phased programme of works, namely the external materials that make up the fabric of the building.

Planning policy encourages development proposals that positively contribute to the health and wellbeing of residents. Specifically, development should be supported that facilitates the modernisation of established facilities and services within the community. The proposed 'fabric first' upgrade and improvements in building efficiency will ensure that the valuable services offered at Moss Side Powerhouse can continue with noticeable reductions in capital and operational costs.

The principle of development is therefore wholly acceptable when assessed against key policies on land use, spatial considerations, a strong protection of community facilities and a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Design and Visual Appearance

As previously described, the proposed upgrades to key areas of external fabric represent an opportunity to safeguard the thermal performance and energy efficiency of the building without compromising on the original design intent of the Powerhouse. The overall form and appearance of the building will remain. The selected material palette and proposed refurbishment simply stabilises the building envelope by using more efficient and high performing materials.

Great care has been taken to ensure that the proposed material upgrades are assimilated into the existing building with minimal visual intrusion. For the most part the changes proposed across elements of the building would not be discernible, such as the upgraded render with improved insulation properties, and repair of existing glazed brickwork. Likewise, upgrades of existing failing single glazed steel crittall casement windows to an aluminium double-glazed unit will have minimal impact aesthetically but will significantly improve the thermal properties of the building. Other changes include the introduction of brick slips, in an engineered blue, and the reconfiguration of existing window openings across each elevation to make these smaller and more energy efficient.

It is not considered that these elevation upgrades would materially affect the character of the surrounding area, or the distinctive architectural form of the Powerhouse. Instead, the works help to create a better and more comfortable working environment for staff and service users during the winter and summer months. No new openings are proposed, or any new floorspace.

The proposed works are therefore clearly in accordance with adopted design policies, specifically with regards to Policy EN8 which encourages a need to control the overheating in buildings through passive design and an informed selection of materials.

Further information can be found within the accompanying Design and Access Statement.

Building Sustainability and Energy Efficiency

This application proposes a response to the climate emergency declared by the City Council in 2019, and the critical role that all buildings must play in meeting future goals towards significantly reducing carbon emissions and becoming more climate resilient.

When assessing the proposed development against key planning policies and material considerations, it is important to have regard to the most recent commitments by the Council in their refreshed Climate Change Action Plan for 2022 – 2025, namely that they will support retrofit building projects and measures to reduce carbon emissions from their operational estate by at least 50% by 2025.

The suite of technical reports submitted as part of the application demonstrate the myriad of inefficiencies within the building, most notably the poorly performing glazing and insulation system which currently contributes to excessive heat loss. The proposals clearly accord with adopted planning policies relating to building sustainability and the need to reduce energy demand.

Summary

Planning permission is sought for a series of external works respond to identified deficiencies in Moss Side Millennium Powerhouse's performance from a mechanical and electrical, thermal efficiency and general maintenance perspective. The proposed scope of works will demonstrably reduce capital and operational costs, carbon emissions and improve energy efficiency and building resilience across the vitally important Millennium Powerhouse.

I trust that you have sufficient information in order to determine this application, however, please do not hesitate to contact me should you require anything further.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Hallett'.

Tom Hallett

Associate

For and on behalf of

Q+A Planning Ltd