

Albert Bridge House

Statement of Community Involvement

Prepared by Counter Context Ltd

NOVEMBER 2022

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1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

This Statement of Community Involvement has been prepared by Counter Context Ltd on behalf of Oval Real Estate Ltd, hereby referred to as 'the Applicant'. It provides:

- An account of the pre-application consultation undertaken with local residents, local community groups, local councillors and other key stakeholders about the proposals.
- A summary of the feedback received from these consultees.
- Evidence that this feedback has been considered in the development of the proposals.

The pre-application community consultation strategy was designed to reflect guidance within Manchester City Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement (2018) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021).

1.2 Site Location

The proposed site is bound by Bridge Street, St Mary's Parsonage and the River Irwell, and is currently home to an 18-storey office building (previously occupied by HMRC until September 2022) and the adjoining car park and land, including Albert Bridge Garden. It is referenced in the 2020 Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) for St Mary's Parsonage as providing a key opportunity for redevelopment.



Figure 1: Site location image

1.3 Overview of the Proposed Development

The Applicant's proposals seek to deliver a landmark 'best-in-class' sustainable new office building, alongside a stylish new residential tower providing 367 new homes of a range of different sizes, supported by communal amenity space. Ground floor retail/food & beverage are also planned to activate the surrounding area. Extensive public realm improvements are also proposed in order to create an attractive and welcoming new public space. The proposals also include new pedestrian routes and connections through the site, including enhanced access to the river.

1.4 Policy Requirements

Conducting an early and transparent pre-application consultation is consistent with the guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021).

Paragraph 39 of the NPPF states that:

Early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and outcomes for the community.¹

The NPPF goes on to state that:

[Local Authorities] should also, where they think this would be beneficial, encourage any applicants who are not already required to do so by law to engage with the local community and, where relevant, with statutory and non-statutory consultees, before submitting their applications.²

...

Design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals. Early discussion between applicants, the local planning authority and local community about the design and style of emerging schemes is important for clarifying expectations and reconciling local and commercial interests. Applicants should work closely with those affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot.³

This Statement of Community Involvement also fulfils a formal recommendation of the Local Planning Authority to provide people with an opportunity to feed into the design process of a scheme at an early stage.

Manchester City Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement (2018) sets out 'how developers can ensure that there is an effective opportunity for people to comment and steer development'⁴.

In providing guidance to developers on how they should carry out pre-application consultation, Manchester City Council's Statement of Community Involvement provides recommendations on the types of methods that developers can adopt as part of their pre-application consultation strategy.

Pre-application consultation is beneficial to both the community and the developer as it allows the developer to design a proposal which takes on board the opinions of the community...

...The format of the consultation that the developer uses is likely to be discussed with us as part of pre-application discussions, to help ensure that there is an effective opportunity for people to comment and steer development. The following methods are likely to be suitable and should be used as appropriate:

- *Letters sent to residents and businesses in nearby streets telling them what is proposed, how they can get more information and how they can give the developer their views*
- *Public exhibition in an accessible location close to the development (e.g. library or supermarket) which tells the public about what is happening and gives them an opportunity to make comments*

¹ Secretary of State for Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, National Planning Policy Framework, 2021, paragraph 39.

² *Ibid.*

³ Secretary of State for Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, National Planning Policy Framework, 2021, paragraph 128.

⁴ Manchester City Council's Planning and Development Statement of Community Involvement, June 2018, page 33.

- A website set up by the developer
- Leaflets distributed to nearby streets and placed in facilities near the proposed developments which have a tear off slip for comments
- Social media used by the developer to advertise the development and associated consultation events...

...We can't require developers to carry out pre-application consultation using the methods set out above, but it is encouraged. Where developers have not engaged with local residents and businesses, it is possible that an application could generate more objections once submitted. This could result in the developer having to amend their application to address the objections which could delay the decision-making process.⁵

As part of this process, and as recommended in Manchester City Council's Statement of Community Involvement, the Applicants' team met with Manchester City Council and discussed the consultation strategy for the proposed development ahead of the commencement of the consultation programme.

In addition to the requirement for pre-application community consultation set out by national and local authorities, the Applicant recognises that local people can make a valuable contribution to the proposals by offering their local knowledge and raising issues that may not have been considered, in many cases resulting in a stronger set of proposals.

2. Pre-Application Engagement with Ward Councillors

2.1 Deansgate ward councillors

The Applicant contacted the three Labour councillors representing the Deansgate ward in which the site is located (Councillors Joan Davies, William Jeavons and Marcus Johns) to provide notice in advance of the consultation opening.

Though a meeting was offered to discuss the proposals, it was not possible to find a date that suited the two Councillors who responded (Councillors Jeavons and Johns). The Applicant provided an overview of the proposals by email initially and then followed up with these two councillors to provide a summary of feedback received after the consultation had closed, again offering to arrange a meeting to discuss should this be useful.

2.2 Notification of neighbouring ward councillors in Salford

Given the proximity of the site to the Salford City Council wards of Blackfriars & Trinity and Ordsall, the Applicant also notified councillors representing these wards at the start of the consultation, providing information about the proposals and the consultation process.

Councillors representing the Blackfriars & Trinity ward were informed that the distribution area for the consultation postcard included part of this ward (see 3.2.1, below), meaning that residents in this area would receive publicity information about the consultation.

⁵ Manchester City Council's Planning and Development Statement of Community Involvement, June 2018, pages 33-34.

3. Pre-application Public Consultation Activities

3.1 Introduction

This section of the Statement of Community Involvement sets out the range of activities undertaken as part of the pre-application consultation with local residents, businesses, community and interest groups. The pre-application public consultation period ran from Wednesday 21 September to Sunday 9 October 2022.

The key aspects of the consultation activity plan are outlined below.

3.2 Publicising the Consultation

3.2.1 Consultation postcard

A consultation postcard was delivered to all residential and business addresses located within a distribution area of 886 addresses (see Figure 2 below) at the start of the consultation period.

The A5 sized postcard introduced the proposals for Albert Bridge House and directed recipients towards the consultation website to find out more and provide their feedback via the dedicated online feedback form or by email. The postcard also provided details of the in-person consultation drop-in session on Tuesday 27 September 2022.

The consultation postcard is provided as **Appendix 1**.

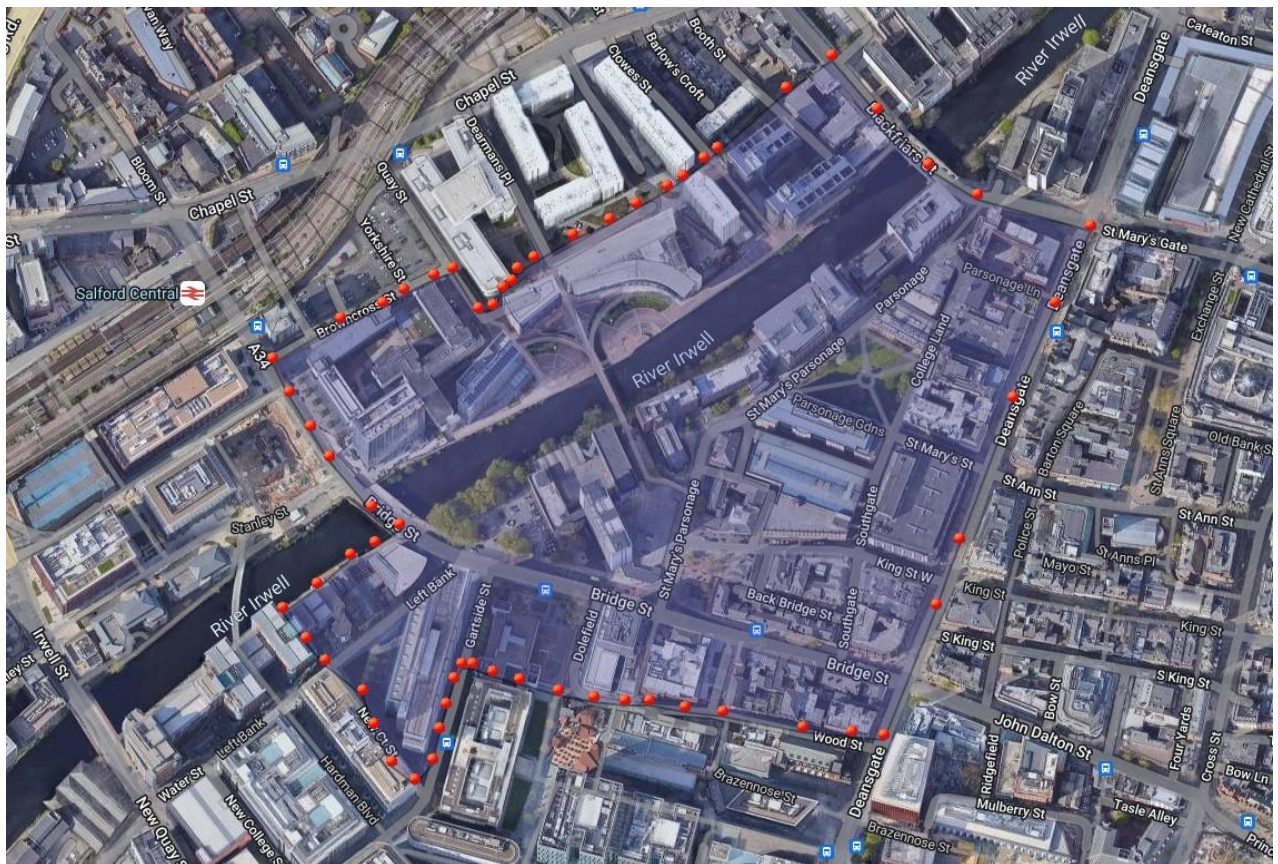


Figure 2: Consultation postcard distribution area.

3.2.2 Press Release and Media Coverage

A press release was issued on Wednesday 21 September. It provided information about the proposals and details of the public consultation, including how people could provide feedback. Articles subsequently appeared in Place North West, Business Manchester, Architects' Journal, Manchester World, The Business Desk, Manchester's Finest among others.

The screenshot shows the Place North West website. The main article is titled "Oval unveils Albert Bridge House transformation" and is dated 21 September 2022. The article describes a 45-storey skyscraper featuring 367 homes and a distinctive 350,000 sq ft office block. It mentions that the 18-storey brutalist Albert Bridge House will be demolished under Oval Real Estate's plans. The article also notes that the proposed development is designed by architect Studio Egret West.

On the left side of the article, there are several "Reader Comments" and "Analysis" sections. The "Reader Comments" section includes comments from users like "Cool. It's an inoffensive slab of mundane and that's fine given where it is..." and "Green light for Silverlane's 25-storey Eccles...". The "Analysis" section includes a sub-header "ANALYSIS - THE SUBPLOT" and discusses the "Northern Powerhouse Rail, investment zones, funds squeeze" and "Why Liz Truss's pledge to resurrect Northern Powerhouse Rail...".

On the right side of the article, there is a "Place Podcast" section titled "PLACE PODCAST" with the subtitle "PODCAST | AG interviews Place North West". Below this is an "Insight" section titled "It's the morning after Place Party. What now?" featuring Lucy Lomas from Luma Marketing. There is also a "Jobs" section listing positions like "Middleweight/Senior Interior Designer" and "BDP Manchester".

At the bottom of the right sidebar, there is a "regent" logo with the text "REGISTER TODAY! FOR YOUR FREE TICKET" and "27/9 NOVEMBER 2023 07:00PM-11:00PM LIVERPOOL".

The screenshot shows the Business Manchester website. The main article is titled "CONSULTATION UNDERWAY ON ALBERT BRIDGE HOUSE PROPOSALS" and is dated 22nd September 2022. The article is written by Sam Allcock. It features a large image of the proposed Albert Bridge House development. Below the article title, there are social media sharing buttons for Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, and Email. To the right of the article, there is a "Upcoming Events" section featuring a photo of a group of people in a meeting and the text "An Intro to Marketing & Promotion for SME's".

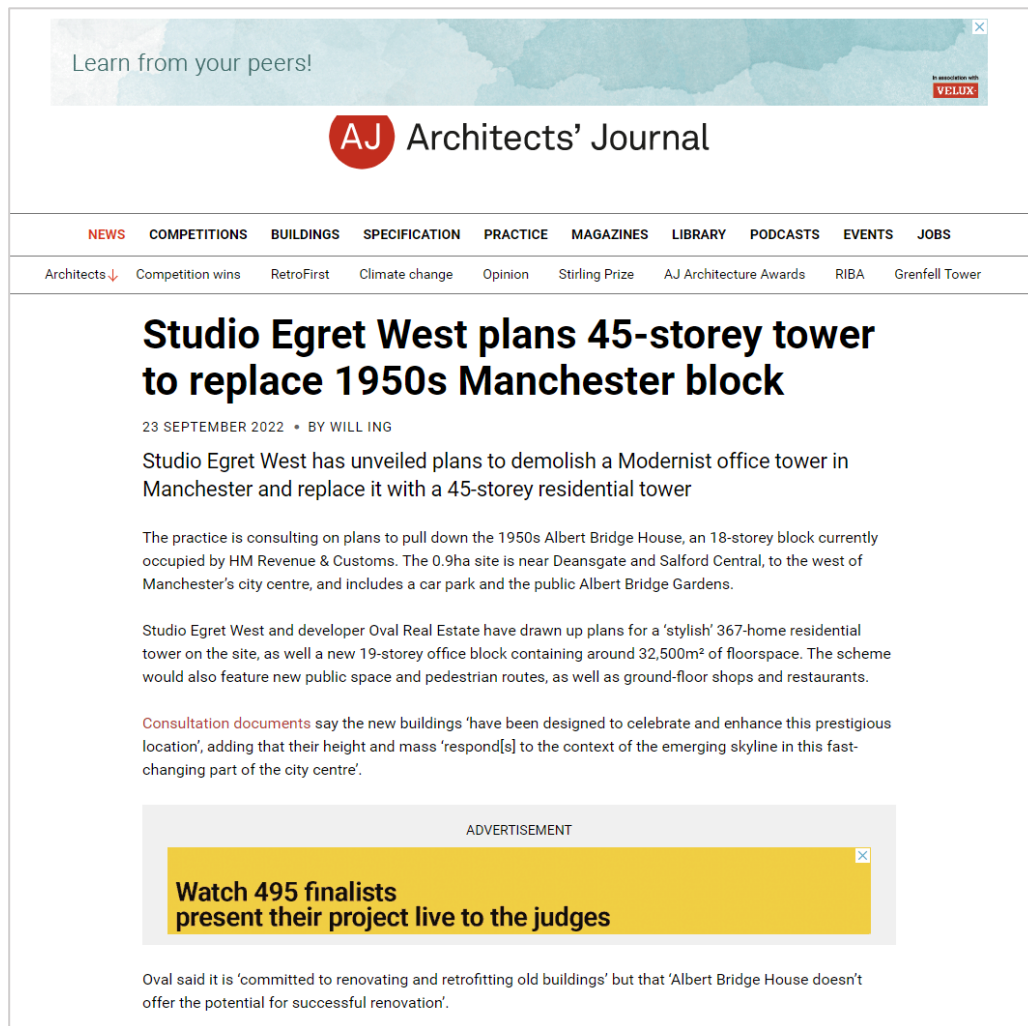
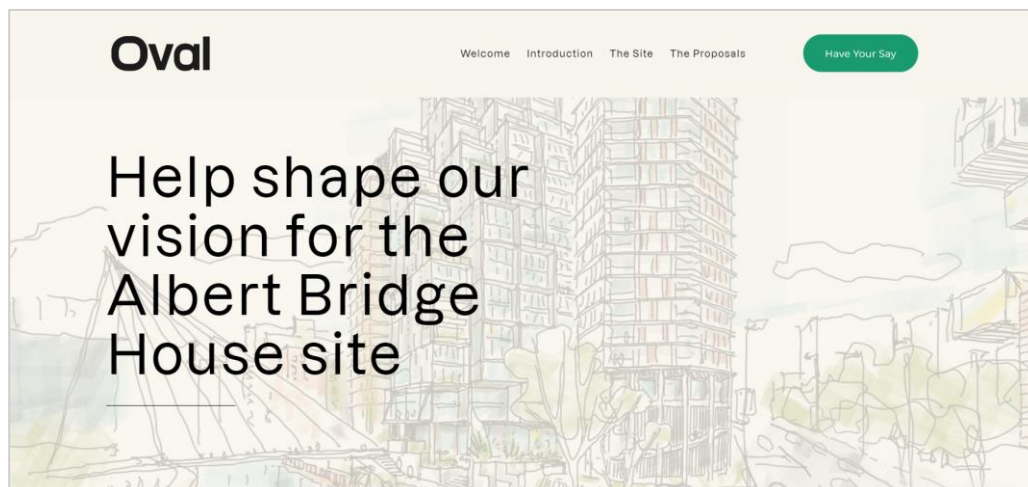


Figure 3: Screenshots of articles that appeared on Place North West, Business Manchester, Architects' Journal.

3.3 Consultation Website

A dedicated consultation website went live at the start of the consultation period. The website (www.albertbridgehouse-mcr.com) provided information on the proposals and vision for the development. It also included a 'Have Your Say' page with a link to an online feedback form and the project email address.



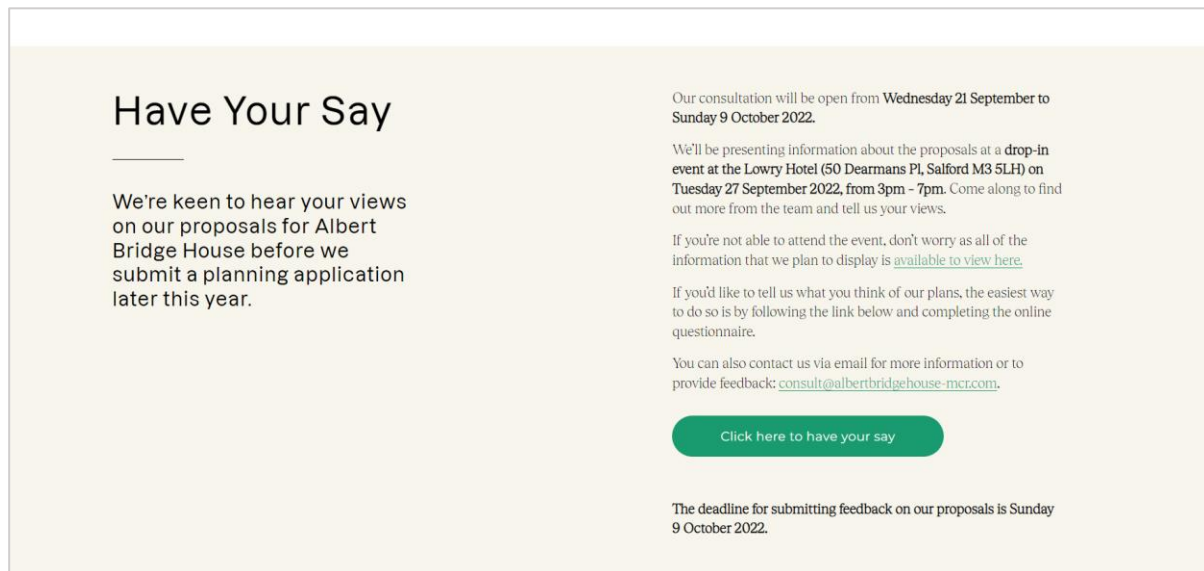


Figure 4: Screenshots of the consultation website.

3.3.1 Traffic to the Consultation Website

During the consultation period there were a total of 715 visits from 652 users in total.

3.4 Consultation Drop-In Session

As part of the consultation, a drop-in event was held on Tuesday 27 September 2022. The event took place at the Lowry Hotel in Salford and was open to members of the public between 3pm to 7pm.

Representatives from Oval Real Estate Ltd, Studio Egret West, Deloitte and Counter Context were present, and ten boards were displayed in an exhibition style presenting information about the scheme. Feedback forms were available to be filled in.

The event displays are provided as **Appendix 2** and the feedback form is provided as **Appendix 3**. 17 people attended the event, three of whom filled in a feedback form.

3.5 Methods for Receiving Feedback

3.5.1 Email Address

The project email address (consult@albertbridgehouse-mcr.com) was publicised on all consultation materials, including the website and the consultation postcard. This email address allowed people to contact the consultation team with any questions and enquiries, as well as providing an alternative way to provide feedback.

3.5.2 Online Feedback Form

An online feedback form was accessible from the 'Have Your Say' page of the consultation website. This questionnaire included a combination of closed, multiple choice questions, and open text questions allowing further comment and explanation.

The questionnaire allowed respondents to comment on each aspect of the plans as well as stating an opinion on the proposals overall. Respondents were also able to provide information about their interest in the site and contact details to be kept informed about the development, should they wish to do so.

Paper copies of the questionnaire were available at the consultation drop-in event for attendees to complete. The feedback form is provided as **Appendix 3**.

4. Pre-Application Consultation Feedback

4.1 Summary of Feedback Received

In total, 20 responses to the pre-application consultation were received via the following channels:

Response Type	Number
Online feedback form	16
Hardcopy feedback form	3
Email	1
Total	20

All of the responses received during the pre-application consultation period have been logged and comments have been considered by the Applicant's team.

4.2 Analysis of Feedback Forms

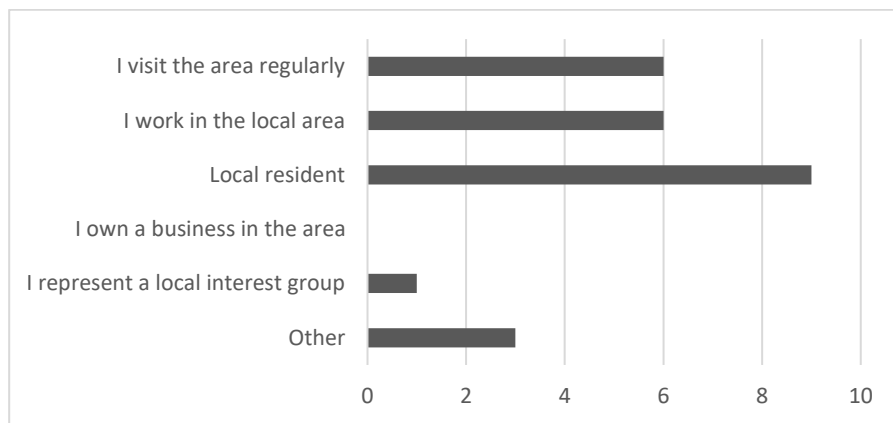
The feedback forms included a series of multiple choice questions and open questions about the proposals. Here follows a summary of the answers received through the multiple choice questions asked within the feedback form.

Comments received through open questions in the feedback forms and by email are summarised and addressed in the table in Section 4.3.

4.2.1 Responses to Closed Questions

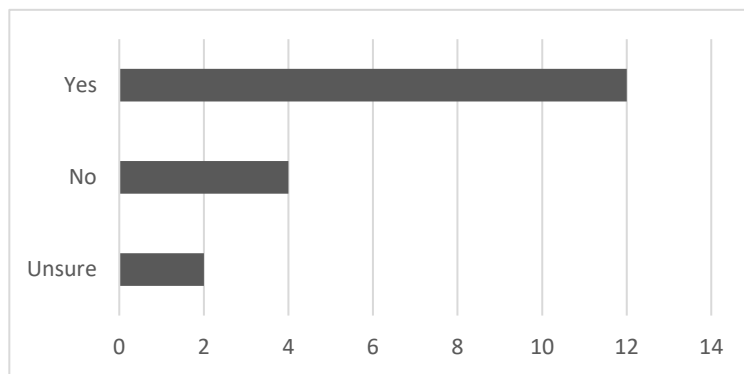
How would you describe your interest in these proposals? (18/19 responded to the question).

Respondents were encouraged to select as many options as applied so some selected more than one option.



One of the respondents who selected 'Other' noted that they simply have an interest in urban planning, one stated they are the owner of an adjoining building, and one simply stated that they are a Mancunian.

Overall, do you think this proposed scheme will make a positive contribution to the wider St Mary's Parsonage area and the city centre? (18/19 responded to this question)



4.2.2 Responses to Open Text Questions

An extensive summary of the issues raised by respondents through the open response field questions within the feedback form and those who submitted feedback via email, alongside an account of how they have been considered and responded to, is provided in the following table.

Topic	Applicant Response
Principle of development and proposed demolition of Albert Bridge House	
Expressions of support for the proposals, referencing: - Support for the provision of new public realm and enhanced connections through the site. - Support for the proposed residential building. - Support for the proposed office building. - Support for plans to create new ground floor spaces for commercial uses.	The comments of support have been noted and are welcomed by the Applicant. The proposals have been designed to help realise the objective of the St Mary's Parsonage Strategic Regeneration Framework to create a commercially-led, mixed-use neighbourhood in this gateway location within Manchester city centre.
Expression of opposition to the proposals in general, referencing: - Opposition to the demolition of the existing building on site on architectural grounds, with a respondent stating it is a key heritage asset and a great example of 50s modernist architecture. - Opposition to the demolition of the existing building on site on sustainability grounds. - An assertion that there is no need for this development.	As a starting point, the Applicant is committed to renovating and retrofitting old buildings and, early within the design development process, numerous studies were undertaken to assess whether Albert Bridge House could be successfully renovated, but no viable option was found. The existing building is highly constrained in terms of its ability to meet the needs of modern occupiers - particularly in terms of floor-to-floor height, layout and efficiency, which no longer meet modern office occupier requirements. In 2019, Historic England determined that the criteria for listing was not met, stating the design of the building is typical of a building of that age lacking sophistication of layout and planning, innovative technology or quality artwork.

	The comprehensive redevelopment of Albert Bridge House and adjacent car park therefore provides the opportunity to realise the full potential of the site – as set out within the St Marys Parsonage SRF which assumed all existing buildings on the site would be demolished to deliver the wider regeneration benefits. The Proposed Development will create a new destination in the St Mary's Parsonage area, which will take advantage of the riverside location and improve connections through the site. Sustainability has been central to the design development. It is recognised that there is 'embedded' carbon involved in demolition and redevelopment of the existing buildings on the site. However, considered over the longer-term, this is balanced against the greater carbon efficiency of the new office building (which is targeting net zero in operation). In addition, opportunities to reuse some of the existing material on site are being explored by the design team.
Public realm and connectivity	
Several positive responses about the plan to provide additional public open space. A couple of positive responses about the plan to open up the site. Two respondents suggested that this aspect of the proposals will serve to enhance the area. One respondent suggested that the open space should aim to be something similar to the open space at Deansgate Square.	The comments of support have been noted and are welcomed by the Applicant. Alongside the delivery of the two new buildings, the Applicant is prioritising the provision of new public open space to help realise the potential of this riverside location and contribute to the vision set out in the St Mary's Parsonage SRF of creating "a commercially led mixed use neighbourhood that is fully integrated with the rest of the City Centre". The Proposal is aiming to develop a unique character of public space, specific to the site location. A combination of commercially led spaces together with a more nature driven river walk will unlock the potential of the site and knit it back to the wider urban area.
Two respondents suggested the proposals present an opportunity to improve access to the river frontage. One respondent expressed strong support for the plan to open up the river walkway. One respondent stated that the pedestrian link running alongside the river must be maintained. One respondent expressed disappointment in relation to the access route from St Mary's Parsonage to Trinity Bridge not being opened up.	The Applicant notes comments of support for opening up and maintaining access to the river front. The route alongside River Irwell was one of the fundamental moves when designing new public space for the development. The elevated river walk not only provides an immediate pedestrian connection between the two bridges, but also opens up new vantage and resting points, provides subtle lighting solution and maintains greenery of the river bank. This also helps to visually connect the area and provide a degree of public surveillance. Connection from Trinity Bridge to St. Mary's Parsonage is not only kept open and accessible

	but also celebrated with new proposals, coming jointly from adjacent Alberton House and Albert Bridge House. The massing of both developments accentuates and opens up the route, which is currently restricted with fencing on the sides.
Two respondents suggested the area is in need of more open green space. However, one of these respondents suggested the majority of the open space in the proposals appears to be paved.	A large portion of the open public space proposal is planted, either with existing or new soft landscape. The planting strategy is to plant species commonly found within British woodlands and amplify the character of each area by building on the structure of the existing planting. The majority of the greenery is concentrated on the river walk character area, where existing greenery and trees on the bank are enriched by selected ground planting. Throughout the entirety of the scheme, there is a total of 32 proposed trees in the public realm, 25 of which are existing trees retained. Three of the existing trees are subject to TPO and are currently sitting within the paved area in front of the existing Albert Bridge House. In the proposed design, they are to be incorporated into a wider planted area, with additional trees of the same species and taller grassland planting. This green area is proposed to become the focus of the new Albert Bridge Square and mark the square's location on Bridge Street.
One respondent suggested this aspect of the proposals can be achieved through effective landscaping of the current development.	After extensive design testing, the Applicant's team came to the conclusion that quantum and quality of public open space couldn't be provided if the existing buildings were left in situ, as well as the opportunity to open up the river frontage.
One respondent stated that the proposed office building appears to be too tightly positioned against the river, and suggested that the footprint would be better if it were to be more rectangular to allow for this space to be maximised. The respondent suggested this could be achieved with stepped terrace seating overlooking the river that links to the ground floor commercial units as this would remove avoid 'oppressive and unengaging 2m+ high retaining walls' which appear to be included in some of the sketches.	The design for the new accessible public realm was carefully considered to improve the site severance caused by the existing building arrangement and to provide new access at ground floor level from the key directions of approach to the Site boundary. Along the northern frontage of the office building, a new access has been formed from the end of Trinity Bridge, which draws people towards active ground level spaces which include a retail space, cyclist café, and restaurant where stepped seating links the commercial ground floor to the proposed ground level and river walk, all set within an under-croft stepping back from the form of the building above to create protection from the elements. Central to the proposal is the preservation and enhancement of riverside ecology to promote biodiversity along the River Irwell. As a result, the raised walkway along the River Walk, which sits 8m+ above the level of the river below, seeks to

	provide minimal impact to the planted river bank below, which therefore celebrates the character of the green space below.
Plans to create ground floor spaces for shops, cafés or restaurants	
One respondent suggested this aspect of the proposals would help to open up Spinningfields towards Parsonage Gardens. One respondent suggested this aspect of the proposals would help to add to the amenity on offer at Motor Square, Bridge Street and The Avenue. One respondent suggested the inclusion of active ground floor uses would help to improve the riverside.	The comments of support have been noted and are welcomed by the Applicant. The provision of ground floor retail and commercial space would help activate the surrounding public space, attracting people to the area. These amenities would mean the site is lively and well-used throughout the day and evening, helping to create a safe and sustainable neighbourhood.
One respondent suggested including flexible working units or pop up spaces at the ground floor level in addition to shops, cafes and restaurants.	The developer will certainly consider the use of a flexible workspace offer to complement other ground floor uses such as retail, café and restaurant use as part of creating a vibrant, active frontage to the building.
One respondent requested that independent retailers are used.	The Applicant will look to curate a mix of ground-floor uses which attracts people to the area and complements surrounding uses.
One respondent questioned whether there is a demand for this aspect of the proposals. One respondent noted that there are already a lot of shops, cafes, and restaurants in the area.	The proposed ground floor uses will support the office and residential elements and activate the new pedestrian routes and connections through the site, including the enhanced access to the river and attractive new public space. They will play a vital role in the site's contribution to the wider SRF vision for a thriving and sustainable neighbourhood.
One respondent suggested that this aspect of the plans could be achieved using the existing building.	After an extensive design testing, the Applicant's team concluded that retaining the existing buildings is not viable. In addition to that, existing structures are not allowing site porosity and connections, as well as not offering opportunity for generous and effective ground floor activation/ retail uses that would be also repairing the urban fabric.
One respondent suggested they would like to see 'the part of the building with the wavy roof' retained as part of a new riverside destination and a link to the existing building on site.	The Applicant is welcoming the idea and will be looking into opportunities to incorporate existing sinusoidal canopy into proposed design at the next stage.
Design	
Expressions of support for the design of the residential building, referencing the following: - Support for a high-rise building with a well-considered design as opposed to 'a glazed monolithic tower' - A suggestion that it is a suitable design for the area. - Support for a distinctive design.	The Applicant has noted and welcomes these comments of support for the design of the proposed residential building.
One respondent suggested that the density of the residential building appears to be too great.	In response to comments around height and density, the height and massing of both buildings respond to the context of the emerging skyline in

One respondent requested that the building is 150m+, and stated that it is always great to see a new skyscraper added to the city's skyline, while another suggested that it will bring critical mass to the area. One respondent suggested that the positioning of the building appears to block views of the court buildings. This respondent suggested that the new building be positioned in the same place as the building currently on the site.	this fast-changing part of the city centre, with the landmark design contributing to its character and sense of place. In line with guidance in the SRF, the taller building would be situated to the south of the site, celebrating the gateway location as an entrance to Manchester, while minimising potential impacts on the conservation area to the north. The hexagonal, stepped form of the residential building creates interest and a playful approach to design. Additionally, the new passageway that is connecting St. Mary's Parsonage and Bridge Street is designed to be framing the view to the Law Courts, where currently the site is inaccessible and blocking both connection and views to the wider urban area.
One respondent suggested that the floor plates for the commercial building appear to be spacious.	The building would provide around 350,000 sq. ft. of office floorspace, with flexibility being a key focus in the design of the floorplate. With an emphasis on flexibility reflecting the evolving role of the workplace and occupier demands, the floorplate would mix traditional workstations with informal working and break out spaces, hot-desking and outdoor terraces. Despite uncertainty over the changing role of offices, the Applicant continues to see strong demand for larger floorplates above 20,000 sq. ft in Manchester City Centre, with larger occupiers requiring a minimum number of floors. This is reflected by the success of schemes such as XYZ, No.8 First Street, Three New Bailey, No.1 Circle Square and Manchester Goods Yard - which were either 100% pre-let, or at least 50% let by practical completion. The central, accessible location of Albert Bridge House, in an established commercial area of the city centre, is ideal to deliver a 'best-in class' sustainable new build office scheme with such large efficient floorplates.
One respondent stated the residential building is not dual aspect, but is rather single aspect with a wider field of view as a result of the hexagonal footprint.	73% of apartments in the residential building are fully dual aspect. Of the remaining 27%, 60% have an enhanced living room aspect.
One respondent suggested the lack of a second staircase in the residential building is a major concern and a significant risk.	The residential building is designed with two protected escape staircases, arranged in a scissor stair plan. This is in line with the most up to date fire safety regulation available.
Sustainability	

One respondent suggested that it is not enough to just target net-zero, but that it should actually be net-zero. One respondent stated they appreciate the aim of developing a sustainable new office building, targeting net-zero in operation, as long as it's actually achievable.	Aligned to the Applicant's ESG objectives, the intention is to deliver a 'best in class' sustainable development, with the office building targeting net zero in line with the Council's 2038 target and the residential building delivering a raft of sustainability features. Whole carbon refers to the sum of the operational and embodied carbon emissions over the life of the building. In order to track progress against the project's net zero carbon ambitions, a preliminary assessment of both operational and embodied carbon emissions has been undertaken. The embodied carbon is expected to be less than 600kgCO₂e/m² but the exact figure cannot be determined until the design and material quantities are frozen. Similarly, the predicted operational carbon emissions are being tracked using a Design for Performance tool that predicts the energy and associated carbon emissions of the building in use. The actual energy use will be monitored and measured after the first 12 months of occupation so cannot be precisely quantified at this early stage. The design team will continue to track both the operational and embodied carbon figures throughout design development to reduce them as far as possible. However, it will be difficult to achieve a totally zero whole life carbon development, therefore offset payments through a recognised scheme will be used to support initiatives such as afforestation, creation of off-site solar/wind farms etc. to achieve this aim.
Environmental and amenity impacts	
A query about whether there would be daylight/sunlight impacts at Parsonage Gardens.	A daylight and sunlight assessment has been undertaken for the development to assess the effects on the amenity experienced by surrounding receptors. The height and massing of the two buildings have been designed to reduce impacts, with the taller residential tower situated to the south of the site and the office building designed to step back to the north and east. However, given the dense, urban context of the site and orientation of properties in respect to the site, a range of potential impacts have been identified on surrounding residential properties. In part, the architectural properties of the existing buildings contribute to the level of impact (e.g. due to overhangs reducing current daylight / sunlight amenity). A number of public amenity areas (e.g. Clermont-Ferrand Square and Motor Square) have also been considered and a range of impacts identified, dependent on location and orientation in relation to the development. Parsonage Gardens was not considered due to its distance and orientation from the site.

A query about what the proposed development would look like from Century Buildings, from the riverside and from St Mary's Parsonage.	Please refer to TVIA views (no.01, 02, 13) and Riverside CGI. The main visual impact from Century Buildings is from the Alberton House proposal, whilst Albert Bridge house scheme is not visible at all.
A query about any potential impact on sewage entering the river. The respondent noted there is sewage in the river from time to time.	The existing overflow system in the vicinity of the site, which is operated by United Utilities, will be retained and unaffected by the development. The new foul water drainage system for the development will connect to the existing network, managed and operated by United Utilities. Consultation will be undertaken with United Utilities to identify the local foul water infrastructure capacity and should any upgrades to the existing public foul water network be required to accommodate the development, these will be undertaken by United Utilities in accordance with the standards and specifications set out in Design and Construction Guidance.
Transport	
A response noting that the roads in the area are frequently gridlocked.	During construction, there is anticipated to be limited numbers of additional vehicles travelling to and from the site in the context of existing traffic. In addition, all construction traffic will be managed / controlled through management plans to ensure that only specified routes are used and where possible, traffic travels to / from site outside of peak hours. At present, the site includes a total of 137 car parking spaces. The Proposed Scheme will have circa <25 car parking spaces in the basement (accessed off Bridge Street) for residents and employees / visitors. Given this, there is likely to be an approximately 74% overall reduction in vehicular traffic at the Site in peak hours. Given this, transport related impacts are not considered to be significant on the local road network.
Support for the inclusion of a cycle club in the plans.	The Applicant's intention is to create a cycle club café facility that works with the secure cycle parking proposed as part of the residential amenity offer.
Miscellaneous	
One respondent suggested that the proposed development should include an affordable housing element and new social housing.	Manchester's economic and population growth continues to fuel residential demand in the City Centre particularly in Build to Rent accommodation and ABH's strategic location is geographically well-placed to play a significant role in satisfying this demand for new homes to support population and economic growth. A viability assessment on the inclusion of affordable housing is provided as part of the planning application.

One respondent claimed that it is difficult to comment on a sketch.	The pre-application consultation was undertaken at a time that the design proposals were still in development, meaning that comments could be taken on board ahead of the finalisation of the plans. Nevertheless, a number of detailed sketches and plans were provided for people to view and comment on.
Expression of support for coordination with Bruntwood and Property Alliance Group.	The Applicant welcomes this comment and will continue to liaise with adjacent landowners / developers as the proposals for this part of the city centre continue to develop.

5. Influence of Consultation on the Proposals

The consultation which has been undertaken is in accordance with both the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021) and with Manchester City Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement (2018). This document fulfils the requirement for a consultation supporting statement that summarises the methods used, the representations received, and the changes made to the proposals as a result of feedback submitted.

The comments received during the pre-application consultation have been considered by the Applicant's team on an ongoing basis to ensure that the issues raised could be addressed during the development of the proposals.

The Applicant would like to thank all those who have provided their feedback during the pre-application consultation and looks forward to further constructive dialogue throughout the development process.

6. Appendices

Appendix 1: Consultation postcard

WE WANT TO HEAR YOUR VIEWS ON OUR PLANS FOR ALBERT BRIDGE HOUSE

Oval

Oval Real Estate is bringing forward plans to redevelop Albert Bridge House and the adjoining car park to realise the potential of this important gateway site in Manchester City Centre.

Our plans include replacing the existing buildings on the site with two new landmark buildings, set within extensive public realm. A highly distinctive and sustainable new office building would provide modern workspace designed to meet the needs of a range of occupiers, alongside ground floor spaces for shops, cafés or restaurants. The second building would be a stylish residential tower, providing 367 new homes in a range of sizes, supported by communal amenity space.

Improvements to the surrounding public spaces, including new pedestrian routes and connections through the site, would help bring this central, riverside location to life.

Before we submit a planning application for these plans later this year, we are keen to hear feedback from the local community.



Aerial view of the site today (Image courtesy of Google Maps).

HAVE YOUR SAY



The public consultation on our proposals for Albert Bridge House will be open from Wednesday 21 September to Sunday 9 October 2022.

You can find more information on our plans by visiting our website www.albertbridgehouse-mcr.com which also includes a link to a questionnaire so that you can provide your feedback.



DROP-IN EVENT

We are holding a public drop-in session on Tuesday 27 September at The Lowry Hotel (50 Dearmans Place, Salford, M3 5LH). The event will be open from 3pm to 7pm. This will be an opportunity to find out more about our plans, talk to members of our team, and tell us your views.

If you have any questions on our proposals, you can contact us via email: consult@albertbridgehouse-mcr.com, or by calling us on: 0161 669 5035.



Indicative sketch of our early stage proposals

Return address if undelivered:
Counter Context, Jactin House, 24 Hood Street,
Ancoats Urban Village, Manchester, M4 6WX.

Appendix 2: Consultation event displays

Welcome

Oval Real Estate is bringing its regeneration expertise to Manchester and is proposing to transform the site at Albert Bridge House. Currently an underused corner of the city centre, these proposals seek to create a design-led, sustainable new riverside destination.

We are now asking you to play your part in helping to shape these plans.



Portfolio Highlights

Ruxington



Mayfield Park

Oval

Introducing Oval Real Estate

We develop, manage and invest in buildings throughout the UK and across every sector.

Specialising in spaces sometimes overlooked, our mission is to leave buildings and neighbourhoods in better shape than we found them.

We place a big emphasis on design and put our own stamp on every building. Tapping into expertise from outside the property sector, we consider everything our occupiers and visitors see, hear and touch.

Oval

Portfolio Highlights



New building in Digbeth



Office for The Pothol

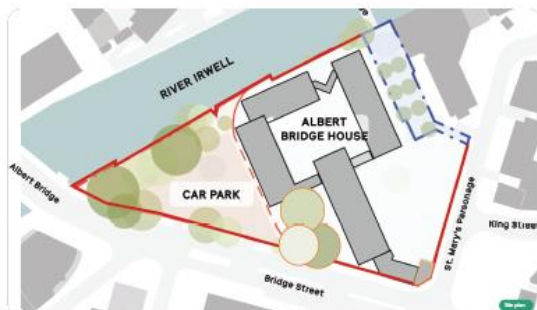
The site today

A currently underutilised riverside location.

The Albert Bridge House site is located between Bridge Street, the River Irwell, St Mary's Parsonage and Trinity Bridge in Manchester City Centre.

It currently contains the 18-storey office building occupied by HMRC and the adjoining car park and land, including Albert Bridge Gardens.

The site is not located within a conservation area and contains no Listed Buildings. The site is within the area covered by the St Mary's Parsonage Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF), which sets out a vision for the future development and regeneration of the area.



Why not reuse the existing building?

At Oval, we are committed to renovating and retrofitting old buildings. While that is always our starting point, Albert Bridge House doesn't offer the potential for successful renovation.



A missed opportunity to open up the site

The existing layout of Albert Bridge House turns its back on the river frontage and its retention would restrict the opportunity to open up the site and improve connections.



A purpose-built building whose purpose has come to an end

Albert Bridge House was purpose-built in the 1950s as a tax office and has been home to HMRC ever since. It is an example of the Ministry for Work's fixed-price contract for government projects, which meant it was constructed under a fixed budget with tight timescales. These functional contracts were necessary during the post-War period, however, the buildings constructed under these contracts were not designed with long-term sustainability in mind, which creates substantial costs for occupiers. With HMRC moving out later this year, Albert Bridge House has come to the end of its logical lifespan. Put simply, its layout and design no longer meets modern office occupier requirements.



A building that has seen extensive remodelling

The best examples of 1950s architecture should be celebrated, but Albert Bridge House was recently assessed by Historic England to have insufficient historical significance or architectural interest for it to be listed. The interior has been extensively refurbished, leaving no original fixtures or features of significance. The exterior of the building has also seen changes and adaptations over time.

A clear vision for this part of the city centre



The Albert Bridge House site is identified as a key development opportunity within the Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) for the St Mary's Parsonage area, which was formerly endorsed by Manchester City Council in July 2020.

The purpose of the SRF is to set out the Council's ambitions for the regeneration of the area and to identify opportunities for redevelopment. It identifies St Mary's Parsonage as a key opportunity area with a vision to create a commercially led mixed-use neighbourhood that is fully integrated into the rest of the city centre.

Since the SRF was endorsed, several development proposals have come forward in the area, including the adjacent Alberton House, as well as proposals for the repurposing and restoration of the Kendals building, redevelopment of the adjoining multi-storey car park and emerging proposals for Reedham House.



The SRF anticipates that the Albert Bridge House site will see some of the most significant development within the whole St Mary's Parsonage area in terms of the extent of redevelopment, as well as height and density.

"The site provides a key opportunity for an important landmark development that identifies the key connections with Salford to the west, Spinningfields commercial quarter to the south and the St Mary's Parsonage SRF and Ramada SRF areas to the north."

The SRF considers the site to provide a key opportunity to simultaneously expand the city's commercial offer and deliver economic growth through a high-density development, whilst also enhancing the river frontage and surrounding streetscape.

Complementing the commercial building and public amenity space, we believe that a residential development would be the most appropriate option to deliver a successful mixed-use development and help to meet the sustained demand for high-quality new homes in the city centre.

Our proposals for Albert Bridge House



A dynamic, sustainable place designed to realise the potential of this gateway location.

Our proposals are designed to help realise the SRF's vision of creating "a commercially led mixed use neighbourhood that is fully integrated with the rest of the City Centre... a place where people 'live, work, relax and socialise'."



We are proposing to completely remodel this 2.2 acre site to open up the river frontage, create more public open space and position two new buildings more sympathetically within the site.

Our proposals include:



A landmark sustainable new office building, creating c.350,000 sq. ft. net commercial floor area, providing flexible workspace for a range of occupiers in response to ongoing demand for this type of space in this area of the city centre.



A stylish new residential tower providing 367 new homes of a range of different sizes, supported by communal amenity space.



Ground floor retail/food & beverage to activate the surrounding area.



New pedestrian routes and connections through the site, including enhanced access to the river.



Attractive and welcoming new public space, with retained trees alongside new planting to encourage biodiversity.

A development that gives back to the city



With much of the existing site dedicated to car parking or off limits to the public, the starting point of our design was to open up the site and make a positive contribution to the city.

Landscape and public realm

Our plans for the site would provide over 1.2 acres of outdoor amenity space, promoting health and wellbeing of the occupants of the buildings as well as creating an attractive, sustainable place that people want to visit and spend time in. Extensive landscaping across the ground floor public realm and roof terraces of the office building will contribute to the character of the area, as well as climate change mitigation.



Ground floor activation

Ground floor retail and commercial space would help activate the surrounding public space, attracting people to the area.

Both buildings would feature ground floor retail and commercial spaces, providing amenities for residents, workers and visitors alike. These amenities would mean the site is lively and well-used throughout the day and evening, helping to create a safe and sustainable neighbourhood. These uses will also help to revitalise and activate the existing public space of Motor Square, just opposite the site.

Routes and connections

We want to open up this site and celebrate a neglected part of the riverside.

Our plans build on the vision outlined in the SRF of creating new pedestrian connections through the site into the city centre, as well as opening up the riverside to more people.



A landmark design



Both buildings have been designed to celebrate and enhance this prestigious location within Manchester city centre.

The height and massing of both buildings respond to the context of the emerging skyline in this fast-changing part of the city centre, with the landmark design contributing to its character and sense of place.

In line with guidance in the SRF, the taller building would be situated to the south of the site, celebrating the gateway location as an entrance to Manchester, while minimising potential impacts on the conservation area to the north. The hexagonal, stepped form of the residential building creates interest and a playful approach to design.

The office building, which is targeting Net Zero, would be similar in height to the adjacent Alberton House. It employs a radical stepped design with green rooftop spaces providing external terraces for all occupiers, whilst also creating a truly unique facade.

Immediate context - materials and colour tones



The texture and materials of both buildings have been carefully selected to complement the surrounding architectural context, as well as contributing to the energy efficiency of both buildings.

High-quality, flexible office space



To help meet increasing demand in the city centre

The SRF envisaged commercial development on the Albert Bridge House site, and with demand for commercial space remaining strong after the pandemic, the city centre is the focus for economic growth and employment

Occupiers are choosing to move to 'best-in class' sustainable new build offices which are rich in outdoor amenity space. Wrap-around ground floor uses such as cafés and restaurants add to the offer for occupiers, whilst also helping to promote collaboration and wellbeing.



The commercial building would reach up to 19 storeys with a unique, stepped design maximising natural light, views.

The building would provide around 350,000 sq. ft. of office floorspace, with flexibility being a key focus in the design of the floorplate.

It has been designed to meet the needs of a range of occupiers, from smaller start-up businesses to larger business looking to re-locate, the floorplate would mix traditional workstations with informal working and break-out spaces, hot-desking and outdoor terraces.

Our emphasis on flexibility has been driven by the evolving role of the workplace as result of COVID-19.

A new community in the city centre



With a range of homes to meet different needs

With a rising population and increasing demand for housing in Manchester, residential development has a crucial role in helping meet the needs of a growing city.

The increasing popularity of city centre living reflects the importance of access to work, leisure facilities and high-quality public transport connections.



Our plans would provide 367 new Build to Rent homes in the city centre.

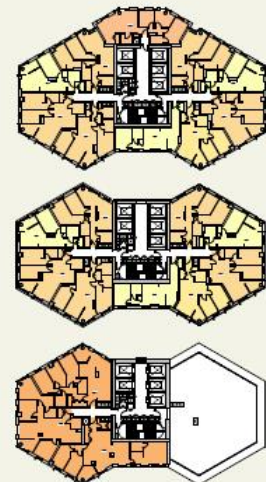


Apartments ranging from 1 to 3-bed (6 person) would cater to the different needs and preferences of those looking to live in the city centre.



The homes would be supported by communal amenity space, including three communal sky garden terraces.

Residential building floorplans



The residential building would comprise three conjoined hexagonal towers, stepping from 34 to 40 to 45 storeys.

The unique shape of the floorplan created by this design allows for dual aspect homes that provide panoramic views in all directions and a communal lift lobby which would enjoy natural daylight.

Aligned to our ESG objectives, we plan to deliver a 'best in class' sustainable development, with the office building targeting net zero in line with the Council's 2038 target and the residential building delivering a raft of sustainability features.

During construction, a commitment to minimising waste and pollution and increasing re-use and recycling would be enforced through a waste management strategy.

[illegible]

Be a smart shopper



You can also email your comments to consult@albertbridgehouse-mcr.com or fill out a paper copy of the questionnaire here at our drop-in event – just ask a member of the team.



Appendix 3: Consultation feedback form

Oval

Albert Bridge House Consultation Questionnaire

We want to hear your views on our proposals for the redevelopment of the Albert Bridge House site.

This consultation is open until 9 October 2022.

Q1. How would you describe your interest in the project?

☐

Local
resident

☐

I work in the local
area

☐

I own a business in
the local area

☐

I visit the area
regularly

☐

I represent a local
interest group

☐

Other
(please specify):

Q2. What do you think of the different elements of our plans?

Your comments

Developing a sustainable new office building, targeting net zero in operation	
Developing a high-quality residential building which will create 367 new homes	
Opening up the site to provide over an acre of public open space and an enhanced river frontage	

Your comments

Creating ground floor spaces for shops, cafés or restaurants	
Providing enhanced walking routes through and around the site	

Q3. Overall, do you think this proposed scheme will make a positive contribution to the wider St Mary's Parsonage area and the city centre?

☐

Yes

☐

No

☐

Unsure

Q4. If you have any further comments you would like to make, please provide them here.

Finally, we would like to know a little bit more about you.

Your personal details will be stored in compliance with the GDPR by Counter Context acting on behalf of Oval Real Estate. As part of any subsequent planning applications, Oval Real Estate may submit to the Local Planning Authority a complete copy of all correspondence received. This ensures all your comments are available to the LPA during the consideration of the planning application(s). Personal data will not be passed onto any other third parties.

Name:

Would you like us to contact you by email to keep you updated on the proposals?

☐

Yes

☐

No

If yes, please provide your email address:

What is your postcode?



0161 669 5035



www.albertbridgehouse-mcr.com



consult@albertbridgehouse-mcr.com