

Planning Statement

Oakley, 188 Wilmslow Road, Fallowfield,
Manchester, M14 6LJ

December 2020

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Client

Watkin Jones Group

Our reference

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Executive Summary

1. This Planning Statement has been prepared by Turley on behalf of Watkin Jones Group to support an application for full planning permission for purpose built student accommodation (PBSA) at the site of the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers (USDAW) head office on Wilmslow Road.
2. The application seeks to retain and convert the non-designated heritage asset, Oakley Villa, as communal and social space with the demolition of the existing office extension buildings and erection of two accommodation buildings comprising 425 bedrooms with associated landscaping and outdoor space.
3. The site is no longer suitable for use as office space, nor is the accommodation appropriate or acceptable in modern standards. USDAW are a not for profit organisation and are relocating to modern office accommodation elsewhere within Greater Manchester. It is therefore crucial for USDAW to secure best value for the sale of the application site; Watkin Jones Group has agreed to acquire the site.
4. The application site is located within a popular student location. It lies adjacent to the University of Manchester's Fallowfield Campus and residential streets popular with year students due to their proximity to the centre of Fallowfield and the high frequency public transport links into the city centre and University teaching campuses.
5. The evidence is clear and the City Council acknowledge there is a need for more PBSA in Manchester as the lack of supply is having adverse consequences on the mainstream housing market and the affordability of Manchester as a place to study.
6. The delivery of high-quality PBSA in Manchester offers the opportunity to ensure that the experience of students attending Manchester's Higher Education Institutions is improved and the accommodation on offer better reflects the world-renowned status of Manchester's institutions.
7. National planning policy sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which confirms that development that accords with relevant policies in an up-to-date development plan should be granted planning permission without delay.
8. The Manchester Core Strategy confirms the principle of purpose-built student accommodation is supported in close proximity to the University campuses or to a high frequency public transport route which passes the area, such as in this location, subject to satisfying other criteria.
9. The National Planning Policy Framework and local planning policies require development to be of high-quality design, and to have regard to the prevailing character with the surrounding area.
10. Other policies in the Core Strategy and NPPF encourage development on previously developed land and development in locations that are accessible by a wide range of sustainable modes of transport.

11. The planning appraisal undertaken demonstrates that:
- The existing office use is no longer suitable in this location or in the outdated premises.
 - The redevelopment of the site for student accommodation helps satisfy a city-wide need for student accommodation and more competitively priced PBSA.
 - PBSA in this location will offer students a high quality and suitable alternative to shared housing and HMOs in the area, thus helping to draw students out of housing more suitable for non-student residents.
 - The scheme benefits from explicit University of Manchester support – the University recognises the special characteristics of the proposal- and is compliant with Core Strategy Policy H12, the development plan policy of greatest relevance.
 - The retention and conversion of the non-designated heritage asset provides a sustainable future for and ensures the ongoing upkeep and management of the asset. The proposed development improves the character and appearance of the site and the setting of the non-designated heritage asset.
 - The proposals would deliver a high-quality and expertly managed (24 hour onsite management) PBSA development that complies with initiatives to address issues around anti-social behaviour and positive public realm.
 - The proposed development would satisfy the requirements of policies relating to heritage, trees, highways, flood risk, amenity, air pollution and biodiversity.
12. The proposed development complies with all relevant policies of the development plan and would assist in delivering the City Council’s regeneration, recovery and economic objectives as well as supporting the Universities’ aims of being a destination of choice for higher education.
13. A range of economic, social and environmental benefits have been identified, and lend further significant weight in favour of the development. These include:
- Economic benefits, including encouraging activity and economic investment in Fallowfield, in particular: direct and indirect job creation; increasing spending within the local area; and encouraging footfall and further investment.
 - Social benefits, including the heritage benefits of the proposals, enhanced student wellbeing and supporting the objective of converting student HMOs to mainstream housing.
 - Environmental benefits, including the retention of existing mature trees and inclusion of an extensive landscaping scheme with native planting; the delivery of energy efficient buildings and essentially a car-free development that is highly accessible by public transport, reducing contributions to climate change.

14. It has also been demonstrated that the proposals are entirely consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework.
15. Whilst a number of material considerations have been identified, these principally add further weight to the granting of planning permission on the site, consistent with the development plan.
16. It has been demonstrated that the proposed development is in accordance with relevant policies of the development plan and other material considerations that weigh further in favour of the grant of planning permission.
17. Planning permission should, therefore, be granted without delay, in accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Turley on behalf of the joint applicants, The Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers (USDAW), Watkin Jones Group Limited (WJG) and Wilmslow Road Manchester Ltd.
- 1.2 The full application is for the redevelopment of the Central USDAW Office site in Fallowfield off Wilmslow Road and Langley Road, which is owned by USDAW and is proposed to be sold to WJG. The description of development is as follows:
- “Part-demolition of the existing office buildings on site and erection of purpose built student accommodation. Retention and redevelopment of Oakley Villa to provide amenity and communal space, landscaping and associated infrastructure.”*
- 1.3 The policy compliant scheme will provide 425 high quality, sustainably located and expertly managed student bedrooms, with the highest standard of facilities and amenity. It will help address unmet demand for student accommodation, and the consequential impacts this has, while offering regeneration benefits for the Fallowfield area.
- 1.4 This Planning Statement demonstrates the building and the site is no longer suitable for employment use and highlights the site’s suitability for purpose built student accommodation (PBSA).
- 1.5 The Statement provides a fully evidenced case of the need for student accommodation, outlines support received from the University of Manchester (UoM) and demonstrates wider regeneration benefits which contribute to the scheme’s compliance with Manchester City Council’s PBSA Policy. The Statement provides a comprehensive review of relevant planning policy and finds the proposals to be fully in accordance with the Development Plan and supported by other material considerations.
- 1.6 The application submission contains a comprehensive suite of technical supporting documents, a full list of which is provided at **Appendix 1**.

Structure

- 1.7 The remainder this Statement is structured as follows:
- **Section 2:** provides a an overview of the reason for the site’s vacancy and the existing student accommodation market
 - **Section 3:** provides a brief description of the application site in context
 - **Section 4:** briefly summarises the consultation undertaken with key stakeholders, local residents and interested parties
 - **Section 5:** provides a detailed description of the proposals

- **Section 6:** outlines the key planning policy considerations
- **Section 7:** provides an assessment of the proposals against those considerations
- **Section 8:** summarises the benefits of the proposed development
- **Section 9:** presents overall conclusions and identifies why planning permission should be granted.

2. Context to the proposals

Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers

- 2.1 USDAW is a non-profit organisation providing advice and representation to businesses in a number of different industries including road transport, dairy and food shopping as well as major retailers; for this reason USDAW is one of Britain's largest trade unions with over 401,000 members.
- 2.2 The USDAW Fallowfield Office is the head office of a wider network of 19 offices across the UK and employs c.180 staff. USDAW purchased the site in the 1920's and have occupied it since that time.
- 2.3 It is evident when moving around the USDAW head office that the site's development and occupation has evolved as the union has employed more staff to help service the needs of the growing number of members. The oldest building on site which pre-dates USDAW's presence, Oakley Villa, was originally a residential property, and a series of office blocks have been added over time. The piecemeal development of the site means level access cannot be achieved and the staff are spread across 'wings' of the building, limiting the ability of staff to work efficiently together.
- 2.4 The internal configuration of Oakley Villa is not suitable for modern office use with a number of rooms and spaces too small to be used at all or only able to fit a small number of staff. A couple of the larger ground floor rooms are used as meeting rooms and private offices, but don't lend themselves to wider use.
- 2.5 The union prepares and distributes a large amount of printed material to locations across the UK. The internal building configuration and services can hamper the capacity of the modern and large printing equipment, for example by overheating. The residential nature of the surrounding neighbourhood and site access onto Langley Road means there can be disruptions when delivery vehicles access the site.
- 2.6 The high management and maintenance costs associated with the day to day running and upkeep of the dated buildings are a drain on USDAW's resources. The energy performance of the building only achieves Grade D which is far below modern standards for office space. These associated costs, coupled with the inefficient and non-DDA compliant building layout are key driving forces leading to the decision for USDAW to move to new premises.
- 2.7 USDAW have now not only outgrown the dated, inefficient and costly office space but it is also no longer considered a suitable location for their operations.
- 2.8 While the site is extremely well served by bus routes and there are high quality cycle lanes and pedestrian routes, accessibility for private vehicle, tram and trains are poor. The nearest bus stop on Wilmslow Road is one of the busiest in Manchester as the bus services are the primary mode of transport for most university students travelling into the city centre and the Oxford Road corridor where the university teaching campuses are located. These bus services are not particularly convenient for staff living further afield in south Manchester. Many staff therefore choose to commute via private car as there is no other feasible public transport option (i.e. by tram or train). This is clearly

not a sustainable transport choice, and it also leads to staff parking on surrounding streets.

- 2.9 The submitted Commercial Market Assessment prepared by Edwards and Co confirms that the existing accommodation is in an area of very limited occupier demand and better quality, more accessible options exist elsewhere. As a result of this lack of demand the commercial market in Fallowfield has less take up, higher vacancy rates and lower prices per square foot than elsewhere in Manchester and South Manchester.
- 2.10 The Assessment by Edwards and Co is clear that office accommodation at the application site is a poor choice when compared to alternative accommodation in Didsbury, the city centre and along Princess Parkway. It is clear that the available accommodation does not offer modern office building specifications, neither is it located close to desired amenities.
- 2.11 New modern and often bespoke office accommodation in favoured and accessible locations has resulted in a significant drop in take up of commercial space in residential south Manchester suburbs and Fallowfield in particular. The Assessment concludes that the site is both unviable for refurbishment as office accommodation and unsuitable as a location for office redevelopment due to lack of demand.
- 2.12 Having reached the conclusion that new premises are needed USDAW sought advice on what use would be suitable in this location and what would secure best value. Securing best value for this site is crucial as USDAW is a non-profit trade union dependent on the capital receipt from the land sale to move to more appropriate office accommodation. USDAW have found new modern accommodation in Salford Quays that is fit for purpose and in a highly sustainable location; the choice of premises (and their associated cost) has been informed by the anticipated level of receipt from the sale of the Fallowfield site. USDAW aim to relocate to the new premises in the spring of 2021, from which point the application site will be vacant.
- 2.13 USDAW has partnered with WJG as student accommodation is thought to be both the most appropriate use for the site and will generate best value capable of supporting their relocation.

Watkin Jones Group PLC

- 2.14 WJG are a market leading multi-occupancy residential developer with expansive experience and knowledge of the residential, commercial and mixed-use property sectors. WJG have more than 200 years of experience of delivering outstanding developments that address the needs of modern living. Since the late 1990s, WJG have become increasingly specialised in the development, construction and management of high-quality purpose built student accommodation. WJG also deliver other residential development including build to rent, co-living and traditional housing – one such example being the 19 dwelling scheme on Egerton Road in Fallowfield which was delivered in 2013.
- 2.15 Nationally, they have constructed over 43,500 student accommodation bedrooms across 130 student schemes, delivering up to 4,000 student bedspaces each year. WJG maintain a reputable position within the PBSA sector due to their diligence and careful selection of PBSA sites based on an understanding of local student trends. They excel in

delivering high-quality, appropriately designed PBSA across major university cities in the UK, including Edinburgh, Belfast, London, Oxford, Liverpool, Manchester and Leicester. The following schemes have been built by WJG in Manchester:

- Wilmslow Park – Mixed use scheme including commercial units and 1004 student units. Development completed in 2002.
- Hulme – 112 student units. Development completed in 2001.
- Briarfields – 239 student units (managed by UoM). Development completed in 2000.
- All Saints/ Cambridge Street – 672 student units (managed by Manchester Metropolitan University). Development completed in 2000.
- Kincardine Court, Kincardine Street – 231 student units. Development completed in 2001.

2.16 Part of WJG is Fresh which operates and manages student accommodation developments across the UK. As a member of the Accreditation Network UK (ANUK), Fresh pursue a high-standard of student management principles across 20,000 student bed spaces. Fresh has directly informed the design of the proposals and the management strategy submitted in support of the application.

2.17 WJG are committed to developing the application site with an aim to be operational for the 2023 academic year. The proposed scheme has evolved in consultation with the construction arm of WJG to ensure the development as proposed is immediately deliverable and to reduce the risk of delay to the construction programme.

Evolving picture of higher education students in Manchester

2.18 Manchester is home to world leading universities with UoM achieving a ranking position of 51 in the world and 8 in the UK Times Higher Education rankings. The University is also one the world's most international universities with its global reputation attracting students from 160 nationalities and a historic increase in number of international students in Manchester. At the heart of UoM's Strategic Plan is support for their "*people and values*". To achieve this, wellbeing is a key priority and there is an aim of being a destination of choice for students globally¹.

2.19 Manchester Metropolitan University's (MMU) Corporate Strategy similarly focusses on the student experience and the benefits a global city such as Manchester can offer to prospective students².

2.20 Factoring in the growth objectives of the two Universities, full time student numbers are projected to increase by 10.3% over the next 5 years³. Higher education students

¹ <https://www.manchester.ac.uk/discover/vision/>

² <https://www.mmu.ac.uk/media/mmuacuk/content/documents/about/corporate-strategy/Manchester-Met-Corporate-Brochure-A6.pdf>

³ Application submission document: Manchester Student Demand Study prepared by Knight Frank

contribute significantly to Manchester's economy and the long term economic aims of the city. Students renting, socialising, shopping and making use of amenities all generate significant economic returns for the city while they study. Ensuring students have a positive experience of living in Manchester and are given the opportunity to live in attractive areas and in high quality accommodation while at university means graduates may be more likely to stay in the city after graduation.

- 2.21 Manchester's most valuable and high skilled sectors include advanced manufacturing, health and life sciences, all of which require a highly skilled work force. The retention of highly skilled graduates, currently at a rate of approximately 53%, aligns with the strategic aims of the Greater Manchester Strategy (2017); recognising the full potential of Manchester's younger population and matching this with the variety of world class employment opportunities.

- 2.22 The City Council's initiative to see the Oxford Road corridor recognised as a world-class innovation district contributing to the *"economic and social dynamism of one of Europe's leading cities"* (A Strategic Vision for Corridor Manchester (2015)) is reliant on the contributions of higher education facilities and students:

*"Major investments by The University of Manchester, Manchester Metropolitan University and the Central Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (CMFT) have been augmented by new research, incubation and science park facilities. These provide the core assets underpinning a broad-based, high-skilled economy."*⁴

- 2.23 The provision of high quality and well managed student accommodation in popular student areas across Manchester has never been more important. Successful PBSA schemes will help ensure the universities attract the best students that can positively contribute to the objectives of the Corridor Manchester strategy and wider objectives for the City's growth.

Existing student accommodation profile

- 2.24 The application is supported by a Manchester Student Demand Study prepared by Knight Frank. The key figures and information provided in this section are taken from this report and therefore reflects the research and analysis undertaken by Knight Frank, specialists in this field.
- 2.25 A key consideration for any prospective student is the quality of available accommodation. The submitted Student Demand Assessment confirms that with 65,434 full time students at UoM and MMU recorded in the last published data and only 29,117 PBSA bed spaces, it is critical that a greater number of appropriately located, well designed and attractive student accommodation is available.
- 2.26 The current supply of student bed spaces within Manchester largely comes from the private rented sector in the form of HMOs and shared homes. Combined, this is deemed to represent approximately 55% of accommodation for full time students across the city, the remaining 45% being PBSA. Even including committed PBSA

⁴ Corridor Manchester Strategic Vision to 2025, page 8

developments not yet available there are still 2 students competing for each available student PBSA bed space.

- 2.27 The high demand and lack of available PBSA means students are forced into private rented accommodation such as shared houses and HMOs. The occupation of market housing and HMOs by students has been common place in Fallowfield over many years⁵ and it is now increasingly been seen within the city centre housing market.
- 2.28 There remains a very high demand for students to locate in the Fallowfield area. This high demand for student accommodation, coupled with the lack of PBSA suitable in the Fallowfield area, has led to this propensity for HMOs, which are subject to limited oversight or management and regularly of low quality. The number of students choosing to live in the area means landlords can secure rent for sub-standard housing with little to no maintenance costs and with no real driver to improve or renovate the local housing stock.
- 2.29 The affordability of student accommodation ranges significantly across Manchester, but overall is expensive compared to many other leading university cities. Presumably driven by the costs of land and property (in turn driven by strong competition across use classes) city centre accommodation (both PBSA and private rented) is notably more expensive than in locations such as Fallowfield.
- 2.30 PBSA weekly rents are generally higher than HMO accommodation, but there are notable differences in the price structure as well as the offer. The length of contract has an impact on annual price; most private house shares or HMOs have 52 week contracts whereas PBSA contracts are typically much shorter aligned to actual occupation – WJG contracts are anticipated to be 45 weeks. There is also generally the additional cost above rental in HMOs of utilities and broadband; this is generally included within the weekly price of PBSA.
- 2.31 With regards to accommodation popularity and student satisfaction, Knight Frank reference a 2019 student survey undertaken with UCAS which concluded that students in University halls of residence or PBSA are the most satisfied with their accommodation. Students in privately rented house shares commonly referenced maintenance and problems with letting agent or landlord as reasons for dissatisfaction.

“Overall, the survey suggests a preference for high-quality accommodation that provides clear and obvious elements that add value. Other factors identified by students as “extremely important” included the cleanliness of the bedroom (96%), the quality of the accommodation (95%) and the facilities offered (91%).⁶”

Manchester City Council’s approach to PBSA

- 2.32 The extensive policy criteria set by Core Strategy Policy H12 for new student accommodation, and in particular the requirement to demonstrate need or university support, has meant that there has been limited PBSA delivery in Manchester over a

⁵ Approximately 4,081 properties explicitly marketed at students within a 2.5 mile radius of the application site in the year to October 2020.

⁶ Application submission document: Manchester Student Demand Study prepared by Knight Frank page 13

number of years. The City Council has not generally accepted an overriding need where university support is not secured, and there are very few instances where such support has been forthcoming. The number of students choosing to study in Manchester has increased but the provision of additional PBSA has not kept up. The City Council now recognises that the mismatch between demand and supply is having consequences on the cost of available accommodation, on the city's housing stock and on Council tax revenues.

- 2.33 The City Council is progressing work on an emerging Local Plan ('ELP') which will identify several strategic objectives and key issues which will be given greater weight in planning decisions moving forward. While the City Council progresses towards adoption of the ELP, currently estimated for adoption in 2023, an interim review of Policy H12 and matters influencing PBSA delivery has been undertaken (consultation in February 2020). Manchester City Council's Executive Committee considered two reports on this matter in November 2019 and December 2020. The initial Report to the Executive committee summarises recent market changes and outlines an updated context in which proposals for PBSA could be considered on an interim basis. The report concludes by outlining possible policy ideas for a revised approach to the application of Policy H12 criteria which will be subject to a period of consultation.
- 2.34 After the period of consultation, the December 2020 Report to Executive provides a summary of the consultation responses and recommends endorsement of the policy ideas outlined in the November 2019 Report (and repeated in the December 2020 Report) to be considered material considerations in the determination of PBSA schemes by the Planning and Highways committee. The Executive resolved to support the recommendation whilst acknowledging that it does not and cannot change development plan policy, which remains within Policy H12.
- 2.35 The Officer Report to Manchester City Council's Executive in November 2019 outlines how the implementation of Core Strategy Policy H12 has managed the *"appropriate delivery of PBSA... prevented oversupply of PBSA and created a dynamic residential market"*⁷. The Report recognises that the development of more private rented accommodation in the city centre has resulted in more students wanting to live in the city competing for this accommodation with working residents; this increased demand has inflated rents. The City Council are clear that the inflated rent costs reflect the lack of supply in mainstream housing and PBSA.
- 2.36 Furthermore, the Report confirms that PBSA in Manchester is one of the most expensive in the UK; *"rental levels across the PBSA market have grown at twice the rate as would be expected in markets with healthy supply/demand levels"*⁸.
- 2.37 The City Council recognise that the provision of competitively priced and high quality PBSA will offer students a suitable alternative to market housing and will therefore reduce rental demand and competition within the private rented sector.

⁷ Officers Report to Executive Committee November 2019 – paragraph 2.6

⁸ Officers Report to Executive Committee November 2019 – paragraph 3.15

- 2.38 The UoM and MMU response⁹ to the City Council's Policy H12 consultation summarised within the Executive Report highlights a key concern with the City Council's approach of limiting new student accommodation to locations only close to the city centre and University campuses; cost and availability of land. The higher costs associated with city centre PBSA is a result of limited available land and the high costs of redeveloping brownfield sites.
- 2.39 The Report also demonstrates Council revenue implications as a result of students residing in market housing; monies lost as a result of student Council Tax exemptions is estimated at £17 million a year based on 15,000 market dwellings being rented by students across the Local Authority area. The City Council acknowledge that this loss of revenue will only be addressed by meeting student accommodation demand and delivering more PBSA.
- 2.40 Turning to the locational differences in the student accommodation market, the 2019 Report acknowledges: *"HMOs in South Manchester remain popular - in part because they are cheaper on average than the direct-let PBSA sector¹⁰."*
- 2.41 The City Council acknowledge that the popularity of HMOs in south Manchester is only "in part" because of accommodation costs; there are other factors influencing the popularity of south Manchester as a location to live, including proximity to open space, local amenities, greater independence and the social benefits that come from living close to a large number of students.
- 2.42 Despite the Council's recognition that South Manchester remains a popular location for students, there has been no new private PBSA developed within the Fallowfield area for over seven years. With the city centre being notably more expensive, and price being an important factor, this will have only supported the HMO market in the Fallowfield area.
- 2.43 The Report concludes that new supply will need to be managed, linked to need and contribute to growth and regeneration objectives. Policy proposals outlined for consideration during the consultation included:
- Affordability
 - Supporting regeneration objectives
 - Quality
 - Wellbeing, safety and security
 - Density
 - Location
 - Sustainability

⁹ Officers Report to Executive Committee November 2019 – paragraph 4.9

¹⁰ Officers Report to Executive Committee November 2019 – paragraph 4.3

- Mix of uses
 - Contributing to zero-carbon initiatives
- 2.44 The December 2020 Executive Report summarises the consultation responses received and confirms that property developers broadly agreed with the City Council's recommendations but raised concerns over a number of matters, one of which is the principle to focus PBSA solely within close proximity to the University campuses. This approach is considered too rigid and does not provide flexibility needed for the lifetime of the Local Plan; WJG made representations to the consultation to that effect.
- 2.45 The Higher Education Institutions also provided feedback to the Policy H12 consultation period and suggested the restriction of PBSA to the Oxford Road Corridor would lead to providers only being able to achieve affordable accommodation in high density developments with a reduction in pastoral care or student welfare as a result of limited land supply.
- 2.46 The December 2020 Executive Report also comments on the possible implications of Covid-19 on the PBSA market and concludes that any reduction in student numbers enrolling in University is likely to be a short to medium term challenge with student enrolment numbers expected to recover when a sense of normality returns.
- 2.47 This statement addresses all criteria of Policy H12, which remains unaltered as development plan policy, as well as the material consideration that the resolution of the City Council's Executive represents, at Section 7.

University of Manchester Support

- 2.48 WJG have worked closely with UoM in developing the proposals, with the University able to confirm their support for the proposals. Discussions have taken place with the UoM's Director of Estates and Facilities, and the wider Estates department to discuss matters relating to scheme design and management details.
- 2.49 The University's support for the proposals is on the basis of the following; a copy of the University's letter of support is provided at Appendix 2:
- The site's location, both on a highly frequent public transport route that affords easy and quick access to the University's teaching campus, and adjacent to Fallowfield Campus which enables the University to provide students with welfare and pastoral care;
 - The scheme deals sympathetically with the heritage aspects of the property, retaining a valued Villa that contributes positively to the character of the area and which will make an appealing communal space for the students that occupy the development;
 - The development is at a human scale reflective of its local context and includes valuable and high quality amenity and open space;

- The anticipated price point is competitive, will compare well with the University's own accommodation at Unsworth Park, and provide a realistic and attractive alternative to a number of HMOs in the Fallowfield area;
- The scheme will support the City Council's recently confirmed aim to better satisfy demand for purpose built student accommodation by providing a greater diversity of supply. The proposed development is in keeping with the University's student welfare and mental health considerations and is in a location that the University can support.
- Overall the proposed scheme is situated in a sustainable, convenient location close to the University's Fallowfield Campus with excellent public transport links. It will offer students a good environment to learn and live in, benefitting from a high level of accessibility, the broad spectrum of local amenities and close the pastoral support the University deliver through the Fallowfield Campus.

2.50 This explicit support and the collaborative approach to design evolution that WJG and the University have adopted is highly material to the determination of the application.

3. Site and Surroundings

Application site

- 3.1 The application site comprises the USDAW Central office and associated landscape and parking areas. The broadly rectangular site extends to circa 0.8 hectares and is located to the north of Langley Road and west of Wilmslow Road in Fallowfield.
- 3.2 The buildings on site comprise Oakley Villa, a large 2 storey building constructed in c1837 and two extension buildings. The three storey extension to the west of the Villa was constructed in 1937 and the raised 2 storey most western block which includes an open car parking area at ground floor was constructed in the late 1970's/early 1980's. A grassed courtyard over two levels (approx. 1metre level change) lies behind the southernmost building.
- 3.3 The submitted Heritage Statement summarises a complex ownership history up to and including USDAW's purchase of the site in 1920. USDAW extended the accommodation on site over several stages as and when the Union expanded and more office space was needed (see figure 5 of the Heritage Statement).
- 3.4 Oakley Villa has gable features, a pitched roof and bay windows while the extension buildings are flat roofed and of a functional office design with larger storey heights than residential equivalents (see Figures 31, 35 and 37 of the Heritage Statement). The extension to Oakley Villa itself is of a poor design and quality, the detailing and materiality is not carried forward as part of the extension, making it appear irregular in the streetscene. The 1930's extension to the south of the site is outward facing and presents a frontage to Langley Road, with traditional terraced residential properties lying opposite. The northern and eastern sections of the site include a number of mature trees. The trees along the eastern boundary obscure Oakley Villa from Wilmslow Road, providing a 'green setting' to the Villa.
- 3.5 A number of internal building features with heritage value have been retained in Oakley Villa. A number of the rooms, used as offices and meeting rooms, have wood panelling and fire surrounds dating back to the 1930's. The hallway and staircase is framed by grand carved timber balustrades dating back to the 1880's and stained glass windows. All original joinery and fire places retained throughout the ground floor of Oakley Villa add to its heritage value.
- 3.6 Vehicular and pedestrian access to the site is taken from two locations on Langley Road. Access onto Wilmslow Road is available, and was the original access to Oakley Villa, but is currently gated and isn't in use.
- 3.7 There are two main car parking areas (total of 53 parking spaces) at the eastern and western parts of the site, servicing and delivery vehicles also use the western hard landscaped area.

Site specific planning history

- 3.8 There are a number of historic applications at the site relating to its current use. The previous applications are of no relevance to the determination of this application but a list of all applications can be found at **Appendix 3**.

Surrounding Area

- 3.9 The site lies to the immediate north of the centre of Fallowfield and approximately 5km south of Manchester city centre. The application site lies approximately 1.5m south of UoM Main Campus, MMU Oxford Road campus, the Manchester Royal Infirmary and Corridor Manchester. The eastern boundary of the application site is formed by Wilmslow Road, a main arterial route within Manchester that provides north south links to Oxford Road and the city centre as well as Rusholme, Withington, Didsbury and Parrs Wood. Fallowfield lies north of Withington, east of Whalley Range, south of Rusholme and west of Levenshulme.
- 3.10 Fallowfield is a residential suburb in south Manchester which is popular with university students from both UoM and MMU. The area has a lengthy history of being the city's most populous student area.
- 3.11 The application site lies adjacent to west of the main driver for the area's popularity among students, UoM's Fallowfield Campus. The Campus houses approximately 3,000 students across seven¹¹ halls of residence and is home to a number of UoM's health, welfare and pastoral care facilities. The Armitage Centre, one of only two UoM sport centres, is located within the Campus and offers a range of facilities accessible to all students, not just those living in the Fallowfield Campus halls. Facilities include a gym, sports hall, fitness classes, indoor and outdoor playing pitches and squash courts.
- 3.12 UoM have begun a billion pound investment in the redevelopment of the Fallowfield Campus, with the first halls of residence, Unsworth Park being highly popular with new students. The entire redevelopment of the campus will see the development of 3,209 bedrooms (net increase of 1,033) and redevelopment or provision of the Central Hub, Amenity Hub, Maintenance Hub, Doctors Surgery and public facing retail space.
- 3.13 The Fallowfield Campus halls of residence are available to all UoM students but primarily provide accommodation for first year students. Students that live in the Fallowfield Campus often wish to stay in the area after first year because of the lively and attractive neighbourhood including numerous bars, restaurants, takeaways and local shops as well as proximity to the Sainsburys superstore off Wilmslow Road (approximately 500m to the south of the application site and Fallowfield Campus). The Fallowfield area also offers students access to attractive, safe and well managed open space at Platt fields Park. The Park includes a sports complex, BMX Track and hosts popular Parkrun events. There are also a number of existing health facilities in Fallowfield; a number of pharmacies and two doctors' surgeries (Bodey Medical Centre and Hawthorn Medical Centre).

¹¹ Ashburne Hall, Oak House, Owens Park, Richmond Park, Sheavyn House, Unsworth Park, Woolton Hall

- 3.14 As the demand amongst students for a Fallowfield base has increased, and the provision of PBSA hasn't kept up with this demand, an increasing proportion of the traditional housing stock in Fallowfield has become privately rented accommodation to serve this demand. It's therefore often the case that the terraced properties typical of the area are HMOs; one can see this in the streets immediately to the south of the application site.
- 3.15 Figure 3.1 below shows the application site within its immediate context. To the north and west of the site lies part of Platt Fields Park, the sunken Shakespearean Garden lies just north of the north west corner of the application site. There are a number of large trees to the north of the application site boundary. Beyond the Shakespearean Garden lies Manchester High School for Girls and its associated playing fields south of Grangethorpe Road. Platt Fields Park wraps around the school and extends north of Grangethorpe Road.
- 3.16 Wilmslow Road creates the eastern site boundary with the Fallowfield Campus adjacent. The 19 storey UoM student accommodation block is almost parallel with the application site. The eastern boundary of the application site is formed by a large 3 bay bus stop which is managed by traffic lights and allows buses to overtake each other separate to the cycle and vehicular lanes. The bus stop is the largest and most commonly used bus stop in Fallowfield as it takes students to the University teaching campuses and into Manchester city centre. Buses use this stop 24 hours a day and a wide range of services (service numbers: 143, 43, 142, 42, 41, 147) means buses pass through the stop extremely frequently. At peak times during the academic term, buses can be as frequent as every couple of minutes. The stop is also used by the Magic Bus service, which offers passengers heavily discounted rates due to the popularity of the route. Whilst the Site is well served by frequent bus services running into Manchester city centre, routes in other directions via existing public transport are lacking – the nearest railway station is Mauldeth Road, over 1.5 miles away and the nearest Metro-link tram stop is Burton Road, which is two miles away.
- 3.17 The southern boundary of the application site is formed by Langley Road, at the south west corner of the application site the road makes a slight change of direction to the south. The adjacent residential buildings are two storey terraces set back slightly from the back of the pavement. At the corner of Wilmslow Road and Langley Road adjacent the application site is a 3 storey apartment building. Beyond Langley Road there are a number of residential streets north of Wilbraham Road which are made up of terrace properties, many of which are HMOs housing university students.
- 3.18 To the west of the application site lies Platt Fields Park with the BMX track, community garden, tennis courts, netball/basketball courts and bike hub all within c. 350m.

Figure 3.1: Aerial image of the application site and surrounding area (application site outlined in red)

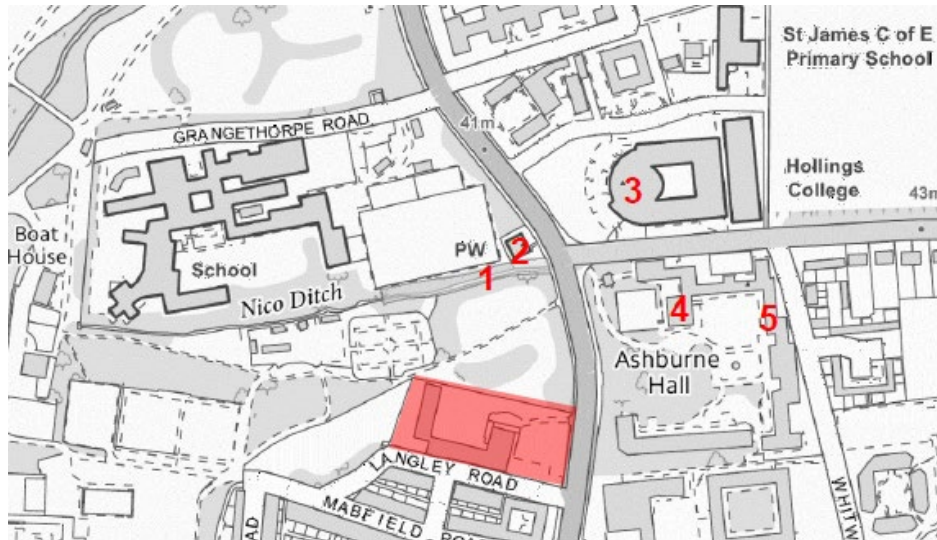


Source: Google Earth

Historic and environmental considerations

- 3.19 The site is not affected by any statutory ecological designations, nor are there any historic designations within or immediately adjacent the application site boundary.
- 3.20 There are a number of heritage assets within a 500m radius of the site as shown at Figure 3.2 and these include:
1. Nico Ditch (Scheduled Ancient Monument)
 2. Grade II Listed Platt Chapel
 3. Grade II Listed Hollings Building at Manchester Metropolitan University
 4. Grade II Listed Behrens Hall
 5. Grade II Listed Ashburne Hall – including Alice Barlow memorial gates to Wilmslow Road and Ashburne Hall Lodge

Figure 3.2: Location of nearby heritage assets



Source: Heritage Statement prepared by Stephen Levrant Heritage

Surrounding planning history of relevance

- 3.21 Manchester City Council approved an application (LPA ref. 110184/FO/2015/S1) for a major redevelopment of the UoM residential Fallowfield Campus on 11 December 2015. The full description of development is as follows:

“Full planning application for development comprising the erection of buildings between two and six storeys in height to form: student accommodation (2313 bedrooms), wardens accommodation, kitchen and maintenance facility, student facilities, energy centres and associated parking, landscaping, boundary treatments and other infrastructure works following demolition of The Limes and Oak House Halls of residence and associated buildings; and, Outline application with all matters reserved for development comprising the provision of student accommodation (896 bedrooms), retail floorspace (for A1,A2,A3 use class to a maximum of 1400m2 Gross Internal Area), Doctors Surgery (maximum floorspace 200m2 Gross Internal Area), and student facilities, in buildings to a maximum height of 15.1 metres following the demolition of Owens Park Halls of residence and associated buildings.”

- 3.22 The site wide masterplan for the Fallowfield Campus, including Phasing for its delivery is provided at Figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3: Extract of Masterplan Roof Plan (drawing ref: P00_00(0-)_Z0_A_903 Rev P06)



- 3.23 The full planning permission includes a student services hub building with a campus bar, learning commons, two amenity hub spaces, ancillary office space and two warden accommodation units. The outline element of the planning permission includes the creation of an amenity hub, ancillary office space, retail uses and doctors surgery.
- 3.24 The planning permission involves the replacement of 2,176 bedrooms and will deliver an additional 1,033 bedrooms. Planning permission within the Campus allows for a total of 3,209 new student bedrooms across three phases and includes cluster flats and townhouses. The first phase of development has been completed, Unsworth Park, and is one of the University's "high demand" residences.

Redevelopment of the 'Toast Rack'

- 3.25 Manchester City Council approved an apartment scheme in August 2016 at the 'Toast Rack' site (LPA ref: 111282/FO/2016/S1, less than 500m from the application site). The proposed development also required Listed Building Consent (LPA ref: 111283/LO/2016/S1). The description of development is as follows:

Change of use, refurbishment, and extension of the Hollings Building (comprising the 'Toast Rack', Clothing Block, U-shaped Admin Block and 'Drum') for residential, retail and leisure purposes including the creation of 150 apartments (Class C3), a gym (2,059m² - Class D2), and 649m² of retail and restaurant/café floorspace (Class A1/A3); erection of an 11 storey building comprising 60 apartments; and associated car parking, landscaping works, boundary treatments and access arrangements.

- 3.26 As referenced, this scheme includes an 11 storey building; the application documentation confirms that the height of new building (Gateway Building), given its close proximity, was intentionally designed to be of the same height as the listed Toast Rack Tower.

4. Pre-application Consultation

Stakeholder and Community Consultation

Political engagement

- 4.1 Several meetings have taken place with local ward members and other Councillors. The design team presented the proposals at various stages of the design process to hear feedback and welcome any initial comments before the period of local resident consultation. Virtual meetings have been held with Fallowfield Ward Councillors and some Ward adjacent Councillors (invitation extended to Withington, Old Moat and Rusholme Ward Councillors).
- 4.2 The discussions were often positive with support garnered for the retention of Oakley Villa and a recognition that the site's current use as office space is no longer suitable. There was some concern expressed by Withington Councillors over the ability to attract students out of poorly maintained HMOs and whether PBSA in Fallowfield would actually attract additional students to the area.
- 4.3 A letter of support from Afzal Khan, Member of Parliament for Gorton, confirms that the site is no longer suitable for office accommodation and that well managed student accommodation of a good design is proposed. Mr Khan suggests the proposals present an opportunity to attract students out of unsuitable housing in the area and will provide much needed amenity space for its residents. The full letter of support can be found in the submitted Statement of Community Involvement prepared by Lexington Communications.

Local Stakeholders

- 4.4 The project team presented the scheme to the South East Fallowfield Residents Group and extended an invite to present the scheme to the UoM Students Union and Friends of Platt Fields Park.
- 4.5 The South East Fallowfield Residents Group expressed their concerns regarding attracting more students to the Fallowfield area.

Public Consultation

- 4.6 Public consultation took place between 12 and 27 November 2020. The approach to public consultation involved the issue of over 5,500 leaflets to households and businesses in the local area, Facebook adverts to people within a 2km radius of the site, press releases to local news publications and the publication of a project specific website¹². There were a total of 28 consultation responses including 4 by telephone.
- 4.7 The submitted Statement of Community Involvement prepared by Lexington Communications outlines and provides a response to the key topics resulting from the public consultation and stakeholder and Councillor discussions. The topics include; impacts from increased students numbers, possibility of providing a different

¹² <https://watkinjonesfallowfield.co.uk/>

residential tenure at the site, the affordability of the scheme, transport and access, scale of development, proposed amenities and ecology and biodiversity.

Manchester City Council

- 4.8 A number of meetings have taken place with Manchester City Council Officers over an approximate 12 month period. The proposals have been presented to Officers throughout the design evolution with feedback received from the Planning and Development Manager, Principal Planner for Development Management South, Section Planning Manager and the Design and Conservation Manager.
- 4.9 The meetings have centred on the principle of student accommodation at the site, design, stakeholder and community engagement and scope of the planning application.
- 4.10 The discussions with Council Officers have been constructive and their feedback and comments have been addressed as part of the design evolution and within the application submission.

Places Matter – October 2020

- 4.11 The scheme was presented to the Places Matter Design Review Panel on 23 October 2020. The written feedback received is provided in full within the Design and Access Statement. For reference purposes please see extracts of key images from the presentation to Places Matter below at Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1: Extract from the Places Matter presentation prepared by Tim Groom Architects



Aerial CGI of the scheme proposed to Places Matter



CGI of the proposed rear extension to Oakley Villa



CGI of the south west corner of the development presented to Places Matter as seen from Langley Road

- 4.12 The feedback received was positive and the retention of Oakley Villa and its leafy setting was recognised as the heart of the site and a key feature of the scheme that sets it apart from student accommodation offerings elsewhere in Manchester. The Panel agreed that setting new built development back from Wilmslow Road behind Oakley Villa means the historic characteristics of the site remain at the heart of the scheme.
- 4.13 The Panel supported the design of the four-storey contemporary block on the Langley Road frontage and as the block turns along the western boundary. The generous amount of green space and tree retention is also recognised as a positive and the Panel emphasised the importance of ensuring the open space is functional, particularly given the possible change in living trends as a result of Covid. A key point raised by the Panel and which has been incorporated into the scheme design evolution is pulling built development away from the north western corner of Oakley Villa to help create a view into the central courtyard and maximise the permeability and usability of this key feature.

- 4.14 During the discussion it was suggested that the tallest element of the 'C-shaped' accommodation block appeared hunched. It was confirmed that the northern extent of the site is an appropriate location for a building of height. The Panel suggested the rear (northern) block would benefit from being taller to give it a better proportion and for it to be separated from the lower block, thus improving key views into and around the application site, particularly from the sunken Shakespearean Garden in Platt Fields Park.
- 4.15 Discussion relating to the Langley Road frontage referenced the inclusion of chimneys, which seek to replicate features of the adjacent terraced properties, and queries over how the building 'turns the corner' to the south west of the site as Langley Road veers slightly south at this corner and so it will be a key view of the development. Further comment was made in relation to changes in roof pitch across the block typologies and a suggestion of extending the block design fronting Langley Road to the block along the western boundary.
- 4.16 All comments received have been taken into consideration and directly affected the design evolution. The process of design review has served to refine and enhance the proposals. A comprehensive summary of which is provided in the accompanying Design and Access Statement.

5. Proposed Development

- 5.1 This chapter provides a summary of the proposed development and should be read in accordance with the submitted Design and Access Statement prepared by Tim Groom Architects.
- 5.2 The benefits of the proposed scheme are described in greater detail at Section 7 and 8.

Key Principles

- 5.3 The redevelopment of the former USDAW Central Office site comprises:
- The retention, sensitive reuse and enhancement of Oakley Villa, a non-designated heritage asset
 - Provision of high quality student accommodation in a popular student location
 - The replacement of out dated and poorly designed office accommodation with 2 blocks of purpose built student accommodation providing a total of 425 bedrooms
 - Provision of an expertly managed student accommodation scheme that provides communal and social space including games room, study areas, library and courtyard
 - Retention and enhancement of onsite landscaping
 - Improvements to the character and appearance of the site, particularly when viewed from Langley Road
- 5.4 The description of development is as follows:

“Partial demolition of existing buildings, conversion and extension of retained building and new development to accommodate student residential accommodation and amenity / management facilities, with hard and soft landscaping, parking and access arrangements.”

Student Accommodation

- 5.5 The accommodation element of the scheme includes the western two blocks. The 4 storey L-shaped block which fronts Langley Road includes 185 bedrooms with a mix of studios and clusters. The 13 storey northern most accommodation block includes 38 clusters with a total of 365 bedrooms and 60 studios.
- 5.6 Cluster flats range in size from 5 to 8 bedrooms per cluster and average at 14sqm. All bedrooms have en-suite bathrooms, desk space and include high speed broadband. The cluster flats have communal kitchen/dining and lounge areas with a TV. Each studio includes kitchen facilities and is on average 18.09 sqm.

- 5.7 The accommodation buildings have been based on a collegiate design with a strong Langley Road frontage using building materiality, tree planting and window features to create a visually attractive streetscene. The new accommodation buildings contain a total of three cores, each with an entrance lobby at ground floor accessed via the courtyard garden. The ground floor of the accommodation blocks also include cycle storage areas, waste facilities, laundry rooms and the plant room. The scheme includes a stepped approach to building height with the taller element set back from Langley Road on the northern site boundary to benefit from the Platt Fields Park setting. The use of large windows and façade detailing on this block ensures the accommodation is attractive when viewed from a distance.

Oakley Villa

- 5.8 The retention of Oakley Villa has been at the heart of the schemes design evolution and is outlined in full within the Design and Access Statement. The removal of the 1930's extension and replacement with a small single storey contemporary extension on parts of the south and west elevation retains and improves the appearance of the Villa. The new accommodation blocks are separated from the Villa to ensure its character and setting is retained.
- 5.9 The proposed facade on the extension to the villa is largely glazed to allow for strong connections out to the courtyard garden. It is proposed that full height doors within the elevation can be opened up in the summertime. The southern extent of the Villa's extension includes the provision of a new entrance and external staircase leading up to the proposed community room entrance. The main entrance to the Villa is the existing access on the northern façade.
- 5.10 The non-designated heritage assets important features are mainly located within the building. The scheme design by Tim Groom Architecture retains and creates a feature of the important historic design elements of the building, including the entrance hallway, staircase and some features within the meeting rooms as existing.
- 5.11 The facilities to be provided in the Villa comprise 525sqm of amenity space and includes a games rooms, lounge, library, study spaces, meeting rooms and a community room. There is also space within the Villa for the concierge and management staff room.

Management and Maintenance

- 5.12 The site is intended to be managed by Fresh; a detailed Site Management Plan has been prepared by Fresh and is submitted in support of the application. Fresh manage student accommodation across the UK and pride themselves on exceptional service to their clients and the students who live in their properties.
- 5.13 The proposed development will deliver a safe, secure home for students that is professionally managed, in an environment that is conducive to study, and integrated with the local community.
- 5.14 A dedicated on-site management team will provide day-to-day support for the residents. The reception will be open Monday – Friday 9am till 5:30pm and will provide

a point of contact for reporting repairs, the delivery and collection of parcels, organising social events as well as the provision of general local information and signposting to specialist services.

- 5.15 In addition to the management team, the site will also benefit from a 24hr security provision which has been tailored around the nature, size and location of the site. The security of the site will be achieved through an unobtrusive approach that will utilise a combination of CCTV cameras, access control and security personnel. Security personnel will provide an on-site presence and will be the first response for any emergencies, and will carry out regular patrols of the interior and exterior of the building.
- 5.16 Fresh's on-site teams play a vital part in supporting students and providing a link between academic life and 'home' life.

Tree Retention

- 5.17 The existing mature trees on site and immediately adjacent the site boundary within Platt Fields Park have been retained and incorporated into the scheme landscape proposals. The development involves the loss of some centrally located trees but these are not mature or of exceptional quality. Where trees are removed, the landscape proposals include for their replacement at a rate of two replacement trees for every tree lost.
- 5.18 The Arboricultural Statement prepared by Cheshire Woodlands outlines the mitigation measures proposed for the protection of existing mature trees on site. The document includes reference to tree protection barriers during construction and states that engineering details and construction methodologies to ensure there are no impacts to the existing trees as a result of the proposed built development can be secured by condition. The proposed construction and engineering details include, for example, cantilevering the building piles outside the root protection areas (RPAs) of retained trees and where hard landscaping is necessary in RPAs, this is to be done using the Cellweb Tree Root Protection System. Arboricultural supervision is also required for the removal of existing hard surfaces within RPAs and this construction activity is to be carried out by hand.

Landscape Design

- 5.19 A comprehensive landscape scheme proposed by Layer is submitted with the application. The landscape design has been influenced by the sites wider Platt Fields Park setting, existing landscaping and preservation and improvement to the Villa's setting.
- 5.20 The landscape scheme incorporates:
- Retention of existing mature trees and supplementary tree and hedgerow planting. Tree planting is also proposed in intervals along the Langley Road frontage.

- Generous green spaces with timber seating and ornamental native planting screened from the car parking area by a timber screen.
- An internal landscaped courtyard area with low level tree planting to increase privacy for overlooking bedrooms.
- Compensation for the loss of a couple of small trees within the site is incorporated into the landscape designs for the site and comprise native trees and shrubs, sedum roof to the external cycle store and resin bound gravel footpaths through the site.
- Green gap paving to car park and bin holding areas and loose gravel within the central area of the courtyard.
- Illuminated bollards and ground uplighters.
- Retention of the existing boundary treatments to Platt Fields Park and Wilmslow Road and secure gating and fencing around the remainder of the site.

5.21 The extensive landscaping scheme proposed is of a high quality that has a functional purpose designed to encourage regular use of the amenity spaces provided.

Sustainability/Energy Efficiency

- 5.22 The proposed development includes high performance building fabric and energy efficient lighting, services and controls to reduce energy demand for heating, cooling, ventilation and lighting. The scheme incorporates passive design measures to reduce energy demand and provides 4 electric vehicle charging spaces.
- 5.23 A key low carbon technology proposed by WJG is the inclusion of Air Source Heat Pumps for hot water heating.

Parking and Accessibility

- 5.24 Access to the site on foot will be from the existing gated access on Wilmslow Road and from Langley Road. WJG recognise the popularity among students to cycle instead of taking the bus to University or the city centre and provide cycle spaces for c.50% of the residents – 172 internal spaces and 42 within an external storage area.
- 5.25 Vehicle access to the site is to be taken from the existing eastern most access point off Langley Road. There is a total of 8 car parking spaces 3 of which are disabled spaces and 4 have electric vehicle charging facilities.
- 5.26 The use of vehicles at the site will be actively discouraged, with the Student's tenancy agreement identifying that the location is car free and students should not bring their own cars to the accommodation.
- 5.27 A detailed Travel Plan is included within the Site Management Plan. The travel plan is prepared mainly for the student living at the development, and the majority of measures proposed are intended to encourage student's use of sustainable modes of

transport. The implementation of the Travel Plan will be the responsibility of the sites management team.

- 5.28 The Travel Plan seeks to encourage the use of non-car modes of transport, by actively promoting the benefits of sustainable travel. This includes bringing benefits to the whole community by improving air quality and reducing traffic levels.
- 5.29 Section 3.3 of the submitted Student Management Plan provides a summary of the procedure to be implemented at the beginning and end of term to move students in and out of the accommodation without causing impacts to neighbouring properties through on street parking for example.

Waste and Construction

- 5.30 Individual refuse storage facilities are to be provided on the ground floor of each accommodation block. Bin provision is in accordance with the City Council's waste management strategy and includes for waste and recycling bins.
- 5.31 Students will be responsible for taking their own refuse down to the bin stores using the lifts or staircase and placing refuse in the 1100 litre wheeled Eurobins provided within the waste storage areas at the ground floor of each accommodation block.
- 5.32 The DAS includes a waste management strategy and has the City Council's waste proforma as an appendix.
- 5.33 A Demolition and Construction Management Plan is submitted with the application and details delivery timescales, HGV routing, construction impact mitigation measures and construction site security.

6. Planning and Regeneration Policy Context

- 6.1 Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (TCPA) and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (PCPA) requires that planning decisions be taken in accordance with the adopted Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 6.2 The adopted Development Plan comprises:
- The Manchester Core Strategy (CS) (2012)
 - Manchester Proposals Map
 - Saved policies of the Manchester Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (1995)
 - Greater Manchester Waste Development Plan (April 2012)
 - Greater Manchester Minerals Plan (April 2013).
- 6.3 Other material considerations include:
- The National Planning Policy Framework (the NPPF) (February 2019)
 - Resolution of Manchester City Council Executive on PBSA (December 2020)
 - Greater Manchester Housing Strategy 2019 – 2024 (2019)
 - A Greater Manchester Vision for Housing (2019)
 - Corridor Manchester Strategic Spatial Framework (March 2018)
 - Greater Manchester Strategy (2017)
 - Guide to Development in Manchester Supplementary Planning Document (2007)
 - A Strategic Vision for Corridor Manchester (2015)
- 6.4 The Core Strategy references and aligns with the NPPF's 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'¹³. This means that planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan should be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 6.5 The remainder of this section outlines, on a thematic basis, the key policy considerations of relevance to the proposed development.

¹³ HM Government (2019), National Planning Policy Framework, para. 11

Purpose-Built Student Accommodation

- 6.6 Planning policy on PBSA in Manchester is principally addressed by Policy H12 of the adopted CS. Policy H12 establishes criteria which the City Council use to assess all proposed PBSA. For ease of reference the Policy wording is provided in full below:

“The provision of new purpose built student accommodation will be supported where the development satisfies the criteria below. Priority will be given to schemes which are part of the universities' redevelopment plans or which are being progressed in partnership with the universities, and which clearly meet Manchester City Council's regeneration priorities.

1. Sites should be in close proximity to the University campuses or to a high frequency public transport route which passes this area.

2. The Regional Centre, including the Oxford Road Corridor, is a strategic area for low and zero carbon decentralised energy infrastructure. Proposed schemes that fall within this area will be expected to take place in the context of the energy proposals plans as required by Policy EN 5.

3. High density developments should be sited in locations where this is compatible with existing developments and initiatives, and where retail facilities are within walking distance. Proposals should not lead to an increase in on-street parking in the surrounding area.

4. Proposals that can demonstrate a positive regeneration impact in their own right will be given preference over other schemes. This can be demonstrated for example through impact assessments on district centres and the wider area. Proposals should contribute to providing a mix of uses and support district and local centres, in line with relevant Strategic Regeneration Frameworks, local plans and other masterplans as student accommodation should closely integrate with existing neighbourhoods to contribute in a positive way to their vibrancy without increasing pressure on existing neighbourhood services to the detriment of existing residents.

5. Proposals should be designed to be safe and secure for their users, and avoid causing an increase in crime in the surrounding area. Consideration needs to be given to how proposed developments could assist in improving the safety of the surrounding area in terms of increased informal surveillance or other measures to contribute to crime prevention.

6. Consideration should be given to the design and layout of the student accommodation and siting of individual uses within the overall development in relation to adjacent neighbouring uses. The aim is to ensure that there is no unacceptable effect on residential amenity in the surrounding area through increased noise, disturbance or impact on the streetscene either from the proposed development itself or when combined with existing accommodation.

7. Where appropriate proposals should contribute to the re-use of Listed Buildings and other buildings with a particular heritage value.

8. Consideration should be given to provision and management of waste disposal facilities, that will ensure that waste is disposed of in accordance with the waste hierarchy set out in Policy EN 19, within the development at an early stage.

9. Developers will be required to demonstrate that there is a need for additional student accommodation or that they have entered into a formal agreement with a University, or another provider of higher education, for the supply of all or some of the bedspaces.

10. Applicants/developers must demonstrate to the Council that their proposals for purpose built student accommodation are deliverable.

6.7 Following the Council's consultation on the Policy H12 review (as detailed in Section 2), the Executive committee endorsed the Officer's recommendation to have regard to a number of policy ideas as material considerations when determining planning applications for PBSA; these do not supersede, replace or outweigh Policy H12. The policy ideas build upon the existing H12 criteria and are briefly summarised below:

- Student accommodation schemes should contribute to delivering regeneration benefits; support employment growth, graduate and talent retention, place making and the city's international reputation;
- The approach needs to be within the context of the approved Corridor Spatial Framework which establishes the principle that development of land in the Oxford Road Corridor should prioritise commercial or educational/research use. Student accommodation should, therefore, be in the right locations, in appropriate numbers, and only where it supports wider growth;
- To meet the needs of students, stabilise rental growth and provide an affordable accommodation offering, a more diverse pipeline of new PBSA is needed;
- All PBSA must be of a high quality, providing a high standard of living, within close proximity to the city's Higher Education Institutions;
- PBSA should consider the welfare and wellbeing of students as a major factor, in both design and management. Ensuring student accommodation is delivered in safe and secure locations, and with appropriate management and facilities. Location of accommodation close to University facilities is a critical issue in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of students;
- All new PBSA development to adopt the principles in the following codes of practice; 1) The Universities UK/GuildHE Code of Practice for University Managed Student Accommodation, 2) The ANUK/Unipol Code of Standards for Larger Residential Developments for Student Accommodation Managed and Controlled by Educational Establishments, 3) The ANUK/Unipol Code of Standards for Larger Developments for Student Accommodation NOT Managed and Controlled by Educational Establishment;
- Consideration of place making opportunities to contribute to the management of areas in which the proposed PBSA is located;

- Density of student accommodation will be essential to deliver the level of new high quality accommodation needed within the context of scarce land availability both in the Oxford Road Corridor area and the wider city centre;
- Given the current climate emergency and Manchester's commitment to be carbon neutral by 2038, it is increasingly important that the location of student accommodation in Manchester should continue to be driven by proximity to university campuses, reducing the need to travel, and to sustainable modes of transport. This supports existing green travel plans.

6.8 Section 7 provides a detailed appraisal of the scheme against Policy H12 criteria and as a material consideration, the policy ideas endorsed by the Executive committee.

Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

6.9 National planning policy sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development¹⁴. This means that planning applications that accord with an up-to-date development plan should be granted planning permission without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where there are no relevant development plan policies or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date, planning permission should be granted unless:

- Policies within the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance (such as those relating to habitat sites, Green Belt, designated heritage assets and areas at risk of flooding) provide a clear reason for refusing the development; or
- Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the NPPF as a whole.

Manchester as a World City

6.10 The vision for Manchester, in accordance with the NPPF's economic sustainability objective¹⁵, is to have a growing economy and to be in the top rank of European and world cities¹⁶. Not only is this emphasised throughout the City Council's commentary on the changing context of the city in relation to PBSA, but also across numerous key policy documents, including the CS, the Oxford Road Corridor Manchester Strategic Spatial Framework¹⁷, the Greater Manchester Strategy¹⁸, the Manchester Strategy¹⁹ and Manchester's Economic Recovery and Investment Plan²⁰.

6.11 The aspiration for Manchester to build upon its already significant international profile and be amongst the leading cities of the world is entirely consistent with the NPPF and the Northern Powerhouse Strategy. In particular, the NPPF advises that planning

¹⁴ HM Government (2019), Paragraph 11, National Planning Policy Framework

¹⁵ HM Government (2019), Paragraph 8a, National Planning Policy Framework

¹⁶ Manchester City Council (2012), 'Core Strategy', para. 4.1

¹⁷ Oxford road Corridor Partnership (2018), Oxford Road Corridor Strategic Spatial Framework

¹⁸ GMCA (2017), 'Greater Manchester Strategy', para 1.1

¹⁹ Manchester City Council (2016), 'Our Manchester –The Manchester Strategy', pg. 34

²⁰ Manchester City Council, Manchester's Economic Recovery and Investment Plan (2020)

decisions should recognise growth aspirations and seek to build on existing strengths to address the challenges of the future²¹

- 6.12 The Corridor Manchester Strategic Spatial Framework (CMSSF) recognises the importance of the City's educational institutions in helping Manchester achieve world-renowned status as a destination of choice for students across the globe.
- 6.13 Ensuring the delivery of infrastructure suitable for world-renowned Higher Education Institutions and City is therefore pivotal for the delivery of the overarching vision. This is further reflected in the CMSSF:

'The investment of the universities and their recognition as world-class institutions will undoubtedly result in an increasingly greater student intake from outside of the region and internationally. This will drive demand for new student residential accommodation within the Corridor, in locations that are within a reasonable walking distance to the heart of the universities, over the lifetime of the strategy. This will include an upgrade of existing stock that is reaching the end of its life as well as additional provision'²².

- 6.14 Manchester's Economic Recovery and Investment Plan was prepared to provide a positive statement on the future of Manchester's economy and its people and how the city council are responding to the challenges and impacts from Covid-19. The document highlights key growth areas resulting from University investment, such as the Science Park and Innovation District. The document recognises that Universities attract and retain overseas and domestic residents and that *"the city's graduate retention and highly skilled talent pool form one of the primary drivers for investment and growth"*²³.

Effective Use of Land

- 6.15 The NPPF requires planning decisions to promote an effective use of land, including the re-development of previously-developed (brownfield) land where possible²⁴. Substantial weight should be given to the value of using suitable brownfield land, and proposals which will secure the development of under-utilised land should be supported²⁵.
- 6.16 The position established through the NPPF is reflected within the regional and local policy context.
- 6.17 The CS seeks to reuse previously developed land wherever possible²⁶. The Council's target is for 90% of new development to be on previously developed land; in line with historic trends and to ensure a sustainable approach is taken with regard to the use of land as a limited resource²⁷.

²¹ HM Government (2019), Paragraph 80, National Planning Policy Framework

²² Corridor Manchester Strategic Spatial Framework, June 2017 (paragraph 3.58)

²³ Manchester City Council, Manchester's Economic Recovery and Investment Plan, page 11

²⁴ HM Government (2019), Paragraph 117, National Planning Policy Framework

²⁵ HM Government (2019), Paragraph 118, National Planning Policy Framework

²⁶ Policy SP1, Manchester Core Strategy

²⁷ Paragraph 12.88, Manchester Core Strategy

6.18 Policy EC2 of the Core Strategy builds on the requirement for the effective use of land within the NPPF. The policy itself relates to employment land and establishes the Council's approach to retaining and enhancing existing employment sites. The Policy confirms there are circumstances where it will be appropriate to support alternative uses for existing employment uses. This broadly focuses on sites where it would be unproductive to protect the land for employment uses, either because employment is unviable, there is limited demand or an alternative use would bring more benefits to the City.

6.19 The CMSSF establishes the principle that development of land in the Oxford Road Corridor should prioritise commercial or educational/research use, however also notes.

*"The likelihood is that over the next 10 years space to grow is likely to become more and more of a significant challenge. This could not only limit the future growth potential of the Oxford Road Corridor Institutions and their drive for excellence but also the scope for the City to attract new added value businesses and continue the significant employment and economic contribution that it makes to Manchester and the City Region"*²⁸

Heritage

6.20 To ensure that development maximises the City's distinctive historic environment, Policy EN 3 (Heritage) requires new developments to be designed to support the Council in preserving, or where possible enhancing the historic environment, the character, setting and accessibility of areas and buildings of acknowledged importance. The Policy further states: *"Proposals which enable the re-use of heritage assets will be encouraged where they are considered consistent with the significance of the heritage asset."*²⁹

6.21 The NPPF confirms that Local Planning Authorities should take account of the following criteria when determining planning applications:

"a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;

b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and

*c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness."*³⁰

Achieving Well Designed Places

6.22 The NPPF confirms that the creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve, and good design is a key aspect of sustainable development³¹. Development should be visually attractive

²⁸ Oxford Road Corridor Strategic Spatial Framework (March 2018) page 2

²⁹ Policy EN3, Manchester Core Strategy

³⁰ HM Government (2019), Paragraph 192, National Planning Policy Framework

³¹ HM Government (2019), Paragraph 124, National Planning Policy Framework

and add to the overall quality of the area by being sympathetic to local character, establishing a strong sense of place and optimising the potential of the site, whilst creating places which are safe, inclusive and accessible³².

6.23 The objective to achieve well-designed places is also reflected in local planning policies. In particular, the CS³³ seeks to ensure that all new development across the City:

- Makes a positive contribution to creating neighbourhoods of choice including:
 - Creating well-designed places that enhance or create character
 - Making a positive contribution to health, safety and wellbeing of residents
 - Considering the needs of all members of the community, and
 - Protecting and enhancing the built and natural environment.
- Minimises emissions, ensures efficient use of natural resources and reuses previously developed land wherever possible, and
- Improves access to jobs, services, education and open space by being located to reduce the need to travel and providing good access to sustainable transport provision.

6.24 All new development in Manchester is required to follow seven principles of urban design³⁴, as follows:

- Character: a place with its own identity
- Continuity and enclosure: a place where public and private places are clearly distinguished
- Quality of the public realm: a place with attractive and successful outdoor areas
- Ease of movement: a place that is easy to get to and move through
- Legibility: a place that has a clear image and is easy to understand
- Adaptability: a place that can change easily, and
- Diversity: a place with variety and choice.

6.25 The CMSSF confirms PBSA schemes should deliver ‘added value’ beyond simply the numerical provision of accommodation. Design is encouraged to reflect and showcase the world-leading activities and opportunities within the Oxford Road Corridor and at the Universities, thus enhancing the public realm through well-planned and designed streetscape.

6.26 The Guide to Development in Manchester SPD (April 2017) recognises the importance of design in delivering sustainable development across the City. The SPD provides a set

³² HM Government (2019), Paragraph 127, National Planning Policy Framework

³³ Policy SP1, Manchester Core Strategy

³⁴ Policy EN1, Manchester Core Strategy

of reasoned principles to guide developers and designers in terms of the development which Manchester desires.

Development Management and Technical Considerations

6.27 In addition to the above key Policy themes, there are a number of topic based policies in the adopted Development Plan and NPPF of relevance:

- **Access and Transportation** - CS Policies T1 and T2 seek to support proposals that improve choice by developing alternatives to the car, improving pedestrian routes and the pedestrian environment and facilitating modes of transport that reduce carbon emissions³⁵. All new developments should be easily accessible to good public transport links to the City Centre and Regional Centre³⁶.

The NPPF confirms that significant development should be focused within locations which are, or can be made, sustainable through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes³⁷. When considering planning applications, local authorities should ensure that appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be taken up, safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved, and any significant impacts on the transport network can be mitigated³⁸.

- **Air Quality** - CS Policy EN16 confirms that development proposals must include measures to minimise and mitigate the local impact of emissions from traffic generated by the development, as well as emissions created by the use of the development itself. The NPPF also requires that proposals must sustain compliance with and contribute towards EU limit values and national objectives for air pollutants³⁹.
- **Biodiversity and Arboriculture** - CS Policies EN15 and EN9 and the NPPF make clear that proposals must aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity, and encourage opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments and integrate proposals with local habitats. The Council's objective is to protect and conserve the City's existing tree and woodlands with the aim for a net increase in trees across the city⁴⁰.
- **Flood Risk and Drainage** - CS Policies EN4 and EN14 include reference to flood risk and new development. These policies and the NPPF require that proposals should be directed away from areas which are at the greatest risk of flooding; and where development is permitted, local planning authorities should ensure flood risk is not increased elsewhere⁴¹. CS Policy EN17 also requires developers to avoid any adverse impact on water quality, including during the construction phase.
- **Ground Conditions** - CS Policy EN18 requires developers to consider the potential risks from ground conditions and, if necessary, incorporate mitigation measures to address

³⁵ Policy T1, Manchester Core Strategy

³⁶ Policy T2, Manchester Core Strategy

³⁷ HM Government (2019), National Planning Policy Framework, para. 103

³⁸ HM Government (2019), National Planning Policy Framework, para. 108

³⁹ HM Government (2019), National Planning Policy Framework, para. 81

⁴⁰ HM Government (2019), National Planning Policy Framework, para. 170

⁴¹ HM Government (2019), National Planning Policy Framework, para. 100-103

them. The NPPF is clear that planning decisions should ensure that sites are suitable for its new use taking account of ground conditions, land instability, and any proposals for remediation⁴².

- **Sustainability** – The NPPF and Core Strategy Policies EN4, EN6, EN8 and EN9 confirm that new development should be adaptable to climate change in terms of design, layout, siting and function of both buildings and external spaces. Regard should be had to minimising flood risk, the use of Green Infrastructure and the opportunity to provide linked and diverse green space.
- **Waste** - CS Policies EN19 and DM1 promote sustainable forms of waste management. The CS recognises that waste management is a key issue for the City and requires developers to submit a waste management plan to demonstrate how both construction and demolition waste will be minimised and recycled on-site wherever possible.

Summary of Key Policy Issues of Relevance

- 6.28 National planning policy sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which confirms that development that accords with relevant policies in an up-to-date development plan should be granted planning permission without delay.
- 6.29 The CS Policy of principal importance, Policy H12, is a permissive policy whereby proposals will be supported if it can be demonstrated that they meet specific criteria. The recent Executive committee resolution on PBSA provides further considerations and context, but does not supersede Policy H12.
- 6.30 The NPPF and local planning policies require development to be of high-quality design, and to have regard to the prevailing character with the surrounding area, including the retention and improvement to assets with a heritage value.
- 6.31 Policies in the CS and NPPF encourage development on previously developed land and development in locations that are accessible by a wide range of sustainable modes of transport.

⁴² HM Government (2019), National Planning Policy Framework, para. 178

7. Assessment

- 7.1 This section of the Planning Statement evaluates the proposals against the planning policy context as summarised in the preceding section. It focuses first on what are regarded to be the principal considerations of relevance to the principle of the development, before turning to more detailed matters regarding the proposal's compatibility with its site and surroundings, as informed by the accompanying suite of technical assessments. In so doing, the policies of the Development Plan are addressed alongside other material considerations, including national policy and local non-statutory policy documents.
- 7.2 In relation to the 'principal considerations', the following are addressed in turn below:
- Compliance with Policy H12 of the Manchester Core Strategy;
 - Evaluation against the City Council's review of Policy H12;
 - Assessment against the relevant Core Strategy Policies.
- 7.3 The evaluation against Policy H12 criteria also addresses the heritage benefits, the scheme's contribution to strategic policy considerations and direct economic benefits, all of which are matters of principal relevance.

Compliance with Policy H12 of the Manchester Core Strategy

- 7.4 Policy H12 is a permissive policy, in that it lends its support to PBSA development within the city provided it satisfies the criteria of the policy. It follows that if each of the criteria are met, the proposals benefit from the support of Policy H12, the most relevant of Development Plan policies in respect of this proposed development.
- 7.5 The policy states that *'Priority will be given to schemes which are part of the universities' redevelopment plans or which are being progressed in partnership with the universities, and which clearly meet Manchester City Council's regeneration priorities.'* (our emphasis). As has been stated earlier, and returned to below, the proposals have been worked up in discussion with UoM and benefit from the University's support (see Appendix 2), and the proposals will convey significant regeneration benefits consistent with the City Council's priorities (e.g. economic development, providing housing choice, protecting and enhancing heritage). It will be shown in appraising the individual criteria that those considerations are met, and therefore 'priority' should be given to this scheme. However, if a different view is taken on those considerations and yet all criteria are deemed to be satisfied, it does not follow that the proposals do not accord with the policy or should not be supported. Considering the scheme not to be a 'priority' does not equate to policy conflict.
- 7.6 An assessment against the criteria set out in Policy H12 of the Core Strategy is presented below.

1. Sites should be in close proximity to the University campuses or to a high frequency public transport route which passes this area.

7.7 The criterion is presented in the alternative – ie. either aspect can be satisfied. In relation to the former, the site is not in close proximity to a teaching campus, but is very close to UoM's Fallowfield Campus, which is not purely a residential campus, but provides support services and leisure facilities.

7.8 In any event, the site is in close proximity to a high frequency public transport route. The application site lies approximately 1.5 miles south of UoM's Main Campus, MMU Oxford Road Campus and Corridor Manchester. The University campuses are easily accessible by foot, high frequency 24 hour bus services and a high quality cycle lane that is safely separated from the vehicular and bus routes for the entire route past the Universities and into the city centre. The popularity of Fallowfield with students as a place to live is of itself an acknowledgement of the ease to which you can travel to the city centre and University teaching campuses. This site is particularly well located relative to the public transport routes, with one of largest and most frequented bus stops situated directly adjacent to the site. UoM recognise the suitability of the location in their letter of support.

7.9 The proposal clearly satisfies criterion 1 of Policy H12.

2. The Regional Centre, including the Oxford Road Corridor, is a strategic area for low and zero carbon decentralised energy infrastructure. Proposed schemes that fall within this area will be expected to take place in the context of energy proposals plans as required by Policy EN 5.

7.10 The site does not fall within the Regional Centre or the Oxford Road Corridor and therefore compliance with this criteria is not required for this scheme.

7.11 The only decentralised energy infrastructure within the Regional Centre is understood to be the Civic Heat Network which is presently under construction, but this has limited coverage and could not for the foreseeable future extend to a great number of sites within the city centre, never mind further along the Oxford Road Corridor.

7.12 However, the applicant has ensured sustainability has been integral to the design process and the proposed scheme includes elements of low and zero carbon technology. The proposed development will achieve BREEAM Very Good and includes air source heat pumps, electric heating and electric vehicle charging points.

7.13 Insofar as it is relevant, this criterion is satisfied.

3. High density developments should be sited in locations where this is compatible with existing developments and initiatives, and where retail facilities are within walking distance. Proposals should not lead to an increase in on-street parking in the surrounding area.

7.14 'High density developments' is not qualified or explained by the policy nor is there a reasoned explanation. However, it is reasonable to conclude that the proposed development could be considered 'high density'.

7.15 The site is already developed to a high density, with a significant number of employees visiting the site each day (c. 180). The site has long been intensively used and

represents a denser character than some of its surroundings. The proposals will increase the built form on site, and will introduce more occupiers, however, the scale and form has been carefully designed relative to its context (including the high density development within the UoM Fallowfield Campus) and the residential character will be more consistent with the surrounding area.

- 7.16 This includes the amount of vehicle trips and movements, which will be substantially reduced as a consequence of the proposals, and lead to a notable reduction in the number of cars parking on surrounding streets. The proposed development will be managed by Fresh and all student accommodation contracts restrict students from bringing private cars. The scheme includes 8 car parking spaces, 3 of which are disabled spaces and will be reserved for staff and individual students where necessary. Access to the car parking spaces will be provided via a security gate. The level of car parking is sufficient for the daily site operation as evidenced through the submitted Transport Assessment. An enhancement of the sites cycle parking provision is also proposed as part of the development proposal and a total of 172 cycle spaces will be provided on-site in secure stores within the accommodation buildings and an additional 42 spaces in a covered outdoor storage area.
- 7.17 The number of bedspaces proposed is entirely compatible with existing developments and the surrounding area. Fallowfield is a thriving district centre and one which offers a wide range of services including retail, all of which lie a short walk from the site. The development will be effectively managed and will provide extensive amenities for its occupiers on site. As considered in detail below, the provision of such high quality purpose built accommodation provides the opportunity to address demand and reduce pressure on traditional housing stock. The technical assessments supporting the application demonstrate both the suitability of the proposals and the compatibility with surrounding uses and environment.
- 7.18 It is concluded that the development satisfies criterion 3 of Policy H12 therefore.

4. Proposals that can demonstrate a positive regeneration impact in their own right will be given preference over other schemes. This can be demonstrated for example through impact assessments on district centres and the wider area. Proposals should contribute to providing a mix of uses and support district and local centres, in line with relevant Strategic Regeneration Frameworks, local plans and other masterplans as student accommodation should closely integrate with existing neighbourhoods to contribute in a positive way to their vibrancy without increasing pressure on existing neighbourhood services to the detriment of existing residents.

- 7.19 Again, the question of giving preference to some schemes over others is not determinative; it does not follow based on the wording of the criterion that the absence of a positive regeneration impact fails to satisfy the criterion. However, there are significant positive regeneration impacts arising from the proposal, which are addressed in turn below.

Supporting Manchester's Higher Education offer

- 7.20 The policy context presented in Section 6 recognises the critical role that the Higher Education Institutions play within the city. They sustain, support and further the

economic performance of the city, in turn conveying significant social benefit. They are equally recognised as crucial to the city's recovery from the Covid-19 crisis.

- 7.21 The provision of high quality, affordable and well managed student accommodation is an essential component in sustaining the appeal of those Higher Education Institutions in what is a very competitive market place. Sufficient high quality provision is critical to the city's universities being able to attract and retain the best talent.
- 7.22 As addressed in relation a separate criterion below, there is a significant mismatch between supply and demand, and a pressing need to deliver additional PBSA. The proposals will make a notable contribution to the supply, with high quality, managed accommodation in location that is proven to appeal to a large proportion of students. By making this contribution and helping to increase and improve the accommodation offer, the proposals will support the appeal of the higher education institutions and their continued essential contribution to the city's economy.

Providing housing choice and supporting 'recovery' of traditional housing stock

- 7.23 The mismatch between supply of and demand for student accommodation within Manchester, referred to in Section 2 and evidenced further below, has generated a significant issue within the city in respect of the occupation by students of mainstream housing stock. There are more than twice as many students at the Higher Education Institutions than there are bedrooms in purpose built accommodation. Allowing for a small proportion of students living at home, the balance is necessarily made up of properties in the private rented sector, the majority of which are HMOs.
- 7.24 Whilst this will always be a feature of any successful university city, the issues this generates are numerous: reduced availability and affordability of housing stock; lack or absence of management; no oversight of student wellbeing; students exposed to poor landlord practices; impact on amenity of neighbours by being interspersed with mainstream housing. High quality, well managed PBSA represents a means of addressing all of these issues.
- 7.25 Those issues are prevalent in Manchester and not least within the Fallowfield area. There has been no private PBSA built in this area in 7 years and yet the number of students coming to Manchester has increased and Fallowfield is a very appealing location for students. They are attracted by the presence of the UoM Fallowfield Campus with the facilities this offers, the other local facilities, the easy accessibility to the university teaching campuses and the city centre, and by the presence of other students.
- 7.26 This demand can be expected to remain, and potentially increase as the number of students attracted to Manchester increases (as forecast within the submitted Student Demand Assessment). There is already a city centre student accommodation market (both PBSA and private rented) and yet Fallowfield continues to attract a large number of students. There is a notable price differential between student accommodation within the Fallowfield area and that found within the city centre; this will be a further contributory factor in the appeal of Fallowfield.

- 7.27 The impact of this mismatch between PBSA supply and continued student demand is very evident within Fallowfield. The Student Demand Assessment identifies that there are nearly 5,000 private rented sector student bedspaces within 0.5 miles of the application site, and over 15,000 bedspaces within 2.5 miles. A large number of these will be within what could otherwise be mainstream housing stock.
- 7.28 To make a difference here, to reduce this 'claim' on the mainstream housing stock and all the associated issues this brings, it is necessary to provide an attractive and realistic alternative. Increased supply of PBSA represents a key solution, in a form, at a price point and in a location which students can and would choose instead.
- 7.29 City centre PBSA is part of that solution, as the City Council now recognises. However, the evidence indicates that it cannot represent the whole solution. There will remain a strong demand from students to locate in Fallowfield, rather than a city centre location. The price differential between the two areas (see Table 13 of the Student Demand Assessment), which even with increased supply in the city centre is highly unlikely to be overcome due to underlying land costs, will preclude many students from making that choice.
- 7.30 To present students with a realistic alternative to HMO accommodation in Fallowfield, WJG, and UoM (as evidenced by their letter of support at Appendix 2), firmly contend that additional PBSA needs to be provided within Fallowfield where it can be suitably accommodated. This does not serve to exacerbate existing issues, but rather acknowledge the reality of sustained demand and the need to accommodate that demand in a form that can help resolve existing issues. It is not a case of seeking to attract more students to the area, but rather displacing existing student demand for HMOs in to a purpose built, managed form of accommodation.
- 7.31 It is this which underpins WJG's proposals. The high quality PBSA proposed on the Wilmslow Road site provides the opportunity to attract students who will otherwise be located in Fallowfield and within HMO stock. They will be attracted by the ability to live with other students, but within a modern, well designed development, which is managed effectively such that their health and wellbeing is protected. They will be attracted by the location, adjacent to a well-frequented bus stop and very close to the UoM Fallowfield Campus and Fallowfield district centre facilities. They will be attracted by the amenities on offer within the development, with dedicated gathering and study spaces and private landscaped areas.
- 7.32 In respect of cost, which is an important but not the sole determinant of choice, the proposals will represent a realistic alternative. As noted earlier, WJG anticipate marketing from 2023 academic year at £160 per week for an en-suite room, over a 45 week contract length. The Student Demand Assessment makes a fair comparison at Section 5, and finds that with adjustment to reflect the additional bills this price is inclusive of, the rental growth position between now and 2023, and contract length, the anticipated price point for the proposals sits substantially below city centre PBSA and HMO prices and between the median and upper quartile for HMO prices in Fallowfield. The price point, together with the high standard of accommodation, amenity offered and its prime location, provides an attractive and realistic alternative to a good proportion of the HMO stock in Fallowfield. The proposal will both serve to

reduce the supply deficiency (which in itself reduces pressure on mainstream housing stock) and offer essential choice.

- 7.33 In so doing, it reduces pressure on the housing stock, reduces the prospects of additional mainstream housing being occupied by students, and creates the opportunity to revert a proportion of the HMOs in the area back to family housing. This is a key regeneration benefit of the proposals.

Making efficient use of land

- 7.34 As referenced in Section 2 the site and premises are no longer fit for purpose as office accommodation. USDAW are moving premises and the site will become vacant. The scheme design makes efficient use of land by retaining and providing a viable future for the existing Villa, introducing high quality new accommodation, and ensuring the site's green environment is retained and enhanced.

Conveying heritage benefit

- 7.35 This is dealt with in detail at criterion 7 below. The proposed scheme places the non-designated heritage asset at the heart of the development and provides it with a viable future. The demolition and decoupling of built development from the Villa improves its setting and the contemporary rear extension ensures the accommodation blocks are tied into the overall aesthetics of the site and surroundings. The heritage enhancement arising from the proposal is a key regeneration benefit, which sets it apart from other prospective sites.

Economic and social benefits

- 7.36 The submitted Economic Impact Statement prepared by Turley summarises the economic benefits resulting from the provision of PBSA in this location. The Impact Assessment summarises the economic benefits at a city wide and local level.
- 7.37 During the construction phase, the proposed development would support a number of direct and indirect jobs within the construction industry and associated supply chains.
- 7.38 The value of the construction of the development is estimated as circa £23.5million, and is estimated to employ a workforce of around 80 during the estimated 2 year construction period.
- 7.39 During the operational phase of the proposed development, approximately 5 full-time equivalent jobs will be created, in addition to investment in the local supply chain.
- 7.40 The 425 no. students who will live within the proposed development are expected to spend a total of more than £1.4 million per year in the local area.
- 7.41 Where the development helps to displace HMO accommodation by providing a realistic alternative, up to £1.7 million in additional retail and leisure expenditure could be generated by new occupants of former student HMOs. A significant proportion of this expenditure would be retained locally, supporting businesses in Manchester and the

district centre of Fallowfield. Up to £110,000 per annum in Council Tax revenue could be collected by the City Council following the re-occupation of former student HMOs.

- 7.42 The proposed development would attract footfall into the area, encouraging further investment to take benefit from the opportunities of increased activity in the area.
- 7.43 By offering a viable and attractive alternative to HMOs within purpose built, well designed accommodation, the scheme can ensure there is a comprehensive management strategy in place to reduce the prevalence of anti-social behaviour typically associated with late night student activity. The Student Management Strategy submitted with the application confirms that 24 hour on and off-site management will be implemented.
- 7.44 In respect of the other expectations of the criterion beyond regeneration benefit, the proposals include a range of amenities for its occupants, with the Villa providing a series of dedicated gathering and social spaces, together with the extensive landscaped areas within the site. These facilities compliment and can work alongside those on offer and planned in the UoM Campus adjacent to the site. Additional services, such as a doctor's surgery and shops are proposed as part of the campus redevelopment and students residing in the WJG accommodation will support and benefit from these facilities, as well as the existing sporting and recreational facilities within the campus.
- 7.45 PBSA in this location will closely integrate with the surrounding neighbourhood which will remain a popular destination for students. The well managed accommodation will help to alleviate some of the existing challenges in the area associated with anti-social behaviour, whilst contributing to the vibrancy of the neighbourhood by supporting the numerous bars, restaurants, takeaways and local shops in close proximity.
- 7.46 On the basis of the above, development satisfies criterion 4 of Policy H12.

5. Proposals should be designed to be safe and secure for their users, and avoid causing an increase in crime in the surrounding area. Consideration needs to be given to how proposed developments could assist in improving the safety of the surrounding area in terms of increased informal surveillance or other measures to contribute to crime prevention.

- 7.47 The proposed scheme has the safety and security of its residents at its heart. The site access points will be gated and on and off-site management protocols will ensure the safety of its residents. The Student Management Plan submitted with the application confirms that the site will have fob/card access, CCTV in the communal areas and a door entry system that means guests can only enter the premises if they're met by a resident. The scheme will also benefit from a concierge and 24-hour onsite management staff. Two secure cycle storage areas are also to be provided.
- 7.48 The active frontage on Langley Road and towards Platt Fields Park will be a benefit to the wider community by offering natural surveillance and making a positive contribution to the prevention of crime and fear of crime.
- 7.49 The applicant has instructed a full Crime Impact Statement from Greater Manchester Police; initial discussions have been positive and Secured by Design principles have

been incorporated throughout. The Crime Impact Statement will be forwarded on to the City Council for review when it becomes available.

- 7.50 It is concluded that the development satisfies criterion 5 of Policy H12 therefore.

6. Consideration should be given to the design and layout of the student accommodation and siting of individual uses within the overall development in relation to adjacent neighbouring uses. The aim is to ensure that there is no unacceptable effect on residential amenity in the surrounding area through increased noise, disturbance or impact on the streetscene either from the proposed development itself or when combined with existing accommodation.

- 7.51 The design and layout of the proposed scheme has been directly influenced by the retained Oakley Villa, existing extensive tree coverage and the neighbouring land uses.

- 7.52 The design and layout has been informed by meetings with City Council Officers and the Places Matter panel. One key layout change that has improved the relationship with neighbouring land uses is the decoupling of the former 'c-shape' block (as referenced in Section 4) and the inclusion of a taller and more meaningful accommodation block to the north of the site, the part of the site most suitable for a building of height. The break of built form in the north west corner improves the visual appearance of the development from Platt Fields Park and the sunken Shakespearean Garden specifically.

- 7.53 Impacts on residential amenity of neighbouring land uses has been considered throughout the design process. The eaves line of the accommodation fronting Langley Road is lower than the current parapet level of the office accommodation so there will be no perceived height increase at street level. The design of this frontage also includes complementary features that mirror the character and appearance of nearby residential properties; for example the use of a pitched roof, chimneys and red brick. The proposals introduce a more residential character to Langley Road, compared to the very functional office building that presently fronts it, providing a notable enhancement to the street scene. The contribution the Villa makes to the streetscene will also be enhanced through the removal of the unsympathetic extensions. The separation distance across Langley Road will remain as existing, generating no issues of overlooking.

- 7.54 The 13 storey accommodation block to the north of the site is significantly taller than the other structures on site and this block will extend slightly above the tree line when seen from Platt Fields Park. However, buildings of height are not uncommon in the surrounding area and the location and design of the taller block has had full regard to its surroundings – separating it from the more residential scale found on Langley Road and to the south, and mindful of key viewpoints from within Platt Fields Park. The design of the block was refined through the Places Matter review.

- 7.55 The technical reports that support the application, and which are considered in further detail below, demonstrate that the proposals will cause no unacceptable impact on residential amenity. The proposal has been carefully designed and will be effectively managed.

- 7.56 The development satisfies criterion 6 of Policy H12.

7. Where appropriate proposals should contribute to the re-use of Listed Buildings and other buildings with a particular heritage value.

- 7.57 WJG recognise the local significance of Oakley Villa and the value of the non-designated heritage asset to the character of the area and have ensured the Villa is at the heart of the proposals, by giving a clear purpose, lasting use and designing the wider scheme to compliment it. Following USDAW's relocation, the Villa and wider site will be left vacant, whilst the Commercial Market Assessment explains the limitations on it being reoccupied for office use. The proposal provides the Villa with a viable future and one which will retain its valuable features and celebrate its history.
- 7.58 The removal and demolition of the unsightly southern extension will help restore the asset to its former glory and will be complimented by the retention of existing mature trees on site and the provision of a high quality landscape strategy.
- 7.59 The small extension to the rear (west) of the Villa will be in contemporary stone to contrast with the existing brickwork and compliment the materials palette of the proposed residential blocks. The rear extension will be a two storey mezzanine with large windows facing onto the internal landscaped courtyard.
- 7.60 Tim Groom Architecture has worked closely with Stephen Levrant Heritage Architecture to ensure the Villa is retained and the important heritage features are included within the scheme's design. The internal original Gothic revival features, fixtures and fittings and later 1880's decorations in the Aesthetic Movement style are to be retained and are detailed in full in the submitted Design and Access Statement. These features include ceiling features and cornices, original cast iron fire places and the ornate central staircase. The Heritage Statement concludes that the proposed development will have a beneficial impact on the non-designated heritage asset.
- 7.61 While it is generally acknowledged the exterior of the building is fairly unremarkable, WJG Group recognise the importance of retaining one of the few remaining Victorian Villas in south Manchester. The Villa is for communal use only, no bedrooms are proposed in this building. The Villa offers secure indoor space for students to socialise and study in, unlike any other private student accommodation offering in the area. A library, games room, meeting rooms and study areas will all be available for use by the students residing at the accommodation.
- 7.62 The Villa will not have 24 hour student access to ensure the space and its retained heritage features are properly managed and no damage occurs when there are fewer staff onsite. The Heritage Statement confirms that the proposals are necessary to ensure the viable use of the heritage asset, including regular maintenance and upkeep.
- 7.63 The Heritage Statement and Archaeology Desk Based Assessment confirms that the proposals do not impact heritage assets in the surrounding area.
- 7.64 The proposal is clearly in accordance with Criterion 7 and this is a key benefit of the scheme.

8. Consideration should be given to provision and management of waste disposal facilities, that will ensure that waste is disposed of in accordance with the waste hierarchy set out in Policy EN 19, within the development at an early stage.

- 7.65 The proposed development includes the provision and management of waste disposal in accordance with the waste hierarchy set out in Policy EN19; prevention, reduction, re-use, recycling/composting, energy recovery, final disposal.
- 7.66 A Waste Management Strategy for the proposed development is submitted alongside the application with further detail provided within the accompanying Design and Access Statement. This outlines the capacity and location of the proposed waste facilities. As part of Fresh's management of the development, occupants will be required to separate recyclable waste from non-recyclable waste and separate bins will be provided for this purpose within the communal bin area.
- 7.67 The sites management staff will arrange for the bins to be moved to an accessible location on collection day and returned to the storage when emptied. The Transport Assessment includes a Swept Path Analysis showing service vehicle tracking to and from the waste collection points on Langley Road.
- 7.68 The development satisfies criterion 8 of Policy H12.

9. Developers will be required to demonstrate that there is a need for additional student accommodation or that they have entered into a formal agreement with a University, or another provider of higher education, for the supply of all or some of the bedspaces.

- 7.69 The criterion is presented in the alternative – ie. either aspect can be satisfied.
- 7.70 In respect of the need for additional student accommodation, this has been recognised by the City Council in its reports on PBSA to the Executive committee, referred to earlier. It is acknowledged within those reports that the present levels of PBSA available to support the student population and the limited investment in PBSA over recent years is causing a series of issues for the city. Those include driving rents upwards such that Manchester is one of the most expensive UK cities for PBSA, and students increasingly occupying mainstream housing stock. The latter has an impact on the availability and affordability of housing to meet local resident needs, significantly reduces Council tax revenue through exemptions, and creates issues in terms of effective management (with consequential impacts on amenity, neighbourliness etc.). The City Council has acknowledged that there is a need for additional PBSA in order to help overcome these challenges. This acknowledgement of need in itself satisfies the first element of this criterion.
- 7.71 The application documentation further evidences this position, specifically within the Student Demand Assessment prepared by Knight Frank. This demonstrates that there are an estimated 28,748 PBSA bed spaces in Manchester, representing only 45% of total full time students. This equates to a gross ratio of 2.2 students per bed space (0.45 bed spaces per student). If the potential development pipeline (3,855 bed spaces) is included within the supply, alongside a projected 10.3% increase in student numbers (1,346 students per annum), the estimated future full-time student to bed space ratio will remain unchanged at 2.2 students per bed space.

- 7.72 Therefore, both at present, and taking in to account pipeline relative to further increases demand, PBSA is catering for less than half of all student accommodation demand. On average, for every 1 PBSA bedroom there are over 2 students within Manchester. This represents a significant mismatch, a significant deficiency, and one which affirms the Council's recognition of the need for additional PBSA provision.
- 7.73 This mismatch is undoubtedly contributing to the rental growth that the Executive reports highlight. Knight Frank identify that annual rental growth in PBSA over recent years has varied between 2.48% and 5.32%, in each case exceeding the UK average. PBSA in Manchester is becoming increasingly unaffordable and additional supply is required to help restrain this rental growth and at least keep up with increased demand.
- 7.74 In respect of the second alternative within the criterion, there is no formal agreement with a higher education provider for the supply of bedspaces, but UoM has expressed its formal support for the proposals. Appendix 2 represents a letter of support from one of the city's key higher education institutes, which is particularly relevant given the adjacency to the UoM Fallowfield Campus, with which this proposal can and no doubt will closely interact. Discussions will continue with UoM with regard to a potential formal agreement, but the express support of the University is highly material to the determination of the application.
- 7.75 Criterion 9 of Policy H12 is fully satisfied.

10. Applicants/developers must demonstrate to the Council that their proposals for purpose built student accommodation are deliverable.

- 7.76 The site will be delivered by WJG, a student accommodation provider with a proven track record of delivering high quality, popular and well managed accommodation across the UK and historically, elsewhere in Manchester.
- 7.77 WJG have entered into an agreement to purchase the site subject to the grant of planning permission and intend to construct the accommodation for occupation in the 2023 academic year. WJG will act as both developer and contractor, and through Fresh, operator of the accommodation. A full design and engineering team is in place and has informed the design of the proposals. A detailed delivery programme has been prepared.
- 7.78 Criterion 10 of Policy H12 is therefore satisfied.

Summary of Policy H12 compliance

- 7.79 Policy H12 is the development plan policy of greatest relevance. It confirms that the provision of new purpose-built student accommodation will be supported where the development satisfies the policy criteria.
- 7.80 It has been demonstrated above that the proposed development satisfies all of the relevant policy criteria and as such, the proposals should be supported.

- 7.81 Furthermore, the proposed development is being progressed with support from the UoM and meets the City Council's wider regeneration priorities. As a result, the proposals should be given priority under the terms of the policy.

Resolution of the City Council's Executive Committee, December 2020

- 7.82 As acknowledged earlier, the Council's Executive Committee resolution of 9 December 2020 is a material consideration in the determination of the application. Each of the policy ideas endorsed by the resolution are considered in turn.

a) Student accommodation schemes should contribute to delivering the city's regeneration objectives; support employment growth, graduate and talent retention, place making and the city's international reputation

- 7.83 The schemes contribution to delivering the city's regeneration benefits and contribution to place making are outlined within the assessment of H12.
- 7.84 The proposal will utilise previously developed land and provide a viable future for a heritage asset.
- 7.85 The Economic Impact Assessment submitted with the application demonstrates how the scheme will contribute to the local economy through additional expenditure and support employment growth by providing opportunities during the construction and operation phases.
- 7.86 The delivery of high quality PBSA in this popular student location will help the Higher Education Institutions attract and retain the best student talent at a time when quality of accommodation is becoming increasingly important to prospective students. It will deliver high quality accommodation at a competitive price point. It will support the attractiveness of the universities and in turn the contribution they make to the city's international reputation. The support of UoM is highly material in this regard.
- 7.87 The design of the proposal is of the highest quality, retaining the site features of greatest value, and significantly enhancing the site's contribution to its locality. It will integrate effectively and sympathetically and undoubtedly contribute to place-making.
- 7.88 The proposed scheme clearly aligns with this consideration.

b) The approach needs to be within the context of the approved Corridor Spatial Framework which establishes the principle that development of land in the Oxford Road Corridor should prioritise commercial or educational/research use. Student accommodation should, therefore, be in the right locations, in appropriate numbers, and only where it supports wider growth

- 7.89 The site is not within the Oxford Corridor. It is considered the site is in the 'right location', and of the appropriate scale, for the reasons set out in the evaluation against Policy H12 above, but this is expanded on below. In respect of supporting 'wider growth' the proposal will support and sustain the appeal of the universities, which in itself is a critical factor in supporting the city's continued economic growth.

c) To meet the needs of students, stabilise rental growth and provide an affordable accommodation offering, a more diverse pipeline of new PBSA is needed. It is critical to ensure there is a residential market, which meets the needs of students at an affordable price

- 7.90 This matter is addressed above in respect of the evaluation of Policy H12. The proposals will introduce new, high quality PBSA, the need for which is recognised by the City Council and further evidenced by the Student Demand Assessment. The anticipated price point is competitive, materially lower than generally found within the city centre, comparable to the Unsworth Park accommodation within the UoM Fallowfield campus, and within the range of HMO prices found in the Fallowfield and surrounding area (Section 5 of the Student Demand Assessment). Student needs can therefore be met by the proposals, at an affordable price.

d) All PBSA must be of a high quality, providing a high standard of living, within close proximity to the city's higher education institutions PBSA should be within or immediately adjacent to Oxford Road Corridor (with the exception of the area surrounding the Institute of Sport, on the Etihad Campus). Design should allow sufficient facilities to cater for the overall wellbeing of students, including, for example, generous living space, communal spaces for students to socialise, and public realm, which contributes to the quality of place. PBSA design must also be sufficiently flexible to allow for re-purposing as demand varies.

- 7.91 The proposed development will offer a high standard of living for its students with the flexibility of being within a studio or cluster apartment with all bills, maintenance, management and access to the communal facilities included with the rent. WJG are reputable student accommodation providers and will deliver a high quality product which is designed around student welfare and identified accommodation needs.
- 7.92 The accommodation will combine high quality living accommodation alongside extensive communal spaces and public realm, which will enhance the site and contribute to the quality of space. For further details refer to the consideration of design below and to the Design and Access Statement.
- 7.93 The site is not within the Oxford Road Corridor nor is it adjacent to it, and therefore this proposal departs from the locational focus of the Executive committee's resolution. However, that resolution does not establish policy nor does it supersede Policy H12. Full weight must be applied to Policy H12. As has been addressed above, the proposals satisfy the criteria of Policy H12, including the criterion relating to location, where it has been shown that the site adjoins a busy public transport route in to the city centre and along the Oxford Road corridor.
- 7.94 The principal reasons given within the Executive report for this revised and more specific locational focus is in the interests of sustainability and student wellbeing. However, the location of the proposal addresses each of these fully. The site is immediately adjacent to a bus route with very regular services, whereby students living at the site would be able to get to the teaching campuses easily and quickly, without reverting to use of a private car. Cycling and indeed walking both represent viable alternatives. They also have easy access to the UoM Fallowfield campus facilities. In respect of wellbeing, this is addressed below. The proposed location presents no

barriers to a sustainable development or one which protects and promotes student wellbeing. The UoM specifically reference this in their letter of support.

- 7.95 Deviation from the more restrictive locational focus proposed within the Executive resolution weighs against the proposal, but given the relationship with Policy H12 which already provides locational direction (with which the proposal conforms) and the reasoning given for this focus, this is to be afforded limited weight.

e) PBSA should consider the welfare and wellbeing of students as a major factor, in both design and management. Ensuring student accommodation is delivered in safe and secure locations, and with appropriate management and facilities. Location of accommodation close to University facilities is a critical issue in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of students

- 7.96 Welfare and wellbeing of students has been a major consideration in the design of the proposals and is day to day in how WJG/Fresh manage their student accommodation.
- 7.97 The communal facilities designed in to the scheme present a unique accommodation offering. The library, study area and games room, coupled with the usable open space ensure a high quality student experience with wellbeing and welfare being a central element. The Student Needs Assessment suggests greater importance on proximity to social and outdoor space will be factored into students' decisions about where to live in a post Covid-19 environment; this proposal responds.
- 7.98 The site will be gated and security will be paramount. Students will be provided with a safe and secure environment in which to live.
- 7.99 The proposal includes extensive management proposals, as referenced in the Student Management Plan, comprising 24-hour on-site security staff ensuring the wellbeing and safety of students are appropriately managed. The on-site staff provide a degree of oversight by helping to manage disputes and arrange socials.
- 7.100 Students will also benefit from being within close proximity to the UoM Fallowfield Campus and associated welfare and pastoral facilities. A key factor in UoM's decision to support the scheme is the human scale of the proposals and the clear focus on student welfare and well-being. The proximity to the Fallowfield Campus is equally, if not more relevant to well-being as being close to teaching facilities.
- 7.101 The proposed scheme clearly aligns with this consideration.

f) All new PBSA development to adopt the principles in the following codes of practice; 1) The Universities UK/GuildHE Code of Practice for University Managed Student Accommodation, 2) The ANUK/Unipol Code of Standards for Larger Residential Developments for Student Accommodation Managed and Controlled by Educational Establishments, 3) The ANUK/Unipol Code of Standards for Larger Developments for Student Accommodation NOT Managed and Controlled by Educational Establishment

- 7.102 WJG are members of ANUK and ensure all schemes are fully compliant with the Code of Standards. As referred to in the Management Plan submitted with the application, WJG also work closely with local councils and education establishments and sign up to local accreditation schemes where appropriate.

7.103 The scheme clearly accords with this consideration.

g) Consideration of place making opportunities to contribute to the management of areas in which the proposed PBSA is located

7.104 The proposed development will be securely gated and self-contained with additional 24 hour security and general management. Extensive space will be provided for the students residing in the property to enjoy, thereby reducing the tendency for students to gather in spaces beyond the site boundary. This all contributes to shaping places in a suitable manner.

7.105 To date, through pre-application discussions, no specific proposals have been raised with WJG in relation to how the propose may make any wider contribution. WJG are content to enter into discussions on this matter during the course of the application.

h) Density of student accommodation will be essential to deliver the level of new high quality accommodation needed within the context of scarce land availability both in the Oxford Road Corridor area and the wider city centre

7.106 As noted, the site does not fall within the Oxford Road corridor and therefore does not put pressure on land availability. However, in the interests of making efficient use of land a suitable level of density is proposed.

i) Location is a key factor in ensuring the quality, security, sustainability and wellbeing benefits of accommodation. As a result, purpose built student accommodation should be located in the areas immediately adjacent to the core university areas, principally the Oxford Road Corridor area.

7.107 This matter is dealt with above. The proposals deviate from this locational focus, but each of the considerations that underpin it are satisfied by the proposals.

j) Given the current climate emergency and Manchester's commitment to be carbon neutral by 2038, it is increasingly important that the location of student accommodation in Manchester should continue to be driven by proximity to university campuses, reducing the need to travel, and to sustainable modes of transport. This supports existing green travel plans.

7.108 This matter is dealt with above, where it is shown that the site is highly accessible by sustainable modes of travel.

Conclusion on Executive resolution

7.109 The proposals align with most of the 'policy ideas' that the Council's Executive has endorsed as a material consideration. Therefore, generally these weigh in favour of the proposals. There is however a deviation in terms of the locational focus on the Oxford Road Corridor, which is to be weighed in the planning balance.

Change from Employment Use – CS Policy EC2

7.110 The development proposals accord with Policy EC2; as demonstrated in Section 2 and by the submitted Commercial Market Assessment the site is not suitable for retention of employment use. Under the terms of the policy only one of the criteria need be met in order for proposals be in accordance with the policy and for alternative uses to be supported. Each is considered in turn:

- **The existing use is un-viable in terms of business operations, building age and format** – USDAW has outlined a number of issues relating to the maintenance and management of the now dated office building. The high heating and maintenance costs associated with the buildings upkeep means it can no longer be effectively and viably managed for employment use. As referenced in Section 2 and the Commercial Market Assessment, the building layout does not meet modern office standards, with insufficient open plan spaces, complex internal layout and level changes throughout the building that mean the site is not fully DDA compliant. The Commercial Market Assessment goes further in demonstrating the lack of market appeal that the site location possesses, with numerous other more attractive options available within the Manchester office market. It is unrealistic to assume the dated and unsuitable existing office accommodation can be viably redeveloped in to more modern office premises; the market would not sustain such a project.
- **The existing use is incompatible with adjacent uses** – The application site is in a high density residential suburb. Whilst some form of employment use is not necessarily incompatible, the close adjacency of the residential properties make redevelopment for any form of intensive employment use much more challenging. There are issues with the existing use for example, with deliveries having to use Langley Road, and the amount of cars used staff leading to parking on the surrounding roads.
- **The existing use is unsuitable for employment having had regard to the Manchester - Salford - Trafford SFRA** – The application site is not within an area at risk of flooding nor is it within close proximity of a watercourse. The SFRA does not conclude that the site is unsuitable for employment use so this criterion is not met.
- **On balance, proposals are able to offer greater benefits in terms of the Core Strategy's vision and spatial objectives than the existing use** – The existing use will soon cease as USDAW vacate the building. Given the limitations of the existing premises, it is highly unlikely that the premises can be viably re-used. As noted above, office redevelopment is unrealistic given the location's limited market appeal. Therefore, as a baseline, the premises once vacated will convey very limited benefit and contribute very little.

By comparison the delivery of high quality PBSA in this sustainable location helps meet the identified need and contributes to Spatial Principle SO3. The delivery of PBSA in this location will help achieve the city's vision of delivering a wide range of quality housing and will help the universities attract and retain the best student talent. The proposals will also contribute to the vitality, distinctiveness and vibrancy of Fallowfield centre through increased spending at local shops, bars and restaurants in accordance with Spatial Principles SO2 and SO4.

The redevelopment of the site also aligns with the aim to deliver sustainable development; the proposal includes a number of sustainable features in the schemes design (as referenced above at Policy H12 criteria 2), but it also

removes a building which has a poor and out dated heating and cooling system that is expensive, inefficient and unsustainable.

- 7.111 Both the first and fourth criteria are satisfied, whilst in relation to the second criterion the proposed use will be more compatible with its surroundings. The proposals therefore accord with and are lent support by the policy.

Development Management and Technical Considerations

Heritage and Archaeology

- 7.112 National and local policy seeks to encourage the reuse of heritage assets and maximise the City's historic environment. The proposals incorporate the non-designated heritage asset into the proposals and improve the external character and appearance of the Villa and incorporate the internal artistic heritage features of importance.
- 7.113 The Villa is one of very few historic villas remaining in south Manchester and WJG recognise its local significance. The removal and demolition of the unsightly southern extension will help restore the asset to its former glory and will be complimented by the retention of existing mature trees on site and the provision of a high quality landscape strategy.
- 7.114 The small extension to the rear (west) of the Villa will be in contemporary stone to contrast with the existing brickwork and compliment the materials palette of the proposed residential blocks. The single storey rear and side extension includes large windows facing onto the internal landscaped courtyard.
- 7.115 As referenced above within the assessment at criterion 7 of Policy H12, the Heritage Statement concludes that the proposed development will have a beneficial impact on the non-designated heritage asset.
- 7.116 The submitted Archaeological Desk-based Assessment confirms that the proposed development will not impact on any designated or non-designate archaeological assets.
- 7.117 The proposals accord with Core Strategy Policy EN3 and the NPPF.

Design

- 7.118 National and local planning policies confirm that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and that new development should function well and add to the overall quality of the area, be visually attractive, sympathetic to local character maintain a strong sense of place and create places that are safe and secure.
- 7.119 The accompanying Design & Access Statement explains the design concepts and principles which have been applied to the proposed development, and how the proposals have evolved to reflect the site's context, identified technical and environmental constraints and opportunities and pre-application engagement with Manchester City Council Officers. It explains the design evolution and rationale for the proposals and how they have been adopted to ensure that the design of the site will produce a place which is appropriate for its physical, social and economic context.
- 7.120 In particular, it confirms that:

- The non-designated heritage asset has been incorporated at the heart of the scheme and the inclusion of attractive and managed communal facilities within this building means the character and important internal heritage features of the building are retained and improved.
- The proposals have been shaped by public and stakeholder consultation as well as pre-application discussions with the City Council, UoM and Places Matter Design Panel, as well as a critical assessment of the character and quality of the local built environment and streetscape. The proposals seek to improve and raise the quality of the local environment by providing a building which actively engages and supports the Langley Road, Wilmslow Road and the wider neighbourhood through its design, the proposed materials, scale, massing and form.
- The aesthetics of Langley Road and the application site will be improved by the removal of the 1930's office extension of poor design and replacement by an appropriately scaled building of residential style and character. The design of the outward facing buildings contribute to safety and security measures by creating opportunities for passive natural surveillance along Langley Road.
- The tallest block is deliberately positioned to the north of the site and its design has been refined, to complement the remainder of the development. There is precedent for taller structures such as this in the surrounding area and given its context and care taken with its design it is considered to be entirely appropriate and a positive addition.

7.121 The analysis presented within the accompanying Design & Access Statement demonstrates that the proposal is entirely consistent with Section 12 of the NPPF, CS Policies SP1 and EN1 and the Guide to Development in Manchester SPD in terms of securing high-quality design which makes a positive contribution to creating neighbourhoods of choice.

Arboriculture

- 7.122 There are a number trees both within and just outside the application site boundary which range in quality and age. The submitted Arboricultural Statement prepared by Cheshire Woodlands confirms that some moderate and low quality trees, shrubs and hedges will be removed and replaced with new landscaping. Details for protection of the retained high and moderate quality trees are included with the statement and residual engineering details can be secured by planning condition. The Statement also includes details of access facilitation pruning in relation to construction works and confirms that this accords with current best practice and should be acceptable in planning terms.
- 7.123 WJG have worked closely with their engineering team at Tier Consult to ensure the safe construction of the two new accommodation blocks with negatively impacting the retained existing trees onsite and immediately adjacent to the site. The proposed mitigation and protection measures outlined in the Arboricultural Statement will be adhered to during construction. These measures include:

- Supervised hand removal of various minor structures, hard surfaces and hard landscaping along the northern boundary;
- Supervised demolition of a section of existing building;
- Erection of tree protection barriers to create construction exclusion zones;
- Retention of existing hard surfaces as temporary ground protection beneath some trees;
- Construction of a section of new building within the RPA of T2 on a specially engineered foundation;
- Construction of new permanent hard surfaces within RPAs using the Cellweb™ Tree Root Protection System4 (or equivalent);
- Supervised hand removal of existing hard surfaces within RPAs and replacement with new soft landscaping.

7.124 The Arboricultural Statement provides a robust assessment of the existing trees onsite, proposed retention and mitigation measures and concludes that a suitably worded condition can be imposed to protect trees where built development strays slightly into the RPAs. The proposals are therefore compliant with CS Policies EN15 and EN9 and the NPPF.

Highways

7.125 The Transport Statement and Framework Travel Plan prepared by Focus Transport Planning demonstrates that:

- The proposed development is located in an area which is highly accessible to local facilities by walking, cycling and public transport.
- The proposed development will be generally free from cars, with the management company discouraging students from bringing private vehicles within their tenancy agreement. Only 8 car parking spaces are provided, 3 of which are disability spaces; these spaces will be used by students that need the space or onsite staff.
- Secure indoor cycle parking for 172 bicycles in the accommodation blocks and 42 external cycle storage spaces located on the western boundary of the site (representing over 50% of total bedrooms).
- Refuse collection, deliveries and servicing for the development is proposed to take place from Langley Road, and such movements can readily be accommodated without adverse impact.
- The Student Management Plan outlines measures for controlling the move in/out period for students at the start and end of term. These movements will be staggered and facilitated via the onsite parking bays and hard landscaping, which will help to minimise potential impacts on neighbouring properties.

7.126 In light of the above, the proposed development complies with CS Policies T1, T2, and DM1, as well as the requirements of Paragraphs 103 – 111 of the NPPF.

7.127 There would certainly be no severe residual cumulative highways impacts arising from the proposed development and, as such, planning permissions should not be withheld on transport/highways grounds in accordance with Paragraph 109 of the NPPF.

Air Quality

7.128 Redmore Environmental has prepared an Air Quality Assessment (AQA) in support of the proposed development.

7.129 The AQA identifies that any potential construction phase air quality impacts resulting from demolition, earthworks, construction and track out activities can be mitigated through the implementation of good practice measures. The submitted Construction Environmental Management Plan includes details regarding dust mitigation measures during demolition and construction.

7.130 During its operational phase, the AQA identifies that as a result of the relatively low number of vehicle trips, emission impacts will be low.

7.131 There are no air quality impacts that would indicate that the development should be refused and the proposal complies with CS Policy EN16.

Daylight / Sunlight

7.132 As noted earlier a Daylight and Sunlight Report has been prepared by Consil to analyse the effect of the proposed development on the daylight and sunlight amenity to neighbouring properties.

7.133 In summary, the Daylight and Sunlight Report confirms that:

- The assessment results demonstrate that the vast majority of assessed windows (91%) would retain Vertical Sky Component levels in line with BRE Report guidance.
- The Daylight Distribution results show that 86% of the rooms assessed would comply with the guidelines using this test.
- Where there are minor, or very few moderate transgressions, they are limited to bedrooms which are regarded as “less important” in the BRE Report guidelines.

7.134 The assessment concludes that the development would not have an unacceptable impact on levels of daylight and sunlight in adjoining properties. The proposal, therefore, complies with CS Policy DM1 in relation to daylight/sunlight impacts and residential amenity.

Ecology

7.135 Bowland Ecology has prepared an Ecological Appraisal detailing the findings of an extended Phase 1 Habitat survey, building inspection survey and bat emergence survey.

- 7.136 The appraisal identifies some habitats of principal importance, including an area of deciduous woodland just outside the application site boundary. Bowland Ecology have identified suitable mitigation measures and recommendations to be adopted during site clearance and construction to ensure there are no direct or indirect impacts on these habitats.
- 7.137 Mitigation of the loss of any habitats and recommended enhancement measures have been incorporated into the landscaping scheme, for example through the provision of replacement native planting.
- 7.138 With the implementation of the identified mitigation measures the proposed development is considered to accord with Policy EN 15 of the CS. The landscaping scheme will ensure that the site's biodiversity is maintained and enhanced where possible with a net gain in biodiversity overall. By virtue of the approach the scheme is will align with the requirements of the NPPF.

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 7.139 The Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) prepared by Tier Consult identifies that the site is located within Flood Zone 1. The report confirms that the risk of surface water or sewer flooding is considered to be low or not significant.
- 7.140 The ground conditions are not suitable for soakaway of surface water, neither is the site within close proximity to a watercourse. Discharge of surface water will therefore be via the combined public sewer on Langley Road.
- 7.141 The foul sewerage will be discharged by gravity into the existing combined sewer within Langley Road. The proposal is to use a detention basin within the courtyard area and a small geo-cellular tank to attenuate this volume. The associated attenuation basin will be in the form of a landscaped depression which will only fill up in heavy storm events once flows reach the specified threshold through a flow control device, allowing the basin area to be used as a recreational or other amenity facility.
- 7.142 The drainage strategy is appropriate for the disposal of foul and surface water from the new development and will not increase the risk of surface water flooding to the surrounding area. The proposal, therefore, complies with the NPPF and CS Policy EN14.

Ground Conditions

- 7.143 Tier Consult have prepared a Ground Investigation Report to support the proposed development. The report details the findings of the desk study, ground conditions encountered during intrusive investigation works and the results of follow up laboratory tests.
- 7.144 A scheme of remediation works is recommended following demolition of the existing building structures in order to ensure that the site is suitable for residential use.
- 7.145 The submitted information confirms that the proposed development complies with CS Policies EN18 and DM1, as well as the NPPF. The implementation of the recommended remediation can be secured via planning condition.

Noise

- 7.146 The Noise Impact Assessment has been prepared by PDA Acoustic Consultants to assess the potential noise impacts on future residents and the noise generated by the proposed use. In accordance with CS Policy DM1, the Noise Impact Assessment sets out acoustic performance requirements for the building.
- 7.147 The assessment demonstrates that a suitable noise environment can be achieved at the development and the proposals are not likely to generate noise impacts on surrounding residents. The assessment identifies that suitable noise insulation specifications have been derived for the windows and trickle vents achieve the necessary thresholds for noise levels.
- 7.148 The external noise climate of the large amenity space in between buildings is expected to achieve the recommended BS criteria. The amenity area close to Wilmslow Road is predicted to exceed the BS criteria but the assessment is clear that exceedance of this criteria does not restrict development from taking place. The sensitive noise receptors, the bedrooms, have specifically been set back beyond the Villa to avoid noise impacts from Wilmslow Road and the proposed development seeks to retain much of the existing vegetation in this area of the site. The proposal is therefore considered to be compliant with CS Policy DM1 in respect of noise, as well as saved UDP Policy DC26.1.

Climate Change and Sustainability

- 7.149 The site is in a sustainable location, and student residents will be able to access the University campuses by a bus, cycle or walking as demonstrated in the submitted Transport Statement prepared by FTP. The accessibility of the site provides the opportunity to reduce private car use and promote the use of sustainable modes of transport, reducing carbon emissions.
- 7.150 The Framework Travel Plan identifies measures to further promote the use of public transport and other sustainable modes of transport to residents and staff. This includes issuing a Welcome Pack to each new student, including information on sustainable travel options and news of forthcoming green transport initiatives, such as 'Bike Week' and providing communal noticeboards displaying relevant travel information.
- 7.151 An Energy Statement has been prepared by Ensphere Group, and identifies the energy efficiency and energy saving measures which are incorporated into the design of the proposed development. These include the use of air source heat pumps, high-efficiency LED lighting with occupancy sensing, natural ventilation and air source heat pumps to serve the domestic hot water load.
- 7.152 The Energy Statement demonstrates that the proposed development will exceed the 20% renewable energy target outlined in the Guide to Development in Manchester SPD.
- 7.153 A BREEAM pre-assessment has been undertaken by Ensphere Group and confirms that the proposed development will achieve a BREEAM rating of 'Very Good'.
- 7.154 It is clear that the proposed development will be adaptable to climate change and incorporates measures to minimise greenhouse emissions, in accordance with Policies EN6 and EN8 of the CS and the NPPF.

Waste Management

- 7.155 The Design and Access Statement includes a waste management section that provides details as to the design of the bin stores, number of bins to be provided and the method of getting the bins to the road side for collection. The City Council's Waste Proforma is also attached to the Design and Access Statement.
- 7.156 The Construction Demolition Management Plan provides details of how waste during demolition and construction will be stored, reused or disposed of.
- 7.157 The application submission material demonstrates compliance with CS Policies EN19 and DM1 in relation to waste management.

TV and Radio Reception and Broadband Connectivity

- 7.158 A Baseline Signal Survey & Television and Radio Reception Impact Assessment has been undertaken by Pager Power to assess the potential impact of the proposed development on Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT), Digital Satellite Television (DST) and FM Radio reception.
- 7.159 The survey confirms that widespread interference to DTT service reception and DST is not expected. The proposed development is unlikely to impact the reception of FM radio broadcasts due to the existing good coverage in the local area.
- 7.160 The submitted Broadband Connectivity Assessment prepared by Pager Power confirms that superfast broadband speed is available at the site.

Summary

- 7.161 The proposed development aligns with and will assist in the delivery of, a number of strategic and regeneration objectives and relevant development plan policies. In particular:
- The proposal makes efficient use of previously developed land within the urban area.
 - The proposed development will help contribute to the University's objectives of maintaining the world renowned status as a top ranking city for higher education.
 - The scheme will convert and retain key features of Oakley Villa, a non-designated heritage asset and will contribute to the character and appearance of the area by removal of the unsightly existing office accommodation and replacement with high-quality and well-designed residential accommodation blocks.
 - The delivery of purpose-built student accommodation will contribute towards meeting the identified shortfall in such provision, on a site which is in a highly accessible location and immediately adjacent to the UoM Fallowfield Campus.
 - The development also aligns with the Council's regeneration priorities for highly populated student areas, by providing high-quality student accommodation at a

competitive price to attract students out of unsuitable HMOs so they can be made available for non-student occupants.

- The proposed development complies with all environmental and other technical considerations established by policy. No material harm will arise but rather there will be beneficial effects.

7.162 Overall, the assessment finds the proposal to be in full accordance with the relevant policies of the development plan, and supported by a number of relevant other policy considerations, not least the NPPF. There is deviation from a locational focus on the Oxford Road corridor expressed in the Council's recent Executive resolution, which is a material consideration to weigh against the proposal. The UoM's explicit letter of support weighs in favour.

8. Benefits of the Proposed Development

Introduction

- 8.1 The proposed development will generate a number of benefits, which comprise material considerations that weigh in favour of the planning application. These benefits are strongly aligned with the three objectives of sustainable development outlined within the NPPF, and summarised below.

Economic Benefits

- 8.2 As noted in the preceding section, the proposed development will convey notable economic benefits, experienced locally and at the city scale:
- During the construction phase, the proposed development would support a number of direct and indirect jobs within the construction industry and associated supply chains.
 - The value of the construction of the development is estimated as circa £23.5million, and is estimated to employ a workforce of around 80 during the estimated 2 year construction period.
 - During the operational phase of the proposed development, approximately 5 full-time equivalent jobs will be created, in addition to investment in the local supply chain.
 - The 425 no. students who will live within the proposed development are expected to spend a total of more than £1.4 million per year in the local area.
 - Where the development succeeds in displacing HMO accommodation by providing a realistic alternative, up to £1.7 million in additional retail and leisure expenditure could be generated by new occupants of former student HMOs. A significant proportion of this expenditure would be retained locally, supporting businesses in Manchester and the district centre of Fallowfield. Up to £110,000 per annum in Council Tax revenue could be collected by the City Council following the re-occupation of former student HMOs.
 - The proposed development would attract footfall into the area, encouraging further investment to take benefit from the opportunities of increased activity in the area.

Social Benefits

- 8.3 A number of social benefits would also arise:
- Enhanced appreciation of Oakley Villa, a non-designated heritage asset, through the retention of key internal heritage features, providing a distinct purpose to the building and the decoupling of unsympathetic built development from the Villa.

- The provision of a bespoke PBSA offering in Fallowfield with unrivalled communal, social and management facilities including a 24 hour onsite security, concierge service, management team to help arrange social events, games room, meeting rooms, library and secure undercover cycle storage. All with the intention of enhancing student wellbeing. This is explicitly recognised by the University of Manchester in its letter of support.
- The proposed development will ensure the site is brought into beneficial use and the site will not lay vacant when USDAW move premises, with the risk of antisocial behaviour arising.
- For the reasons given earlier, the provision of new high quality accommodation at competitive price point can help free up existing HMOs currently popular with students.

Environmental Benefits

- The proposed development would deliver high density PBSA on a site no longer suitable for its current office use, representing an efficient use of land.
- The proposed development would deliver improvements to the public realm, including the provision of trees along the Langley Road frontage and a high quality landscaped scheme within the site.
- The proposed development would deliver an energy efficient building which will achieve a BREEAM rating of 'Very Good' and CO₂ reduction in excess of Building Regulations and local policy requirements. The existing buildings are highly inefficient in their energy consumption; the new development would represent a significant net improvement.
- The development would essentially be car-free with car parking spaces limited to staff and those requiring a disabled parking space. The application site is highly accessible to public transport and other sustainable modes of transport, minimising potential impacts on climate change. This compares to the present use of the site with c.180 occupants generally making use of the private car.

Summary

- 8.4 By delivering economic, social and environmental benefits, the proposed development will constitute sustainable development.

9. Conclusions

- 9.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Turley on behalf of Watkin Jones Group to support an application for full planning permission for PBSA at the site of the USDAW head office on Wilmslow Road.
- 9.2 The application seeks to retain and convert the non-designated heritage asset, Oakley Villa, as communal and social space with the demolition of the existing office extension buildings and erection of two accommodation buildings comprising 425 bedrooms with associated landscaping and outdoor space.
- 9.3 The planning appraisal undertaken and presented within this Statement has demonstrated the following.
- 9.4 The existing office use is no longer suitable in this location and in what are very outdated and unsuitable premises. The site will soon become vacant and an alternative purpose must be found.
- 9.5 There is a pressing need for more PBSA in Manchester as the lack of supply is having adverse consequences on the mainstream housing market and the affordability of Manchester as a place to study.
- 9.6 The redevelopment of the site for student accommodation will help satisfy this city-wide need for student accommodation and more competitively priced PBSA.
- 9.7 PBSA in this location of high demand will offer students a high quality and suitable alternative to shared housing and HMOs in the area, thus helping to draw students out of housing more suitable for non-student residents; a key policy objective and one which would convey social, economic and environmental benefit.
- 9.8 The scheme benefits from explicit University of Manchester support – the University recognises the special characteristics of the proposal. This support, and the reasons given by the University, is highly material to the determination of the application.
- 9.9 The proposal complies with Core Strategy Policy H12, the development plan policy of greatest relevance. Each criterion is satisfied, and given the University of Manchester's support, the policy points to the proposal being treated as a priority.
- 9.10 The retention and conversion of the Oakley Villa, provides a sustainable future for and ensures the ongoing upkeep and management of a non-designated heritage asset. The proposed development improves the character and appearance of the site and the setting of this non-designated heritage asset.
- 9.11 Extensive technical assessment has shown that the proposed development would satisfy the requirements of policies relating to heritage, trees, highways, flood risk, amenity, air pollution and biodiversity. Any harms will be minimised and mitigated. Benefits will arise.

- 9.12 The proposed development complies with all relevant policies of the development plan and would assist in delivering the City Council's regeneration, recovery and economic objectives as well as supporting the City Council and Universities' aims of being a destination of choice for higher education.
- 9.13 A range of economic, social and environmental benefits will arise, and lend further significant weight in favour of the development. These include:
- Economic benefits, including supporting the economic growth of the city by sustaining its Higher Education offer; encouraging activity and economic investment; direct and indirect job creation; increasing spending within the local area; and encouraging footfall and further investment.
 - Social benefits, including the heritage benefits of the proposals, enhanced student wellbeing, and supporting the objective of converting student HMOs to mainstream housing.
 - Environmental benefits, including making efficient use of previously developed land; inclusion of an extensive landscaping scheme with native planting; the delivery of energy efficient buildings and essentially a car-free development that is highly accessible by public transport, reducing contributions to climate change.
- 9.14 It has also been demonstrated that the proposals are entirely consistent with the NPPF, a material consideration to be afforded significant weight. The proposals represent sustainable development, for which a presumption in favour applies.
- 9.15 Whilst a number of other material considerations have been identified, these principally add further weight to the grant of planning permission.
- 9.16 There is deviation from the City Council's recently endorsed policy ideas on PBSA in respect of the location of the proposals; but this needs to be weighed against the compliance with Policy H12, wider development plan policy compliance, and other material considerations that weigh in favour (e.g. the NPPF). The rationale for the focus on the Oxford Road corridor is underpinned by encouraging sustainable travel and supporting student wellbeing. The location of the site and both the proposed design and approach to management can achieve those objectives to the same degree; the UoM acknowledge this in lending their support.
- 9.17 The planning balance clearly falls in favour of the grant of planning permission: a decision to grant planning permission would be in accordance with the development plan, and material considerations do not weigh sufficiently against this, rather as a whole they convey considerable further support.
- 9.18 Planning permission should, therefore, be granted without delay, in accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Paragraph 11 of the NPPF.

Appendix 1: Application Submission Documents

Cover Letter

Application Forms and Certificates

Design and Access Statement prepared by Tim groom Architects

Architectural Plans and drawings

- Existing Building Outline with Tree Survey (ref: 1093-TGA-XX-ZZ-DR-A-02001 Rev B)
- Site Red Line (ref: 1093-TGA-XX-ZZ-DR-A-02002)
- Site Line Red (ref: 1093-TGA-XX-ZZ-DR-A-02003)
- GA Ground Floor (ref: 1093-TGA-XX-00-DR-A-03000 Rev D)
- GA First Floor (ref: 1093-TGA-XX-01-DR-A-03001 Rev C)
- GA Second Floor (ref: 1093-TGA-XX-02-DR-A-03002 Rev C)
- GA Third Floor (ref: 1093-TGA-XX-03-DR-A-03003 Rev C)
- GA Fourth Floor (ref: 1093-TGA-XX-04-DR-A-03004 Rev C)
- GA Fifth Floor (ref: 1093-TGA-XX-05-DR-A-03005 Rev C)
- GA Sixth Floor (ref: 1093-TGA-XX-06-DR-A-03006 Rev C)
- GA Seventh Floor (ref: 1093-TGA-XX-07-DR-A-03007 Rev C)
- GA Eighth Floor (ref: 1093-TGA-XX-08-DR-A-03008 Rev C)
- GA Ninth Floor (ref: 1093-TGA-XX-09-DR-A-03009)
- GA Tenth Floor (ref: 1093-TGA-XX-DR-A-03010)
- GA Eleventh Floor (ref: 1093-TGA-XX-DR-A-03011)
- GA Twelfth Floor (ref: 1093-TGA-XX-DR-A-03012)
- Proposed Elevation A (ref: 1093-TGA-XX-ZZ-DR-A-05001)
- Proposed Elevation B (ref: 1093-TGA-XX-ZZ-DR-A-05002)
- Proposed Elevation C (ref: 1093-TGA-XX-ZZ-DR-A-05003)
- Proposed Elevation D (ref: 1093-TGA-XX-ZZ-DR-A-05004)

- Proposed Elevation E (ref: 1093-TGA-XX-ZZ-DR-A-05005)
- Proposed Elevation G (ref: 1093-TGA-XX-ZZ-DR-A-05007)
- Proposed Elevation H (ref: 1093-TGA-XX-ZZ-DR-A-05008)
- Block A Detailed Elevation A (ref: 1093-TGA-XX-ZZ-DR-A-21100)
- Block A Detailed Elevation B (ref: 1093-TGA-XX-ZZ-DR-A-21101)
- Block A Detailed Elevation C (ref: 1093-TGA-XX-ZZ-DR-A-21102)
- Block A Detailed Elevation D (ref: 1093-TGA-XX-ZZ-DR-A-21103)
- Block B/C Detailed Elevation E (ref: 1093-TGA-XX-ZZ-DR-A-21104)
- Block B/C Typical Bay Study (ref: 1093-TGA-XX-ZZ-DR-A-21105)
- Existing Ground Floor Plan (ref: 1093-TGA-XX-00-DR-A-03100)
- Existing Mezzanine Plan (ref: 1093-TGA-XX-M-DR-A-03101)
- Existing First Floor Plan (ref: 1093-TGA-XX-01-DR-A-03102)
- Existing Basement Plan (ref: 1093-TGA-XX-B-DR-A-03103)
- Ground Floor Demolition Plan (ref: 1093-TGA-XX-00-DR-A-03200)
- Mezzanine Floor Demolition Plan (ref: 1093-TGA-XX-M-DR-A-03201)
- First Floor Demolition Plan (ref: 1093-TGA-XX-01-DR-A-03202)
- Existing Elevation A (ref: 1093-TGA-XX-ZZ-DR-A-05101)
- Existing Elevation B (ref: 1093-TGA-XX-ZZ-DR-A-05102)
- Existing Elevation H (ref: 1093-TGA-XX-ZZ-DR-A-05103)

Planning Statement prepared by Turley

Statement of Community Involvement prepared by Lexington Communications

Manchester Student Demand Study prepared by Knight Frank

Economic Impact Statement prepared by Turley

Commercial Market Assessment prepared by Edwards and Co

Heritage Statement prepared by Stephen Levrant Heritage Architecture

Landscape Proposals

- Landscape Design Development (rev 2) prepared by Layer Studio
- Landscape GA (including topographical information) (ref: 204-LYR-XX-ZZ-DWG-L-1001 Rev 7)
- Softworks (ref: 204-LYR-XX-ZZ-DWG-L-1002 Rev 5)
- Tree Constraints (ref: 204-LYR-XX-ZZ-DWG-L-1003 Rev 1)
- Site Wide Sections (ref: 204-LYR-XX-ZZ-DWG-L-2000 Rev 2)

Transport Statement prepared by Focus Transport Planning

Travel Plan prepared by Focus Transport Planning

Arboricultural Statement prepared by Cheshire Woodlands

Air Quality Assessment prepared by Redmore Environmental

Archaeological Desk Based Assessment prepared by RPS

Ground Investigation Report prepared by Tier Consult

Flood Risk Assessment prepared by Tier Cosult

Ecological Assessment prepared by Bowland Ecology

Noise Impact Assessment prepared by Philip Dunbavin Acoustics Ltd

Daylight and Sunlight Assessment prepared by Consil

Energy Statement prepared by Ensphere

Sustainability Statement prepared by Ensphere

Demolition and Construction Management Plan prepared by Watkin Jones Group

Student Management Plan prepared by Fresh

Broadband Connectivity Assessment prepared by Pager Power

Television and Radio Desk-Based Report prepared by Pager Power

Overheating Study prepared by Quality Engineering Design Limited

Appendix 2: University of Manchester Letter of Support

18 December 2020

Delivered by email

Mr David Taylor
Watkin Jones Group
7-9 Swallow Street
London, W1B 4DE

Dear David

**UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER SUPPORT FOR STUDENT ACCOMMODATION PROPOSALS AT THE
USDAW HEAD OFFICE SITE, WILMSLOW ROAD, FALLOWFIELD**

We write to confirm the University of Manchester's position regarding USDAW/Watkin Jones Group's (WJG) proposed student accommodation development at the above site. I understand that this letter will be submitted with the planning application for the proposals, to be taken in to account by Manchester City Council in determining the application.

The University of Manchester note the City Council's adopted development plan policy position in relation to the preferred location for purpose built student accommodation, as outlined in Policy H12; that being that schemes should be close to University campuses or high frequency public transport routes that pass that area. H12 also notes that priority should be given to proposals that are progressed in partnership with a Higher Education Institution.

We have been working closely with WJG over a number of months in relation to their proposals. You have engaged with us regularly in developing the design, both externally and internally, and we are satisfied that you have taken all comments on board.

The University of Manchester recognise the unique opportunity that this scheme presents, particularly in regards to the following considerations:

- The site's location, both on a highly frequent public transport route that affords easy and quick access to the University's teaching campus, and adjacent to Fallowfield Campus which enables us to provide students with welfare and pastoral care;
- The scheme deals sympathetically with the heritage aspects of the property, retaining a valued Villa that contributes positively to the character of the area and which will make an appealing communal space for the students that occupy the development;

- The development is at a human scale reflective of its local context and includes valuable and high quality amenity and open space;
- The anticipated price point is competitive, will compare well with the University's own accommodation at Unsworth Park, and provide a realistic and attractive alternative to a number of HMOs in the Fallowfield area;
- The scheme will support the City Council's recently confirmed aim to better satisfy demand for purpose built student accommodation by providing a greater diversity of supply. The proposed development is in keeping with our student welfare and mental health considerations and is in a location that we can support.

Overall the proposed scheme is situated in a sustainable, convenient location close to our Fallowfield Campus with excellent public transport links. It will offer students a good environment to learn and live in, benefitting from a high level of accessibility, the broad spectrum of local amenities and close the pastoral support we deliver through the Fallowfield Campus.

I look forward to continuing our discussions on the proposals, hopefully in light of a positive determination of the planning application.

Yours sincerely



Diana Hampson
Director of Estates and Facilities, University of Manchester

Appendix 3: Site Specific Planning History

Application Reference	Date Validated	Proposal	Decision and Date
072235/FO/2004/S1	Thu 24 Jun 2004	Erection of a single storey extension to form filing room and accessible toilet.	Approved 28 July 2004
054381/FO/CENTL1/98	Fri 15 May 1998	Construction of new entrance porch incorporating a lift for disabled access.	Approved 10 July 1998
055757/FO/CENTL1/98	Thu 10 Dec 1998	Extension to existing car park providing 16 extra spaces.	Approved 25 Feb 1999
072235/FO/2004/S1	Thu 24 Jun 2004	Erection of a single storey extension to form filing room and accessible toilet.	Approved Wed July 2004

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