MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

Planning

Growth & Development

Delegated officer report for planning application

Application no.	144969/LO/2026
Date registered valid:	6 February 2026
Proposal:	Listed Building Consent for installation of 1no. louvre, 1no. roof-mounted air conditioning unit and associated internal alterations.
Address:	Rutherford Building, Coupland Street, Manchester, M13 9GP
Ward(s):	Hulme Ward
Applicant:	Mr Stuart Lockwood University of Manchester
Agent (if any):	Miss Alison Berry Arcadis
Case officer:	Michael Pearson Tel: 0161 219 2735 Email: michael.pearson@manchester.gov.uk
Recommendation:	Approve

Date of recommendation: 30/03/2026

Application details

Type of application: Listed Building Consent

Development type: Listed building alteration

Date of site visit:

Standard consultations:
Printed: 12 February 2026 Expired: 5 March 2026

Neighbour notifications
Printed: 12 February 2026 Expired: 5 March 2026

Site notice
Posted: 13 February 2025 Expired: 6 March 2025

Press advert
Published: 17 February 2026 Expired: 10 March 2026

Departure from Development Plan: No

Environmental Statement: Not required

Description of site/building

The application relates to the Grade II listed Rutherford Building. The property dates from the late Victorian period and forms part of the University of Manchester's historic central campus. The property is completed in a neo-gothic style, with a façade of red brick and sandstone, and a roof of red clay tiles. The application property is currently undergoing works to renovate the interior of the building, approved under permissions 138994/LO/2024 and 138993/FO/2024. There is a live planning permission and listed building consent for the installation of an external rooftop gantry, approved under permissions 143735/FO/2025 and 143736/LO/2025.

Listed building: Grade II

Conservation area: Not applicable

Tree Preservation Order: Not applicable

Description of area

The neighbouring area forms the heart of the University of Manchester's campus and lies along the Oxford Road Corridor, an area designated as a space for the growth of Manchester's health, higher education, creative and scientific industries. Lying within the heart of the University of Manchester's Campus, the neighbouring area is characterised by well landscaped pedestrianised paths lined by historic buildings in educational uses (Class F1(a)), including the Grade II listed former department of metallurgy and Manchester Museum Extension, as well as the Grade II* listed Whitworth Hall.

Description of development

The application seeks listed building consent for the installation of 1no air conditioning unit, 1no louvre and internal structural strengthening works.

The proposed air conditioning unit would be situated atop the property's flat roof, set against its rooftop stair access. The unit would have a height of 943mm, 1220mm when including the anti-vibration legs it would sit atop of, a width of 950mm and a depth of 330mm.

The proposed louvre would be installed within one of the property's northern facing gables to assist in airflow. The louvre would be aluminium and have a height of 1200mm and a width of 600mm.

Internal structural strengthening works would see the installation of new steelwork, comprising of new steel plates with anchor bonds. With said works being required to give the rooftop stair access's walls enough strength to support the gantry approved under permissions 143735/FO/2025 and 143736/LO/2025.

Planning History

A high number of applications are on record for the application site, the most relevant of which are shown below:

144968/FO/2026 - Installation of 1no. louvre and 1no. roof-mounted air conditioning unit – Application pending consideration.

143736/LO/2025 - Listed building consent for the installation of rooftop gantry and associated works – Approved October 2025.

143735/FO/2025 - Installation of rooftop gantry and associated works – Approved October 2025.

138994/LO/2024 - Refurbishment of the Rutherford Building including alterations to internal layout, services and finishes, alongside external repair, addition of ventilation grilles and sustainability measures including replacement of window casements and glass, and insertion of roof insulation – Approved May 2024.

138993/FO/2024 - Refurbishment of the Rutherford Building including alterations to internal layout, services and finishes, alongside external repair, addition of ventilation grilles and sustainability measures including replacement of window casements and glass, and insertion of roof insulation – Approved May 2024.

138277/LO/2023 - Listed building consent for repair, part removal and reinstatement of areas of floors and ceilings, and alteration of internal partitions – Approved February 2024.

108895/LO/2015/C1 - LISTED BUILDING CONSENT for Internal alterations to subdivide a first floor office – Approved July 2015.

106421/LO/2014/C1 - LISTED BUILDING CONSENT Internal alterations to include Installation of glazed screen and doors, re- forming an existing opening to create a new reception area, removal and replacement of modern partition – Approved September 2014.

Consultations & Notification Responses

Publicity – A site notice and press notice were issued. Neighbouring properties were notified by letter. No representations were received.

Historic England – No objection.

Policy

The Places for Everyone Plan - Joint Development Plan Document, for nine of the 10 boroughs which make up Greater Manchester adopted on 21st of March 2024:
- Policy JP-Strat1 – Core Growth Area
- Policy JP-Strat2 – City Centre
- Policy JP-P2 – Heritage

The Manchester Core Strategy – Development Plan Document 2012-2027 ("the Core Strategy") was adopted by the City Council on the 11th of July 2012:
- Policy SP1 – Spatial Principles
- Policy CC9 – Design and Heritage
- Policy EN1 – Design Principle and Strategic Characters Areas
- Policy EN3 – Heritage
- Policy DM1 – Development Management

The Unitary Development Plan for Manchester – For the reasons outlined below the following saved UDP Policies are of relevance to this application:
- Policy DC19 – Listed Buildings
- Policy DC26 – Development and Noise

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Chapter 12 – Achieving Well-Designed Places
- Chapter 16 – Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

Draft National Planning Policy Framework (2025)
The government has published a consultation National Planning Policy Framework which is intended to improve housebuilding rates through a clearer, more predictable and faster policy basis for decision and plan making. Whilst this is a draft NPPF for consultation it is considered that the development proposals are in accordance with the general thrust of policy contained within it.

Other Legislative Requirements
Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (LBCA Act) states that in considering whether to grant Listed Building Consent for any works the Local Planning Authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Section 66 of the LBCA Act requires the local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings. This requires more than a simple balancing exercise and considerable importance and weight should be given to the desirability of preserving the setting.

Issues

Impact upon the Heritage Asset

The Rutherford Building, constructed between 1898-1901, is recognised for its architectural, historical, design and interiors, with it being one of the largest physical laboratories in the world at the time of its construction, and featuring an impressive neo-gothic façade. Furthermore, much of the original internal features, including glazed brick, terrazzo flooring and staircases survive. The building is also notable for being home to Ernest Rutherford, who led the Manchester physics laboratories in ground breaking research on the splitting of the atom. At this time, the site is under extensive repair and refurbishment works, as part of these works the property will be modernised, this includes the provision of a new roof access, approved under permissions 143735/FO/2025 and 143736/LO/2025. Since the approval of said applications, it has been found the approved gantry cannot be installed without the wall it was due to be attached being strengthened with additional steelwork.

The introduction of an external air conditioning unit and a louvre for ventilation would lead to some low level less than substantial harm to be encountered, through the introduction of modern infrastructure largely alien to the more historic listed building. Notwithstanding this, said alterations would be reversible, would largely be screened from view and planning condition would control the final finish of the proposed louvre so that it would blend with the wall that it would be set within.

The installation of new steelwork within the property's flat roof access stair core, is also considered would encounter a very low level of less than substantial harm. Whilst it is appreciated the staircase is a non-original addition to the building, the increased presence of steelwork would somewhat detract from its overall appearance of this part of the listed building. Notwithstanding this, planning condition would be utilised to ensue the finish of the metalwork would be a match to that present elsewhere on site.

Heritage Assessment and Conclusion

In line with the above, it is acknowledged that a very low level of less than substantial harm would be caused to the significance of the listed building. Notwithstanding this, it is considered there would be sufficient public benefit generated through its implementation that would outweigh the recognised harm, this being the modernisation of the amenities on site and enabling the provision of safe roof access. Furthermore, the proposed alterations would be reversible ensuring no permanent damage to the listed building. Therefore, subject to appropriate planning condition, the proposal would meet the requirements as set out under Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 in relation to preservation, and accord with Places for Everyone Plan Policies JP-Strat1, JP-Strat2 and JP-P2, Core Strategy Policies SP1, EC2, EC3, CC1, CC9, EN3 and DM1, Saved Unitary Development Plan Policies DC19 and DC26, the National Planning Policy Framework, and the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. On this basis the application is recommended for approval.

Other Legislative Requirements
Equality Act 2010
Section 149 (Public Sector Equality Duty) of the Equality Act 2010 requires due regard to the need to: Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act and; Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The Equality Duty does not impose a legal requirement to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment. Compliance with the Equality Duty involves consciously thinking about the aims of the Equality Duty as part of the process of decision-making.

Human Rights Act 1998 considerations
This application needs to be considered against the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998. Under Article 6, the applicants (and those third parties, including local residents, who have made representations) have a right to a fair hearing and to this end the local planning authority must give full consideration to their comments.

Protocol 1 Article 1, and Article 8 where appropriate, confer(s) a right of respect for a person's home, other land and business assets. In taking account of all material considerations, including Council policy as set out in the Core Strategy and saved polices of the Unitary Development Plan, the Director of Planning, Building Control & Licensing has concluded that some rights conferred by these articles on the applicant(s)/objector(s)/resident(s) and other occupiers and owners of nearby land that might be affected may be interfered with but that that interference is in accordance with the law and justified by being in the public interest and on the basis of the planning merits of the development proposal. She believes that any restriction on these rights posed by the recommendation given is proportionate to the wider benefits of and that such a decision falls within the margin of discretion afforded to the Council under the Town and Country Planning Acts.

Recommendation: Approve

Article 35 Declaration

Officers have acted positively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against relevant planning policies and all material considerations. The nature of the scheme has not necessitated further discussions with the applicant. On this basis it is decided to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Conditions to be attached to decision for approval

1) The development must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason - Required to be imposed pursuant to Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

2) The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following drawings and documents:

- 0005-RBUM-ARC-XX-ZZ-DR-A-0005 Revision P6: Site Plan
- 10893-WML-XX-03-DR-S-0015 Revision C01: Roof D Stair Enclosure Strengthening Details
- 2464-RBUM-ARC-XX-RL-DR-A-2464: Monodraught (Received 06/02/2026)

o 2464-RBUM-ARC-XX-RL-DR-A-2465: Proposed Roof Plan & Elevation (Received 06/02/2026)
o Design & Access Statement (Prepared by Arcadis; Received 06/02/2026)
o Heritage Impact Assessment (Prepared by Donald Insall Associates)
o Heritage Statement Addendum (Received 06/02/2026)
o PUZ-ZM60VHA2 Mr Slim Power Inverter Outdoor Unit Single Phase R32
o Ventsair Façade Product Specification

All stamped as received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on 16/01/2026, unless specified otherwise.

Reason - To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans. Pursuant to policies SP1 and DM1 of the Core Strategy.

3) Prior to the installation of the louvre hereby approved, as shown on drawing no.2464-RBUM-ARC-XX-RL-DR-A-2464 (Received 06/02/2026), a material sample that shall confirm the louvre is to be colour matched to that of the brick wall it is to be inserted into, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall then proceed in accordance with the approved details which shall be retained and maintained for its lifetime.

Reason - In the interests of preserving and protecting the historic character and appearance of the listed building in accordance with policies CC9 and EN3 of the Core Strategy, saved policy DC19.1 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester and the National Planning Policy Framework.

4) The steelwork to strengthen the stair enclosure hereby approved, as shown on drawing no.10893-WML-XX-03-DR-S-0015 Revision C01 (Received 16/01/2026), shall be finished in RAL 9005.

Reason - In the interests of preserving and protecting the historic character and appearance of the listed building in accordance with policies CC9 and EN3 of the Core Strategy, saved policy DC19.1 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified

Heritage & Urban Design
Historic England (North West)

Pinc College, Manchester Museum, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL
University Of Manchester, Beyer Building, Dover Street, Manchester, M13 9PL
Manchester Museum, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL

Appendix 2 – Planning constraints

Article 4 Direction - City Centre PD Restriction - Class B1(a) To C3
Article 4 Direction - Removal Of PD Rights Change Of Use From Class C3 To Class C4
Coal Authority - Development Low Risk - Name: DEVELOPMENT_LOW_RISK_AREA
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Middle) -
Area Team Boundary - Name: CENTRAL