Planning

Growth & Development

Delegated officer report for planning application

Application no.	144381/FO/2025 and 144382/LO/2025
Date registered valid:	29 October 2025
Proposal:	144381/FO/2025 - Removal of extract to rear window to be replaced with windowpane. 144382/LO/2025 - Listed Building Consent for internal alterations comprising the installation of a passenger lift, the replacement of stud partitions, removal of extract to rear window, and other associated works.
Address:	Unit 5 Barton Arcade, 48 Barton Square, Deansgate, Manchester, M3 2BH
Ward(s):	Deansgate Ward
Applicant:	Sarah Jane Close, The Cat Cafe Manchester Ltd
Agent (if any):	Mark Clifford Paul Butler Associates
Case officer:	Emily Booth Tel: 0161 234 4193 Email: emily.booth@manchester.gov.uk
Recommendation:	144381/FO/2025 Approve, 144382/LO/2025 Approve

Date of recommendation: 22 December 2025

Application details

Type of application: Full Application Consent and Listed Building Consent

Development type: Minor Other and Listed Building Consent

Date of site visit: 27 November 2025

Standard consultations:
144381/FO/2025 - No consultations have been printed and sent.
144382/LO/2025 - Printed: 05 November 2025 Expired: 26 November 2025

Neighbour notifications
144381/FO/2025 - No neighbour notifications have been printed and sent.
144382/LO/2025 - No neighbour notifications have been printed and sent.

Site notice
Posted: 13 November 2025 Expired: 4 December 2025

Press advert
Published: 11 November 2025 Expired: 2 December 2025

Departure from Development Plan: No

Environmental Statement: Not required

Description of site/building

Listed building: Grade II* Listed

Conservation area: St Anns Square Conservation Area 1970

Tree Preservation Order: Not applicable

Description of building

This application relates to an historic shopping arcade named Barton Arcade. As a Grade II* listed building Barton Arcade is in the top 8.5% of buildings listed nationally. It is one of the only remaining Victorian arcades in Manchester and has high architectural integrity and high heritage significance.

It was designed by Corbett, Raby and Sawyer who were local to the Manchester area. It also has high social value, the location of the first meeting of the founders of the Catenian Association in 1908. The Arcade was named after its owner, John Hope Barton Esq, who was the owner of Barton's building (1 and 3 Barton Square), which includes the Arcade. Barton Arcade was the first structure to be built after the widening of Deansgate in 1873, being built in 1871.

The building was damaged during World War 2, in the 'Christmas Blitz' of December 1940. This destroyed the glass dome and parts of the original façade. In the post-war period there have been renovations to the Arcade, including the removal of all historic shopfronts in the 1980s. Despite this, the Arcade retains a great deal of historic features and is characterful with a decorative original cast iron frame and repaired glass domes. It is constructed of cast iron and glazing.

It retains its original use, with the ground floor still being in retail use despite not all of the units being occupied.

The unit subject of this application is Unit 5 of the ground floor fronting Deansgate. The occupation of the unit presents an opportunity to enhance the appearance and contribution of this part of the premises to the asset's overall significance and appreciation. Previous works have caused harm and removed or damaged some existing features. At first floor there is a historic decorative plaster ceiling visible which is damaged in parts and at ground floor the cornicing has been damaged. It shows signs of originally having been part of a larger unit at ground floor.

Unit 5 is currently vacant being last used as a shop selling football shirts It has a glazed south elevation facing inwards to the arcade and exterior glazed ground and first floors facing Deansgate. The interior has previously been altered with partitions, raised floor to ground floor and modern internal staircase. It currently has no disabled access with the raised floor being reached by steps and covering most of the ground floor and that there is no lift access

Description of area

The building has frontages on Deansgate and Barton Square. It is within the St Ann's Square Conservation Area and fronts onto Deansgate, which is a main route through the City Centre. Deansgate includes a mix of historic, Modern and Contemporary Buildings.

Surrounding listed buildings include the Grade II Listed 62 to 66 Deansgate and 18 to 20 St Anns Square.

The building is within the central shopping and business area of the City Centre and surrounding uses include shops, offices, bars, restaurants and entertainment venues.

Description of development

Planning permission is sought to replace the existing WC vent at the rear of the property with glazing, reinstating the appearance of the window. This vent was installed in the centre of a glazing panel within a first-floor window fronting Barton Square.

Listed Building consent is also sought for this and for the following additional works:

- Removal of non-original existing partitions.
- Removal of the non-original raised floor that covers part of the ground floor.
- Installation of new partitions.
- Installation of platform lift within the area between the non-original staircase.
- Installation of new WC fittings and services in the location off the existing non-original WCs.
- Installation of bench seating in front of the glazing along Deansgate at first floor level.
- Installation of new cabling on existing cable trays.
- Redecoration.

The unit would be used as a cat café with cats roaming around the unit and there are works proposed to secure them in certain areas and at certain times.

Consultations & Notification Responses

Publicity –

143985/FO/2025 - The application was advertised in the local press as affecting a listed building and a conservation area, a site notice was displayed on site. No replies were received.

143986/LO/2025 - The application was advertised in the local press as an application for listed building consent, a site notice was displayed on site. No replies were received.

Historic England - Suggest that the LPA seeks the views of their specialist conservation and archaeological advisers and refer to Historic England's published advice.

Issues

Local Policy

Places for Everyone

The Places for Everyone Plan is a Joint Development Plan Document, providing a strategic plan and policies, for nine of the 10 boroughs which make up Greater Manchester.

The following policies are considered relevant to this application.

Policy JP-Strat2 (City Centre)
Policy JP-P1 (Sustainable Places)
Policy JP-P2 (Heritage)

The Adopted Core Strategy for the City of Manchester

Policy EN1 (Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas)
Policy EN3 (Heritage)
Policy CC9 (Design and Heritage)
Policy SP1 (Spatial Principles)
Policy DM1 (Development Management)

The Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester

Saved Policy DC18.1 (Conservation Areas)
Saved Policy DC19.1 (Listed Buildings)

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- Chapter 6 - Building a strong, competitive economy
- Chapter 7 - Ensuring the vitality of town centres
- Chapter 12 - Achieving well-designed places
- Chapter 16 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Draft National Planning Policy Framework - 16th December 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. As set out in the printed report no adverse impacts have been identified through consideration of the application proposals that would outweigh a positive decision in this instance.

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)
Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Issues

Principle of Development

The unit affected by the works has suffered from some poor quality and damaging works and has been vacant for more than two years. Other units within this Grade II* Listed building are currently vacant, especially those within the arcade behind those that front Deansgate. The most significant impact would be from the installation of a new lift in order to meet accessibility requirements and the installation of partitions. The existing lift outside the unit, in the arcade is too narrow to accommodate wheelchairs and, in any case, would require people needing to use the lift to have to leave the unit and use the one lift that serves the whole building.

Given this, the re-use of the retail unit is supported in principle and would result in a relatively modest change.

Layout, Scale and Appearance, including the impact on the affected Heritage Assets

Removal of the extract and reinstatement of glazing of the louvres

The extract that has been installed within the glazing of the first-floor window is an unsightly alteration that would be removed and replaced by glazing restoring the appearance of the window. A condition will require a sample of the glazing. These works are considered to be beneficial.

The lift

The proposed lift would be located within the existing void within the footprint of the non-original staircase which will not require the removal of any fabric from the ceiling. There would be some harm in the basement from the insertion of two supporting steel beams and padstones. These works are required to avoid breaking into basement ceiling. The basement is a utilitarian space of lesser significance, and the small amount harm is considered to be outweighed by providing improved accessibility. These works would not affect the existing cast iron column within the basement.

The operation of the lift would require part removal of the non-original balustrade at first floor level to allow access into the lift car. As it is a modern balustrade to a modern staircase there would be no impact on historic fabric and the harm to heritage significance would be neutral. This non-original staircase is a huge structure that dominates the ground floor, and it is of benefit that the lift can be installed within the footprint of it.

Partitions

The number of partitions would be increased as partitions would be installed on the ground floor of the unit which is currently open plan. These partitions would be installed to provide a lift lobby, storage area and cat play area and to prevent cats from escaping. The impact of these has been minimised to some extent by the provision of glazed areas within the ground and first

floor partitions which would provide more visibility to the interior of Barton Arcade on the south elevation.

It would be preferable to reduce subdivision on the first floor, but it is appreciated that the business would need to keep service areas separate from the areas that cats can access due to their climbing. Internal reconfiguring of service functions on the first floor will result in a minor positive benefit with the alteration of the ceiling to a canted design reducing the on the window affected by exposing the full window.

The visibility of the decorative ceiling would be retained through the inclusion of a glazed portion at the head of the partitions. It would however be preferable if the damaged ceiling decoration could be repaired and a condition will require the assessment of this.

Visibility would be retained through he first floor windows for the most part, but bench seating proposed at the first floor would block views through the lower part of the glazing which would be required to be blocked in some way to meet privacy requirements.

Services

The existing service trays will be re-used for cabling, painted and would be raised in height meaning that they would appear less intrusive; this element is supported as it will improve the appearance of the space.

Conclusion

The proposals would result in some instances of less than substantial harm which would be offset by the accessibility benefits due to installing a lift and levelling the ground floor, the above-described heritage enhancements along with the occupation of the vacant unit within this Grade II* Listed Building.

Conditions will be attached for the submission of full and final details of paint specification and internal fixings and finishes, repairs, glazing details and bench seating details.

Paragraph 215 states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

Overall, the impacts cause a minor amount of less than substantial harm which addresses the requirements of paragraph 212 and 215 of NPPF and the advice within Section 16 of the NPPF in relation to harm. The removal of non-original fabric and replacement with less harmful additions along with the above descried public benefits justifies this harm.

Paragraph 212. Of the NPPF states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

The proposed works would therefore be consistent with sections 66 and 72 of the Planning Act in relation to preservation and enhancement and comply with Policies EN1, SP1, CC9, EN3 and DM1 of the Adopted Core Strategy for the City of Manchester and saved policies DC14, DC18 and DC19 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester and Policies JP-P1, JP-Strat2 and JP-P2 of Greater Manchester's Places for Everyone Guidance in relation to the impact on visual amenity.

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:

144381/FO/2025 – Approve
144382/LO/2025 - Approve

Article 35 Declaration

In assessing the merits of an application officers will seek to work with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner to seeking solutions to problems arising in relation to dealing with the application. In this instance this has included pre-application advice about the information required to be submitted to support the application and the agreement of changes to the proposals.

Condition(s) to be attached to decision for referenced 144381/FO/2025

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 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

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

The location plan referenced 2025-1918-P-110 received by the City Council as local planning authority on 29 October 2025

The drawing referenced 2025-1918-P-103 Rev E received by the City Council as local planning authority on 19 December 2025

The Design, Access and Heritage Statement prepared by Paul Butler Associates received by the City Council as local planning authority on 29 October 2025

Reason - To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans. Pursuant to policies EN1, EN3, SP1 CC9 and DM1 of the Core Strategy, saved policies DC18.1 and DC19.1 of the Unitary Development Plan.

3) Notwithstanding the details submitted with the application, prior to the commencement of development a hand sized sample of the proposed glass and a method statement for its installation and a cross section through the window shall be submitted for approval in writing by the City Council.

The approved glazing shall be used in the repair of the window.

Reason - To ensure that the appearance of the development is acceptable to the City Council as local planning authority in the interests of the visual amenity of the area within which the site is located, as specified in policies SP1 and DM1 of the Core Strategy.

Condition(s) to be attached to decision for referenced 144382/LO/2025:

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:

The location plan referenced 2025-1918-P-110 received by the City Council as local planning authority on 29 October 2025

The drawings referenced:

2025-1918-P-109
731924

Received by the City Council as local planning authority on 29 October 2025

2025-1918-P-105 Rev A
2025-1918-P-107 Rev A
2025-1918-P-108 Rev A

Received by the City Council as local planning authority on 17 December 2025

2025-1918-P-103 Rev E

Received by the City Council as local planning authority on 19 December 2025

The Design, Access and Heritage Statement prepared by Paul Butler Associates received by the City Council as local planning authority on 29 October 2025

The Platform Lift Company specification sheets received by the City Council as local planning authority on 29 October 2025

Reason - To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans. Pursuant to policies EN1, EN3, SP1 CC9 and DM1 of the Core Strategy, saved policies DC18.1 and DC19.1 of the Unitary Development Plan.

3) Full and final details of the detailed design of glazed panels to be installed within the ground floor glazing shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the City Council as local planning authority prior to the installation of any partitions. The partitions shall then be installed only in accordance with the approved details prior to the completion of the development hereby approved.

Reason - In the interests of visual amenity and because the proposed works affect a building that is included in the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest so careful attention to building work is required to protect the character and appearance of this building in accordance with policies SP1, CC9, EN1, EN 3 and DM1 of the Adopted Core Strategy for the City of Manchester, the Design and Principle of the Guide to Development in Manchester SPD and saved policies DC19.1 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester.

4) Full and final details of full and final details including drawings at 1:5 scale of the bench seating shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the City Council as local planning authority prior to the installation of the bench seating. The seating shall then be installed only in accordance with the approved details and shall be in place prior to the completion of the development hereby approved.

Reason - In the interests of visual amenity and because the proposed works affect a building that is included in the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest so careful attention to building work is required to protect the character and appearance of this building in accordance with policies SP1, CC9, EN1, EN 3 and DM1 of the Adopted Core Strategy for the City of Manchester, the Design and Principle of the Guide to Development in Manchester SPD and saved policies DC19.1 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester.

5) Full and final details of the repair works, to the existing plaster of the decorative ceilings at the ground and first floor shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the City Council as local planning authority prior to the removal of any plaster at the building. The works to the ceilings shall then be completed only in accordance with the approved details prior to the completion of the development hereby approved.

Reason - In the interests of visual amenity and because the proposed works affect a building that is included in the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest so careful attention to building work is required to protect the character and appearance of this building in accordance with policies SP1, CC9, EN1, EN 3 and DM1 of the Adopted Core Strategy for the City of Manchester, the Design and Principle of the Guide to Development in Manchester SPD and saved policies DC19.1 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester.

6) Full and final details of the wall, ceiling and floor finishes of the ground and first floor shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the City Council as local planning authority prior to the commencement of any redecoration works at the building. The finishes shall then be completed only in accordance with the approved details prior to the completion of the development hereby approved.

Reason - In the interests of visual amenity and because the proposed works affect a building that is included in the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest so careful attention to building work is required to protect the character and appearance of this building in accordance with policies SP1, CC9, EN1, EN 3 and DM1 of the Adopted Core Strategy for the City of Manchester, the Design and Principle of the Guide to Development in Manchester SPD and saved policies DC19.1 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester.

7) Full and final details of the works to the first-floor window shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the City Council as local planning authority prior to the commencement of any redecoration works to windows. The works shall then be completed only in accordance with the approved details prior to the completion of the development hereby approved.

Reason - In the interests of visual amenity and because the proposed works affect a building that is included in the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest so careful attention to building work is required to protect the character and appearance of this building in accordance with policies SP1, CC9, EN1, EN 3 and DM1 of the Adopted Core Strategy for the City of Manchester, the Design and Principle of the Guide to Development in Manchester SPD and saved policies DC19.1 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester.

Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified

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
Conservation Area - St Anns Square Conservation Area 1970
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -
Area Team Boundary - Name: CENTRAL