



MARCH 2026

Planning Statement

Old School House
Thirsk Street, Ardwick, M12 6FW

Iceni Projects Limited on behalf of
The Green Independent School Ltd

March 2026

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ON BEHALF OF THE GREEN
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL
LTD

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Planning Statement
OLD SCHOOL HOUSE

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Icení Projects Limited ('Icení') on behalf of The Green Independent School Ltd ('the Applicant'), in support of a planning application for the proposed change of use of Old School House, Ardwick ('the site'), from photographic studio to independent special school.
- 1.2 The proposed description of development is: **Change of use from former photographic studio (Use Class E) to independent Special Educational Needs (SEN) school (Use Class F1) and associated works (part retrospective).**
- 1.3 The proposal will expand SEN provision in Manchester, for which there is a critical, and growing, need.
- 1.4 The application is submitted on a part retrospective basis as the Applicant has started undertaking preliminary, minor internal alterations to the building in anticipation of the change of use. The new school is proposed to open in September 2026.
- 1.5 The site is 1,080m² in size and no new floorspace is proposed. The proposal therefore falls within the minor development category.
- 1.6 The planning statement sets out the context for the proposed development and assesses its compliance with the adopted development plan for Manchester City Council, the National Planning Policy Framework (2025), and any other material considerations, in accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 1.7 The application is supported by the following technical information and evidence, which was agreed with Manchester City Council through pre-application discussions prior to submission:
- Architectural plans and drawings prepared by Jeff Atkins Architect:
 - Site Location Plan (Ref. P2522 B01 **Rev B**)
 - Existing Site Plan (Ref P2522 D01 **Rev A**)
 - Existing Ground Floor Plan (Ref P2522 D02 **Rev D**)
 - Existing First Floor Plan (Ref P2522 D03 **Rev A**)
 - Existing Mezzanine Floor Plan (Ref P2522 D04 **Rev -**)
 - Proposed Site Plan (Ref. P2522 D14 **Rev -**)

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- Proposed Ground Floor Plan (Ref. P2522 **D06 Rev C**)
 - Proposed First Floor Plan (Ref. P2522 D10 **Rev A**)
 - Proposed Mezzanine Floor Plan (Ref P2522 D11 **Rev -**)
 - Proposed Bin Store (Ref. P2522 D12 **Rev A**)
 - Proposed Bin Collection Route (Ref. P2522 D05 **Rev C**)
- Transport Statement (including Interim Travel Plan) prepared by SK Transport (Ref. 260320/SK225103/TS01(-03))
 - Air Quality Assessment prepared by Haze Environmental (Ref. 155 Old School House)
 - Waste pro-forma prepared by Icen

About the Applicant

- 1.8 The Green School will be a new independent SEN school to be run by Strive Academy. was established by Alec Dean and Paul Riley in 2022. The Academy offers an alternative educational setting to support secondary aged learners and post-16 students who may be looked after,¹ have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), or need a fresh start in an educational setting. Strive offers a tailored approach that blends academic learning with real world skills and emotional support. Programmes are developed in a creative manner to suit the bespoke needs of individual students, to maximise their emotional, social and academic progress.
- 1.9 Manchester has seen an 87% increase in EHCPs between 2019 and 2024, compared to a 73% rise in the North West and a 63% rise nationally. As of 2025, the city maintains 9,213 plans, placing significant pressure on schools.²

¹ A child who has been in the care of their local authority for more than 24 hours, also referred to as children in care.

² [SEND and Inclusion Report 2025](#), p. 5.

2. SITE CONTEXT

Site and surroundings

- 2.1 The site is an approximately 1,080m² rectangular parcel of land which is bounded by streets on all sides; Paddock Street to the north, Thirsk Street (formerly Thomas Street) to the west, Randerson Street to the east and Nivin Street to the south. The entirety of the site is occupied by Old School House, a U-shaped building, and its associated, fully tarmacked courtyard.
- 2.2 Vehicular access to the site is via an existing crossing from Thirsk Street which leads directly to the gated courtyard. Pedestrian access is through a main door, also fronting Thirsk Street, or from within the courtyard (level access).



Figure 1 - The subject site

- 2.3 Constructed in 1870 (according to the foundation stone), the building was originally St Thomas' School. It is a brick and stone building in the Gothic style, extending to two storeys (ground and first floor), plus basement. Windows on the lower floor were boarded over to support the former photography studio use, with some featuring security grilles. Currently, the building is vacant.
- 2.4 The total floor area for the building is 1,367.9 sq. metres, with a schedule provided in **Error! Reference source not found.** below.

Table 1 - Floorspace

Floor	Area (sqm)
Ground	684.4
Level 1	640.5
Mezzanine	40.0
Total	1,367.9



Figure 2 - View of the front elevations and courtyard from Thirsk Street (September 2025)

- 2.5 The wider locality is of mixed character. To the north, off Paddock Street, are a row of terraced residential dwellings and further north is the A635 ring road. Directly to the east is the St Thomas Parish Hall, beyond which are more terraced residential dwellings. To the south and west are mainly commercial and industrial buildings, as well as St Thomas' Church, a Grade II listed building and Ardwick Green Park.

Site and planning history

- 2.6 St Thomas' School was built in connection with St Thomas' Church, Ardwick, and in the Victorian era first accommodated 300 infants and 250 boys.³ Originally two separate buildings (along the northern and southern boundaries of the site), a two-storey link building was constructed at some point prior to 1973 according to historic maps.
- 2.7 Figure 3 shows the layout of the school (two separate buildings) circa 1914. Figure 4 shows the link building was added in the mid-20th Century. The two maps also illustrate the significant change to the surrounding context of Old School House that took place between 1914 and mid-Century, with the redevelopment of much of the terraced housing in the local streets to provide lower density dwellings and industrial uses.

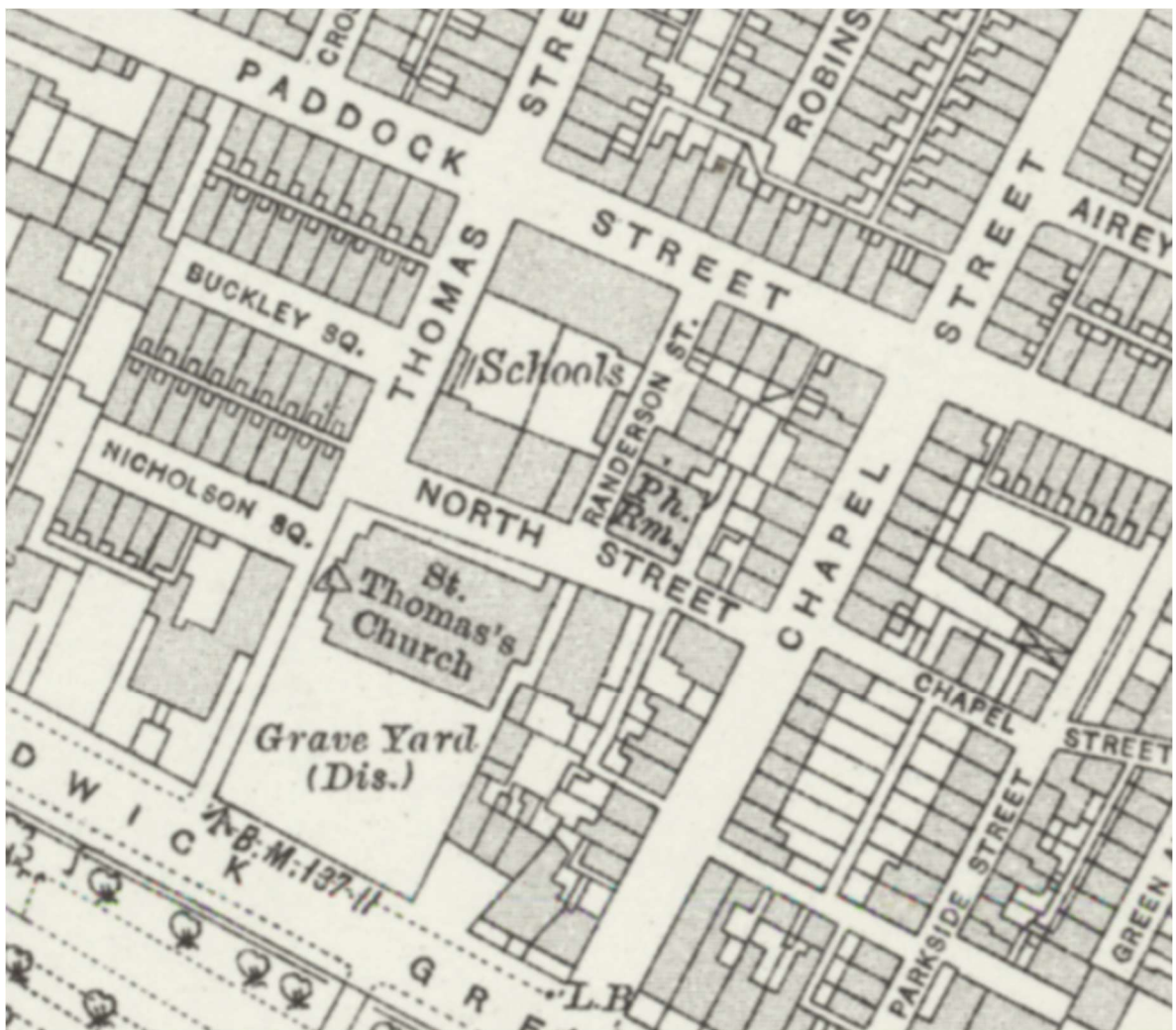


Figure 3 - OS 25 Inch map, 1892-1914 (Source: National Library of Scotland)

³ Source: Architects of Greater Manchester 1800-1940, see <https://manchestervictorianarchitects.org.uk/buildings/st-thomass-schools-paddock-street-ardwick>.

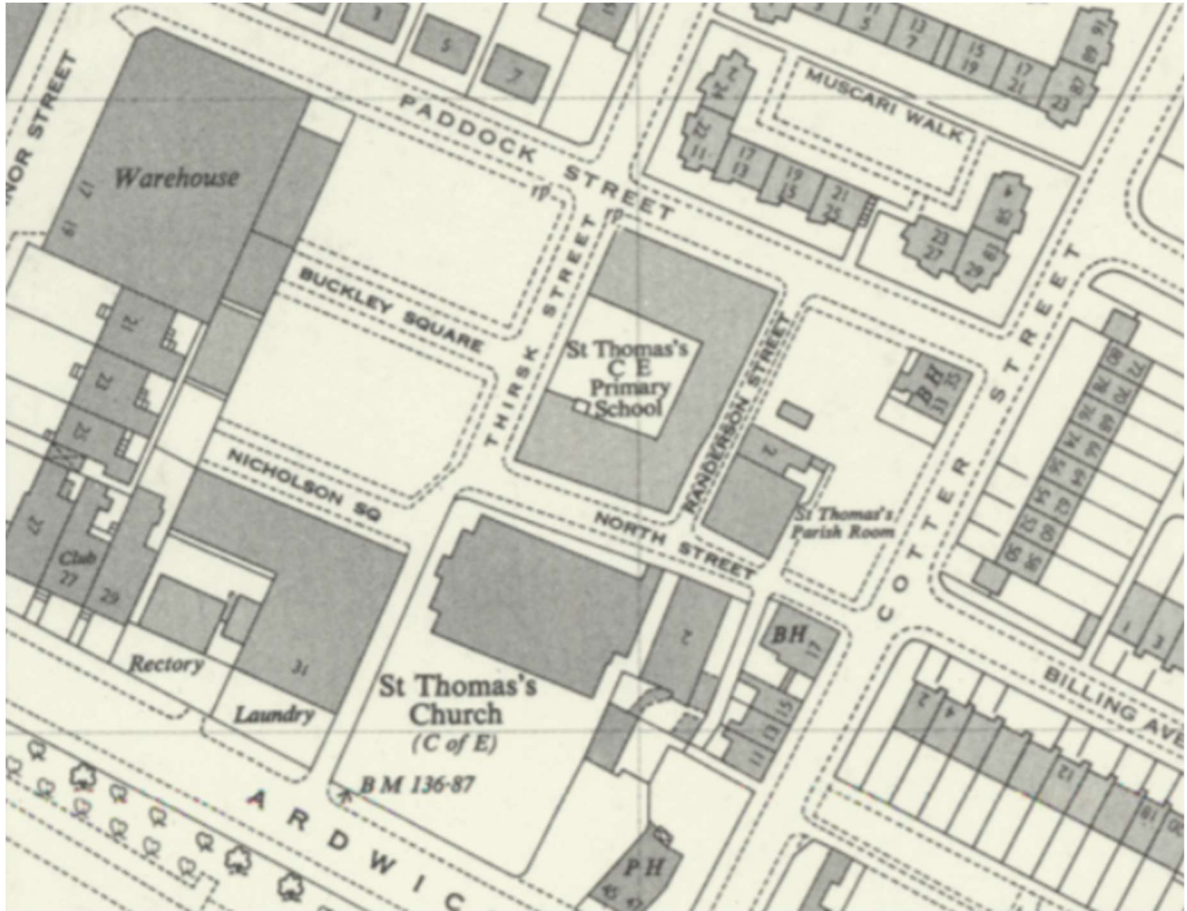


Figure 4 - OS 1:2,500 C ed. map, 1954-1973 (Source: National Library of Scotland)

Change to light industrial use

2.8 Old School House is understood to have been in use as a school from 1870 until 1981, when it was changed to light industrial use, to accommodate a photographic studio. This use was previously classified as B1(c) ('any industrial process that can be carried out in any residential area without causing detriment to the amenity of the area'), which now falls within Class E. Therefore, loss of employment use is not relevant to this application.

2.9 Table 2 provides a summary of the site planning history, which is limited. There is no recorded planning history after 1988.

Table 2 - Planning history

Reference	Proposal	Decision	Decision date
F14436	Change of use from a school to a light industrial building	Approved	4 February 1981
026131	Single storey extension to provide additional storage	Approved	3 March 1986
031495	Single storey extension to existing photographic studio	Approved	2 June 1988

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- 2.10 It is unknown when the photographic studio use ceased, however, it is understood to have been vacant for at least 12 months, and potentially up to two years.

Relevant designations

- 2.11 The site is located within Central Manchester, which is an 'Inner Area' regeneration area defined in the Core Strategy. Inner Areas are outside the Regional Centre and are described as including some of the most deprived and under-populated neighbourhoods in the City of Manchester.⁴ The Core Strategy seeks to direct the majority of new residential development to the Inner Areas.
- 2.12 Old School House is not statutorily or locally listed. The former Church of St Thomas, located to the south, was Grade II listed in 1974 (list entry no. 1197828).
- 2.13 The site is located within Flood Zone 1 and within a Critical Drainage Area.

⁴ Manchester City Council Core Strategy 2012, Policy SP 1, paragraph 6.6, p.33.

3. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Change of use

- 3.1 The application is for change of use of the existing building from photographic studio (Class E) to independent Special Educational Needs (SEN) school (Class F1) and associated works (part retrospective).
- 3.2 This change of use can be accommodated mostly within the site as existing, with a small number of minor internal and external alterations proposed. These are the “associated works” referenced in the application description. The operational and physical details are provided in this section.

Operational details

- 3.3 Section 1.8 and 1.9 of this statement provides a general overview of the applicant and the educational offer they provide. Specific operational details for the Ardwick site (The Green School) are as follows.

Subjects taught

- 3.4 The Green School will teach the following subjects:

- Maths
- English
- Science (Human Biology)
- Personal Social Health Education
- Employability
- Careers
- Art
- ICT

- 3.5 All subjects will be taught via in-person learning.

Times and dates

- 3.6 The school will operate between 08:00 to 16:00, Monday to Friday. It will be open 195 days per annum, aligned with the school term period of Manchester City Council.

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- 3.7 Parent teacher conferences will take place virtually or during the school's opening hours, therefore, after-hours access is not required as part of the operational model.

Staff and security

- 3.8 It is anticipated that the number of Full Time Equivalent ('FTE') staff will be 15. This is across teaching and administration.
- 3.9 Access to the school will be through a tag-based system which has facial recognition capabilities which can be reviewed by reception staff. The existing CCTV system present on the site will be utilised and upgraded. Students will be monitored by staff throughout the day via classes and during recreation times.
- 3.10 The site will have specific Health and Safety, Safeguarding and Child Protection and Data Protection policies in place.

Students and classes

- 3.11 40 students will be the registered capacity for the proposed school, however, it will likely only accommodate 18- 20 at any one time due to flexible and bespoke learning plans. The age range of the students will be within secondary education age and post-16. There will only be up to five students per class, and a maximum of four classes running simultaneously on-site.
- 3.12 None of subjects included within the School's curriculum is anticipated to give rise to any abnormal noise, odour or activity levels throughout the school day.

Recreation and amenity

- 3.13 Outdoor recreation is provided in the existing courtyard at the western side of the site. The courtyard is approximately 285m² with the usable area is about 276m² owing to the bin store proposed in this area (see the 'Physical alterations' section of this statement). Outdoor planters and planter boxes on the railings will be provided for some greenery.
- 3.14 As with drop-off and pick-up periods, staff members will be required to be present during recreation periods both inside and outside to manage noise and behaviour.
- 3.15 There are internal lunch seating areas and a kitchen noted on the proposed plans. The kitchen will be a basic facility with a fridge, sink and microwave. It is expected students will bring their own lunch or be supplied with pre-made lunch; there are no plans to have any on-site cooking facilities.

Servicing and waste

- 3.16 A Service & Waste Management Plan is provided in the Transport Statement (see paragraphs 3.24 to 3.29). The application is also accompanied by Manchester City Council's Waste Proforma.
- 3.17 A new bin store is proposed within the courtyard, to accommodate three 1,100L Eurobins, two of which will be for recyclable waste. The bin store will be ventilated and bins will be cleaned periodically by the waste contractor.
- 3.18 Collection will be from Paddock Street, as allowed within the existing TRO. Refuse vehicles will wait on Paddock Street and operatives will collect the bins from the courtyard, returning them when empty. This is in line with the existing/previous arrangement at the site.
- 3.19 Collections will be timed to occur around 10am on collection days, and in any case, outside of student arrival/departure periods. Refuse collection will continue to be undertaken by private contract, which has already been arranged by the applicant.
- 3.20 Internally, separate waste and recycling bins will be provided in every room. Classrooms will have 30L bins and communal areas will have 50L bins. The bin sizes are deliberately small as the bins will be emptied daily.
- 3.21 Please refer to the enclosed Transport Statement and Waste Proforma for full details.

Physical alterations

Internal alterations

- 3.22 As detailed on the supplied floor plans, all internal rooms will be repurposed for the proposed use. Rooms include classrooms/multi-purpose teaching spaces, indoor communal spaces, a lunch seating area, offices for staff and toilets.
- 3.23 Internal works will be predominantly cosmetic to ensure a safe and welcoming environment for students.
- 3.24 At the south western corner of the ground floor level, one of the existing WCs will be converted into an accessible toilet, with medical room opposite. Level access into the ground floor of the building is already available.
- 3.25 As previously mentioned, an existing CCTV is present throughout the building. This will be utilised as existing, however, the cameras will be replaced with newer models.

External alterations

- 3.26 At present, various windows are boarded up or have grilles in place. Boards, previously used to block out daylight for the photographic studio use, will be removed to create a more welcoming environment. Existing grilles (as shown in Figure 5) will be retained for security reasons.
- 3.27 The removal of existing boards is not considered to comprise development, as these are temporary installations on the windows that can be removed easily. This element of work is therefore 'de minimis' and does not require planning permission. This approach was agreed with the Council prior to submission.
- 3.28 Existing external CCTV cameras will be replaced with newer models. As the cameras are already in situ, this element of work is also considered to be 'de minimis' and therefore does not comprise development requiring planning permission. As such, separate elevational drawings have not been prepared for the removal of window boards or replacement CCTV cameras.



Figure 5 – Existing security grilles

Transport and access

Student travel and drop-off

- 3.29 Based on the applicant's experience at their other facilities, students aged 14-16 will travel by taxi, with students over 16 travelling by public transport, walking and cycling.
- 3.30 Students will receive travel training as part of their induction, which means the applicant has some control over the access arrangements and modes for students at the site. It is estimated that eight student taxis will be generated by the proposed development. Drop-off and collection will be at Paddock Street, which is permitted within the existing TRO.
- 3.31 Student arrival and departure times will be staggered to minimise the number of vehicles generated at any one time. Staff members will be required to be on hand to greet students upon arrival and accompany them into the building.
- 3.32 From Thirsk Street, staff and students can enter the building directly via an entrance at the north west corner of the building. This leads to an entrance hall and then into one of the main classrooms. There is also direct access to the courtyard via a gate. The courtyard access links to several components of the building, such as the communal and lunch spaces to the eastern rear.
- 3.33 The following works to improve access to the site, as discussed and agreed with the Council's Highways team before submission, will be delivered by Section 278 Agreement:
- Reinstatement of redundant vehicle access point on Thirsk Street to continuous footway.
 - Provision of tactile paving and dropped kerbs at Thirsk Street/Paddock Street and Paddock Street/Randerson Street. These kerbs are located on the pedestrian route that will be promoted for use by staff and students, which provides a connection to Cotter Street. This route has good width footways, is well lit and overlooked. It also benefits from recent improvement works on Cotter Street.
 - Modification to TRO to provide a double yellow line on Thirsk Street and Nivin Street frontage. This will remove parking from the frontage and enable access to the fire escape from Nivin Street.
- 3.34 The school is required to open in September 2026. Owing to the current timescales for progressing Section 278 agreements and TRO modifications in Manchester, works will not be in place when the school opens. As discussed at the pre-application stage, a temporary strategy is proposed whereby students who walk or use public transport will be required to be accompanied by a parent/carers during this period, and school staff will be on Paddock Street during arrival/departure periods to greet them.

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- 3.35 This temporary strategy will be reviewed periodically to ensure that it is fit for purpose until the Section 278 works are in place and will be managed via the Travel Plan (an Interim Travel Plan is set out in the Transport Statement at Appendix D).

Staff parking

- 3.36 The site is proposed to be car-free to allow the courtyard to be used for recreational purposes. Existing parking is informal and spaces are therefore unmarked. It is estimated that the courtyard previously accommodated approximately nine cars. The existing gate will remain in situ for security purposes.
- 3.37 The applicant will arrange contract car parking for staff who require it at nearby Powerleague, which is located 350 metres from the site. Based on the Transport Statement, the forecast demand is seven spaces, based on car driver mode share data for the local area. Should parking become unavailable at Powerleague in the future, the applicant will organise parking at another nearby location, to meet the needs of staff travelling by car. Alternative car parking locations are available within a short walk, including at Cakebread street (65 spaces), Higher Ardwick (120 spaces) and Baring Street (55 spaces).
- 3.38 Staff will be required by their employment contract to use the parking space arranged for them and not to park on the streets surrounding the site. A Car Parking Management Plan will be adopted, which will set out staff parking arrangements and allow the requirements to be monitored and managed. As part of this process, the applicant will review staff parking requirements annually to ensure that sufficient spaces are provided for staff. A framework for this document is included in the Interim Travel Plan attached to the Transport Statement at Appendix D.

Cycle parking

- 3.39 Cycle parking will be provided internally within the ground floor. This will provide space for nine bicycles in accordance with the adopted minimum standards.

4. PRE APPLICATION ENGAGEMENT

Manchester City Council Planning Department

- 4.1 A pre-application enquiry was issued on 8th October 2025, with a reply received on 14th October 2025. The pre-application response confirmed that this proposed change of use was the correct application procedure and that the educational use and external physical alterations were considered acceptable in principle.
- 4.2 The response also highlighted transport and parking as an area of concern due to the congested nature of the location, specifically, how staff parking and pupil drop-off and pick-up arrangements would be managed. The Council also raised concerns about the potential off-site parking for staff if this is to be located on land outside the applicant's control, owing to uncertainty about its long-term availability and how this would be secured. The response stated, *"any future application would need to robustly demonstrate that the impact on the highway network could be managed and sustained in this location in order to be supported"*.
- 4.3 The proposed list of submission documents was agreed:
- Application forms and certificates
 - Site Location Plan
 - Existing and proposed site plan
 - Existing and proposed floor plans
 - Existing and proposed elevations (only where changes are proposed)
 - Proposed bin store and collection route
 - Planning Statement, including commentary on why level access cannot be provided throughout the building (Policies CC10 and DM1) and details required for education facilities (Policies SP1 and EC1), and how crime/safety is considered (Policy DM1).
 - Air Quality Management Strategy (Policy EN16)
 - Transport Technical Note / Statement
 - Waste Strategy and Proforma
- 4.4 It was specifically agreed that other supporting documentation is not required for an application:

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- Ecology and BNG: there are no changes proposed that would have ecological impact, therefore meeting the BNG exception of a development below the threshold.
 - Flood risk and drainage/SuDS: the site size is below the threshold for a Flood Risk Assessment within a Critical Drainage Area.
 - Environmental Standards Statement (Policies EN4 and EN6): not proposed as this is an existing building and not a retrofit project.
 - Crime Impact Statement: not proposed as the development is minor. Crime and safety to be addressed in the Planning Statement.

Follow up with Manchester City Council Highways Department

4.5 Owing to the initial pre-application response from the planning team raising concerns about transport matters, further detailed pre-application discussions took place between SK Transport and the Local Highway Authority over January and February 2026. In summary, it was agreed as follows:

- The applicant would undertake highways works as shown on a draft general arrangement drawing prepared by SK Transport, which will include reinstatement of the vehicle access on Thirsk Street to continuous footway, the provision of dropped kerbs/tactile paving at the Thirsk Street/Paddock Street junction, and a new TRO to prevent parking in front of the site on Thirsk Street.
- Condition of footways on Thirsk and Paddock Street were discussed. The applicant considered that upgrade works unnecessary given the current condition of the footway and any works would not be reasonably related to the development. Photographs are provided to evidence this position in the submitted Transport Statement.
- The protracted timescales for TROs and S278 works was discussed in the context of the proposed opening date of September 2026. A pragmatic approach, by which students would be accompanied by parents/carers was agreed in principle, through a temporary pedestrian management plan. This would demonstrate how safe access to and around the site would be managed prior to highways works taking place (given that some students would walk independently).
- A Framework Travel Plan and Service Management Plan would be included within an application. Both are included within the submitted Transport Statement.
- Further details on student mode share, rationale for parking numbers and a parking management strategy would be included within an application, along with the rationale for the staff parking numbers. Although currently based on Census commuter mode share, the parking management

strategy will include a commitment to make sure sufficient parking is hired based on actual staff requirements at the site.

- 4.6 The submitted Transport Statement takes into account all feedback from the Council. A draft Travel Plan is provided within the Transport Statement, along with a Service & Waste Management Plan.

5. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Development Plan

5.1 Applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The adopted development plan for Manchester City Council comprises:

- Places for Everyone (PfE) Joint Development Plan 2024 (Adopted 2024)
- Core Strategy 2012-2027 (Adopted 2012; updated 2014; addendum 2024)
- Extant Unitary Development Policies (Adopted 1995; saved 2012)
- Interactive Proposals Map (Adopted 2012)
- Greater Manchester Joint Waste Development Plan Document (Adopted 2012)
- Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Plan (Adopted 2013)

5.2 Neither the Greater Manchester Joint Waste Development Plan or the Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Plan are considered relevant to the proposal and so are not considered further in this statement

Material considerations

5.3 The following documents are material to the determination of this application:

- National Planning Policy Framework (Adopted 2024)
- National Planning Guidance (Adopted 2024)
- Guide to Development in Manchester Supplementary Planning Document (Adopted 2007)
- Ardwick Green - Neighbourhood Development Framework (Endorsed 2021) and Extension (2021)
- Manchester SEN and Alternative Provision (AP) Inclusion Plan (Published 2025)
- Our Manchester Strategy 2025-2035 (Published 2025)

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- Manchester Inclusion Strategy 2022-2025 (Published 2022)
 - GD 04: Waste Storage and Collection Guidance for New Developments Manchester City Council; Version 7.00 (Published 2024)
 - Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan (live strategy)

6. PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

- 6.1 As detailed in Section 2 of this Planning Statement, the site was constructed as a school in the late 1800s and operated as such for over 100 years. Following the cessation of the photography studio, the intention of this application is to bring the building back into use as a school focused on SEN provision to respond to contemporary needs.
- 6.2 There is no change of use application on record (see Table 2.2), however, as the site was used as a photography studio since at least 1988, the existing (previous) use class is taken to be Class E - commercial, business and service. Under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, a change to Class F1 - learning and non-residential institutions from Class E is permitted development where the learning institution created is state-funded (Schedule 2, Class 3, Part T).
- 6.3 In this case, the school does not benefit from permitted development rights due to nuances in the funding model. However, the existence of the provision within Schedule 2, Class 3, Part T suggests the principle of a Class E use changing to Class F1 can be acceptable. Furthermore, the provision of schools, including those that accommodate SEN, is supported by the development plan and material considerations.
- 6.4 Places for Everyone Policy JP-P5 seeks to deliver significant enhancements in education via the provision of new and improved accessible facilities like schools. This aligns with the Core Strategy, which identifies improving access to employment and education being one of the city's key challenges. Chapter 8 of the NPPF seeks to promote healthy and safe communities, which includes the need of a sufficient choice of early years, school and post-16 school places. It directs local authorities to take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to widen the choice in education.
- 6.5 Manchester City Council has also produced several other documents which cover the educational requirements of the city. One of the core priorities of the Our Manchester Strategy 2025-2035 is to continue to provide excellent and inclusive education facilities. This is also reflected in the Manchester Inclusive Strategy 2022-2025. The latest available Manchester SEN and Alternative Provision (AP) Inclusion Plan (2025) identifies that, as of January 2025, 15% of pupils in Manchester schools were at SEN Support level and 7.1% had an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Consequently, there is significant pressure on current services and budgets across the city.
- 6.6 There is a clear and ongoing need for SEN schools, and so the proposed development should be acceptable in principle, noting the additional cultural benefit of reinstating a historic use, which is capable of operating a modern educational format. Site-specific development considerations are addressed in Section 7 of this statement.

7. DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT MATTERS

- 7.1 Section 4.4 of this Planning Statement confirms which development management matters were excluded from the scope of the application during pre-application discussions. As a result, they are not considered further in this section.

Transport and access

- 7.2 Core Strategy Policy T 1 outlines that the Council will support proposals that encourage modal shift away from car travel to public transport, cycling and walking. Policy T 2 states that development outside of the City Centre should provide appropriate car parking and have regard for disabled and cycle parking (in line with Appendix B of the Core Strategy). Places for Everyone Policy JP-C1 aligns with these Core Strategy directives, encouraging development which meets the needs of all people and those modes which make most efficient and sustainable use of limited road space.
- 7.3 Chapter 9 of the NPPF also states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe.
- 7.4 Appendix B of the Core Strategy (parking standards) provides the maximum spaces for car parking and the minimum standards for disabled, bicycle and motorcycle parking. It still refers to the now-revoked Use Class D1 – Non-residential institutions, but it is taken that the standards would still apply to Class F1 as applicable.
- 7.5 For the “Higher and Further Education” category, Appendix B outlines that one car parking space per two staff members should be provided, and one cycle space per five staff and three students. For disabled parking, it will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Based on the projected staff and student numbers for this proposal outlined in Section 3 of this statement, the proposal would require a maximum of seven car parking spaces and a minimum of nine cycle spaces.
- 7.6 As outlined in Section 2 and 3 of this statement, there exists a vehicular crossing from Thirsk Street into the site’s courtyard. It is not intended this is utilised for the proposed development because the entirety of the courtyard will be used for outdoor recreation space for the students. Therefore, there is no vehicular access to the proposal and, in turn, no car parking.
- 7.7 Based on pre-application feedback, a Transport Statement has been produced to review the suitability of the site in terms of access and parking.

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- 7.8 It has been established that, for students under the age of 16, the applicant will be arranging private taxis for drop off and pick-up. These taxis will drop off and collect students from Paddock Street, which possesses an existing Traffic Regulation Order for single yellow lines with no loading restrictions, enabling this to occur.
- 7.9 For students over 16, it is expected that they utilise public transport to get to the site, will walk, or use other modes of transport like bicycles. The nearest bus stop is adjacent to Ardwick Green Park, approximately 320m from the site. This stop is used by the following services between Manchester City and: No. 192 (Hazel Grove), 201 (Hattersley), 202 (Hyde), 203 (Stockport) and 205 (Dane Bank). This provides good direct coverage over south west Manchester and onward connections to other parts of Manchester via the City Centre. The Transport Statement confirms that a Greater Manchester Accessibility Level calculation has been done for the site, which yielded a result of “8 - exceptional level of accessibility”.
- 7.10 For students walking or cycling, the area around the site is posted at a 20mph speed limit, meaning the area is a low-speed environment which is better for general safety.
- 7.11 In terms of parking, a bicycle store is proposed interior to the building. This accommodates parking for up to nine bicycles and so meets the minimum requirement in the Core Strategy Appendix B.
- 7.12 For vehicular parking, no provision is provided on-site, and it is noted that the requirement of Core Strategy Appendix B for car parking is a maximum, not a minimum. Nevertheless, it is recognised that some level of vehicular parking is required to realistically accommodate staff. The proposed accommodation for this is to utilise up to seven spaces at the existing Powerleague facility, located approximately 350m to the east of the site. The requirement to use the designated parking will be included in staff employment contracts and managed through a Car Park Management Plan.
- 7.13 In the event the Powerleague arrangement cannot be secured or expires, the intent is for the applicant to seek a similar arrangement, or direct staff to use the number of paid public car parks within the vicinity of the site on Cakebread Street, Higher Ardwick and Baring Street. As only around seven spaces are anticipated to be required, this can be reasonably accommodated via private arrangement or through use of public facilities.
- 7.14 All staff will be provided a handbook which will detail all of the public transport routes to the site, as well as any car parking arrangements in place. Staff will be offered the Cycle to Work Scheme and a Season Ticket Loan to encourage travel by sustainable means.
- 7.15 Within the Transport Statement, a review was also done against the baseline trip generation of the current land use, and that of the proposed land use via the Trip Rate Information Computer System (TRICS). Due to the limited use of taxis, encouragement of public transport modes, and off-site

parking, the proposal will only generate 16, staggered vehicle trips in the vicinity of the site, and about 23 trips overall when counting off-site utilisation of Powerleague. This is significantly less than what could be generated by bringing the use back into the extant Class E.

- 7.16 Overall, the proposal is compliant with the Core Strategy and Places for Everyone policies and other material considerations. It provides sufficient on-site bicycle parking and has made provisions for off-site car parking given the restricted nature of the site. The proposal encourages the use of sustainable transport modes and is able to do this by being well connected to the existing public transport network.

Accessibility

- 7.17 As a SEN school, the applicant aims to accommodate a diverse set of needs as far as practicable. Core Strategy Policy T 1, supported by Chapter 3 of the SPD and Chapters 8 and 12 of the NPPF, aims for development proposals to achieve suitable levels of accessibility and inclusivity, so that Manchester is a 'place for everyone'. This is inclusive of provisions to accommodate people who are disabled or of limited mobility.
- 7.18 As detailed, the site was constructed in the late 1800s and has only experienced minor structural changes up to the present day. A full retrofit to meet modern accessibility standards would be unfeasible to viably deliver the proposed use (e.g. installation of a lift). Further, while not listed, the Ardwick Green Neighbourhood Development Framework identifies Old School House as contributing to the character of the area and with its appearance to be retained. In addition, the Applicant is precluded from making significant physical changes to the fabric of the building by the terms of the lease.
- 7.19 Taking this into account, a proportionate approach is proposed via the following interventions and methods:
- Level access will remain from the courtyard into the ground floor, allowing access into the ground floor for those with additional mobility needs.
 - The ground floor WC will be converted to become accessible, and a new medical room will be provided.
 - The full academic curriculum can be provided at ground floor level for any students requiring reasonable adjustments.

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- 7.20 For these reasons, it is considered the proposal aligns with the relevant policies and material considerations, taking into account the context of the site and restrictions inherent in a historic building.

Air quality

- 7.21 Core Strategy Policy EN 16 and Places for Everyone Policy JP-S5 states that the Council will seek to improve the air quality within Manchester. Paragraph 199 of the NPPF states that any decisions for development within Air Quality Management Areas ('AQMA's') should be consistent with the local air quality action plan, and the PPG states mitigation options will need to be contextually specific. In Manchester, this is the Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan and the primary emphasis has been improving investment in and usage of public transport.
- 7.22 Much like most of central Manchester, the site is located within an AQMA, designated due to nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) levels arising from vehicle emissions from use of local roads. The proposal reintroduces sensitive receptors into the area, accordingly an Air Quality Assessment has been produced and submitted as part of this application.
- 7.23 The assessment reviews the baseline conditions and reviews the impact at both the construction and operational phases. During the construction phase, air quality impacts arising from activities such as demolition, construction and transport relative to the sensitivity of the surrounding area is considered low to negligible, as there are no construction activities associated with the change of use that are likely to generate dust. During the operational phase, there is anticipated to be no material increase in vehicle movements on the local road network, resulting in negligible impacts.
- 7.24 Due to the nature of the works required to accommodate the proposed use, which are predominantly cosmetic, no air quality mitigation measures are considered necessary for this proposal, albeit the Air Quality Assessment sets out recommendations for air quality protection measures as standard.
- 7.25 The Air Quality Assessment provides analysis of future occupant exposure to exceedances of the annual mean NO₂ and PM₁₀ objectives. The assessment concludes that the model concentrations of particulate matter and nitrogen oxide concentrations remain below the relevant thresholds. In any case, good practice measures are recommended to support wider air quality and sustainability objectives and to maximise benefits for future occupiers, including:
- Encouraging sustainable transport.
 - Using low emission heating technologies.
 - Integrating green infrastructure into the site via planters.

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- 7.26 Based on the findings of the Air Quality Assessment, impact to air quality is not considered to be a constraint to planning permission. The proposal aligns with Core Strategy Policy EN 16 and the relevant material considerations.

Waste and servicing

- 7.27 Core Strategy Policy DM 1, EN 19 and Chapter 4 of the Guide to Development in Manchester SPD encourage good waste management practices which have regard to the waste hierarchy. The Waste Storage and Collection Guidance for New Developments supporting document does not provide any specific guidance for schools but outlines that development proposals should detail the estimated waste to be produced and collection arrangements.
- 7.28 The waste generation and capacity requirements have been based on those of the other schools run by the Applicant. It is proposed to provide:
- 1 x 1100L General Waste (external bin store)
 - 2 x 1100L Mixed Recycling (external bin store)
 - 2 x 240L bins for food and glass (internal bin store)
- 7.29 The 1,100L bins will be kept in a secure, enclosed bin storage area located at the western side of the courtyard. The bin store's location is shown on the submitted plans and measures 4.1m by 2.1m.
- 7.30 Waste will be managed by a private contractor, with collections occurring fortnightly. On collection days, operatives will wheel the bins to the corner of Thirsk Street and Paddock Street so that bins do not obstruct access for students and parents during the drop-off periods. Bins will then be returned to the courtyard at the same time. The bin collection route is shown on the enclosed Bin Collection Route plan.
- 7.31 Internally, all rooms will have bins with separate waste and recycling. Classrooms will have 30L bins and communal areas will have 50L bins. The caretaker will empty bins daily and place rubbish and recyclable materials in the appropriate external bin.
- 7.32 These details are also provided in the Waste Proforma submitted with this application, alongside a Waste Management Plan (see the Service & Waste Management Plan at paragraphs 3.24 to 3.29 of the Transport Statement).

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- 7.33 Waste generation is modest, recycling provision has been included, along with a practicable plan for collection. For these reasons, the proposal complies with the relevant policies and material considerations.

Safety and security

- 7.34 All development should have regard to ensuring community safety and crime prevention, as per Policy DM 1 and EC 1 of the Core Strategy. The Guide to Development in Manchester SPD also encourages developers to provide detail on how safe environments can be created. All of these local directives align with Paragraph 96(b) of the NPPF, where planning decisions should aim to create safe and accessible places so that crime, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion.
- 7.35 The site already has an existing CCTV system in place and this is intended to be utilised and upgraded with more up-to-date specifications. The submitted plans show the locations of the CCTV cameras which provide good coverage throughout the school. Furthermore, access to the school itself will be managed via combination of fob keys with facial recognition capabilities and staff presence.
- 7.36 Existing external shutters and window grilles will be retained for security reasons.
- 7.37 The applicant also has site-specific Health and Safety, Data Protection and Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies in place which will be applied to the proposal as standard.
- 7.38 This combination of on-site security measures and pre-existing policies will ensure the proposal is compliant with Policy DM 1, EC 1 and the other relevant material considerations.

Good design

- 7.39 Policy SP 1 of the Core Strategy aims for development to create well designed places that enhance or create character, which is also reflected in Chapter 12 of the NPPF and the vision of the Ardwick Green Neighbourhood Development Framework.
- 7.40 The proposal will bring a previously vacant building into productive use. The existing building is inherently attractive, as a building identified as contributing to the character of Ardwick.
- 7.41 Old School House does not require many significant changes in design, however, there are various minor interventions that contribute to the general improvement of the site. These include:

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- Removed the boards from windows, making the site looks more welcoming both internally and externally.
 - Bringing the site back into use, and more of the site itself into use, utilising previously vacant rooms.
 - The presence of staff and children throughout the day in the courtyard and general vicinity improves the degree of passive surveillance. The existing CCTV system is also proposed to be replaced and upgraded.
 - Creation of an accessible WC to generally improve the overall accessibility of the site.
 - Cosmetic improvements internally to create a welcoming and safe environment for learning, and weed removal throughout areas of hardstanding.

7.42 For these reasons it is considered the proposal positively responds to those policies and material considerations.

External amenity impacts

7.43 Core Strategy Policy DM 1 states that all development should have regard to effects on amenity, including privacy, noise, odours, litter, traffic and include consideration of reverse sensitivity effects.

7.44 The school's opening hours are 08:00 to 16:00. Any potential adverse noise impacts on surrounding residential receivers are mitigated by the low overall number of students (estimated up to 20 per day), opening hours coinciding with typical working hours, and that outdoor recreation will always be monitored by staff (who can control noise levels if deemed excessive). Any after-hours meetings, such as staff training or parent meetings, will be indoors and small scale.

7.45 In terms of reverse sensitivity, the application site has the benefit of being in a low intensity environment. Directly adjacent land uses are a mix of residential dwellings, a community centre and commercial spaces which are typically not nuisance-generating land uses.

7.46 Traffic impact has already been assessed; the adverse impact of on-site trip generations would be negligible on the local area.

7.47 As detailed, there are no on-site cooking facilities, and none of the proposed education subjects would give rise any abnormal activities, noise or odours. Staff will be present during pick-up, drop-off and recreational times to manage any litter generation or behavioural issues in the vicinity of the site.

7.48 For these reasons the proposal is not anticipated to give rise to any notable external or reverse sensitivity amenity impacts.

8. PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

Planning balance and conclusion

- 8.1 The proposed development is for the change of use of the existing building from photographic studio (Class E) to independent Special Educational Needs (SEN) school (Class F1) and associated works (part retrospective)
- 8.2 The new school is proposed to open in September 2026.
- 8.3 The application is submitted on a part retrospective basis as the Applicant has started undertaking preliminary, minor internal alterations in anticipation of the change of use, specifically, works to create an accessible WC on the ground floor.
- 8.4 The proposal has been subject to pre-application engagement with Manchester City Council's planning team, and extensive, positive pre-application discussions with the Council's highways team, with transport strategy agreed in principle prior to submission of the application. This includes temporary measures to ensure safe access to the site prior to the TRO amendments being implemented, owing to the expected timescale for this process.
- 8.5 There is a clear and ongoing need for SEN schools in Manchester, with significant current shortages of SEN places. The proposed development should be acceptable in principle, noting the additional cultural benefit of reinstating a historic educational use.
- 8.6 Chapter 7 of this Planning Statement demonstrates that all relevant development management matters have been carefully considered and appropriately addressed, with no identified adverse impacts that would warrant refusal of the application.
- 8.7 The key development management considerations are summarised below:

Transport and access

- 8.8 The site is highly accessible by sustainable modes and benefits from an exceptional level of public transport connectivity.
- 8.9 The proposal promotes modal shift away from private car use through a car-free site layout, provision of on-site cycle parking, and the use of managed off-site staff parking secured through a Car Parking Management Plan.

8.10 Student drop-off and pick-up arrangements have been robustly assessed and agreed in principle with the Local Highway Authority, including temporary measures prior to delivery of Section 278 works and Traffic Regulation Order amendments.

8.11 As such, the proposal would not result in unacceptable impacts on highway safety or network capacity.

Accessibility

8.12 Accessibility considerations have been addressed through a proportionate and pragmatic approach that reflects the constraints of a historic building.

8.13 Level access is provided to the ground floor, alongside sufficient teaching space at ground floor level to accommodate students with additional mobility needs, where reasonable adjustments are required.

8.14 This approach aligns with inclusive design objectives while respecting the building's heritage and physical limitations.

Air Quality

8.15 The submitted Air Quality Assessment confirms that the proposal would not give rise to significant adverse effects during either construction or operation.

8.16 The change of use would not materially increase vehicle movements and future occupiers would not be exposed to pollutant concentrations exceeding relevant thresholds.

8.17 Accordingly, air quality is not a constraint to the development.

Waste and servicing

8.18 Waste and servicing arrangements have been designed to accord with the Council's guidance and the waste hierarchy.

8.19 Adequate on-site storage is proposed, collection arrangements are practical and safely managed.

Safety and security

8.20 Existing safety and security measures at the site, including external shutters and window grills will be retained per the existing condition.

8.21 Existing CCTV cameras will be replaced with upgraded models.

8.22 Access will be controlled and established safeguarding, health and safety and data protection policies will be implemented at the site.

8.23 Together, these measures will ensure a safe environment for students, staff and the surrounding community.

Good design

8.24 From a design perspective, the proposal represents a sensitive and positive reuse of a vacant building that contributes to the character of Ardwick. Limited external alterations, removal of window boarding, and internal improvements will enhance the appearance, functionality and accessibility of the site, while increased activity and passive surveillance will contribute positively to the surrounding area.

External amenity

8.25 The proposal would not give rise to unacceptable impacts in terms of noise, disturbance, traffic, odour or reverse sensitivity. The scale of the school, controlled operating hours, supervised outdoor activity and absence of on-site cooking ensure compatibility with neighbouring uses.

Conclusion

8.26 Overall, this Planning Statement confirms that the proposed development is fully compliant with the relevant development management policies and material considerations, with all potential impacts appropriately mitigated.

8.27 The proposed SEN school will provide an important educational facility for Manchester, for which there is demonstrable and pressing need. The proposal will also bring an existing building back into productive use following a protracted period of vacancy, and bring local benefits including new restrictions on parking in nearby streets and dropped kerbs.

8.28 Accordingly, there are no technical or policy-based reasons to withhold planning permission, and the application should be granted.