

10 March 2026

Planning Department
Manchester City Council
PO Box 532
Town Hall
Manchester
M60 2LA

FAO Jennifer Atkinson

Dear Jennifer

NQ Building, Ancoats, Manchester
Full Planning Application for Change of Use with Associated Internal General Arrangement and External Elevation Works

Please find enclosed an application ("this Application") for change of use of 2no. ground floor commercial units at the NQ Building on Bengal Street, Manchester. The Units comprise Unit 1 (located at 43-45 Bengal Street and Unit 3 (located at 49 Bengal Street) which currently benefit from Commercial Office Use (Class E(g)) under planning permission (Ref: 097904/JO/2011/N1).

Due to long term vacancy of the units and the aspiration to secure occupiers that positively contribute towards the area's food and beverage offer, the Applicant seeks to secure permission for a Change of Use to a flexible commercial uses (Use Class E) and Sui Generis, comprising public houses, wine bars, or drinking establishments). The Application also seeks to secure permission for minor works to the external elevation and internal sub-division of units to create smaller lettable spaces.

The Applicant is Lowry Investments (NW) Limited ("the Applicant").

Description of Development

The proposed Description of Development is:

"Change of Use to commercial units 1 (43-45 Bengal Street) and 3 (49 Bengal Street) on ground level of NQ Building from commercial office (Use Class E(g)) to flexible commercial (Use Class E and Sui Generis – public houses, wine bars, or drinking establishments) and external elevation works."

Background

Planning Permission (ref: 079367/FO/2006/N1) (the "Original Permission") for NQ Building was granted on 6 December 2006. The description of development is as follows:

"Erection of mixed use development (6/8/10 storeys) comprising 135 no. apartments, 2,047 square metres commercial floorspace (Class B1) following demolition of remaining structures associated with Bengal Mill and remedial works to Beehive Mill. Associated parking, landscaping and public realm works."

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The Original Permission was subsequently subject to a Minor Material Amendment (Section 73a) Application (Ref: 097904/JO/2011/N1) for changes to approved plans and façade materials, and it was approved on 14th February 2012 (the “S73 Permission”). The description of development is:

“Variation of conditions 2 and 3 attached to previously approved application 079367/FO/2006/N1 to allow for changes to approved plans and materials.”

The amendments to the building included changes to the façade materials, proposing to revert to the original white render design, which was approved with the Original Permission. The S73a Permission (Ref: 097904/JO/2011/N1) is the implemented Planning Permission for NQ Building.

The Site

NQ Building is a modern building, and it is bound by Beehive Mill to the north east, Jersey Street to the south east, Bengal Street to the south west, and Naval Street to the north west.

NQ Building is located within the Ancoats Conservation Area, designated in June 1989.

The Site comprises two ground floor commercial units – Unit 1 (43-45 Bengal Street) and Unit 3 (49 Bengal Street). The Site does not go beyond the existing building fabric of NQ Building (Ref: 097904/JO/2011/N1) and constitutes a total of 316.5 square metres.

It should be noted the Site was approved for Use Class B1 (Business) under the old Use Class Order revoked on 1 September 2020. From that point onwards, Use Class B1 was replaced by Use Class E(g) – therefore the prevailing use class for the Site is Use Class E(g).

Pre-application Consultation

Pre-application consultation took place on 30th November 2023 and 8th January 2026 with Ms. Jennifer Atkinson, Principal Planning Manager at Manchester City Council where the Proposed Development and scope of the application were discussed and agreed in-principle.

Proposed Development

This Application comprises the following scope of works:

- Change of Use to commercial units 1 (43-45 Bengal Street) and 3 (49 Bengal Street) within ground level of the NQ Building from commercial office (Use Class E(g)) to flexible commercial (Use Class E and Sui Generis – public houses, wine bars, or drinking establishments and/or public houses, wine bars, or drinking establishments).
- Elevational works to external façade.
- Internal general arrangement works to facilitate the creation of 3no. flexible commercial units (namely 43, 45, and 49 Bengal Street) from the 2no. existing commercial units.

Further details on the Proposed Development are provided within the Design and Access Statement and drawings submitted with the application, prepared by the Applicant and submitted in support of this Application.

Planning Policy Framework

The Local Development Plan for Manchester City Council comprises:

- Manchester Core Strategy (2012) and its Addendum (2024);
- Saved Policies of the Manchester Unitary Development Plan (1995); and,
- Greater Manchester Combined Authority Places for Everyone Plan (PfE Plan) (2024).

Other material considerations of relevance to the Proposed Development are as follows:

- NPPF (2024, minor updates incorporated in February 2025);
- Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs);
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG);
- Ancoats & New Islington Neighbourhood Development Framework (NDF) Update 2016 (dated November 2016) (the “NDF”); and, ”).

A revised NPPF is currently undergoing consultation (closes in March 2026). Given its current status and that it may be subject to changes, while it has been considered against the context of this Application, it attracts limited weight in decision making.

The Draft Manchester Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation ended in November 2025. Given its current status, it has limited weight in the determination of planning applications, however it does provide an indication of the potential direction of travel of Manchester's planning policy.

Document	Policy
Local Development Plan	
Saved Policies of Manchester Unitary Development Plan (1995)	• DC18.1 – Conservation Areas • DC19.1 – Listed Buildings • DC26.1 – Development and Noise • EM8 – Ancoats
Manchester Core Strategy (2012)	• CC1 – Primary Economic Development Focus: City Centre and Fringe • CC2 – Retail • CC4 – Visitors - Tourism, Culture and Leisure • CC7 – Mixed Use Development • CC9 – Design and Heritage • SP1 – Spatial Principles • EC3 – The Regional Centre • EC5 – East Manchester • C10 – Leisure and Evening Economy • EN1 – Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas • EN3 – Heritage • EN19 – Waste

Document	Policy
	DM1 – Development Management
The Places for Everyone (PfE) Plan (2024)	- JP-Strat2 – City Centre - JP-P4 – New Retail and Leisure Uses in Town Centres - JP-P2 – Heritage - JP-P1 – Sustainable Places
Material Considerations	
- NPPF (2024) - Ancoats & New Islington Neighbourhood Development Framework (NDF) Update 2016 (dated November 2016) (the “NDF”)	

Principle of Development

Relevant Policies / Material Considerations

Saved UDP Policy EM8 (Ancoats) and Core Strategy CC7 (Mixed Use Development) encourage high-density mixed-use development with active ground floor uses.

Core Strategy Policy CC1 (Primary Economic Development Focus: City Centre and Fringe) notes the provision of a range of economic development uses e.g. leisure, flexible, entertainment is encouraged. Policy CC2 (Retail) promotes the growth and improvement of retail provision in the City Centre. Moreover, under Policy CC4 (Visitors - Tourism, Culture and Leisure), culture and leisure offerings that improves facilities for visitors and Manchester residents are promoted.

Core Strategy Policy SP1 (Spatial Principles) notes “the Regional Centre will be the focus for economic and commercial development, retail, leisure and cultural activity”, this is reinforced by Policy EC3 (The Regional Centre) that notes commercial developments are encouraged in the Regional Centre.

PfE Policy JP-Strat2 (City Centre) notes that “the City Centre will continue to provide the primary focus for business, retail, leisure, culture and tourism activity in Greater Manchester”. Policy JP-P4 outlines that the City Centre is located highly on the hierarchy for retail and leisure uses.

The NDF (2016) promotes the active ground floor environment and encourages ground floor commercial uses that will promote street life and provide visual interest for pedestrians.

The NPPF (2024) promotes and supports developments at underutilised land and buildings and to make effective use of land.

Applicant’s Response

The Site has been vacant since the NQ Building was completed and it represents an unrealised active frontage that fails to positively contribute to the success and vibrancy of Ancoats currently.

Due to long term vacancy of the units and the aspiration to secure occupiers that positively contribute towards the area’s food and beverage offer, the Applicant seeks to secure permission for a Change of Use to a flexible commercial uses (Use Class E) and Sui Generis, comprising public houses, wine bars, or drinking establishments). The Application also seeks to secure permission for minor works to the external elevation and internal sub-division of units to create smaller lettable spaces.

The Proposed Development transforms currently vacant commercial office units into flexible ground floor commercial spaces, directly aligning with the strategic planning framework for the Ancoats area and the wider City Centre. This initiative supports high-density mixed-use development with active ground floor uses, as advocated by Saved UDP Policy EM8 (Ancoats), Core Strategy CC7 (Mixed Use Development), and the NDF (2016). By introducing diverse and active frontages, the Proposed Development enhances street animation, visual interest, and natural surveillance, thereby boosting vitality and pedestrian experience.

The provision of flexible commercial units, encompassing potential retail, leisure, and entertainment uses, is fully consistent with Core Strategy Policies CC1, CC2, and CC4, which promote a range of economic development, improved retail provision, and enhanced leisure offerings for both visitors and residents. This approach reinforces the City Centre's role as the primary focus for economic, commercial, retail, leisure, and cultural activity, as articulated in Core Strategy Policies SP1 and EC3, and further supported by PfE Policies JP-Strat2 and JP-P4, which designate the City Centre as a key hub for business, retail, leisure, and tourism.

The Proposed Development is expected to introduce circa. 15 jobs once operational (full-time equivalent), thereby positively contributing to the local economy by bringing the Site back into active use.

The Proposed Development will attract greater footfall into the Ancoats area and strengthens neighbourhood amenities, particularly beyond Cutting Room Square which provides the main focal point for F&B uses. The Application is therefore considered to be in line with the NPPF (2024), the NDF (2016), and the Development Plan, bringing beneficial effects to residents and the wider community through the activation of the building frontage.

Design and Appearance

Relevant Policies / Material Considerations

Core Strategy Policy CC9 notes new developments must be designed to the highest standard in terms of appearance and function. Policy EN1 emphasises the importance of active frontage.

Core Strategy DM1 (Development Management) requires that all development should consider specific issues related to its nature, including appropriate siting, layout, scale, form, massing, materials, and detailing, as well as its impact on the surrounding areas in terms of design, scale, and appearance.

Core Strategy EN1 (Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas) highlights the importance of high-quality public realm and the creation of active frontages to contribute positively to the character and appearance of an area.

The NDF (2016) emphasises that where ground floor commercial use is proposed, it should incorporate active frontages to promote street life and provide visual interest for pedestrians. It also emphasise on the design quality of development and how design should contribute to a great sense of place.

Applicant's Response

The Proposed Development is compliant with Core Strategy Policy CC9 through the delivery of a high-quality design. As detailed in the accompanying Design and Access Statement and associated drawings, the Proposed Development will include a palette of high-quality materials and detailing that complements the surrounding built context whilst responding to the local heritage.

The Proposed Development plans to install high quality glazing, which compliments the design and materiality of precedential commercial units throughout Ancoats. Furthermore, the design incorporates louvres above the unit entrance/glazing, featuring anodised decorative panels to maintain visual appearance and minimise visual impact.

In accordance with Policy EN1, the Proposed Development directly contributes to active ground floor use within Ancoats, which could promote the sense of place and improve security. In accordance with Core Strategy Policy DM1, the palette of materials has been carefully chosen to complement the surrounding area and the architectural character of the existing building.

The Proposed Development aims to maximise local residents' amenity offerings and design of the Site will be of a high quality. The Applicant has prepared a Signage Strategy (included within the Design and Access Statement) which details how signage will be incorporated into the façade design to positively contribute towards streetscape and wayfinding.

The Proposed Development has been developed by an experienced design team, to respond to the local context and ambitions for the City Centre in respect of design and appearance. Further details of the design and materiality of the Proposed Development, please refer to the Design and Access Statement, as prepared by the Applicant and submitted in support of this Application.

As such, the Proposed Development is considered to comply with the relevant planning policies and material considerations in respect of design and appearance.

Built Heritage

Relevant Policies / Material Considerations

PfE Plan Policy JP-P2 (Heritage) notes that we must *“positively conserve, sustain and enhance our historic environment and heritage assets and their settings.”*

Core Strategy Policy EN3 (Heritage) outlines that “developments must be designed so as to support the Council in preserving or, where possible, enhancing the historic environment, the character, setting and accessibility of areas and buildings of acknowledged importance, including scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings, registered parks and gardens, conservation areas...”

Core Strategy Policy EC5 (East Manchester) outlines that the Council will promote development that considers listed buildings and conservation areas such as Ancoats and the industrial heritage of the area.

Saved UDP Policy DC18.1 (Conservation Area) notes the Council will seek to preserve and enhance the character to development proposals, in particular with consideration to the effect of changes to the appearance of existing buildings.

Saved UDP Policy DC19.1 (Listed Buildings) notes the Council will seek to preserve and enhance the settings of listed buildings by appropriate control over the design of new development in their vicinity.

The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sets out the general duty on decision makers in exercising their planning functions with respect to heritage assets. Section 72 sets out the corresponding duty in relation to conservation areas, which notes *“with respect to any building or other*

land in a conservation area, of any of the provisions mentioned in subsection (2), special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area..."

Paragraph 8 of the NPPF (2024) notes that one of the key dimensions to sustainable development is protecting and enhancing our historic environment.

Applicant's Response

The Site is located within the Ancoats Conservation Area, where developments are encouraged to contribute to the continued prosperity of the area whilst considering the area's historic quality. The nature of the Proposed Development, as discussed in previous section, would ensure that intervention / disturbance to the historic quality of the area would be minimal. Every care and consideration have been taken to ensure that the frontages of the Site, if approved, would conform to the local character and would not be out-of-place. Therefore, the Proposed Development will not cause any harm

The Proposed Development has been designed in a way which diversifies the existing offerings within Ancoats, introducing vitality, while ensuring that external changes remain minor and sympathetic. This approach is fundamental to maintaining the established character of the Ancoats Conservation Area. As such, the proposals will contribute positively to its continued prosperity.

Significant consideration has been given to the design, ensuring a sensitive integration with the existing streetscape. This includes a glazing design, which balances aesthetic appeal with functionality, and the incorporation of decorative panels at the louvres. These elements have been detailed to ensure a minimal visual impact, preserving the visual amenity and historic integrity of the Conservation Area.

There are a number of listed buildings in the vicinity of the Site, whose settings could be impacted by any development proposal in their proximity. As demonstrated, the Proposed Development incorporates a high quality design which promotes active use at the Site and active frontage (including higher proportion of glazed façade) which is not in abundance in the Site's vicinity. In turns, every care has been taken to preserve and enhance the settings of the listed buildings in the Site's vicinity.

Therefore, it is concluded that the Proposed Development will not cause any harm to the historic quality of the area and the nearby listed buildings.

As such, the Proposed Development is considered to comply with the relevant planning policies and material considerations in respect of built heritage.

Amenity Considerations (Noise, Waste Management, Ventilation, Construction and Operational Management)

Relevant Policies / Material Considerations

Saved UDP Policy DC26.1 (Development and Noise) outlines the Council intends to use the Development Control process to reduce the impact of noise on people living and working in, or visiting, the City.

Core Strategy Policy DM1 (Development Management) requires that all development should consider specific issues related to the nature of the development.

Core Strategy Policy C10 (Leisure and the Evening Economy) notes that development that supports the evening economy will be permitted on the basis that the proposals do not create an unacceptable impact on neighbouring uses in terms of noise and disturbance.

Noise

The Applicant has commissioned a noise assessment, prepared by Fisher Acoustics and submitted as part of this Application.

The assessment identified the pre-existing environmental noise levels in the area during daytime and nighttime, an assessment of the potential noise impact of the proposed flexible commercial units on nearby residential receptors has also been carried out.

The minimum recommended acoustics performance of façade elements and maximum allowable activity noise levels within the proposed flexible commercial units have been identified such that residential amenity would be maintained.

Appropriate noise limits, covering noise egress from activity within the proposed flexible commercial units, noise transfer via party floor, plant equipment, have been set. It is expected a condition will be attached to any consent granted for this Application that require a detailed acoustics insulation scheme to be submitted for the Local Planning Authority's approval prior to any of the proposed flexible commercial units being brought into use.

As a result, the Proposed Development is therefore considered to be in accordance with relevant planning policy and guidance in respect of noise and vibration.

Waste Management

The Applicant has prepared a Site Waste Management Strategy and Manchester City Council Waste Proforma to ensure compliance with Manchester City Council GD04 Guidance. The Strategy details the arrangement for the collection of general and recyclable waste, and deliveries.

Dedicated waste and recycling storage facility is already operational on-site. This facility is located within the ground-floor car park, accessible via secure entrances on Naval Street and Jersey Street, ensuring convenient access for all commercial tenants and waste collection services.

Operational procedures are clearly defined to ensure effective waste management. Each unit will be responsible for daily waste transfer to the communal bins. Waste collection for all units will be supervised by the on-site building management team, who will manage the timely placement and retrieval of bins for collection, ensuring the cleanliness and orderliness of the storage areas.

To promote effective waste segregation and maximise recycling rates, each tenant will be provided with individual bins for general waste, paper and cardboard, and mixed recyclables (plastic, metal, and glass). This approach to waste management has been reviewed and approved by the building management company and integrates seamlessly with the existing waste management strategy for the building.

Further detailed information regarding the waste management strategy can be found within the accompanying Design and Access Statement.

As such, the Proposed Development is considered to be in full accordance with all relevant planning policy and guidance pertaining to waste management.

Ventilation

The Proposed Development incorporates a comprehensive ventilation strategy, prepared by Futureserv and submitted with this application, which aligns with the principles of the Building Regulations. This strategy is integral to the development's sustainability objectives, significantly contributing to the reduction of annual CO₂ emissions and the overall carbon footprint.

It is confirmed that the proposed commercial units will not incorporate full commercial kitchen facilities. Food preparation within these units will be restricted to the reheating of pre-prepared light snacks. As such, the provision of kitchen extracts or odour filtration systems is not deemed necessary.

Key energy reduction measures include the integration of Mechanical Ventilation Heat Recovery (MVHR) systems for waste heat recovery and the specification of energy-efficient fans and motors. They will be located internal to the Site within the ceiling void. These systems will reduce heat demand, provide filtered air, and enhance occupant well-being. All components will utilise accredited technology and appropriate controls, ensuring optimal performance and efficiency in line with best practice for sustainable development.

Further details, please refer to Ventilation Statement prepared by Futureserv submitted in support of this Application.

As a result, the Proposed Development is therefore considered to be in accordance with relevant planning policy and guidance in respect of ventilation.

Construction Management

This Application is supported by a Construction Management Plan (CMP) prepared by the Applicant that set out measures to ensure the secure and safe operation of the site, thereby protecting staff, existing building occupants, the environment and the businesses that operate on site, from unnecessary harm. The CMP also aims to minimise impact to local amenities during the construction phase of the Proposed Development and proposes ways in which the surrounding environment can remain unharmed.

Site operating hours is expected to be as follows:

- Monday to Friday: 08:00 – 18:00 hrs
- Saturday: 08:00 – 14:00 hrs
- Sunday/Bank Holidays: No works proposed.

These working hours cover operations and work activities which are audible at the Site boundary and are based upon normal working hours in line with MCC Guidance. Any noisy operations outside of these hours shall not be undertaken without prior agreement from the Applicant and where applicable, from the Local Planning Authority with written approval provided.

As a result, the Proposed Development is therefore considered to be in accordance with relevant planning policy and guidance in respect of construction management.

Operational Management

The occupiers of the retail units are not presently known; however, the Applicant has prepared and submitted a Retail Management strategy, in support of this Application. The strategy outlines the proposed management strategy of the 3no. flexible commercial units, queue management, music policy, outdoor seating policy and licencing.

The operating times for the proposed retail units will differ, but will typically be as per below:

Monday to Saturday: 08:00 – 23:00 hrs

Sunday/Bank Holidays: 08:00 – 22:00 hrs

It is expected any deviation to the proposed opening hours as above, would need to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority via discharge of planning condition attached to any consent granted for this Application.

Further details, please refer to Retail Management Strategy prepared by the Applicant and submitted in support of this Application.

As a result, the Proposed Development is therefore considered to be in accordance with relevant planning policy and guidance in respect of operational management.

Summary

The above sections provide a summary of how the Proposed Development has been comprehensively assessed in relation to the Development Plan and other material considerations. This has taken place during a process of pre-application consultation and technical due diligence including the preparation of technical reports.

The conclusion of that process is that the proposals are in accordance with the Development Plan when taken as a whole and positively address the material planning considerations such that they merit the support of the Local Planning Authority.

Application Submission

In addition to this Covering Letter, the following documentation is submitted in support of this Application:

Technical Documents	
Document	Author
Construction Management Plan	The Applicant
Local Labour Agreement	The Applicant

Technical Documents	
Retail Management Strategy	The Applicant
Design and Access Statement incl. Signage Strategy	The Applicant
Ventilation Statement	FutureServ
Noise Impact Statement	Fischer Acoustics
Drawings	
Drawing Reference No.	Drawing Title
NQ-PD-SHP-B5D9-G100-EL-EE-0001	Jersey St Proposed
NQ-PD-SHP-B5D9-G100-EL-ES-0001	Bengal St Proposed
NQ-PD-SHP-B5D9-G100-EL-EW-0001	Naval St Proposed
NQ-PD-SHP-B5D9-G100-PL-GRD-0001	Site Location Plan Rev 2
NQ-PD-SHP-B5D9-G100-PL-GRD-0002	Red Line Site Plan Rev 2
NQ-PD-SHP-B5D9-G251-EL-ES-0001	Detail Elevation
D-30-541	Existing Naval Street Elevation – North Block
D-30-581	Existing South Elevation – South Block
D-30-512	Existing Bengal Street Elevation

The Application has the Planning Portal reference: PP-12772296 and the application fee of £578 in addition to pre-requisite Planning Portal administrative fee has been paid online via Planning Portal.

The development is therefore wholly compliant with the policies of the Development Plan and there are no material considerations which would justify refusal of the Application. We therefore respectfully request that this Application be supported by the Planning Authority.

We would be grateful if you could notify us of the validation of the Application and please do not hesitate to contact my colleagues Jemma Brabrook (jbrabrook@deloitte.co.uk / +44 161 455 6903) or Matthew Lam (mlam@deloitte.co.uk / +44 161 455 8448).

Yours sincerely

Deloitte LLP

For Deloitte LLP

Encl.