MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

Planning

Growth & Development

Delegated officer report for planning application

Application no.	145087/JO/2026
Date registered valid:	2 February 2026
Proposal:	Variation of Condition 2 (Specified Plans) pursuant to Listed Building Consent 143965/LO/2025 to allow for internal reconfiguration.
Address:	Merchants Warehouse, Castle Street, Manchester, M3 4LZ
Ward(s):	Deansgate Ward
Applicant:	Mrs Sarah Ramsbottom Castlefield Estates
Agent (if any):	Mr Simon Davies Tim Groom Architects
Case officer:	Sam Elliott Tel: 0161 219 2856 Email: sam.elliott@manchester.gov.uk
Recommendation:	Approve
Date of recommendation:	25/03/2026

Application details

Type of application: Variation or Removal of Condition

Development type: Notifications

Date of site visit: 06/03/2026

Standard consultations:
Printed: 6 February 2026 Expired: 27 February 2026

Neighbour notifications
No neighbour notifications have been printed and sent.

Site notice
Posted: 25 February 2026 Expired: 18 March 2026

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

Departure from Development Plan: No

Environmental Statement: Not required

Description of site/building

The warehouse forms a simple, brick-built, rectangular building in English garden wall bond, that is of three-storeys to the Castle Street elevation (east) and four-stories to the canal elevation (west).

The west elevation directly fronts the canal, where it would have only been accessible by boat. To the centre of the elevation are two “shipping holes”, common to Castlefield warehouses during the 18th and 19th centuries. As used on the other warehouses around the canal basin, the building was designed with small, round-headed windows containing multi-pane, timber casements with pivot windows to the bottom half on its two principal elevations to the east and west, with six vertical loading bays, or 'loopholes', to each of these elevations.

Merchants Warehouse yields high historic interest through its early date and unusual building type, which now forms only one of two such warehouses surviving in the Castlefield Basin. The warehouse has strong historical ties and associations with the Duke of Bridgewater and to the formation and early success of the Basin at Castlefield, and of trading in the wider city.

Internally, the building formed a functional and utilitarian warehouse that was divided into six bays by the use of brick walls constructed east-west across each floor level with arched openings linking the bays. The significance of the interior is derived from the original, open-plan spatial character of bays repeated on all floor levels, the original internal walls (largely now covered by c1990s plasterboard/plaster, the original timber ceiling structure/locations of original hoists.

Levels 1 and 2 of Merchants Warehouse were substantially altered and refurbished in the mid-1990s, which involved replastering all internal walls, inserting new floor coverings, new M&E throughout, all windows/doors replaced, and new toilet facilities. To the north and south ends of the building are two mid-1990s extensions, which accommodate an entrance, reception, and circulation, with new hard and soft landscaping around the perimeter. Internally, the two floor

levels were restored to retain their original spatial character of open, yet interconnected, warehouse bays.

Listed building: Not applicable

Conservation area: Castlefield Conservation Area 1979

Tree Preservation Order: Not applicable

Description of area

Merchants Warehouse is located in Castlefield, Manchester, and is bounded to the east by Castle Street, to the north and south by areas of soft and hard landscaping, and to the west by the Bridgewater Canal.

It is located within the Castlefield Conservation Area, which forms the largest conservation area in Manchester. Given its siting and relationship with the historic canal infrastructure, it makes a positive contribution to the setting of the Conservation Area.

Background

Application 143965/LO/2025 was approved 05/11/2025 for the internal fitout to first and second floors with removal of partitions, effectively restoring the floorplate to its 2015 107844/LO/2015/C1 shell and core condition. Application CDN/26/0048 has been discharged for Conditions 3 (Strip Out Methodology) and 4 (Repair Samples and Methodology).

Following the decision, the applicant wished to form a small nib and reduction in the width at the Level 01 entrance screen. This would allow centralisation of the screen with the reception space and the toilet wall. It would also future proof the development should the screen be relocated as part of any future works, the screen could be retained and reused rather than disposed of.

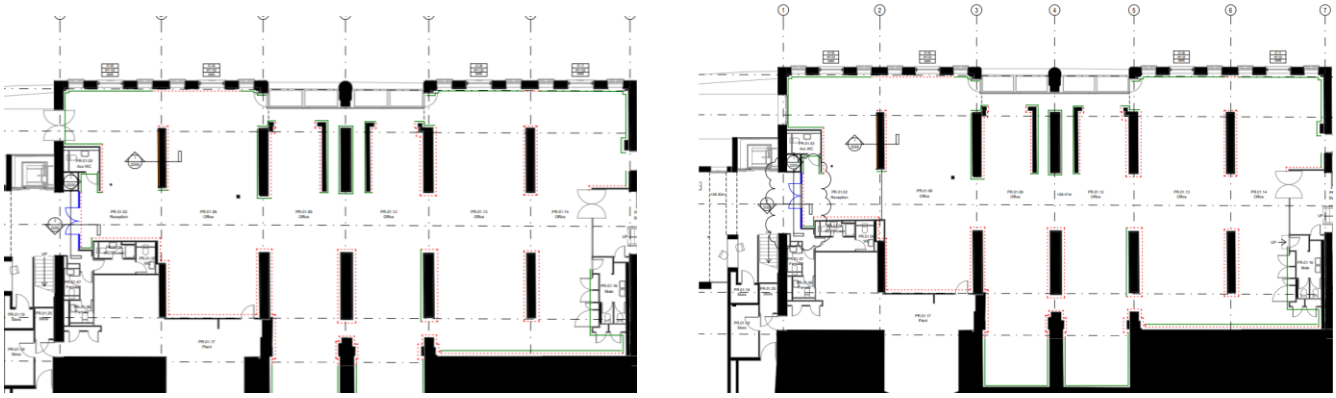
They also sought a small section of plasterboard boxing on Level 01 to avoid a small nook in this location without demolition.

Pursuant to the discharge of conditions, investigate works have been undertaken beneath plaster linings to be removed. The applicant discovered original brickwork (with some more modern brick infill and additions) and wished to retain these features.

The above forms the basis of this application.

Description of development

The application would see the variation of Condition 2 (Specified Plans) attached to planning permission 143965/LO/2025 to allow some internal reconfiguration of partitioning and associated works at Levels 01 and 02, as well as inclusion of discovered original brickwork into to the finishes.



Left: Level 01 as approved; Right: Level 01 as proposed under variation



Left: Level 02 demolitions as approved; Right: Level 02 demolitions as proposed under variation



Left: Level 02 finishes as approved; Right: Level 02 finishes as proposed under variation

Consultations & Notification Responses

Publicity and Advertisement:
The proposal has been advertised by way of site and press notice. Notification letters have also been sent to nearby properties. No comments have been received.

Policy

The following policies are considered relevant to this application:

Places for Everyone

- JP-P2 – Heritage The Adopted Core Strategy for the City of Manchester
- SP1 – Spatial Principles
- CC9 – Design and Heritage

- EN3 – Heritage
- DM1 – Development Management

The Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester

- DC19 – Listed Buildings

NPPF

- Section 12 (Achieving Well Designed Places)
- Section 16 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment)

Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990

- Section 16

Issues

Impact upon the Heritage Asset

At Level 01, the formation of a nib for minor adjustment of the entrance and plaster boarding to avoid the nook are not considered to materially impact the approved works to restore the spacious character to the interior from which the listed asset's significance partially derives. These aspect of the proposal are not considered to result in any significant additional harm.

At Level 02, the incorporation of the exposed brickwork into the scheme would have minor positive heritage benefits, allowing greater appreciation of the building's historic fabric. It is noted that there are more modern brickwork additions to the original – most likely from where bricks have been taken from this location to aid in the restoration works following a historic fire.





In order to ensure the historic fabric is expressed sensitively and sits as comfortably as possible alongside the modern brick, it is recommended that a new condition is added to ensure the brickwork is treated in accordance with the details of the method statement of the 1241-TGA-XX-XX-RP-A-PM_60_90_40-00003 P01 document. This includes the following measures and provisions:

- Any areas of cement mortar in disrepair to be repaired and infilled areas of without the need to be fully raked out and repointed to avoid causing unforeseen damage to the existing brickwork.

- Any joints that need to be raked out to be infilled with a flush joint to match existing profile. The joint will be tamped back, or brushed back with a stiff bristled brush to expose the arises of the brick very slightly.

- Spray painted symbols on face of brickwork to be removed with a brick cleaning solution.
- Screw fixings in brickwork to be removed.
- Evidence on plaster adhesive dab to be brushed off with a stiff brush.
- Water and aggregate staining from previous core drill works to be brush off.
- Sample of removed paint accepted by MCC.
- Contractor to take care not to damage existing brick faces or disturb original mortar joints

In view of the above, the proposed works are considered to have a neutral to minor positive impact on the character and historic fabric of Levels 01 & 02 of the Grade II listed building resulting in an overall minor positive impact on the special interest of the Grade II listed Merchants Warehouse as a whole. The consented works to revert back to the 2015 consented shell and core scheme would not be materially impacted by the proposed variation of plans.

Conclusion

In consideration of the above and subject to condition, the proposed variation to condition 2 to facilitate minor alterations is ultimately considered to have a neutral to minor positive impact on the special interest of the heritage asset. The variation of the consented works would not materially worsen any harm accounted for in the original permission, and would not limit the public benefits secured in the permission to prepare levels 01 and 02 for a future tenant to ensure a future viable use. The works continue to restore the spatial character of the warehouse floors which contributes to its historic significance.

On this basis, the proposal is considered to meet the statutory test to preserve as required by Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The proposal would also meet the requirements set out in sections 12 and 16 of the NPPF; Policies SP1, CC9, EN3 and DM1 of the Core Strategy; saved UDP policy DC19; and Places for Everyone Policy JP-P2.

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

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

Protocol 1 Article 1, and Article 8 where appropriate, confer(s) a right of respect for a person's home, other land and business assets. In taking account of all material considerations, including Council policy as set out in the Core Strategy and saved polices of the Unitary Development Plan, the Director of Planning, Building Control & Licensing has concluded that some rights

conferred by these articles on the applicant(s)/objector(s)/resident(s) and other occupiers and owners of nearby land that might be affected may be interfered with but that that interference is in accordance with the law and justified by being in the public interest and on the basis of the planning merits of the development proposal. She believes that any restriction on these rights posed by the recommendation given is proportionate to the wider benefits of and that such a decision falls within the margin of discretion afforded to the Council under the Town and Country Planning Acts.

Recommendation:

Approve

Condition(s) to be attached to decision for approval

1) The development must be begun not later than the 5 November 2028.

   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 plans and documents received 12/09/2025 as part of application 143965/LO/2025:

   Site Plans

   - 1241-TGA-XX-00-DR-A-95200 - Site Location Plan P01
   - 1241-TGA-XX-00-DR-A-95201 - Site Plan P01

   - 1241-TGA-XX-01-DR-A-95302 - Demolition Plan - Level 01 P03
   - 1241-TGA-XX-01-DR-A-95352 - Proposed Ceiling Plan - Level 01 P03
   - 1241-TGA-XX-01-DR-A-95354 - Demolition Ceiling Plan - Level 01 P03
   - 1241-TGA-XX-02-DR-A-95355 - Demolition Ceiling Plan - Level 02 P03
   - 1241-TGA-XX-01-DR-A-95432 - Proposed Floor Finishes Plan - Level 01 P03
   - 1241-TGA-XX-02-DR-A-95433 - Proposed Floor Finishes Plan - Level 02 P03
   - 1241-TGA-XX-01-DR-A-95434 - Demolition Floor Finishes Plan - Level 01 P03
   - 1241-TGA-XX-02-DR-A-95435 - Demolition Floor Finishes Plan - Level 01 P02

   MEP

   - 22741(52)110-P1-A1 PROPOSED AGD SERVICES LAYOUT LEVEL 1
   - 22741(52)210-P1-A1 PROPOSED AGD SERVICES LAYOUT LEVEL 2
   - 22741(53)110-P1-A1 PROPOSED HOT AND COLD WATER SERVICES LAYOUT LEVEL 1
   - 22741(53)210-P1-A1 PROPOSED HOT AND COLD WATER SERVICES LAYOUT LEVEL 2
   - 22741(56)110-P1-A1 PROPOSED HEATING AND COOLING SERVICES LAYOUT LEVEL 1
   - 22741(56)210-P1-A1 PROPOSED HEATING AND COOLING SERVICES LAYOUT LEVEL 2
   - 22741(57)110-P1-A1 PROPOSED VENTILATION SERVICES LAYOUT LEVEL 1
   - 22741(57)210-P1-A1 PROPOSED VENTILATION SERVICES LAYOUT LEVEL 2

- 22741(62)110-P1-A1 PROPOSED SMALL POWER & DATA SERVICES LAYOUT LEVEL 1
- 22741(62)210-P1-A1 PROPOSED SMALL POWER & DATA SERVICES LAYOUT LEVEL 2
- 22741(63)110-P1-A1 PROPOSED LIGHTING AND EMERGENCEY LIGHTING LAYOUT LEVEL 1
- 22741(63)210-P1-A1 PROPOSED LIGHTING AND EMERGENCEY LIGHTING LAYOUT LEVEL 2
- 22741(68)110-P1-A1 PROPOSED FIRE ALARM & SECURITY SERVICES LAYOUT LEVEL 1
- 22741(68)210-P1-A1 PROPOSED FIRE ALARM & SECURITY SERVICES LAYOUT LEVEL 2

Details

- 1241-TGA-XX-ZZ-DR-A-22500 - Plasterboard lining reinstatement detail P02
- 1241-TGA-XX-01-DE-A-35500 - Ceiling remediation detail P02
- 1241-TGA-XX-ZZ-DE-A-43500 - Raised access floor remediation detail P02

Documents

- 1241-TGA-XX-XX-SH-A-FI_40_78_00001 - Scope of Works Revision P02 works index received 12/09/2025
- 1241-TGA-XX-XX-RP-A-FI_10_10-00250 - Design and Access Statement received 12/09/2025
- the Heritage statement REV.A dated 10th October 2025 and received 10/10/2025 by the City Council as Local Planning Authority.

As well as the following drawings and documents received 02/02/2026 pursuant to application 145087/JO/2026

- 1241-TGA-XX-01-DR-A-32200 P06
- 1241-TGA-XX-01-DR-A-95304 P04

As well as the following drawings received 27/02/2026:

- 1241-TGA-XX-02-DE-A-35501 P02
- 1241-TGA-XX-02-DR-A-95303 P04
- 1241-TGA-XX-02-DR-A-95305 P04
- 1241-TGA-XX-02-DR-A-95353 P04

As well as the following document received 25/03/2026:

- Brickwork repair method statement referenced 1241-TGA-XX-XX-RP-A-PM_60_90_40-00003 P01

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

3) The details of the approved strip out of the unit shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details received by the City Council, as Local Planning Authority and remain in situ for the duration of the construction of the development (as approved under CDN/26/0048). For the avoidance of doubt, these details consist of the following documents:

- Merchants Warehouse - Cat A Contract Programme received 15/01/2026
- Strip Out Works Method Statement Version No. 001 prepared by Stredder Group and received 15/01/2026

- Merchants Warehouse Listed Building Consent Close Out Rev a document prepared by Mountain Earth and received 18/03/2026

Reason - In the interests of visual amenity and because the proposed works affect a building which is included in the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest and careful attention to building work is required to protect the character and appearance of this building and to ensure consistency in accordance with policy and EN3 of the Core Strategy and saved policy DC19.1 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester.

4) The details of the approved repair and making good works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details received by the City Council, as Local Planning Authority and remain in situ for the duration of the construction of the development (as approved under CDN/26/0048). For the avoidance of doubt, these details consist of the following documents:

- Merchants Warehouse - Cat A Contract Programme received 15/01/2026
- Strip Out Works Method Statement Version No. 001 prepared by Stredder Group and received 15/01/2026

- 1241-TGA-XX-XX-RP-A-PM_60_90_40-00002 REV 01 dated 10.03.26, prepared byTim Groom Architects and received 18/03/2026
- Merchants Warehouse Listed Building Consent Close Out Rev a document prepared by Mountain Earth and received 18/03/2026

Reason - In the interests of visual amenity and because the proposed works affect a building which is included in the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest and careful attention to building work is required to protect the character and appearance of this building and to ensure consistency in accordance with policy and EN3 of the Core Strategy and saved policy DC19.1 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester.

5) The details of the approved Level 02 brickwork repairs hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details received by the City Council, as Local Planning Authority and remain in situ for the duration of the construction of the development. For the avoidance of doubt, these details consist of the following documents:

- Proposed Plan Level 02 referenced: 1241-TGA-XX-02-DR-A-95303 P04

- Brickwork repair method statement referenced 1241-TGA-XX-XX-RP-A-PM_60_90_40-00003 P01 received 25/03/2026

Reason - In the interests of visual amenity and because the proposed works affect a building which is included in the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest and careful attention to building work is required to protect the character and appearance of this building and to ensure consistency in accordance with policy and EN3 of the Core Strategy and saved policy DC19.1 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester.

Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified

Heritage & Urban Design

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 - Castlefield Conservation Area 1979
Flood Zones Type 2 (low to medium risk) -
Flood Zones Type 3 (high risk) -
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -
Area Team Boundary - Name: CENTRAL