

Planning

Growth & Development

Delegated officer report for planning application

Application no. 144597/LO/2025

Date registered valid: 21 November 2025

Proposal: Listed Building Consent for replacement of cloister roofs on both the north and south elevations.

Address: John Rylands Library, 148 - 158 Deansgate, Manchester, M3 3EH

Ward(s): Deansgate Ward

Applicant: Mr Stuart Lockwood The University of Manchester

Agent (if any): Mr Jack Whitehouse Donald Insall Associates Ltd

Case officer: Michael Pearson
Tel: 0161 219 2735
Email: michael.pearson@manchester.gov.uk

Recommendation: Approve

Date of recommendation: 07/01/2026

Application details

Type of application: Listed Building Consent

Development type: Listed building alteration

Date of site visit:

Standard consultations:

Printed: 28 November 2025

Expired: 19 December 2025

Neighbour notifications

Printed: 28 November 2025

Expired: 19 December 2025

Site notice

Posted: 4 December 2025 Expired: 27 December 2025

Press advert

Published: 2 December 2025

Expired: 23 December 2025

Departure from Development Plan: No

Environmental Statement: Not required

Description of site/building

The application relates to the Grade I listed John Rylands Library. The library is a late Victorian building, dated 1899, completed in a neo-gothic style with dark sandstone blocks. The library is completed in the style of church, being two storeys though having the appearance of being three storeys. The property's southern and northern facing side elevations feature single storey extensions, known as the cloisters, that have roofs completed in an asphalt finish, said extensions show signs of water ingress to the vaulted corridors that are housed within them.

Listed building: Grade I

Conservation area: Deansgate Conservation Area 1985

Tree Preservation Order: Not applicable

Description of area

The application site lies within the heart of the Deansgate Conservation Area and the commercial centre of Manchester City Centre. The site also lies on the eastern boundary of the neighbourhood of Spinningfields, a neighbourhood characterised by contemporary office development. Built development along Deansgate is varied in age, scale and design, with Victorian and 21st century contemporary development sitting alongside each other. Neighbouring uses are largely commercial, consisting of Class E retail and office uses, as well as Sui Generis bar uses.

Description of development

The application seeks listed building consent for the replacement of the property's cloister roofs to both its north and south facing elevations.

The proposal would see the removal of the existing asphalt roof and its replacement with a like for like system, the relaying and redressing of existing lead capping, where reuse of existing leadwork is not feasible replacements will be on a like for like basis. Existing downpipes will have leaf guards installed to prevent future blockage.

Planning History

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

134908/LO/2022 - Listed Building Consent for external masonry conservation and cleaning – Approved November 2022.

064606/LO/CITY1/02 - LISTED BUILDING CONSENT Re-roofing to flat roofs and construction of new extract dormers to transept roofs – Approved September 2002.

064605/FO/CITY1/02 - Replacement of roof coverings to flat roofs, construction of new louvred air extract dormers to transept roofs – Approved September 2002.

064604/LO/CITY1/02 - LISTED BUILDING CONSENT Alteration and refurbishment of the existing library, demolition of existing 1960s building and new build entrance and book storage accommodation at Spinningfields – Approved September 2002.

064603/FO/CITY1/02 - Proposed new build extension to replace the existing 1960s building on Spinningfield together with alteration and refurbishment works o the existing building fabric – Approved September 2002.

060660/LO/CITY1/00 - LISTED BUILDING CONSENT Construction of slate pitched roof the main reading room – Approved February 2001.

060659/FO/CITY1/00 - Construction of slate pitched roof to the main building – Approved February 2001.

Consultations & Notification Responses

Publicity – A site notice and press notice were published. Neighbouring properties were notified of the development by letter. No representations were received.

Historic England – No objection received.

Policy

The Places for Everyone Plan – Joint Development Plan Document, for nine of the 10 boroughs which make up Greater Manchester adopted on 21st of March 2024:

- Policy JP-Strat1 – Core Growth Area
- Policy JP-Strat2 – City Centre
- Policy JP-P2 – Heritage
- Policy JP-P3 – Cultural Facilities

The Manchester Core Strategy – Development Plan Document 2012-2027 (“the Core Strategy”) was adopted by the City Council on the 11th of July 2012:

- Policy SP1 – Spatial Principles
- Policy EC3 – The Regional Centre
- Policy CC1 – Primary Economic Development Focus: City Centre and Fringe
- Policy CC4 – Visitors – Tourism, Culture and Leisure
- Policy CC9 – Design and Heritage
- Policy C10 – Leisure and the Evening Economy
- Policy EN1 – Design Principle and Strategic Characters Areas
- Policy EN3 – Heritage
- Policy DM1 – Development Management

Saved Unitary Development Plan for Manchester – The following saved UDP Policies are of relevance to this application:

- Policy DC18 – Conservation Areas
- Policy DC19 – Listed Buildings

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- Chapter 9 – Promoting Sustainable Transport
- Chapter 12 – Achieving Well Designed Places
- Chapter 16 – Conserving the Historic Environment

Other Legislative Requirements

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

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

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

Issues

Impact upon the Heritage Asset

John Rylands Library, a late neo-gothic Victorian property, is a Grade I listed building and is one of the most impressive buildings of its age and type. The library was created to commemorate John Rylands (1801 – 1888), a Victorian philanthropist and one of Manchester’s first multi-millionaires, being commissioned by his widow Enriqueta Augustina Rylands and being designed by Basil Champneys. The building houses over 250,000 printed volumes and over one million manuscripts and archival items, forming a culturally significant collection of historic, linguistic and cultural material of national and international significance. The building’s external façade is no less impressive and important as its innards, with it featuring brilliantly ornate detail and impressive sandstone blocks. The buildings northern and southern sides feature one storey extensions, known as cloisters. Said building features roofs of asphalt that show signs of water ingress, with internal stones showing signs of damp and delamination. As such, it is recognised that there is a need to intervene within the roof space of the property’s cloisters to address these issues.

The proposed works would see the removal of the existing asphalt roof, with a new like for like asphalt roof then being laid over, with a solar reflective treatment then applied over it. As part of the proposed works, the leadwork of the cloisters would have to be removed and then subsequently relaid. Leaf guards would be introduced to the property's rainwater pipes and internal stone damaged by water ingress would be brushed clean. The proposed works are deemed necessary to ensure the long term health of the listed building. The use of asphalt is considered historically sensitive, with the applicant providing evidence that the roofs of the cloisters were always finished in such a material in the interest of fire protection to ensure the protection of the books stored within.

With the above in mind, provided that additional detail is sought with regard to how any scaffold will abut the listed building, how material of historic importance will be protected during the proposed works, and that material samples of the new roof covering be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval, the proposed development would have a beneficial impact on the listed building. It is also considered necessary that should any new leadwork be required that material samples of this, as well as details as of its location be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval. Lastly, any internal repair works should be conditioned so that they are only undertaken via brush, and that should any additional making good works be required that detail of these works be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The implementation of the proposal is considered would result in a reasonable amount of public benefit, generated by how the works would help to preserve the listed building into the future.

Heritage Impact Assessment and Conclusion

The proposed development, subject to appropriate planning condition, would result in a reasonable amount of public benefit to be generated, having a slight beneficial impact on the listed building. Therefore, subject to appropriate planning condition, the proposal would meet the requirements as set out under Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and as such accord with Places for Everyone Plan Policies JP-Strat1, JP-Strat2, JP-P2 and JP-P3, Core Strategy Policies SP1, EC3, CC1, CC4, CC9, C10, EN1, EN3 and DM1, Saved Unitary Development Plan Policies DC18 and DC19, the National Planning Policy Framework, and the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. On this basis the application is recommended for approval.

Other Legislative Requirements

Equality Act 2010

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

Human Rights Act 1998 considerations

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

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

Recommendation: Approve

Article 35 Declaration

Officers have worked with the applicant/agent in a positive and proactive manner in determining this application by assessing the proposal against relevant planning policies and all material considerations, identifying matters of concern with the proposal and discussing those with the applicant/agent. In this instance negotiation has been able to successfully resolve the identified concerns and issues.

Conditions to be attached to decision for approval

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

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

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

- o Location Plan (Planning Portal Reference: PP-14491143v1)
- o JRL.06 - DIA - ZZ - ZZ - D30 - ACL - 2000 Revision P1: Cloister Roofs Plan as Proposed
- o JRL.06 - DIA - ZZ - ZZ - D20 - ACL - 2401 Revision P1: Typical Lead Details as

- o JRL.06 - DIA - ZZ - ZZ - D20 - ACL - 2402 Revision P1: Typical Lead Details as Proposed 2 of 2
- o JRL.06 - DIA - ZZ - ZZ - D20 - ACL - 2500 Revision P1: Roof Build Up Details as Proposed
- o JRL.06 - DIA - ZZ - ZZ - D30 - ACL - 4500 Revision P1: North Elevation as Proposed
- o JRL.06 - DIA - ZZ - ZZ - D30 - ACL - 4502 Revision P1: South Elevation as Proposed
- o Heritage, Design and Access Statement (Prepared by Donald Insall Associates)
- o MAN.JRL.06 - The John Rylands Library - Cloister Roof Works (Prepared by Donald Insall Associates; Dated 04/12/2025; Received 17/12/2025)
- o Email correspondence (Prepared by Donald Insall Associates; Dated and received 17/12/2025)
- o Email correspondence RE internal repairs (Prepared by Donald Insall Associates; Dated and received 06/01/2026)

All stamped as received by the Local Planning Authority on 12/11/2025, unless specified otherwise.

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

3) Prior to the commencement of the development, a methodology for the protection of the listed building, including its windows, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall then proceed in accordance with the approved details which shall be adhered to for the full duration of the works hereby approved.

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 policies CC9 and EN3 of the Core Strategy and saved policy DC19.1 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester.

4) Prior to the installation of any scaffolding, a methodology and specification for any associated scaffolding and support structure, including its location, means of affixing to the building, if applicable, location of any associated fixings to the building, details of how the building fabric would be protected from potential damage as a result of the erection of the scaffolding, and details of making good to the building fabric following removal, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scaffolding methodology shall be implemented and remain in place for the duration of the development. The building shall be repaired and made good following removal of the scaffolding within one month of removal.

In the event that scaffolding is not required to carry out the development hereby approved, a methodology and specification for the alternative means of access, and details of making good to the building fabric following removal if applicable, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to being undertaken. The approved details shall be implemented as part of the development. Where necessary the building shall be repaired and made good following removal of any fixings within one month of removal.

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 policies CC9 and EN3 of the Core Strategy and saved policy DC19.1 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester.

5) Prior to the commencement of the development, with the exception of site preparation works, material samples of the new asphalt roof and reflective treatment hereby approved shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall then proceed in accordance with the approved details.

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 policies CC9 and EN3 of the Core Strategy and saved policy DC19.1 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester.

6) The listed building's leadwork shall be lifted, redressed and lapped in accordance with the following drawings:

- o JRL.06 - DIA - ZZ - ZZ - D20 - ACL - 2401 Revision P1: Typical Lead Details as Proposed 1 of 2
- o JRL.06 - DIA - ZZ - ZZ - D20 - ACL - 2402 Revision P1: Typical Lead Details as Proposed 2 of 2
- o JRL.06 - DIA - ZZ - ZZ - D20 - ACL - 2500 Revision P1: Roof Build Up Details as Proposed

All stamped as received by the Local Planning Authority on 12/11/2025.

In the event that existing leadwork cannot be reused, prior to the installation of any new leadwork, material samples of such material, as well as architectural drawings detailing where it is to be laid, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall then proceed in accordance with the approved details.

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 policies CC9 and EN3 of the Core Strategy and saved policy DC19.1 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester.

7) The making good of internal stonework affected by water ingress shall be carried out with natural brushes, as detailed in the methodology contained within the email correspondence prepared by Donald Insall Associates (Dated and received 06/01/2026). Should any additional or more intrusive works be required, no such works shall proceed until they have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall then proceed in accordance with the approved details.

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 policies CC9 and EN3 of the Core Strategy and saved policy DC19.1 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester.

8) The development hereby approved shall proceed in accordance with the submitted Conservation Specification, all detailed within the report prepared by Donald Insall Associates (Reference: MAN.JRL.06 - The John Rylands Library - Cloister Roof Works; Stamped as received by the Local Planning Authority on 17/12/2025).

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 policies CC9 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
Historic England (North West)

Unit G3 And G4, Crown Square, Manchester, M3 3AY
Unit G6 And G7, Crown Square, Manchester, M3 3AY
Unit G21, 2 Spinningfields Square, Manchester, M3 3AP
Ruh Dental, Unit G5, Crown Square, Manchester, M3 3AY
Seventh To Eleventh Floors, 125 Deansgate, Manchester, M3 2BY
Third Floor, 125 Deansgate, Manchester, M3 2BY
Second Floor, 125 Deansgate, Manchester, M3 2BY
First Floor, 125 Deansgate, Manchester, M3 2BY
Fourth Floor, 125 Deansgate, Manchester, M3 2BY
Sixth Floor, 125 Deansgate, Manchester, M3 2BY
18 Wood Street, Manchester, M3 3EF
16 Wood Street, Manchester, M3 3EF
123 Deansgate, Manchester, M3 2BY
125 Deansgate, Manchester, M3 2BY
Wood Street Mission, 26 Wood Street, Manchester, M3 3EF
24 Wood Street, Manchester, M3 3EF
22 Wood Street, Manchester, M3 3EF
20 Wood Street, Manchester, M3 3EF
Unit 2A, Spinningfields Square, Manchester, M3 3AP
Australasia, 2 Spinningfields Square, Manchester, M3 3AP
Second Floor Front, Grampian House, 144 - 146 Deansgate, Manchester, M3 3EE
Second Floor Right, Grampian House, 144 - 146 Deansgate, Manchester, M3 3EE
Grampian House, 144 - 146 Deansgate, Manchester, M3 3EE
Unit G22, 2 Spinningfields Square, Manchester, M3 3AP
Spinningfields Magistrates Court, Crown Square, Manchester, M60 1PR
2 Spinningfields Square, Manchester, M3 3AP
First Floor, Rational House, 64 Bridge Street, Manchester, M3 3BN

Appendix 2 – Planning constraints

Article 4 Direction - Removal Of PD Rights Change Of Use From Class C3 To Class C4
Article 4 Direction - City Centre PD Restriction - Class B1(a) To C3
Coal Authority - Development Low Risk - Name: DEVELOPMENT_LOW_RISK_AREA
Conservation Area - Deansgate Conservation Area 1985
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -
Area Team Boundary - Name: CENTRAL