MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

Planning

Growth & Development

Delegated officer report for planning application

Application no.	144619/FO/2025
Date registered valid:	9 December 2025
Proposal:	Proposed alteration to existing elevation at ground floor.
Address:	1 Hillcourt Street, Manchester, M1 7HU
Ward(s):	Hulme Ward
Applicant:	Mr Karawan Farooq & Mahmood Sewkani
Agent (if any):	Mr M Farooq Building Design Services
Case officer:	Michael Pearson Tel: 0161 219 2735 Email: michael.pearson@manchester.gov.uk
Recommendation:	Refuse

Date of recommendation: 20/01/2026

Application details

Type of application: Full Application Consent

Development type: Minor Other

Date of site visit:

Standard consultations:
Printed: 15 December 2025 Expired: 8 January 2026

Neighbour notifications
Printed: 15 December 2025 Expired: 8 January 2026

Site notice
Posted: 19 December 2025 Expired: 12 January 2026

Press advert
No press advert had been published

Departure from Development Plan: No

Environmental Statement: Not required

Description of site/building

The application relates to the detached three storey property present at 120-124 Grosvenor Street. The site is bounded by Grosvenor Street, as well as Sidney Street and Hillcourt Street. The property is a mid to late Victorian former end terrace building that originally abutted a property to the east, now demolished, and backed onto a row of terrace properties to the north. The western facing elevation of the property features a former cart entrance and cobbled access. The building is completed in red brick and a slate tile roof. The northern elevation of the property features a now redundant goods lift, the property's eastern facing elevation features a rear yard and an elevation completed in render where it had previously abutted another property. The use of the application site at ground floor comprises of 4no commercial units, this being 1no bar/drinking establishment use (Sui Generis), 1no café (Class E(b)), and 2no Class E retail units. The site's upper floors are vacant having last been in use as offices (Class E (g)(i)). Access to the commercial class E unit affected by the proposals is possible from Hillcourt Street. The application is subject to a live planning permission for the erection of a three storey side extension and the change of use of its upper floors to 28no bedspaces for student accommodation (Sui Generis), along with associated external alterations.

Listed building: Not applicable

Conservation area: Not applicable

Tree Preservation Order: Not applicable

Description of area

The neighbouring area forms that of the Oxford Road Corridor, an extension of the City Centre of Manchester that provides access to its heart and that of the neighbouring university campuses. Built development along the corridor varies significantly in age, design and scale, with larger tower

blocks in the form of Circle Square being situated to the north of where the Mancunian Way crosses over Oxford Road. Built development closer to that of the application site is typically smaller scale, with a row of commercial properties situated to the west of it being only three storey. Immediately to the north of the site lies the Sugden Sports Centre. To the south of the application site lies the Grade II listed former Picturehouse and Former Adult Deaf and Dumb Institute. To the west of the site lies All Saints Park and the eight storey Grosvenor Building, to the east of the site lies the Grade II listed Oddfellows Hall and 94-98 Grosvenor Street. Neighbouring uses largely comprise of light commercial class E retail uses, drinking establishment uses, takeaway uses and educational uses, the latter forming part of the Manchester Metropolitan University Campus.

Description of development

The application seeks consent for the insertion of a new doorway to the property's Sidney Street elevation.

The proposal would see the removal of a basement and ground floor window, as well as sandstone lintel and original brickwork. In its place a recessed external staircase would be situated which would then give way to a new dedicated access to the ground floor commercial unit.

The materiality of the proposed door, recess and external stair has not been confirmed.

Planning History

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

142467/FO/2025 - Erection of three storey side extension and associated external alterations to create Purpose Built Student Accommodation (Use Class Sui Generis) comprising 28no bedspaces – Approved August 2025.

132276/FO/2021 - Change of use of existing unused first floor rear areas from last known use, light industrial (Class B2), to a function room (Class A3) and microbrewery (Class B2) to form part of the Sandbar which is on the ground floor. Second floor rear areas change of use from last known use, light industrial(Class B2) to offices (Class B1). New internal stair from Sandbar to the first floor areas. Internal reconfigurations to create safe separation and access between different uses. New window to Sidney Street – Application Approved June 2022.

115205/FO/2017 - Placement of tables and chairs on the pavement for licensed drinking – Approved April 2017.

113858/FO/2016 - Change of use from storage areas to Shop (Use Class A1) at first floor and 2 No. residential flats at second floor together with erection of new stair and lift access – Approved February 2017.

070461/FO/2003/C2 - Change of use to cafe/takeaway and elevational alterations – Application approved May 2004.

052942/FU/CITY2/97 - Change of use of part ground and part first floor to Class A3 (Food and Drink) – Approved November 1997.

052511/JO/CITY2/97 - Removal of condition 6 on application 046097/FU/CITY2/94 (change of use to A3 (Food & Drink) use) – Approved March 1998.

046097/FU/CITY2/94 - Change of use from office/ storage to restaurant/sandwich bar & cafe/bar and 2 no retail units on ground floor with 1st & 2nd floors manufacturing to offices retaining 2 no retail units on 1st floor – Approved December 1994.

Consultations & Notification Responses

Publicity – A site notice and press notice were published. Neighbouring properties were notified of the proposals by letter. One letter of objection was received. The reasons cited for the objection can be summarised as follows:

- The proposal would interfere with the outdoor seating area approved under permission 115205/FO/2017.
- The recessed entrance would provide a location for anti-social behaviour.
- The building is of some heritage value and consideration must be given to replacement materials.

Environmental Health – No objection.

Greater Manchester Police – The proposals should not provide a recessed entrance. Any new doorway should prevent access to a recess. Any new door should be to secured by design standards.

Highway Services – No objection subject to informatives relating to highway works.

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-Stat1 – Core Growth Area
- Policy JP-Strat2 – City Centre
- Policy JP-P2 – Heritage

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 CC1 – Primary Economic Development Focus: City Centre and Fringe
- Policy CC2 – Retail
- Policy CC9 – Design and Heritage
- Policy CC10 – A Place for Everyone
- Policy C10 – Leisure and the Evening Economy
- Policy EN1 – Design Principles and Strategic Character 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 DC10 – Food and Drink uses
- Policy DC26 – Development and Noise

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Chapter 12 – Achieving well-designed and beautiful places
- Chapter 16 – Conserving the Historic Environment

Draft National Planning Policy Framework (2025)
The government has published a consultation National Planning Policy Framework which is intended to improve housebuilding rates through a clearer, more predictable and faster policy basis for decision and plan making. Whilst this is a draft NPPF for consultation it is considered that the development proposals are in accordance with the general thrust of policy contained within it.

Oxford Road Corridor Strategic Regeneration Framework Guidance (SRFG) (2019)
Guide to Development in Manchester Supplementary Planning Document and Planning Guidance (Adopted April 2007)

Issues

Principle of the Development

The proposal would see the insertion of a new doorway in a commercial property in order to provide a dedicated entrance to one of its commercial units. It is understood that the commercial Class E unit affected by the proposals spans both the basement and ground floor of the site, being accessed off of Hillcourt Street via an existing stepped access. The commercial Class E unit was occupied consistently as a restaurant use until late 2025, with the permission for the permitted use dating back to 2004 with permission number 070461/FO/2003/C2. Notwithstanding this, the principle of the insertion of a doorway to aid in access to the commercial unit is considered acceptable and would accord in principle with Places for Everyone Plan Policies JP-Strat1 and JP-Strat2, Core Strategy Policies SP1, CC1, CC2, C10 and DM1, and Oxford Road Corridor SRFG, subject to the matters discussed below.

Visual Amenity and Heritage

The application site is a Victorian end-terrace former warehouse property with surviving lift hoist and lift hoist doors. The property is one of the older surviving buildings within the Oxford Road Corridor and is emblematic of the former character of the area during the height of Manchester's industrial age. Due to this, the application site is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset. Despite this significance, the site has been subject to a large number of unsympathetic additions, this includes unauthorised and poorly designed signage, bricked up former window openings, unauthorised air intake and extract points, and a low quality boundary treatment. The commercial unit affected by the works is considered to be emblematic of this trend, with multiple unauthorised air intake and extract points serving it being situated on the external elevations of the building.

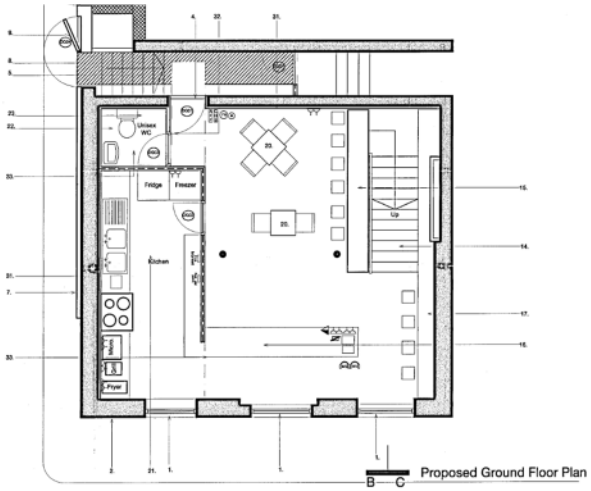


Figure 1: Consented ground floor layout to affected commercial unit, showing existing stepped access off of Hillcourt Street, all approved under planning permission 070461/FO/2003/C2.



Figure 2 and 3 (From left to right): Existing stepped access from Hillcourt Street & application site's Sidney Street elevation showing signs of unsympathetic alterations.

The application site notwithstanding the above, is subject to a extant planning permission for the erection of a three storey side extension, the change of use of its upper floors to student accommodation and associated external alterations, that would see the restoration and repair of the building's façade. This repair and restoration includes the basement and upper ground floor windows proposed to be removed, with the aforementioned consent seeking to replace the basement window with a more historically sensitive unit, as well as see the insertion of a reclaimed brick surround.

An objection has been received in which concern was cited over the proposal's impact on the heritage significance of the building, with the objector stating that due to this significance consideration must be given to any new materials proposed.

The submitted supporting information with the proposal states that the development will provide a clear legible entrance to the commercial unit affected. This is despite the fact that the existing entrance is already visible from Sidney Street and that the unit successfully operated as a café/restaurant for over twenty years.

The proposed development is considered would continue the trend highlighted above, in which this non-designated heritage asset is subject to unsympathetic alterations that are poorly designed and continue to erode features of heritage significance to the detriment of the overall appearance of the application site and its contribution to the wider street scene. Furthermore, the materiality of the proposed staircase, alcove/recess and door have not been confirmed, thus providing an insufficient level of information in order to determine the exact impact of the proposals. Notwithstanding this, the proposed works are poorly designed, in that it would see the

insertion of a door that is a clear departure and visual downgrade in design terms from that of the property's original doors that front out onto Grosvenor Street (Pictured below).



Figure 4: Application site's original entrances off of Grosvenor Street featuring ornate surround, timber column detail and sandstone steps.

In light of the above, it is considered the proposal would result in a poorly sited and unsympathetically designed entrance on a non-designated heritage asset that would provide no identifiable public benefit. Thus, the proposals are considered to be contrary to Places for Everyone Plan Policy JP-P2, Core Strategy Policies SP1, CC9, EN1, EN3 and DM1, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Residential Amenity

The wider application site lies in a variety of commercial uses, one of which is a drinking establishment that operates an outside seating area along Sidney Street and Grosvenor Street. The upper floors of the application site are subject to a live planning permission for the creation of student accommodation. The proposed entrance way would be recessed, providing a refuge from the street and a location hidden away from natural surveillance during the hours in which the ground floor commercial unit is not in operation. Such a hidden location could provide a reasonable location for anti-social behaviour to the detriment of local amenity, particularly that of the student accommodation approved within the upper floors of the application site. An objection has been received which cited concern over the potential of the proposal to provide a potential location for anti-social behaviour. Furthermore, Greater Manchester Police within their consultation response make clear that any new access is not recessed. In light of this information, it is considered the proposal would worsen local amenity by virtue of the introduction of a secluded refuge thereby encouraging anti-social behaviour, contrary to Core Strategy Policy DM1 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Accessibility

The commercial unit as existing features a stepped access located off of Hillcourt Street. It is acknowledged that the unit does not benefit from level access and that this is a short coming to the commercial unit's offer. The proposed access would not address this short coming, seeing the creation of another stepped access on site. The proposal has been accompanied by minimal information stating that options for disabled access were considered but were discounted due to their infeasibility, what these options were or why exactly they were not workable has not been confirmed. The submitted supporting information goes onto state that a moveable disabled access ramp will be used to allow for disabled persons to gain access, however, no further information on this and whether such an arrangement is actually feasible due to the incline such a ramp would have to have to overcome the proposed stairs has been submitted. On this basis, the proposal would not provide inclusive access for people whose mobility may be impaired, contrary to Core Strategy Policies SP1, CC10 and DM1, the Guide to Development in Manchester

Supplementary Planning Document and Planning Guidance and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Highways Safety

The proposed doorway would front onto the public highway, with a set of recessed external steps, no part of the development would encroach onto the public highway. Highway Services do not object to the proposal subject to informatives relating to highway works. On this basis, the proposal is acceptable in this regard and accords with Core Strategy Policy DM1 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Conclusion

In light of the above, the proposed development has been found to have an unacceptable impact on the appearance of the application site, a non-designated heritage asset, and local street scene, with it not having an identifiable public benefit to outweigh the recognised harm. Furthermore, the development would provide a secluded refuge likely to encourage anti-social behaviour to the detriment of local amenity. Lastly, the proposed access would fail to provide level access for those whose mobility is impaired, with no convincing justification being provided to demonstrate why this has not been proposed. The development is therefore contrary to Places for Everyone Plan Policies JP-Strat1, JP-Strat2 and JP-P2, Core Strategy Policies SP1, CC9, CC10, EN1, EN3 and DM1, the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework. The application is therefore recommended for refusal.

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: Refuse

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. However, the issues identified are considered to be so fundamental that it has not been possible to negotiate a satisfactory way forward and due to the harm which has been clearly identified within the reason for the refusal, approval has not been possible.

Reasons for recommendation to refuse

1) By virtue of the proposed doorway's poor design and how it would see the removal of features of heritage significance, causing a low level of less than substantial harm to the significance of the non-designate, as well as the lack of information in regard to the proposal's materiality, the proposed development would cause an unacceptable impact on the character and appearance of the application site and the neighbouring street scene, with no recognisable public benefit being generated by its implementation. The proposal is therefore contrary to Places for Everyone Plan Policy JP-P2, Core Strategy Policies SP1, CC9, EN1, EN3 and DM1, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

2) The applicant has failed to provide sufficient justification for why disabled access cannot be provided on site, nor have they demonstrated an acceptable alternative access arrangement. The proposed development would not provide inclusive access for people whose mobility may be

impaired which is contrary to the Manchester City Council's adopted Core Strategy Policies SP1, CC10 and DM1, The Guide to Development in Manchester Supplementary Planning Document and the National Planning Policy Framework.

3) The proposed recessed entrance, by virtue of its secluded nature would provide a potential refuge for anti-social behaviour, thereby worsening local amenity contrary to Core Strategy Policy DM1 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified

Highway Services
Environmental Health
Greater Manchester Police

Scruffy Murphys And Holy City, Grosvenor Street, Manchester, M1 7HL
The Pub Zoo, 126 Grosvenor Street, Manchester, M1 7HL
Flat 14, 126 York Street, Ardwick, Manchester, M1 7XN
Flat 13, 126 York Street, Ardwick, Manchester, M1 7XN
Flat 6, 126 York Street, Ardwick, Manchester, M1 7XN
Flat 5, 126 York Street, Ardwick, Manchester, M1 7XN
Flat 17, 126 York Street, Ardwick, Manchester, M1 7XN
Flat 16, 126 York Street, Ardwick, Manchester, M1 7XN
Flat 15, 126 York Street, Ardwick, Manchester, M1 7XN
Flat 12, 126 York Street, Ardwick, Manchester, M1 7XN
Flat 11, 126 York Street, Ardwick, Manchester, M1 7XN
Flat 10, 126 York Street, Ardwick, Manchester, M1 7XN
Flat 9, 126 York Street, Ardwick, Manchester, M1 7XN
Flat 8, 126 York Street, Ardwick, Manchester, M1 7XN
Flat 7, 126 York Street, Ardwick, Manchester, M1 7XN
Flat 4, 126 York Street, Ardwick, Manchester, M1 7XN
Flat 3, 126 York Street, Ardwick, Manchester, M1 7XN
Flat 2, 126 York Street, Ardwick, Manchester, M1 7XN
Flat 1, 126 York Street, Ardwick, Manchester, M1 7XN
Sand Bar, 120 Grosvenor Street, Manchester, M1 7HL
122 Grosvenor Street, Manchester, M1 7HL
124 Grosvenor Street, Manchester, M1 7HL
Dominoes Pizza, 126 York Street, Ardwick, Manchester, M1 7XN
131 Grosvenor Street, Manchester, M1 7HE
Sugden Sports Centre, 114 Grosvenor Street, Manchester, M1 7HL
Flat 2, Scruffy Murphys, 126 Grosvenor Street, Manchester, M1 7HL
Flat 1, Scruffy Murphys, 126 Grosvenor Street, Manchester, M1 7HL

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
Area Team Boundary - Name: CENTRAL