Planning

Growth & Development

Delegated officer report for planning application

Application no.	144027/VO/2025
Date registered valid:	22 September 2025
Proposal:	Installation of new steel car port structure with roof mounted solar PV array located within the existing yard to the rear of the property. Installation of free-standing 2.6m high timber gates and fencing to the vehicle entrance of yard to the rear of the property.
Address:	Blackley Cemetery Office And Yard, Victoria Avenue, Blackley, Manchester, M9 8JP
Ward(s):	Higher Blackley Ward
Applicant:	Manchester City Council
Agent (if any):	Mr Alexander Hodkin Drees & Sommer UK Ltd
Case officer:	Ellie Knowles Tel: 0161 219 6633 Email: ellie.knowles@manchester.gov.uk
Recommendation:	Approve
Date of recommendation:	**20 November 2025**

Application details

Type of application: Regulation 3 Consent

Development type: Minor Other

Date of site visit: 8 October 2025

Standard consultations:
Printed: 3 October 2025 Expired: 24 October 2025

Neighbour notifications
No neighbour notifications have been printed and sent.

Site notice
Posted: 8 October 2025 Expired: 29 October 2025

Press advert
Published: 7 October 2025 Expired: 28 October 2025

Departure from Development Plan: No

Environmental Statement: Not required

Description of site/building

The application site relates to a modern (1959) curtilage building to the Grade II listed crematorium chapel. It is set back and elevated on a grass bank 105 metres northeast of and facing the listed building separated by a tree-lined avenue (Rose Walk). Running in front of the building is Willow Walk an internal access road which provides vehicular access with a small parking area in front. It provides Registrar, Chapel of Remembrance and associated back-office and maintenance services.

Its significance derives from its contemporaneous design and construction with clarity of design, by the same architect, and using the same materials as the listed chapel. It has group value with the main chapel and its own distinctive features in the same Modernist style.

Its most striking feature is a 2-storey brown brick tower on the front elevation that has a hexadecagonal plan form, with vertical exposed concrete fins. This elevation comprises its special interest and contributes to the architectural interest of the main chapel. By its association with the listed building, it has the potential to be curtilage listed and is treated as such for the purposes of this application.

At the rear, the building has an open-sided central courtyard with a series of ancillary rooms around the perimeter providing a parks office, tool store, switch/boiler room, drying room and staff facilities. These are accessed under a canopy roof and secured by the original timber doors. There is extensive parkland planting to the north, east and south and parking at the front and to the north-west.

Listed building: Curtilage Listed Building in the setting of Grade II Building

Conservation area: Not applicable

Tree Preservation Order: Not applicable

Description of area

The host building is set within extensive, landscaped grounds, containing a Grade II listed building, graveyard and remembrance garden.

The Chapel of Remembrance building and cemetery offices is set within the southern section of Blackley Cemetery at the north-eastern end of a short north-east - south-west tree lined avenue (Rose Walk) that connects the chapel and office to the listed crematorium.

The site is accessed from Victoria Avenue (A6104), with a second access road via Chapel Lane off Blackley New Road.

The area surrounding the site is largely residential in character.

Description of development

Listed Building Consent for the installation of a new steel car port structure with roof mounted solar PV array located within the existing yard to the rear of the property, alongside the installation of free-standing 2.6m high timber gates and fencing to the vehicle entrance of yard to the rear of the property.

Alongside this, planning permission is sought as part of this application for external alterations to the building.

In totality, the works comprising both the listed building consent (144028/LO/2025) and planning application entail the following, to be carried out:

1. Installation of 35No. Solar PV panels mounted to a steel carport structure within the rear Yard compound.

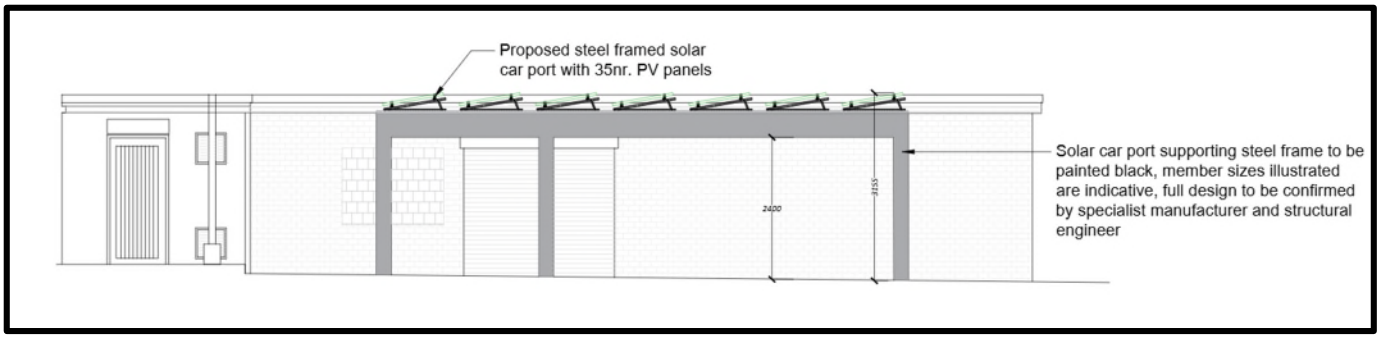


Figure 1: Proposed steel carport structure

2. Solid timber gates with fence side panels are to be installed to the Yard entrance to a height of 2.6m, that would replace the existing vehicular barrier.

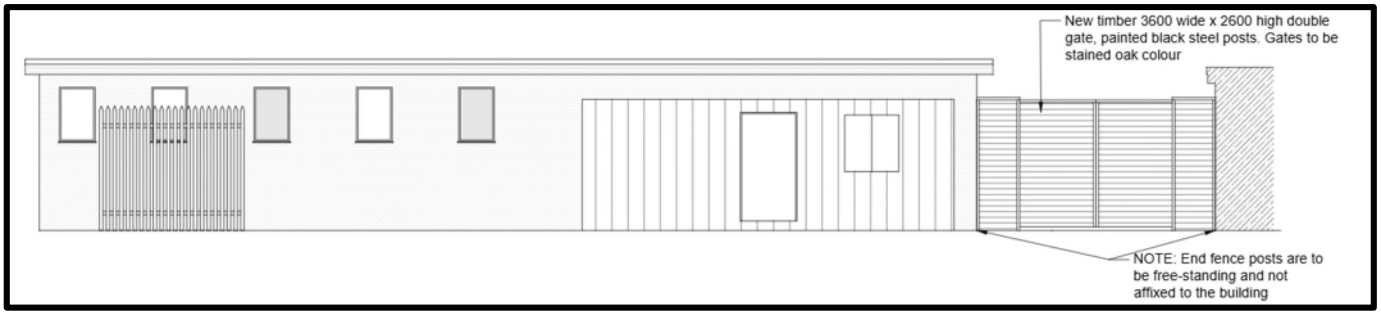


Figure 2: Proposed access gates and fencing



Figure 3: Proposed location of development within the service yard, Green (Carport) & Orange (Gates & fencing).

Consultations & Notification Responses

Local responses
None

Consultee responses

Manchester Airport Safeguarding Officer – No objections.

Relevant Planning History

At the application site –

141805/LO/2024 – Listed Building Consent for the installation of floor mounted air sourced heat pumps and enclosure, replacement flat roof coverings and rooflights, replacement external windows and doors and installation of cavity injected wall insulation. Approved 05.06.2025.

141804/VO/2024 – City Council Development for the installation of floor mounted air sourced heat pumps and enclosure, replacement flat roof coverings and rooflights, replacement external windows and doors and installation of cavity injected wall insulation. Approved 05.06.2025.

138652/LO/2023 – City Council Development Listed Building Consent for installation of Wi-Fi access points and associated cabling. Approved 30.01.2024

132396/VO/2021 – City Council Development to enclose 5no. original concrete roof light domes with clear acrylic domes with GRP surround. Approved 29.03.2022.

130138/LO/2021 – Listed Building Consent for the replacement of cremators, and associated plant and ventilation system, internal and external alterations. Approved 26.07.2021.

130137/VO/2021 – City Council Development for replacement of Cremators, and associated plant and ventilation system, internal and external alterations. Approved 26.07.2021.
087437/VO/2008/N1 – City Council Development external alterations to form access panel to basement. Approved 01.10.2008.

History of negotiations

No negotiations were entered into with the agent, given that the submitted scheme adhered to detailed pre-application discussion and therefore was considered policy compliant.

Local Planning Policies

Places for Everyone (2022-2039) – Places for Everyone is a long-term plan of nine Greater Manchester districts for jobs, new homes, and sustainable growth. It has been published by the GMCA on behalf of the nine districts and took effect and became part of the statutory development plan on March 21, 2024.

The PfE Plan and its policies are now a material planning consideration in the determination of planning applications. The PfE Plan and its policies must therefore be given full weight in the planning balance.

Manchester Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2012-2027) - The Core Strategy was adopted on the 11 July 2012 and replaces a large number of policies in Manchester's Unitary Development Plan. Parts of the policies have been superseded by the Places for Everyone Plan.

The Unitary Development Plan (UDP) for the City of Manchester (1995) - The Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester was adopted in 1995 and has largely been replaced with the policies contained within the Core Strategy. However, there are a number of policies that are extant.

The relevant **Places for Everyone** policies for this application are as follows:

JP-S1 – Sustainable Development
JP-S2 – Carbon and Energy
JP-P1 – Sustainable Places
JP-P2 – Heritage

The relevant **Core Strategy** policies for this application are as follows:

DM 1 – Development Management
SP 1 – Spatial Principles (partially superseded by PfE)
EN 3 – Heritage (partially superseded by PfE)
EN 4 – Reducing CO2 Emissions by Enabling Low and Zero Carbon Development (partially superseded by PfE)
EN 6 – Target Framework for CO2 reductions from low or zero carbon energy supplies (partially superseded by PfE)
EN 7 – Energy Infrastructure opportunities
EN 8 – Adaptation to Climate Change (partially superseded by PfE)
EN 15 – Biodiversity and Geological Conservation (partially superseded by PfE)

EN 16 – Air Quality (partially superseded by PfE)

The relevant saved **UDP** policies for this application are:

DC19 – Listed Buildings
DC26 – Development and Noise

Historic England Advice Note 18: Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency

National Planning Policy Framework

The NPPF (December 2024) sets out broad national policies on themes such as housing, historic environment, town centres, design, climate change and the Green Belt. Central to the broad policy direction contained within the NPPF is the notion of sustainable development; development which effectively balances economic, social and environmental factors. The Local Planning Authority consider the following sections relevant to this proposal.

- Section 2 – Achieving sustainable development
- Section 4 – Decision-making
- Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places
- Section 14 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- Section 16 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Paragraph 8 states *"Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):*

a) ***an economic objective*** *– to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;*
b) ***a social objective*** *– to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and*
c) ***an environmental objective*** *– to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy."*

Paragraph 98 (d) states that development should "*ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise and are retained for the benefit of the community*."

Paragraph 135 (c) states that developments should be "*sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);."*

Paragraph 136 states "*Trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments, and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change*."

Paragraph 167 states "*significant weight [should be given] to support energy efficiency and low carbon heating improvements to existing buildings, both domestic and non-domestic (including through installation of heat pumps and solar panels where these do not already benefit from permitted development rights).*"

Paragraph 202 states "*Heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance*."

Paragraph 207 states "*Local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance*."

Paragraph 208 states "*LPAs should ensure that any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal is avoided or minimised*."

Paragraph 210 states "*In determining applications, LPA's should take account of, the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness*."

Paragraph 212 states "*when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance."*

Paragraph 213 states "*Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification*."

Paragraph 215 states "*where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use*."

Paragraph 219 states "*Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance*."

Issues

Principle of development:

The application forms part of a city-wide programme of decarbonising the City's assets in line with meeting its net zero carbon commitment as set out in the Climate Change Action Plan 2020-2025.

As such, the proposal is considered pursuant to policies JP-S1 and JP-S2 Places for Everyone, policies EN3, EN4, EN5, EN7 and EN8 of the Core Strategy (2012), and would help the Crematorium achieve its energy targets. As such, the principle of development is considered acceptable.

However, consideration must be given to the proposal's appearance, alongside its impact upon the curtilage listed heritage asset and adjacent listed building and its setting.

Impact on heritage and visual amenity:

The application has been subject to detailed pre application discussion and continued dialogue, supported by a Heritage Impact Assessment which considers the historic significance of the building and the impact of the proposed works on the historic fabric and heritage value. In summary, it is considered that the works will have less than substantial harm upon the curtilage listed building.

Carport structure with PV array

The proposed solar PV carport will be sited behind the main offices and Chapel of Remembrance, within the confines of the service yard area (as shown in figure 3). The proposed carport would comprise a flat roof steel framed structure (9m by 9m) installed on new pad foundations to support perimeter beams and roof joists having overhead clearance of 2.4m to the underside of the frame. The proposed carport will be painted black (Jet Black RAL 9005).

The solar PV array is to be secured to a supporting galvanised steel tilted framework mounted on the steel beam and joist structure with suitable fixings to accommodate wind uplift. PV panels and cable connections would be accessible to be safely maintained from below the structure avoiding the need to access from height above the roof.

Cables trays are also to be supported and fixed to the steel framework, the cable route would be via underground ducting and to enter the building and terminate within the storeroom.

From the details shown on Drawing: P24606.301, it is understood that the proposal within the rear yard area would be well screened from public views by the siting, height, mass and scale of the Chapel of Remembrance and office buildings when viewed from Willow Walk, as seen on site. The proposed PV array is to be laid at 10° pitch with the highest points slightly protruding above the Office and Yard flat roof to minimise visual impact as detailed on drawing ref: 24606.300, 24606.301 and 24606.302.

The PV array will enable the cemetery office and its associated back-office functions to reduce its operational carbon cost and to transition away from the current fossil-fuel system in the most sustainable way. The proposal supports the Councils net zero carbon reduction ambitions and will deliver financial savings for the Council in the long term.

Boundary treatment (access)

New boundary treatment in the form of free-standing 2.6m high timber gates and fencing (with black painted steel posts – RAL 9005) to the vehicle entrance of yard area is proposed. It is noted that the end fence posts will not be affixed to the building. The proposed gates would assist to screen and minimise the visual impact of the Carport structure as detailed on drawing ref: P24606.301. The proposed timber gates and fencing would be stained in an oak colour.

It is believed that on balance, the proposed works will meet an established need and would still sustain the heritage significance of the curtilage listed building. It is considered that less than substantial harm would be caused and on balance when weighed against the public benefits that the proposal will deliver, including reduction in operational carbon cost, the proposed development is considered acceptable and would have minimal impact to the external appearance of the building.

<u>Impact on residential amenity:</u>

The application property is set within extensive ground in a relatively isolated position away from any residential properties, as such the proposed solar Photovoltaic array is not considered to give rise to amenity impacts upon neighbouring residential properties.

On the basis, this proposal is considered compliant with saved policy DC26 of the UDP, Policies DM1, SP1 of the Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework which seek to protect amenity.

Impact on Highway Safety:

The proposed development would not interfere with the existing staff and visitor parking provision, as such is considered acceptable in this regard.

Conclusion:

The proposals are supported, given that harm to the heritage asset has been minimised through selective site location and adjustments to the positioning of the proposed infrastructure and site appropriate mitigation measures. Where it has been identified, it is at the lower end of the less than substantial scale.

Significant public benefits would be delivered enabling the public building to transition from fossil fuels to clean and sustainable air-sourced heat pump and solar PV technology whilst preserving the integrity, fabric and character of the curtilage building. The proposal accords with Core Strategy policies EN3, EN4, EN6, EN8 and EN9 of the Core Strategy, JP-P1, JP-P2 and JP-S2 of Places for Everyone, saved UDP Policy 19.1 and the guidance within Section 16 of the NPPF.

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

Article 35 Declaration
Officers have worked with the applicant/agent in a positive and proactive manner based on seeking solutions to problems arising in relation to dealing with the application.

Condition(s) 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 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the documents labelled:

   - 'Proposed Arrangement', numbered '24606.300', stamped as received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on the 22/09/2025.
   - ‘Proposed Elevations 1', numbered '24606.301', stamped as received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on the 22/09/2025.
   - ‘Proposed Elevations 2', numbered '24606.302', stamped as received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on the 22/09/2025.
   - 'Proposed Roof Plan', numbered '24606.303', stamped as received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on the 22/09/2025.
   - Email from Equans dated and received 20/11/2025 at 16:39pm (RAL Colour - 9005)

   - Heritage Statement (Prepared by Turley, Dated September 2025)
   - Design & Access Statement (Prepared by Drees & Sommer, Dated September 2025)

   Stamped as received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on 05/01/2025 unless specified otherwise.

   Reason - To ensure the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans, pursuant to Policies SP1 and DM1 of the Core Strategy.

Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified

Manchester Airport Safeguarding Officer

Appendix 2 – Planning constraints

Article 4 Direction - Removal Of PD Rights Change Of Use From Class C3 To Class C4
Aircraft Safeguarding Zone - Aircraft Safeguarding - Not Affected
Coal Authority - Development Low Risk - Name: DEVELOPMENT_LOW_RISK_AREA
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: NORTH AREA