

Planning

Growth & Development

Delegated officer report for planning application

Application no.	143965/LO/2025	
Date registered valid:	12 September 2025	
Proposal:	Listed building consent internal fitout to first and second floors with removal of partitions	
Address:	Merchants Warehouse, Castle Street, Manchester, M3 4LZ	
Ward(s):	Deansgate	Ward
Applicant:	Mr Simon Davies Tim Groom Architects	
Agent (if any):	Mr Simon Davies Tim Groom Architects	
Case officer:	Sam Tel: 0161 219 Email: sam.elliott@manchester.gov.uk	Elliott 2856
Recommendation:	Approve	
Date of recommendation:	31/10/2025	

Application details

Type of application: Listed Building Consent

Development type: Listed building alteration

Date of site visit: 15 October 2025

Standard consultations:

Printed: 22 September 2025

Expired: 13 October 2025

Neighbour notifications

Printed: 22 September 2025

Expired: 13 October 2025

Site notice

Posted: 2 October 2025

Expired: 23 October 2025

Press advert

Published: 30 September 2025

Expired: 21 October 2025

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

Listed Building Consent was acquired in 2015 by Castlefield Estates Ltd. for shell and core works to Levels 1 and 2 (Ref: 107844/LO/2015/C1). Subsequently a Listed Building Consent application was approved by the then tenant to fit out the office spaces to their requirements, including the addition of glazed/stud partitioning, M&E, floor coverings etc (Ref: 108241/LO/2015/C1).

The applicant has also submitted a heritage statement which outlines works undertaken by the former tenant without Listed Building Consent during the tenancy. The report identifies these as unauthorised works, consisting of the installation of brick skin walls, roller shutters, kitchen fitout, glazed partitions, internal signage, stud partition walls, cabinetry, as well as the removal of consented glazed partitions and raised access floor within the server room. These unauthorised works were confirmed on site 15/10/2025.

Description of development

Listed Building Consent is sought to revert Levels 1 & 2 back to shell and core condition, in line with the previous 2015 consent 107844/LO/2015/C1). Accordingly, the works would see the removal of all alterations consented by the most recent tenant under application 108241/LO/2015/C1, including the removal of modern solid/glazed office partitions, M&E, floor coverings and fitted kitchen units. These works would also see the removal of all unauthorised works.

At level 01, the proposed works would reinstate the glazed entrance door and remove the tenant reception space and security shutter. The dividing partitions and glazed screens would be cleared to revert the floor plan back to an open office arrangement. The kitchenettes would also be removed as well as any metal ductwork installed. Unconsented feature wall finishes such as brick cladding, wallpaper and company messaging are to be removed. Plastered linings will be reinstated, surface defects made good and re decorated.

Within the Level 01 server room partially formed by partitions to be removed, the plasterboard ceiling would also be removed, and the existing floor joists would be exposed. The perforated ceiling panels will be reinstated within the ceiling bulkhead. AC plant would be removed with elevations made good.

At level 02, the proposed works would remove the kitchenette and storage room within the first structural bay and reinstate the view through the building. Partitions and screens would be removed to revert back to an open plan arrangement. As at level 01, feature wall finishes such as brick cladding, wallpaper and company messaging would similarly be removed. Plastered linings are to be reinstated, surface defects will be made good and redecorated.

All small power, underfloor data cabling, ventilation, IT, audio visual, lighting, mechanical fixtures and floor finishes that were installed by the previous tenant will be removed throughout and reinstated to suit an open plan arrangement. Existing carpeted finishes will be replaced throughout.

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 Context

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 of unauthorised works upon the Heritage Asset

Listed Building Consent was not sought for the above works, nor a methodology statement submitted outlining a careful and considered procedure for carrying out these works, workmanship or making good. It is however considered that the unauthorised works – including but not limited to the installation of brick skin walls in Level 01 Room 1 and Level 02 Room 1 constructed on the inside face of the c1995 plastered wall surface; the stud wall and glazed partitions erected on both levels; kitchen and cabinetry fitouts within Level 01 Rooms 03 and 16 and Level 02 Rooms 01; the roller shutter installed at Level 01 Room 1, and the removal of the raised access floor of Level 01 Room 16 – are likely to have impacted historic fabric and have altered the character of the space.

Impact upon the Heritage Asset

The proposed works aim to reverse the current consented and unconsented office fit-out alterations to Levels 01 & 02. The proposals would remove and make good all elements that were

added as part of the former tenant's consented scheme, as well as the unauthorised works identified in the Heritage Statement.

At levels 01 and 02, where dividing partitions and glazed screens would be cleared the floor plan would revert back to an open office arrangement and restore the spacious character to the interior from which the listed asset's significance partially derives.

The proposal would remove any brick cladding, exposing the plasterboard wall lining behind to reinstate the lining as per the 2015 LBC approved drawings (Ref: 107844/LO/2015/C1). The height of the wall and skirting profile would match all other central piers and the wall would be skim finished and decorated, reversing the unauthorised works.

Where the kitchenettes, wallpaper and company messaging would be removed from these levels, the works would not impact original historic fabric, only affecting the plastering of the modern fitout. Plastered linings would be reinstated, surface defects made good and re decorated to ensure the long-term preservation of the listed asset via repair work.

With the removal of partitions, the Level 01 server room would be removed. The condition of remaining elevations, ceilings and floors would be restored, with the dense plasterboard ceiling removed up to the junction with the ceiling rafts and reinstated with perforated ceiling panels within the ceiling bulkhead. The floor's joists would be exposed and the raised access floor panels reinstated. The AC units associated with the server room would be removed and made good.

Additionally, it is not considered that the reinstatement of the glazed entrance door and removal of the tenant reception space would result in any significant harm to the internal character of the listed asset.

At level 02, the non-original carpeted finishes would be replaced throughout and it is not considered that this element would result in any significant harm. Where small power, lighting and mechanical fixtures that were installed by the previous tenant would be removed throughout, they would be made good or reinstated to suit an open plan arrangement. These works would not impact upon any historic fabric or alter the spatial character of the unit and are considered to have a neutral impact on the listed asset.

In the event of an approval, it is recommended that a methodology statement is conditioned to provide full and final details of the proposed works, ensuring that the works are carried out in accordance with careful and considered conservation principles.

In view of the above, the proposed works are considered to have a neutral impact on the character and historic fabric of Levels 01 & 02 of the Grade II listed building resulting in an overall neutral impact on the special interest of the Grade II listed Merchants Warehouse as a whole. In so doing the two floor levels would be reverted back to the 2015 consented shell and core scheme, enabling the spaces to be re let as office spaces to ensure the continual, viable, long-term use of the two levels. The floorplates will be returned to their consented configuration which will have the benefit of removing non-consented items.

Conclusion

In consideration of the above and subject to condition, the works are considered to have a neutral impact on the special interest of the heritage asset and prepare levels 01 and 02 for a future tenant to ensure a future viable use. The works 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 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 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 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:

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-02-DR-A-95303 - Demolition Plan - Level 02 P03
1241-TGA-XX-01-DR-A-95304 - Proposed Plan - Level 01 P03
1241-TGA-XX-02-DR-A-95305 - Proposed Plan - Level 02 P03
1241-TGA-XX-01-DR-A-95352 - Proposed Ceiling Plan - Level 01 P03
1241-TGA-XX-02-DR-A-95353 - Proposed Ceiling Plan - Level 02 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 EMERGENCY LIGHTING LAYOUT LEVEL 1
22741(63)210-P1-A1 PROPOSED LIGHTING AND EMERGENCY 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 reinstatement detail P02
1241-TGA-XX-01-DR-A-32200 - Reinstated entrance screen and door 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
1241-TGA-XX-XX-RP-A-FI_10_10-00250 - Design and Access Statement

As well as the Heritage statement REV.A dated 10th October 2025 and received 10/10/2025 by the City Council as Local Planning Authority.

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. Notwithstanding the details as set out in condition 2 above, prior to the strip out works detailed in the 1241-TGA-XX-XX-SH-A-FI_40_78_00001 Revision P02 works index being implemented, a detailed methodology statement for the strip out works shall be submitted and approved by the City Council as Local Planning Authority.

For the avoidance of doubt, this shall include:

- details of methods and equipment used for careful removal and protection of historic fabric

The approved details shall be implemented as part of the development.

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. Notwithstanding the details as set out in condition 2 above, prior to any repair work being carried out, details of the methods and samples of the products for any making good detailed in the 1241-TGA-XX-XX-SH-A-FI_40_78_00001 Revision P02 works index shall be submitted and approved by the City Council as Local Planning Authority.

For the avoidance of doubt, this shall include:

- Details of the methods and products used for the making good of fixings into original timber, plaster and brickwork
- Samples of each of the repair and reinstatement products.

The approved details shall be implemented as part of the development.

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

Third Floor, 21 Castle Street, Manchester, M3 4SW

First And Second Floor, 21 Castle Street, Manchester, M3 4SW

Flat 24, Canal Wharf House, 15 Blantyre Street, Manchester, M15 4YY

Flat 23, Canal Wharf House, 15 Blantyre Street, Manchester, M15 4YY

Flat 22, Canal Wharf House, 15 Blantyre Street, Manchester, M15 4YY

Flat 21, Canal Wharf House, 15 Blantyre Street, Manchester, M15 4YY

Flat 20, Canal Wharf House, 15 Blantyre Street, Manchester, M15 4YY

Flat 19, Canal Wharf House, 15 Blantyre Street, Manchester, M15 4YY

Flat 18, Canal Wharf House, 15 Blantyre Street, Manchester, M15 4YY

Flat 17, Canal Wharf House, 15 Blantyre Street, Manchester, M15 4YY

Flat 16, Canal Wharf House, 15 Blantyre Street, Manchester, M15 4YY

Flat 15, Canal Wharf House, 15 Blantyre Street, Manchester, M15 4YY

Flat 14, Canal Wharf House, 15 Blantyre Street, Manchester, M15 4YY

Flat 13, Canal Wharf House, 15 Blantyre Street, Manchester, M15 4YY

Flat 12, Canal Wharf House, 15 Blantyre Street, Manchester, M15 4YY

Flat 11, Canal Wharf House, 15 Blantyre Street, Manchester, M15 4YY

Flat 10, Canal Wharf House, 15 Blantyre Street, Manchester, M15 4YY

Flat 9, Canal Wharf House, 15 Blantyre Street, Manchester, M15 4YY

Flat 8, Canal Wharf House, 15 Blantyre Street, Manchester, M15 4YY

Flat 7, Canal Wharf House, 15 Blantyre Street, Manchester, M15 4YY

Flat 6, Canal Wharf House, 15 Blantyre Street, Manchester, M15 4YY

Flat 5, Canal Wharf House, 15 Blantyre Street, Manchester, M15 4YY

Flat 4, Canal Wharf House, 15 Blantyre Street, Manchester, M15 4YY

Flat 3, Canal Wharf House, 15 Blantyre Street, Manchester, M15 4YY

Flat 2, Canal Wharf House, 15 Blantyre Street, Manchester, M15 4YY

Flat 1, Canal Wharf House, 15 Blantyre Street, Manchester, M15 4YY

Catalan Square, Duke Street, Manchester, M3 4WD

Fourth And Fifth Floor, 21 Castle Street, Manchester, M3 4LZ

The Wharf, 6 Slate Wharf, Manchester, M15 4ST

Flat At, The Wharf, 6 Slate Wharf, Manchester, M15 4ST

The Lock Keepers Cottage, 14 Castle Street, Manchester, M3 4LZ

21 Castle Street, Manchester, M3 4LZ

Flat 15, Ship Canal House, Slate Wharf, Manchester, M15 4SX

Flat 13, Ship Canal House, Slate Wharf, Manchester, M15 4SX

Flat 10, Ship Canal House, Slate Wharf, Manchester, M15 4SX

Flat 8, Ship Canal House, Slate Wharf, Manchester, M15 4SX

Flat 5, Ship Canal House, Slate Wharf, Manchester, M15 4SX

Flat 17, Ship Canal House, Slate Wharf, Manchester, M15 4SX

Flat 16, Ship Canal House, Slate Wharf, Manchester, M15 4SX

Flat 14, Ship Canal House, Slate Wharf, Manchester, M15 4SX

Flat 12, Ship Canal House, Slate Wharf, Manchester, M15 4SX

Flat 11, Ship Canal House, Slate Wharf, Manchester, M15 4SX

Flat 9, Ship Canal House, Slate Wharf, Manchester, M15 4SX

Flat 7, Ship Canal House, Slate Wharf, Manchester, M15 4SX

Flat 6, Ship Canal House, Slate Wharf, Manchester, M15 4SX

Flat 4, Ship Canal House, Slate Wharf, Manchester, M15 4SX

Flat 3, Ship Canal House, Slate Wharf, Manchester, M15 4SX

Flat 2, Ship Canal House, Slate Wharf, Manchester, M15 4SX

Flat 1, Ship Canal House, Slate Wharf, Manchester, M15 4SX

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) -

Flood Zone Plus Climate Change -

Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -

Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -

Area Team Boundary - Name: CENTRAL