

Planning**Growth & Development****Delegated officer report for planning application**

Application no. 143525/FO/2025

Date registered valid: 25 September 2025

Proposal: Installation of new mezzanine level, ramp and handrail, with stepped access and entrance doors with glass fanlight above

Address: The Manchester Centre For Buddhist Meditation, 21 High Lane, Manchester, M21 9DJ

Ward(s): Chorlton Ward

Applicant: Mr Francis Beresford, Manchester Centre for Buddhist Meditation

Agent (if any): Mr Carl Thorgaard, Graham Holland Associates

Case officer: Holly Wright
Tel: 0161 219 6381
Email: holly.wright@manchester.gov.uk

Recommendation: Approve

Date of recommendation: 13 November 2025

Application details

Type of application: Full Application Consent

Development type: Minor Other

Date of site visit: 14 October 2025

Standard consultations: Printed: 8 October 2025 Expired: 29 October 2025

Neighbour notifications: Printed: 8 October 2025 Expired: 29 October 2025

Site notice: No site notice has been produced

Press advert: No press advert had been published

Departure from Development Plan: No

Environmental Statement: Not required

Description of site/building/area

Listed building: Not applicable

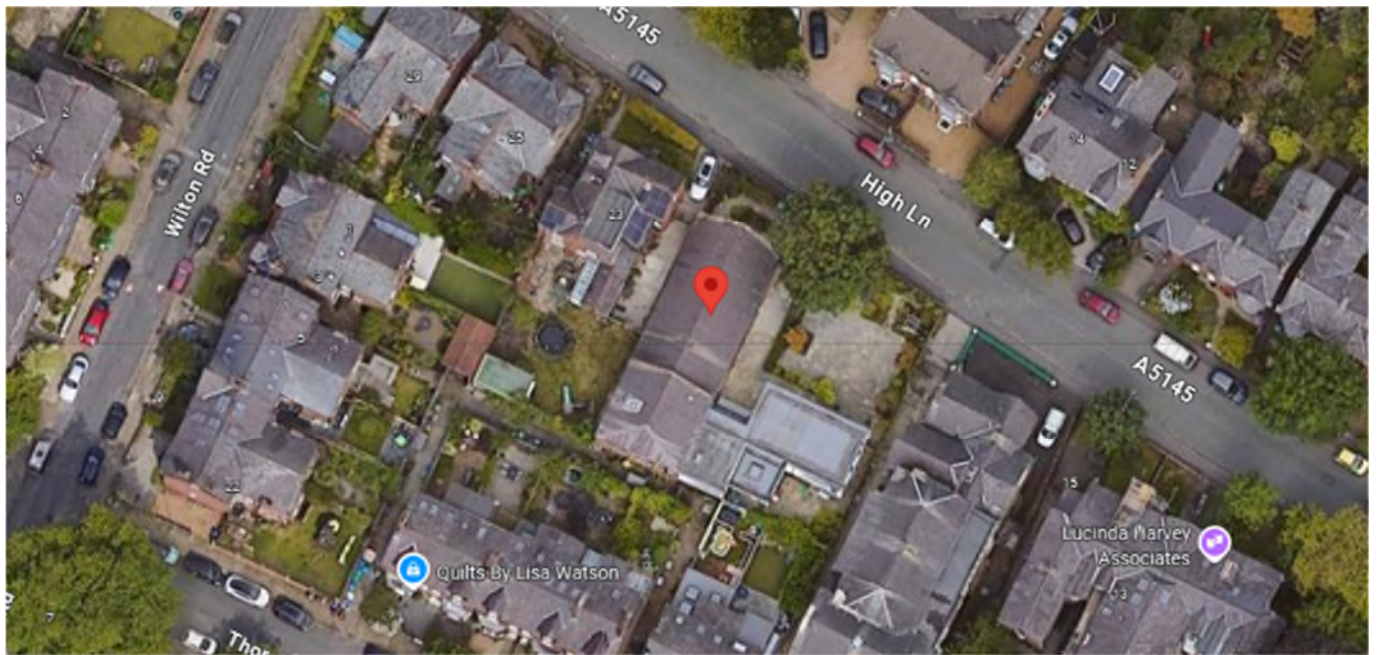
Conservation area: Not applicable

Tree Preservation Order: Not applicable

The building under consideration is located in Chorlton-cum-Hardy, east from Chorlton Green Conservation Area. It was constructed in 1908 as an extension to the 1898 Methodist Church and is the only remnant of the original church that occupied the site. The church was constructed at a time of the rapid residential expansion of the area in the late Victorian era, constructed to serve the new population.

The building, constructed in brick with stone dressing, presents an attractive, well-proportioned and ornamented frontage to High Lane, with tall windows, paired doors set in carved surrounds, pinnacles and buttressed pilasters, and consistent brick elevation punctuated with pointed arched windows and buttressed pilasters to the side elevations, representative of its age, type and original use. It is an important local landmark in its setting, with a strong and important contribution to the local character and sense of history of the local area.

Due to its social, historic, architectural and townscape interest, the building is considered an important non-designated heritage asset.





Description of development

The applicant is seeking planning permission for the installation of a mezzanine level, a ramp and handrail, with stepped access and entrance doors with glass fanlight above.

Consultations & Notification Responses

Local residents – no representations received.

MCC's Highways Services made the following comments in response to the application:

- No highway issues are raised with this application.
- Highways understand that there is currently a small residential facility on site and that the proposed development is for a further three bedrooms with supporting rooms on the first floor.
- The proposals are not expected to add an unacceptable number of additional vehicle trips onto the highway network. It is therefore accepted that the adjacent highway network can facilitate the additional demands with no highway safety or capacity concerns.
- The site is well accessed by sustainable modes of transport. Regular bus services and tram services are available within an acceptable walking distance.
- There is no onsite parking available currently and that will continue in the future. There is however unrestricted parking to the front of the property with numerous spaces regularly seen as available along High Lane and other nearby side streets.
- In line with MCC Residential Guidelines, secure and sheltered cycle parking provision should be considered within the curtilage of the site. Insufficient information is available to accurately define the number of cycle spaces required. However, it is recommended that two spaces are made available.
- It is understood that no works are proposed that will affect the boundary features.
- No information has been provided on the method of refuse storage nor the method of collection. It is therefore assumed these will not change.

MCC's Environmental Health Services made no objection to the application, requesting conditions relating to the control of construction hours, acoustic insulation, and external plant, in the event of an approval.

Chorlton Civic Society - no representations received.

Policies

The following policies are considered relevant in the consideration of this application.

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 DM1 – Development Management
- Policy SP1 – Spatial Principles
- Policy EN3 – Heritage

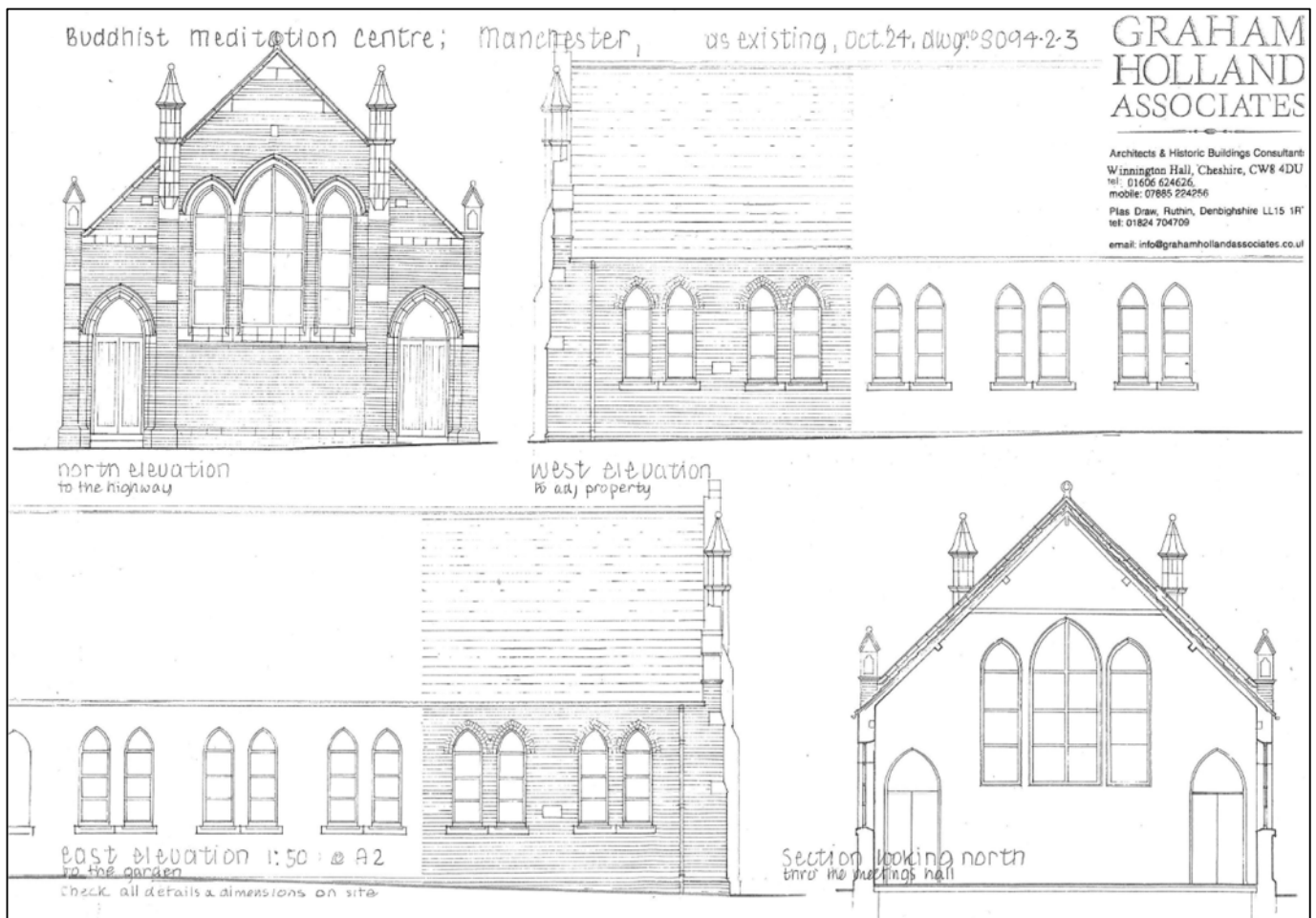
The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024)

- Chapter 12 – Achieving Well-Designed Places
- Chapter 16 – Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

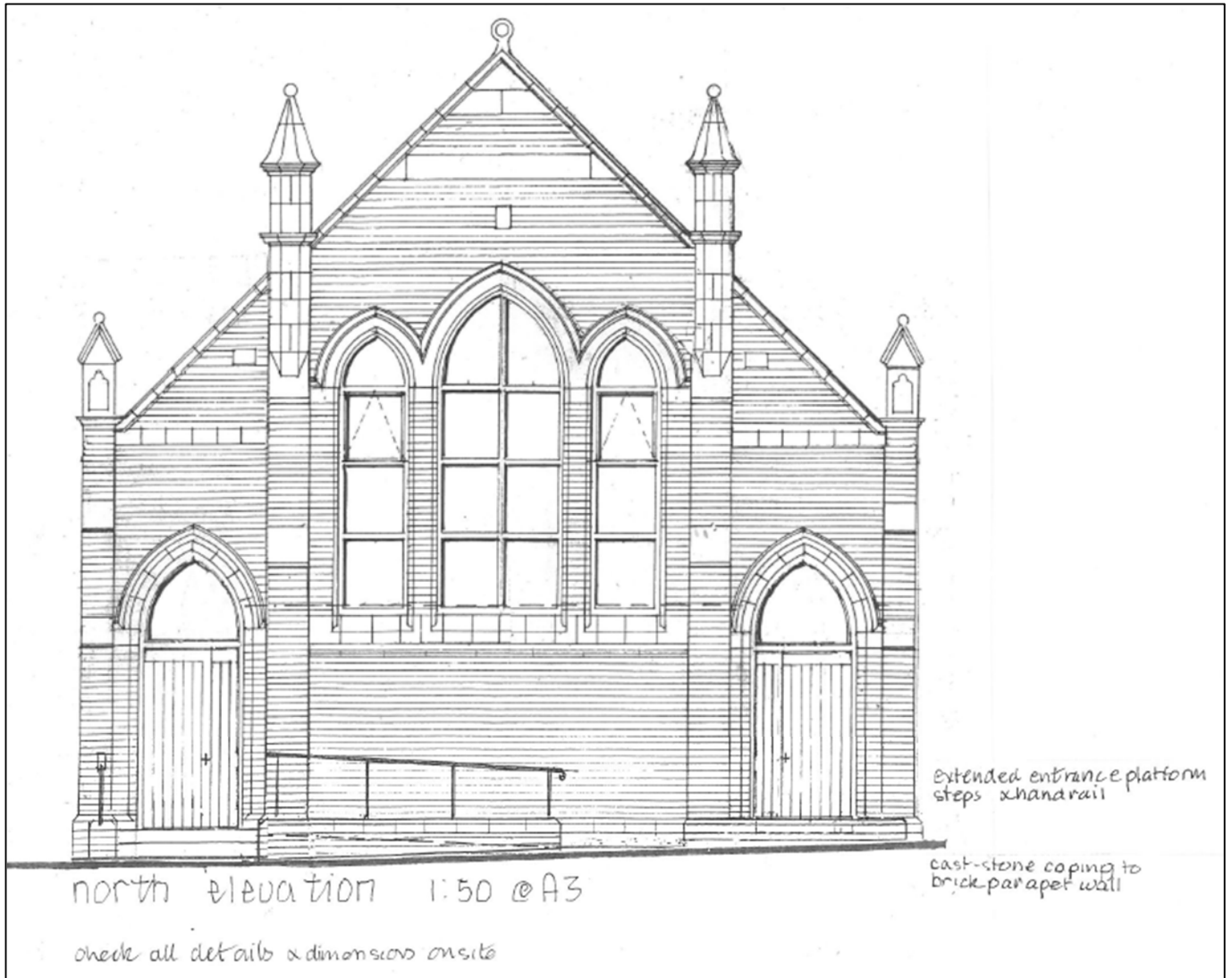
Paragraph 216: “The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.”

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.

- Policy JP-P1 – Sustainable Places
- Policy JP-P2 – Heritage



Submitted existing elevations



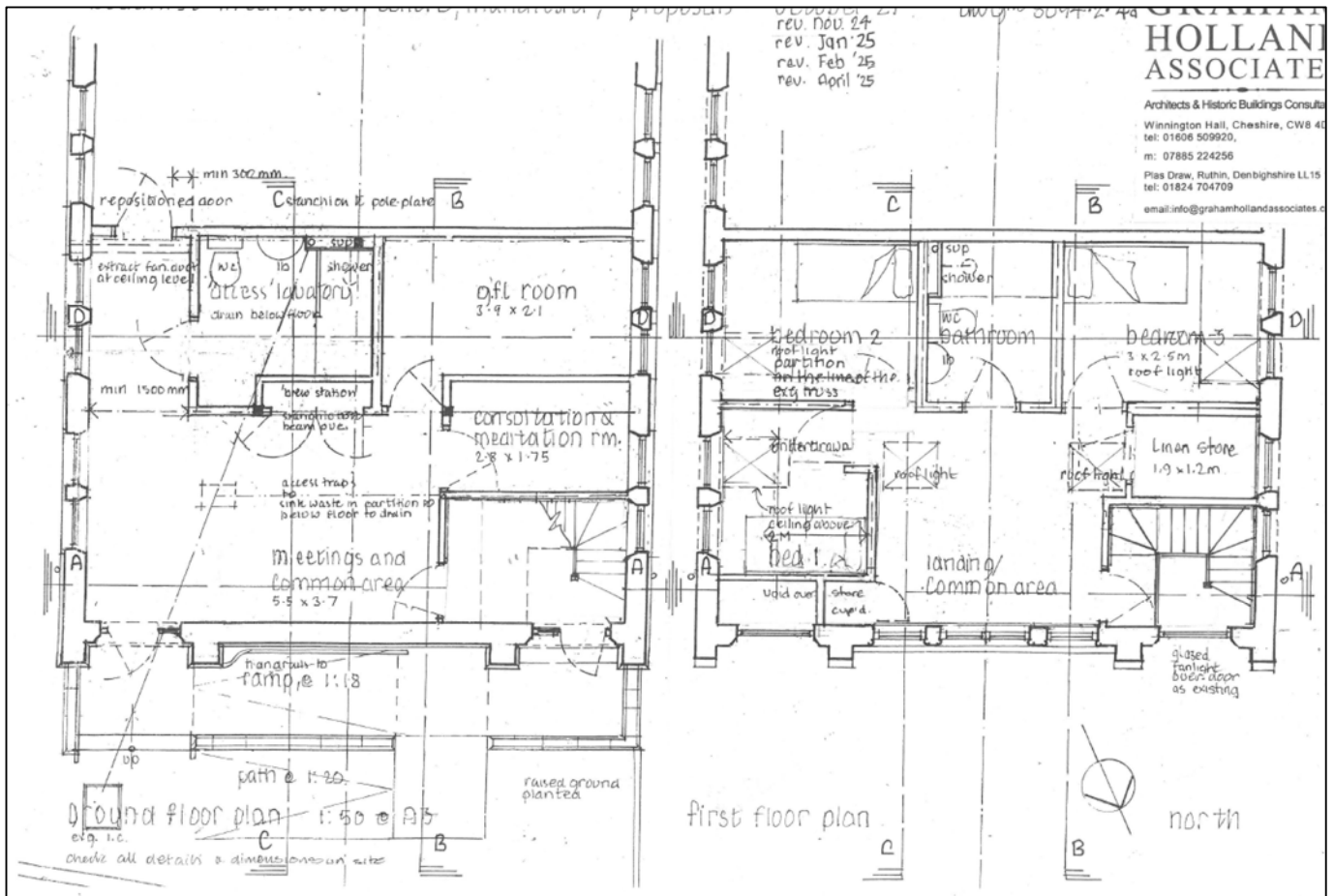
Submitted proposed north elevation



Submitted proposed west elevation



Submitted proposed east elevation



Submitted proposed ground and first floor plan

Issues

Principle – the principle of the proposal, to install a mezzanine floor, an access ramp, handrail, and steps, together with elevational alterations including replacement entrance doors and windows/glazing, is acceptable. Notwithstanding this, consideration must be given to the proposal's impact upon the visual and residential amenity of the area as well as the character and appearance of the application building as a non-designated heritage asset.

Internal alterations at ground floor level – the proposal includes the insertion of stud partitions at ground floor level to provide 2no. rooms, 1no. WC, and 1no. meeting room. Whilst the subdivision introduces a degree of harm by interrupting the historic openness, height, and volume of the original space, the impact is considered to be moderate. The partitions would be of a lightweight and reversible nature, allowing for future reinstatement of the original layout without permanent loss of historic fabric. Furthermore, such works do not constitute development requiring planning permission. On this basis, the proposed internal alterations are deemed acceptable.

Creation of a mezzanine floor – the proposal includes the insertion of a mezzanine floor to be supported on steel beams spanning between external walls and columns to provide 3no. bedrooms, 1no. bathroom and a linen store, accessed by a staircase with winders in north corner.

Planning permission is not generally required for internal works to non-designated heritage assets unless such works materially affect the external appearance or result in a change of use of the building. In the case of this application, whilst the mezzanine would intersect with side-facing windows thereby having some impact on the internal appreciation of the building's historic volume as well as its external appearance, the principal elevation would remain largely unaffected. The mezzanine would be positioned at windowsill level, avoiding any intrusion into the glazing of the building's most architecturally significant façade. For these reasons, the proposal is considered acceptable in heritage terms.

Entrance doors (northern/principal elevation) – the proposal includes the replacement of the existing timber doors on the building's principal elevation with single-leaf solid oak boarded timber doors. The replacement doors would replicate the appearance of the existing doors, with the glazed fanlight detail retained. Given the deteriorated condition and poor fit of the current doors, the proposed replacements would enhance the building's appearance and contribute positively to its overall character, while also improving thermal performance. Additionally, the existing fanlights are to be replaced with clear double-glazed units set within the original frames. This approach would ensure minimal visual impact on the building's appearance and further supports improved energy efficiency. As such, the proposed works are considered acceptable

Windows – the proposal involves the replacement and upgrade of several existing windows and openings across the building. This includes the refurbishment of the existing windows on the northern (principal) elevation, incorporating slimline double-glazed panels within the original frames. Additionally, the side lancet windows on the western and eastern elevations are to be replaced with new hardwood frames replicating the existing arrangement, fitted with double-glazed units. Some opening lights are proposed at ground floor level to facilitate natural ventilation. Owing to their close resemblance to the original windows in terms of design and detailing, these alterations are considered to have a minimal impact on the appreciation of the building's character. Furthermore, the upgrades will enhance the building's thermal performance and are therefore considered acceptable.

Rooflights and vents - the proposal includes the installation of two conservation-style rooflights (Velux GGL MK08) and one vent to the western roof slope, along with three conservation-style rooflights (Velux GGL MK08) and one smaller extract vent to the eastern roof

slope. Whilst the works would result in a limited loss of historic fabric, the rooflights and vents are considered necessary to provide natural light and ventilation to the proposed mezzanine-level rooms. Their siting has been carefully considered to minimise visual impact, particularly in longer views of the principal elevation of the building, with the rooflights positioned to align with the side-facing windows located below. As such, given their conservation-style design and discreet placement, the proposed interventions are considered to have an acceptable impact on the character and appearance of the building.

Access ramp, handrail, and steps – the proposal includes the installation of an access ramp, handrail, and associated steps to the northern side of the building. The ramp will be constructed using red smooth-faced brick with buff stone upstands and steps, designed to closely match the existing masonry. The ramp surface will comprise textured buff-coloured paving, and a 50mm round powder-coated black metal handrail will be installed for safety. Whilst the addition will alter the appearance of the building's principal elevation, it is a necessary intervention to provide inclusive and equitable access. The design and materials have been carefully selected to respect the character of the building and its setting, with further safeguards secured via condition. As such, the proposed works are considered acceptable in terms of visual impact and accessibility improvements.

Impact upon non-designated heritage asset – Paragraph 216 of the National Planning Policy Framework indicates that *“the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset”*.

In this case, the proposed works are considered to be sensitive to the character and appreciation of the asset. The use of materials and finishes that reflect the existing palette ensures visual continuity, while new interventions, such as the mezzanine, rooflights, and ventilation elements, have been carefully sited to minimise their visual impact, particularly in relation to the building's principal elevation. As such, the proposals are not considered to result in substantial harm to the significance of the non-designated heritage asset and are therefore acceptable in heritage terms.

Residential amenity – no adverse impacts are anticipated in relation to residential amenity. The proposal does not include any new window or door openings, and as such, existing privacy conditions would remain unaffected. The introduction of new rooflights is not considered to give rise to additional opportunities for overlooking, given their positioning on the roof slopes of the building. Furthermore, the proposed ramp, steps, and handrail are modest in scale and design, and would not result in overshadowing or appear overbearing to neighbouring occupiers. The proposed use remains consistent with the established use of the site and is therefore considered acceptable in this context.

Waste storage – the current waste storage arrangements would be unaffected by the proposal.

Parking and highways impact – the current parking arrangements would be unaffected by the proposal. Further to this, MCC's Highways Services indicated that the proposal is not expected to add an unacceptable number of additional vehicle trips onto the highway network. It is therefore accepted that the adjacent highway network can facilitate the additional demands with no highway safety or capacity concerns. The site is well accessed by sustainable modes of transport. Regular bus services and tram services are available within an acceptable walking distance.

Cycle parking – MCC's Highways Services have requested that a condition be imposed requiring the provision of secure cycle storage facilities, in line with sustainable transport objectives and to encourage active travel. Whilst such a condition would ordinarily be appropriate for new developments or changes of use, in this case no change of use is proposed. As such, requiring additional infrastructure for an existing operational arrangement would be considered disproportionate and unnecessarily burdensome. It is therefore recommended that this condition is not attached.

Environmental Health – MCC's Environmental Health Services have requested that conditions be imposed relating to the control of construction hours, acoustic insulation, and external plant, should planning permission be granted. These measures are typically aimed at mitigating potential impacts on residential amenity. However, as the proposal does not involve a change of use, the imposition of such conditions on an existing operational arrangement would be considered unduly onerous and not reasonably related to the nature of the development. Therefore, it is recommended that these conditions are not attached in this instance.

Conclusion – given the above issues, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable in terms of its principle, appearance, impact upon visual and residential amenity, character and appreciation of the non-designated heritage asset, waste storage and parking. The proposal complies with policies DM1, EN3 and SP1 of the Manchester Core Strategy, policies JP-P1 and JP-P2 of Places for Everyone, and chapters 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

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 in a positive and proactive manner based on seeking solutions to problems arising in relation to dealing with the planning application. Minor issues have arisen during the consideration of this application and the officer negotiated with the agent to reach a satisfactory resolution.

Condition(s) to be attached to decision for approval OR Reasons for recommendation to refuse

1) 3-year time limit:

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

Reason - Required to be imposed pursuant to Section 91 of the Town and Country Act Planning Act 1990.

2) Specified plans:

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

Proposed ground floor plan shown on the drawing numbered '0894.2.4d', received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on the 22nd July 2025.

Proposed first floor plan shown on the drawing numbered '0894.2.4d', received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on the 22nd July 2025.

Section AA looking north shown on the drawing numbered '8094.2.5b', received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on the 22nd July 2025.

Section AA looking south shown on the drawing numbered '8094.2.6b', received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on the 22nd July 2025.

Section BB looking west shown on the drawing numbered '8094.2.7c', received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on the 22nd July 2025.

Section DD looking south shown on the drawing numbered '8094.2.8b' received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on the 22nd July 2025.

Section CC looking east shown on the drawing numbered '8094.2.9a', received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on the 22nd July 2025.

Proposed north elevation shown on the drawing numbered '8094.2.10c', received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on the 22nd July 2025.

Proposed east elevation shown on the drawing numbered '8094.2.11d', received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on the 3rd November 2025.

Proposed west elevation shown on the drawing numbered '8094.2.12d', received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on the 3rd November 2025.

Ramp elevation from the north, section looking south, plan of the ramp & path shown on the drawing numbered '8094.2.13', received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on the 22nd July 2025.

Section looking west shown on the drawing numbered '8094.2.14', received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on the 22nd July 2025.

Vertical sections of east & west walls shown on the drawing numbered '8094.2.15b', received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on the 3rd November 2025.

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

3) Materials:

The materials used in the external surfaces of the development hereby approved shall be as follows:

- Side-facing lancet windows in east and west elevation: bespoke hardwood frames, colour to be dark blue, similar in appearance to the existing windows present on the building
- Access ramp/steps to north of building: red smooth-faced brick with buff stone upstands and steps, similar in appearance to the existing masonry of the building. Surface of the ramp to be Marshall's Saxon buff, with a Woodkirk natural stone coping.
- Access ramp/steps handrail: powder-coated black metal 50mm round handrail.
- Rooflights to east and west roof slopes: conservation type by Velux GGL MK08.
- Entrance doors in north elevation: single-leaf solid oak boarded timber doors.
- Fanlights above entrance doors: clear double-glazed units in existing frames.
- Front-facing windows in north elevation: 'slimline' clear double-glazed units in existing frames.

Reason - In order to ensure a satisfactory appearance in the interests of visual amenity in accordance with policies SP1 and DM1 of the Core Strategy and the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Informatives

1) Information for Developers guidance documents can be downloaded using the following link:

http://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/500207/planning_and_regeneration/1962/additional_planning_guidance/3

2) Construction works shall be confined to the following hours:

- Monday - Friday: 7.30am - 6pm
- Saturday: 8.30am - 2pm
- Sunday / Bank holidays: No work

Reason - To safeguard the amenities of nearby residents pursuant to policies SP1, EN19 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy.

Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified

Highway Services
Environmental Health
Heritage & Urban Design
Chorlton Civic Society

23 High Lane, Manchester, M21 9DJ
22 High Lane, Manchester, M21 9DF
5 Thornbridge Avenue, Manchester, M21 9DN
20 High Lane, Manchester, M21 9DF
14 High Lane, Manchester, M21 9DF
9 Thornbridge Avenue, Manchester, M21 9DN
7 Thornbridge Avenue, Manchester, M21 9DN
3 Thornbridge Avenue, Manchester, M21 9DN
11 Thornbridge Avenue, Manchester, M21 9DN
1 Thornbridge Avenue, Manchester, M21 9DN
17 High Lane, Manchester, M21 9DJ
16 High Lane, Manchester, M21 9DF
12 High Lane, Manchester, M21 9DF
18 High Lane, Manchester, M21 9DF
13 Thornbridge Avenue, Manchester, M21 9DN

Appendix 2 – Planning constraints

Article 4 Direction - Removal Of PD Rights Change Of Use From Class C3 To Class C4
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Middle) -
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Middle) -
Area Team Boundary - Name: SOUTH AREA