30 April 2026

Delivered via Planning Portal

Rob Griffin
Manchester City Council
P O Box 532
Town Hall, Albert Square
Manchester
M60 2LA

Dear Rob,

FULL PLANNING APPLICATION RELATING TO FAÇADE AND ROOF ALTERATIONS AND EXTERNAL WORKS TO BLOCK 1, VICTORIA POINT, 44 HATHERSAGE ROAD, MANCHESTER

On behalf of Empiric Student Property ('the Applicant'), we are pleased to enclose a full planning application in order to facilitate the refurbishment of Block 1 at Victoria Point ('the Site') comprising external alterations to the existing building's façade and roof and a number of external works in line with the following description ('the Proposed Development'):

> *External alterations to Block 1 comprising replacement of existing cladding and windows, replacement of existing flat roof and provision for solar PV installation, erection of external buildings to contain Air Source Heat Pumps, substation, cycle storage, waste storage, installation of access ramp and associated works*

The application has been submitted via the Planning Portal (ref. PP-14346331) and is supported by a completed application form, this covering letter, Design and Access Statement (doc ref. Issue 1), along with the electronic copies of the architectural drawings listed below:

- Existing Site (*Location*) Plan (0814-BPA-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0110 P01), prepared by Bell Phillips
- Proposed Site Plan (0814-BPA-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-1010 P01), prepared by Bell Phillips
- Block 1 - Proposed Plan (0814-BPA-B1-ZZ-DR-A-1172 P01), prepared by Bell Phillips
- Block 1 - Proposed Elevations (0814-BPA-B1-ZZ-DR-A-1260 P01), prepared by Bell Phillips
- Block 1 - Proposed Sections (0814-BPA-B1-ZZ-DR-A-1360 P01), prepared by Bell Phillips
- Proposed Block 1 Typical Window Study (0814-BPA-B1-ZZ-DR-A-4021 P01), prepared by Bell Phillips
- Cycle and Bin Stores (0814-BPA-B1-ZZ-DR-A-4327-Block 1 P01), prepared by Bell Phillips

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- Block 1 Substation and ASHP Enclosure (0814-BPA-B1-ZZ-DR-A-4328 P01), prepared by Bell Phillips
- Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment (554029arMar26FV01_BNGA.docx), prepared by Greengage Environmental Ltd
- Statutory Biodiversity Metric, prepared by Greengage Environmental Ltd

The requisite application fee of £1,220.00 has been paid online via Planning Portal.

BACKGROUND

Victoria Point was originally developed as residential accommodation (Use Class C3) following the grant of the outline planning permission by Manchester City Council ('MCC') on 1st December 2006 (LPA ref. 077297/00/2005/N2), full design detail being approved via reserved matters application, granted on 3rd September 2007 (LPA ref. 082442/MO/2007/N2).

The six no. blocks at Victoria Point have operated as purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) since 2009. The Applicant acquired the Site in 2016 and undertook a series of minor works in 2017 to refurbish the complex. However, the Site requires further investment to bring it up to current market and environmental standards.

As such, the Applicant applied for a full planning permission (LPA ref. 139987/FO/2024, '2025 FPP') for the redevelopment of the Site and including the following works: "*Phased demolition and extension of the existing buildings to a maximum height of 12 storey's to form Purpose Built Student Accommodation (876 bedspaces in total) (Use Class Sui Generis), including associated ancillary internal and external amenity space, ground floor community/commercial (Use Class E, F1 and F2), hard and soft landscaping and associated highway works*".

Planning permission was granted by MCC on 7th October 2025. Following this, the Applicant has progressed the detailed design of the consented development. In doing so the decision has been made not to progress with the extension to Block 1, effectively decoupling it from the 2025 FPP and instead seeking consent for its refurbishment through a new standalone planning application which would retain the same building footprint and envelope with a range of upgrades to the exterior facades and roof alongside limited associated external works.

THE SITE

The Site comprises Block 1 at Victoria Point, it is currently in poor condition requiring upgrades in order to ensure its durability, safety and sustainability.

The Site is bound to the north-east and south by residential housings at Chelford Close/ Keswick Close/ Brandish Close and Hathersage Road respectively. Victoria Baths (Grade II* Listed) sits at the south-west of the Site. The Site can be accessed via Bax Road, connecting through Hathersage Road and A34 Upper Brook Street.

It benefits from a range of sustainable travel options. The Site is within walking distance of both University of Manchester and Manchester Metropolitan University campuses, which are at the north-west of the Site at 970m and 1.9km away respectively. It provides future occupiers with a good level of accessibility on foot or by bicycle to their places of study.

RATIONALE FOR THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The existing Block 1 has an external envelope constructed from white brick with areas of High-Pressure Laminate cladding integrated with the window assemblies. The windows are fixed with tall side hung 'vents' that provide

ventilation to the units. The roof and basement car park roof have no parapet and recent investigations have identified the following issues:

- the condition of the roof is at the end of its life and should be replaced
- there are leaks within the basement area that require remediation
- the fire risk assessment has identified 'intolerable' risks to the external facade construction and requires short term attention under the BSA 2022 regulations

Given the poor condition of Block 1, Empiric has proposed a series of improvements work to upgrade Block 1's environmental performance, appearance, safety and the generally the living condition of future occupiers. These include:

- Replacement of brick type and precast pigmented concrete and replacement of windows
- Replacement of existing flat roof and provision for solar PV installation
- Installation of an Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP), generator and associated enclosures
- Erection of a new substation
- Erection of detached cycle and waste stores.

PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT AND APPRAISAL

In accordance with the provisions of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Section 70(2) of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, this application must be determined against the adopted Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

In this case the adopted Development Plan comprises the following:

- Places for Everyone ('PfE') (adopted in March 2024)
- Manchester Core Strategy ('MCS') (adopted in July 2012), along with Addendum to Manchester Core Strategy 2024
- 'Saved' policies from Unitary Development Policies ('UDP') (adopted in July 1995 and alterations on various dates)

Material considerations include the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') (December 2024) and the Guide to Development in Manchester Supplementary Planning Document and Planning Guidance (SPD) (adopted in April 2007). The NPPF states that policies within it are material considerations and that due weight should be given to relevant policies in existing development plans according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF.

Relevant Policies and NPPF Provisions

Student Accommodation – MCS Policy H12 (Purpose Built Student Accommodation) establishes the criteria which MCC use to assess all proposed PBSA, including sites should be in close proximity to the University campuses or to a high frequency public transport route which passes the area; proposals should be designed to be safe and secure for their users, and avoid causing an increase in crime in the surrounding area; consideration should be given to the design and layout of the student accommodation in relation to adjacent neighbouring uses.

Design - PfE Policy JP-P1 (Sustainable Places) states that development should be distinctive, socially inclusive, resilient and durable. MCS Policy EN1 (Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas) expects development to maximise the opportunities for good design and enhance the overall image of the City. MCS Policy DM1 (Development Management) outlines key development management matters (including layout, scale, materials and appearance of the proposed development), to which all developments should demonstrate consideration at application stage.

The NPPF highlights the importance of achieving high standards of design (paragraph 131), whilst the 'Guide to Development in Manchester' SPD outlines the seven key principles, including design should respect and be informed by location; delivering good design with functionality; safe routes for pedestrians.

Heritage – PfE Policy JP-P1 (Sustainable Places) states that development should be distinctive with a clear identity that conserves and enhances the historic environment. PfE Policy JP-P2 (Heritage) advises that opportunities will be pursued to promote enjoyment, understanding and interpretation of the historic environment. MCS Policy EN3 (Heritage) states that the MCC will encourage development which enables the re-use of heritage assets. 'Saved' Policy DC19 (Listed Building) of the UDP states that, in determining planning applications for development involving or having an impact on buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, MCC will have regard to the desirability of securing the retention, restoration, maintenance and continued use of such buildings and to protecting their general setting.

Paragraph 212 of the NPPF states that "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).

Highways and Accessibility - PfE Policy JP-C8 (Transport Requirements of New Development) prioritises safe and convenient access to the site for all users. MCS Policy T1 (Sustainable Transport) state that developers should improve pedestrian safety. Paragraph 109 of the NPPF requires that transport issues are considered from the earliest stage of development proposals, so that the potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed and the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be identified, assessed and considered.

Principle of Development

The principle of development is established via the Site's existing use as PBSA and the approval of the 2025 FPP and the continued use as such. The Proposed Development does not change the lawful use of PBSA nor adjust the number of student bedspaces contained within and thus shall be deemed to be acceptable, and in accordance with MCS Policy H12 (Purpose Built Student Accommodation).

Design and Heritage

The Proposed Development does not seek to extend Block 1 as per the 2025 FPP. Key design principles, architectural detailing and the material palette of the Proposed Development will reflect those as endorsed by MCC through the 2025 FPP. MCC's assessment of that permission concluded less than substantial harm would be caused to the setting of Victoria Baths, largely arising due to the scale of the proposals (Blocks 5 and 6 in particular) relative to the Grade II* heritage asset. The Proposed Development focuses on refurbishing Block 1, to a matching design of Blocks 2-6, whilst roof mounted solar PV would be hidden below the building's parapet.

The substation, ASHP enclosure, cycle store and bin store whilst proposed to be finished in a range of materials are positioned discretely, are no larger than necessary and in some instances shielded by existing buildings and vegetation, they will not be visible from Victoria Baths of the public realm.

In light of the above it is considered that the Proposed Development would not harm the setting of Victoria Baths and therefore it is concluded that the Proposed Development accords with PfE Policy JP-P1 (Sustainable Places), PfE

Policy JP-P2 (Heritage), MCS Policy EN1 (Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas), MCS Policy DM1 (Development Management), MCS Policy EN3 (Heritage), 'Saved' Policy DC19 (Listed Building) of the UDP paragraphs 131 and 212 of NPPF, Guide to Development in Manchester SPD.

Highways and Accessibility

Vehicular access will remain as existing. It is however proposed to introduce a dedicated ramped pedestrian path leading to the building entrance, segregating pedestrians and vehicles for better road safety and prioritising safe and convenient access to Block 1. The Proposed Development also incorporates a secure cycle store with a capacity of 20 no. bicycles, whereas there is currently no cycle storage associated with Block 1.

To conclude, the Proposed Development seeks to promote sustainable travels and pedestrian safety, aligning with PfE Policy JP-C8 (Transport Requirements of New Development), MCS Policy T1 (Sustainable Transport) and Paragraph 109 of the NPPF.

Noise

The enclosed Block 1 Plant Noise Egress and Overheating Assessment, prepared by Sandy Brown, provides the acoustic analysis in relation to the proposed substation and ASHP enclosures confirming that the predicted external noise level at Brandish Close and Keswick Close (as the nearest noise sensitive premises) will meet the criteria, given that the plant will be designed such that the cumulative noise level at 1m from the worst affected windows of the nearby noise sensitive premises. Furthermore, the plant and equipment will have no impact on the façade sound insulation performance requirements to control noise ingress or on the overheating strategy for Block 1.

Therefore, the Proposed Development accords with CS Policy DM1, 'saved' Policy DC26 from UDP, paragraphs 187 and 198 of the NPPF.

Biodiversity

The enclosed Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment and Statutory Biodiversity Metric, prepared by Greengage, confirms the proposal will result in a net loss of 0.16 habitat units (equivalent to -53.19%). The proposed habitat creation includes modified grassland, biodiverse green roof and introduced shrub. Alternative options to achieve a 10% statutory biodiversity net gain have been explored, in which purchasing habitat units (of 0.20) from a third party habitat bank is considered the most suitable in this circumstance.

Given that the habitats will have be low value/ significance, they do not require condition assessments. Therefore, detail relating to the proposed biodiversity compensation and enhancement actions in relation to habitat creation and management can be secured via planning condition.

Overall, the Proposed Development accords with PfE Policy JP-G8, the NPPF.

Summary

The Proposed Development complies with all relevant national, regional and local planning policies and will not result in any adverse environmental impacts. As such, planning permission should be granted without delay.

I trust that you have all the information to enable you to register the application and approve the Proposed Development. Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

