MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

Planning

Growth & Development

Delegated officer report for planning application

Application no.	145408/LO/2026
Date registered valid:	11 March 2026
Proposal:	Listed Building Consent for the installation of a suspended acoustic ceiling.
Address:	Sunlight House, Quay Street, Manchester, M3 3JZ
Ward(s):	Deansgate Ward
Applicant:	PINS (Manchester) Ltd
Agent (if any):	Mr Jay Patel Savills
Case officer:	James Bridgman Tel: 0161 219 6202 Email: james.bridgman@manchester.gov.uk
Recommendation:	Approve
Date of recommendation:	28 April 2026

Application details

Type of application: Listed Building Consent

Development type: Listed building alteration

Date of site visit: 27 March 2026

Standard consultations:
Printed: 19 March 2026 Expired: 11 April 2026

Neighbour notifications
No neighbour notifications have been printed and sent.

Site notice
Posted: 27 March 2026 Expired: 20 April 2026

Press advert
Published: 24 March 2026 Expired: 16 April 2026

Departure from Development Plan: No

Environmental Statement: Not required

Description of site/building

Listed building: Grade II

Conservation area: Deansgate Conservation Area 1985

Tree Preservation Order: Not applicable

Sunlight House is located on the corner of Quay Street and Little Quay Street in the city centre of Manchester. Sunlight House is a Grade II listed building completed in 1932 by Joseph Sunlight, architect and developer, as the headquarters for his property business, with offices and shops to let. At the time, it was Manchester's tallest building. The building is also located within the Deansgate/ Peter Street Conservation Area.

The building is a 14 storey (15 including roof plant to western side) steel and concrete structure, clad in Portland stone. The building is almost square in plan, with three street frontages, and a large central light-well. Each of the three street facades are seven bays, with the two street corners expressed as three sided towers, which each rise to a four-level octagonal turret, topped by a domed lantern and finial. Behind and between the turrets, the top four floors are expressed as a mansard roof with multiple setback square dormer windows, which together with the turrets create a distinctive skyline and a major feature in the city.

The ground floor, mezzanine and basement areas subject of this application were previously occupied by a leisure use with a gym and swimming pool. Sunlight House has been extensively modernised throughout including refurbishment works previously throughout the building since its original construction.

The application site is located in the heart of the city centre. Quay Street contains a variety of commercial uses and buildings.

The ground floor, basement and mezzanine levels are likely to be refurbished following the recent approval of consents 142873/LO/2025 and 142872/FO/2025.

Description of development

This application refers to the ground floor of Sunlight House. The application has been submitted by the landlord, but the space is to be occupied by PINS Social Club, an entertainment and sports venue.

Listed Building Consent is sought for the installation of a suspended acoustic ceiling. The scope of the ceiling is shown below:

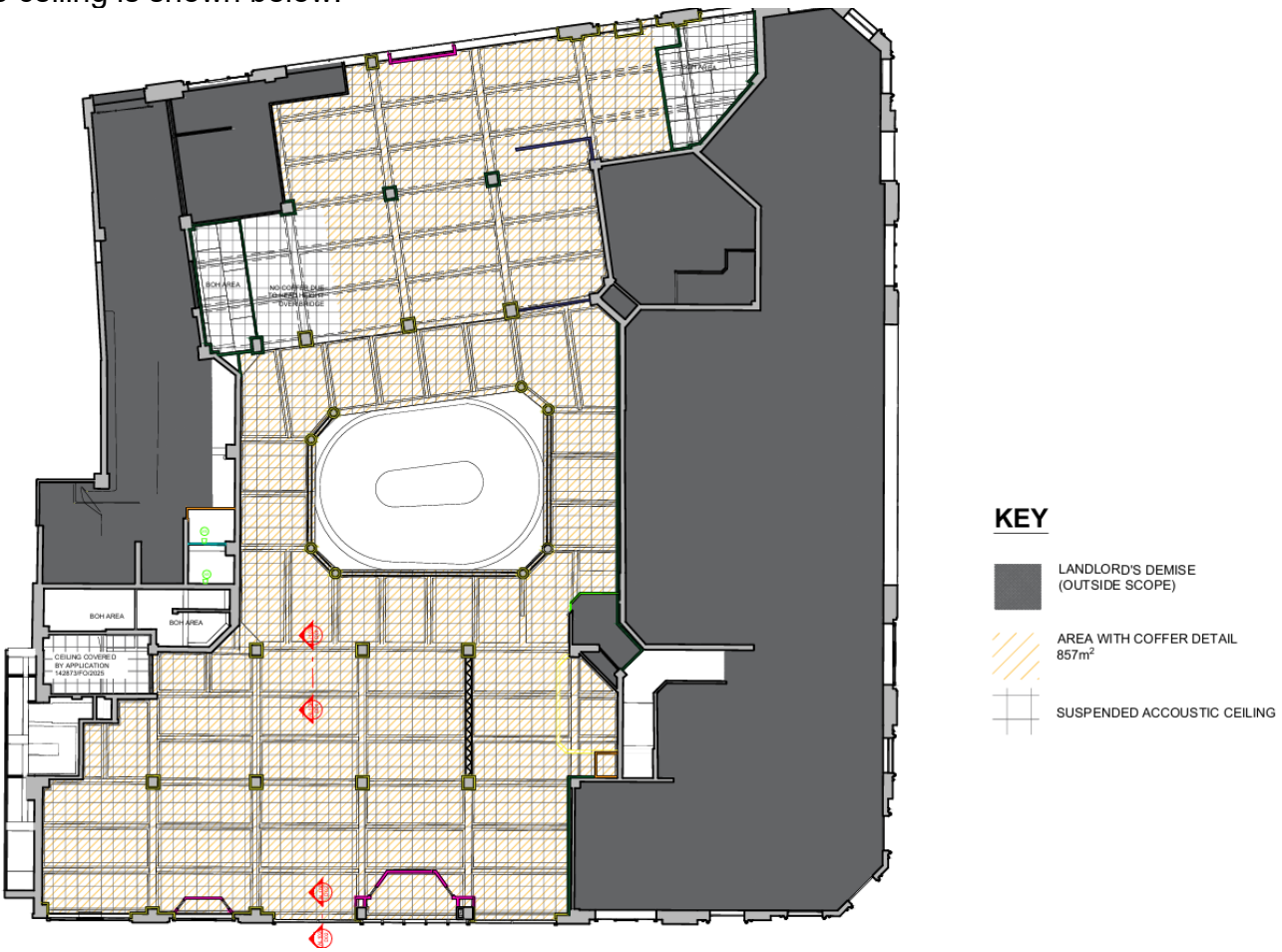
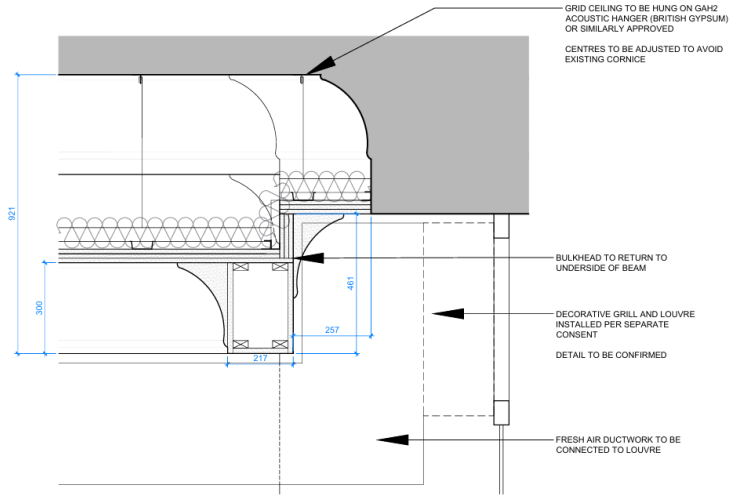
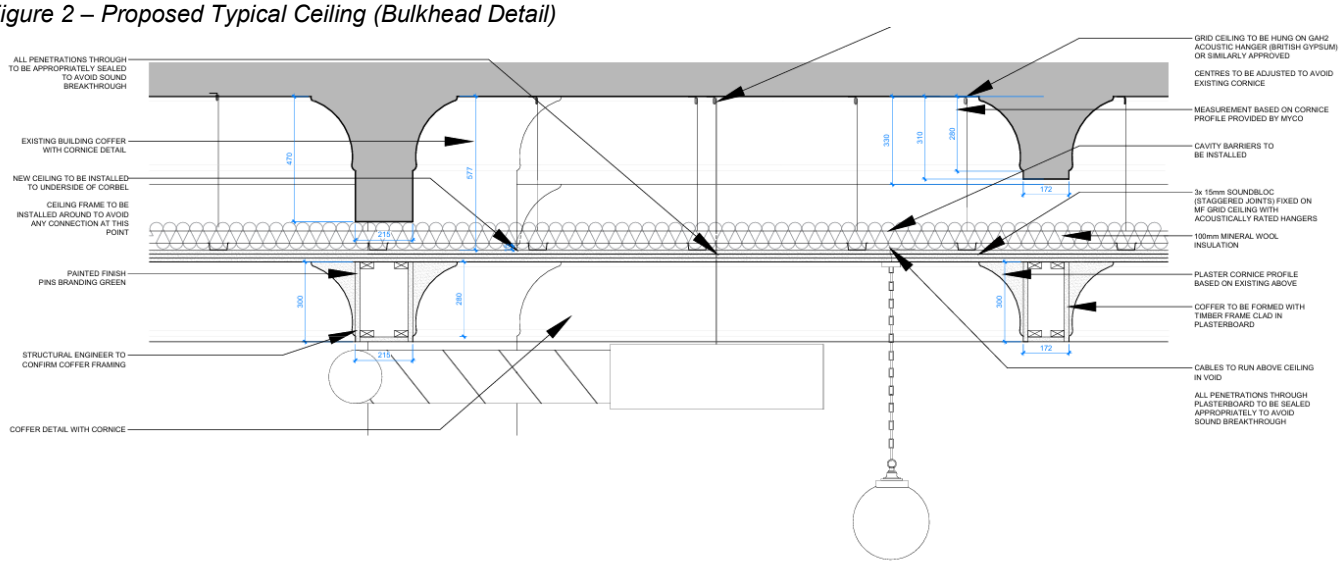


Figure 1 – Ceiling extent (acoustic ceiling marked yellow)



D02 - PROPOSED TYPICAL CEILING DETAIL (BULKHEAD)

Figure 2 – Proposed Typical Ceiling (Bulkhead Detail)

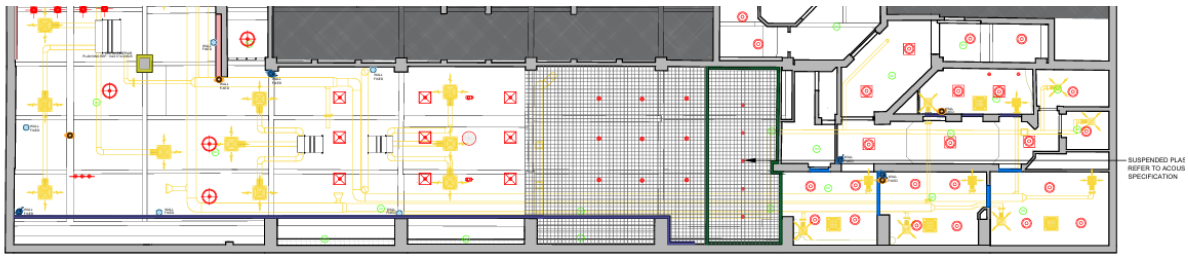


D01 - PROPOSED TYPICAL CEILING DETAIL

Figure 3 – Proposed Typical Ceiling Details (acoustic ceilings a replica down stand beams to replicate coffered ceiling

Listed Building Consent 142873/LO/2025 provided consent for a suspended acoustic ceiling but was limited to above the bowling alley to the ground floor, above the bowling alley within the basement, to a stairwell from the ground floor to basement and to a karaoke room on the mezzanine level.

These plans shown below are from the previously approved application 142873/LO/2025:



PROPOSED BASEMENT RCP

Figure 4 – Approved Basement RCP 142873/LO/2025 (hatched area shows extent of approved suspended ceiling)



Figure 5 – Approved Ground Floor RCP 142873/LO/2025 (hatched area shows extent of approved suspended ceiling)

Consultations & Notification Responses

Publicity – The proposal has been advertised, by way of site notice and press advertisement, as affecting the setting of a listed building and the conservation area. Letters have also been sent out to local businesses and residents.

No comments were received as a result of the publicity.

Environmental Health – Given the office space directly above the ground floor would operate for 24 hours daily, the hours of live music/noise transfer during live music events is unable to be controlled through planning condition restriction. The EHO agrees with the recommendations of the Acoustic Report that establishes by not extending the acoustic ceiling it will lead to the risk of flanking paths and noise outbreak.

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-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 CC9 – Design and Heritage
- Policy EN1 – Design Principle and Strategic Characters Areas
- Policy EN3 – Heritage

The Unitary Development Plan for Manchester – For the reasons outlined below the following saved UDP Policies are of relevance to this application:

- Policy DC18 – Conservation Areas
- Policy DC19 – Listed Buildings

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- Chapter 9 – Promoting Sustainable Transport
- Chapter 12 – Achieving Well-Designed Places
- Chapter 16 – Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (LBCA Act) states that in considering whether to grant Listed Building Consent for any works the Local Planning Authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Section 66 of the LBCA Act requires the local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings. This requires more than a simple balancing exercise and considerable importance and weight should be given to the desirability of preserving the setting.

Section 72 of the LBCA Act requires the local planning authority to have pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

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.

As set out in the printed report no adverse impacts have been identified through consideration of the application proposals that would outweigh a positive decision in this instance.

Relevant Planning History

142873/LO/2025 – Listed Building Consent for internal refurbishment of ground floor and lower basement areas for entertainment venue. Decision: Approved 27 February 2026.

142872/FO/2025 - Change of Use to Sui Generis (Bar/Entertainment Complex), including associated external alterations. Decision: Approved 27 February 2026.

Issues

Impacts on the listed building

The use of the basement, ground floor and mezzanine as an entertainment venue with a drinking establishment, live music, activities including bowling and karaoke by virtue of the nature would create noise.

During application 142872/FO/2025, the impacts on noise disturbance to adjoining floors of the building was considered and appropriate measures including suspended ceilings were consented above the bowling alleys and karaoke rooms. The sound system and live music levels were provided, and the finalised design was subject to verification testing prior to the first use of the entertainment venue.

Since the approval of the occupiers internal fit out and change of use, the landlord has carried out further noise testing, and an acoustic survey was commissioned. This noise report has identified

there would be noise outbreak to the adjoining upper floors and vibrations through the concrete slab.

The first and second floors have been refurbished as part of the wider refurbishment of the listed building and were always intended as an office use. The occupier of these floors would operate on a 24-hour basis and therefore any noise nuisance should be carefully considered.

This application therefore is proposing a suspended acoustic ceiling across the ground floor which is to be occupied by the entertainment venue. This would be a significant intervention that would conceal the historic coffered ceiling. The applicant has considered alternative acoustic measures including the installation of acoustic insulation below the Raised Access Flooring (RAF) where it is located directly above.

The Acoustic Survey has concluded the insulation within the RAF void is unlikely to result in a notable increase in performance above the baseline. Additionally, due to the historic concrete slab running across the ground floor plan, this would not prevent vibrations as without the suspended ceiling as a barrier, the noise vibrations would still transfer into the concrete slab.

To achieve the required internal acoustic insulation to prevent any noise disamenity to the office occupiers on Levels 1 and 2, the proposal seeks consent for the installation of a suspended ceiling across the ground floor. The ceiling would conceal the historic coffered ceiling and would result in harm to the listed building. This harm would to some degree be mitigated by the suspended ceiling having a replica down stand beam and cornice detail to reflect the original ceiling.

The acoustic suspended ceiling would be installed on acoustic hangers with mineral wool in the cavity and would be reversible addition. Nevertheless, there would be less than substantial harm to the listed building.

Heritage Assessment

The level of attenuation measures is driven by operational requirements of the proposed entertainment use which includes noise generative activities such as bowling alleys and live music.

The level of attenuation measures is considered to be the minimal amount of intervention required by the Council's Environmental Health Officer's to avoid any noise outbreak to upper floors adjoining office floors when live music is in operation.

As outlined above, the harm would be mitigated by a faithful replica where possible. This refers to some areas as shown below where the extent of the down stand beam cannot be replicated as it would require the ceiling to be sited lower which would impact on acoustic attenuation and the internal head height of the space once M&E is installed below.

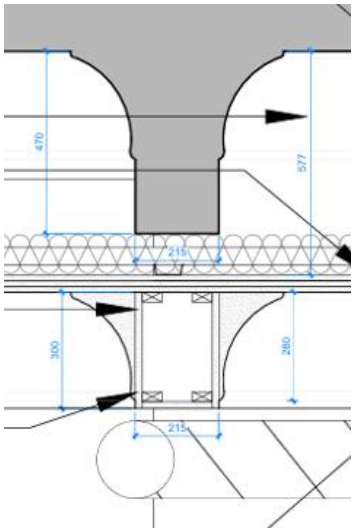


Figure 6 – Example of faithful replica where possible

The M&E on the previous consent was sited below the historic coffered ceiling, and the minimalistic approach was colour matched to the ceiling to minimise the impact on the ceiling. Given an acoustic suspended ceiling was established as required, the Council explored whether the M&E could be sited within the void of the ceiling. However, this would have lowered the ceiling and impacted on the noise insulation/attenuation measures and openings/fixings within the ceiling would lead to noise outbreak.

The Design and Access Statement confirms the electrical cabling will sit within the void and any penetrations would be acoustically sealed and minimised as part of the MEP strategy.

The historic coffered ceiling and cornices that are to be concealed by the acoustic ceiling shall be refurbished and repaired prior to the installation of the ceiling which would provide a heritage benefit.

The previously approved suspended ceiling above the bowling alley under consent 142873/LO/2025 was not a faithful replica but followed a traditional design. Given the increase in intervention across the floor plan and increase in harm, the applicant has committed to ensuring that the ceiling above the bowling alley to the ground floor is a faithful replica so there is a consistent design approach.

In some areas to the north side of the ground floor plan such as the bridge across the bowling alley, the extent of the down stands to the suspended ceiling may need to be reduced to allow for the minimum head height clearance. Further investigations would be carried out to establish which areas would not be able to replicate in entirety.

In line with the requirements of paragraph 215 of the NPPF where less than substantial harm occurs this must be set against the public benefits of the scheme.

The suspended ceiling is required to allow for the operational requirements of the new occupier. This use consists of an entertainment venue and drinking establishment which represents an active and viable use that secures the occupation of the ground floor, mezzanine and areas of the basement. The use would therefore bring forward a greater proportion of the building that would otherwise remain underutilised. The occupation supports the building's long-term conservation and aligns with the extensive refurbishment works carried out across the Grade II Listed Sunlight House.

The current spaces subject of this application has been vacant for approximately two years, and there would be economic benefits associated with the development, which must be given weight in the planning balance, from the creation of employment of approximately 70 staff within the heart of the city centre. It would also contribute towards the further activation of Quay Street and an increase in activity within this part of the city centre which would support the areas vitality and vibrancy.

The benefits of the proposal through the occupation of a greater proportion of the building that would otherwise remain underutilised is acknowledged and there would be limited subdivision to allow for visible permeability across the floor plan.

On balance, whilst harm has been identified through necessary acoustic intervention and concealment of the historic ceiling, it is considered to be outweighed by above identified public benefits and heritage benefits derived from the retention of the open plan layout, viable reuse of the asset and activation of currently underused spaces.

The proposal complies with policies SP1, CC9, EN1, EN3 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy, saved UDP policies DC18 and DC19, Places for Everyone Plan policy JP-P2, and guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

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 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.

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 following drawings and documents:

   - Site Plan: SLH-ANO-B0-XX-DR-A-05001-P01 (Received 11 March 2026)
   - Proposed Acoustic Ceiling Details (Ground Floor): AL102 REV B (Received 28 April 2026)
   - Design Statement prepared by Harrison Ince (Received 11 March 2026)
   - Heritage Statement Addendum prepared by Savills Heritage (Received 11 March 2026)

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

3. Prior to the installation of the suspended acoustic ceiling hereby approved, and the commencement of any works in the relation to the repair and refurbishment of the listed building's coffer ceiling, a detailed method statement, product specifications and a sample repair shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

   The approved details shall then be implemented as part of the development prior to the installation of the approved suspended ceiling.

   For the avoidance of doubt, any part of the coffering ceiling that is to be covered by the acoustic suspended ceiling is still required to be repaired in accordance with the approved details prior to the installation of the acoustic ceiling.

   Reason - In the interests of preserving and protecting the historic character and appearance of the listed building in accordance with policies CC9 and EN3 of the Core Strategy (2012), saved policy DC19 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester (1995) and the NPPF/NPPG.

4. Prior to the installation of the suspended acoustic ceiling hereby approved, and the commencement of any works in the relation to the repair and refurbishment of the listed building's cornices, a detailed method statement, product specifications and a sample repair shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved details shall then be implemented as part of the development and be completed prior to the first occupation of the unit.

   For the avoidance of doubt, any cornices that are to be covered by the acoustic suspended ceiling are still required to be repaired in accordance with the approved details prior to the installation of the acoustic ceiling.

Reason - In the interests of preserving and protecting the historic character and appearance of the listed building in accordance with policies CC9 and EN3 of the Core Strategy (2012), saved policy DC19 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester (1995) and the NPPF/NPPG.

5. Prior to the installation of the acoustic ceiling as shown on drawing no. AL102 REV B (Received 28 April 2026), material samples of the new cornice/coffer detail, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall then proceed in accordance with the approved details.

   Reason - In the interests of preserving and protecting the historic character and appearance of the listed building in accordance with policies CC9 and EN3 of the Core Strategy (2012), saved policy DC19 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester (1995) and the NPPF/NPPG.

6. Prior to the installation of the acoustic suspended ceiling, scaled sections, internal elevations and ceiling plans to evidence any areas where the historic ceiling cannot be faithfully replicated shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

   For the avoidance of doubt, this refers to any areas where the extent of the down stand beams cannot be replicated as demonstrated on drawing AL102 REV B (Received 28 April 2026).

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

   Reason - In the interests of preserving and protecting the historic character and appearance of the listed building in accordance with policies CC9 and EN3 of the Core Strategy (2012), saved policy DC19 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester (1995) and the NPPF/NPPG.

Informative

1. The occupier (PINS Social) is required to submit an application to update the approved drawings on consent 142873/LO/2025 and planning permission 142872/FO/2025.
2. The occupier (PINS Social) is advised that their Acoustic Consultant (Reds Acoustics) should review the recommendations of the Noise Impact Assessment: HT: 32835/PTM3/R5, prepared by Han Tucker Acoustics in preparation for the discharge of the noise conditions associated with planning permission 142872/FO/2025.

Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified

Environmental Health

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 - Deansgate Conservation Area 1985
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Middle) -
Area Team Boundary - Name: CENTRAL