

Planning

Delegated Officer Report

Summary of application details

Application reference:	145264/LO/2026
Application type:	Listed building consent (Alt/Ext)
Proposal:	Listed Building Consent for installation of Air Source Heat Pumps, substation, lighting units and associated infrastructure.
Site address:	Manchester Piccadilly Station Manchester M1 2WD
Ward(s):	Piccadilly
Date application valid:	09 April 2026
Applicant name:	Michael Gradwell
Agent (if any):	Mr Archie Kimberley
Case officer:	Michael Pearson
Recommendation:	Approve
Date of recommendation:	01/06/2026

Description of site, building and/or area

The application relates to the undercroft area of the Grade II listed Piccadilly Railway Station. The area of the station dates from the mid-Victorian period and features impressive brick arches and a decorative bridge with Tuscan columns that front out onto Sheffield Street. The site is open to Sheffield Street with it then being lined by a palisade fence. The site has been utilised as a service yard and back of house space for the operation of the Railway Station. Above a surface car park that serves the station features, railway lines then lead to the south-east, with Piccadilly Station acting as one of Manchester's major public transportation hubs.

The neighbouring area lies within the eastern edge of Manchester's City Centre boundary, with Sheffield Street providing access to the Piccadilly Trading Estate to the east of the site, and residential development along Chapteltown Street and Fair Street. An active tramline is present to the east of the site.

Description of development

The application seeks listed building consent for the installation of 5no air source heat pumps, associated boundary treatment, new substation and associated infrastructure.

The proposed air source heat pumps would be installed within the open service yard area under the aforementioned bridge that would then be lined by an acoustic boundary treatment.

The site's boiler room would be stripped and then refitted with new equipment. A new switch room would then be created within the station's undercroft, with new transformer and associated infrastructure to serve the proposed heat pumps.

New M&E, piping, lighting and cable trays are proposed to the property's ceiling which would serve the air source heat pumps before then running southwards deeper into the station's undercroft and away from Sheffield Street.

Relevant planning history

095551/FO/2011/C2 - Extension of existing multi-storey car park to create an additional 263 spaces over 5 levels, including ground and lower ground floor levels, re-cladding of the existing multi-storey car park to match the extension, erection of a boundary fence and external landscaping – Approved July 2011.

058859/LO/CITY3/00 - LISTED BUILDING CONSENT Replacement of part of existing car park deck at concourse level, provision of north entrance stair tower to store street, cleaning of brickwork to undercroft as exposed by works and general re-arrangements to existing car parking within part of undercroft – Approved July 2000.

Consultation, notification and publicity responses

A site notice and press notice were published. Neighbouring properties were notified of the development by letter. No representations were received.

Relevant policies

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-Stat1 – Core Growth Area
- Policy JP-Strat2 – City Centre
- 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 SP1 – Spatial Principles
- Policy EC2 – Existing Employment Space
- Policy EC3 – The Regional Centre
- Policy CC1 – Primary Economic Development Focus: City Centre and Fringe
- Policy CC9 – Design and Heritage
- Policy EN1 – Design Principle and Strategic Characters Areas
- Policy EN3 – Heritage
- Policy EN4 – Reducing CO2 Emissions by Enabling Low and Zero Carbon Development
- Policy DM1 – Development Management

Saved Unitary Development Plan for Manchester – The following saved UDP Policies are of relevance to this application:

- Policy DC19 – Listed Buildings
- Policy DC26 – Development and Noise

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- Chapter 12 – Achieving well-designed and beautiful places
- Chapter 16 – Conserving the Historic Environment

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.

Other Legislative Requirements

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.

Assessment

The portion of undercroft space visible from Sheffield Street is an underutilised piece of the application site, with it largely being vacant or taken up by redundant pieces of infrastructure or paraphernalia with the space acting as an informal storage yard. The use provides a harsh contrast to the more decorative and historic elements of the space, with brick arches and metal columns being visible from Sheffield Street. Deeper within the site, feature many brick arches, which though not visible from the public highway, add additional significance to the listed building, with them being good examples of 19th century engineering on a larger scale.

The proposal, as part of energy infrastructure upgrades to the station, would see the removal of existing boiler infrastructure. As such features are modern interventions within the station, their removal, subject to a condition that would require the submission of a methodology for The works, would have a neutral impact on the significance of the listed building. In their place new infrastructure would be installed, comprising of a pressurisation unit, distribution pump skid, expansion / buffer vessel and side stream filter that are required for the operation of the proposed air source heat pumps (ASHPs).

The 5no proposed ASHPs, as previously stated within this report, would occupy a visible section of the station's undercroft space, fronting out onto Sheffield Street. The ASHPs are heavy pieces of infrastructure that would have a significant impact on how this space is viewed. Notwithstanding this, it is appreciated that as existing, this is an underutilised and somewhat neglected space whose setting is also compromised by the multi-storey car park that neighbours the site to the north, and the post-war concrete and brick façade interventions present on the station's elevation to the west of the area concerned. To soften this visual impact, and to negate the acoustic impacts of the proposed ASHPs, an acoustic baffle and boundary treatment is proposed that would run along the site's Sheffield Street elevation. At this time, the boundary treatment's design and materiality have not yet been confirmed but are constrained due to them needing to be compatible with ASHPs. Subject to a condition that would control the boundary treatment/screen's final dimensions, materiality, pattern and finish, this element of the development would cause a low-medium level of less than substantial harm to be caused to the significance of the listed building by virtue of obscuring features of architectural note.

To serve the ASHPs and replace existing infrastructure at end of life, significant new M&E, lighting, cable trays and pipework is proposed to run through the undercroft space fronting out onto

Sheffield Street and then deeper into the undercroft space to the boiler room and substation. The infrastructure would be suspended from the ceiling of the undercroft space so would stand away from material of historical significance. Notwithstanding this, it would still be read as a notable intervention within the space that would cause a low to medium level of less than substantial harm. In order to mitigate this harm as much as possible, in the event of an approval, planning condition would control the fixing detail for such infrastructure, as well as its final finish so that it can be sensitively designed.

To ensure the ASHPs remain operational a new substation is proposed within a back of house space within the undercroft area that already features existing energy infrastructure. In light of how this space is screened from public views of the property and how the proposed additions would largely be reversible, this element of the proposal is considered would have a neutral impact on the significance of the listed building.

The development if implemented would bring about significant environmental benefits, assisting in decarbonising the operation of Piccadilly Station, continuing to enable its daily operations with the replacement of aging infrastructure, and improvements in air quality via ceasing the use of natural gas in energy generation. It is appreciated that it is vital that major transport nodes/hubs modernise their energy infrastructure in order to adapt to climate change and decarbonise.

Conclusion

In line with the above, it is acknowledged that a low to medium level of less than substantial harm would be caused to the significance of the listed building. Notwithstanding this, it is considered there would be sufficient public generated through the implementation of the proposal that would outweigh the recognised harm, this being significant energy efficiency improvements to the operation of the Railway Station. Additionally, planning condition would further mitigate the harm caused to the listed building by securing sympathetic finishes and installation methods. Therefore, the proposal would meet the requirements as set out under Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 in relation to preservation, and accord with Places for Everyone Plan Policies JP-Strat1, JP-Strat2 and JP-P2, Core Strategy Policies SP1, EC2, EC3, CC1, CC9, EN3, EN4 and DM1, Saved Unitary Development Plan Policies DC19 and DC26, the National Planning Policy Framework, and the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. On this basis the application is recommended for approval.

Recommendation: Approve

Conditions attached to this decision

- 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:

- Location Plan
- 50902-VE-PS-00-DR-E-6101 Rev P2: Piccadilly Station Containment Layout (Received 28/05/2026)
- 50902-VE-PS-00-DR-E-6102 Rev P1: Piccadilly Station Site Wide Containment Layout
- 50902-VE-PS-00-DR-E-6201 Rev P2: Piccadilly Station Small Power Layout (Received 28/05/2026)
- 50902-VE-PS-00-DR-E-6203 Rev P1: Plantroom Small Power Layout
- 50902-VE-PS-00-DR-E-6301 Rev P2: Piccadilly Station Lighting Layout (Received 28/05/2026)
- 50902-VE-PS-B1-DR-E-5001 Rev P4: Electrical Equipment Layout
- 50902-VE-PS-B1-DR-E-6201 Rev P1: Piccadilly Station HV RMU / Transformer Layout
- 50902-VE-PS-B1-DR-E-6202 Rev P3: Piccadilly Station HV RMU / Transformer Layout (Received 28/05/2026)
- 50902-VE-PS-SW-DR-M-5601 Rev P1: Site Wide Equipment GA (Received 17/03/2026)
- 50902-VE-PS-XX-DR-M-5601 Rev P2: Manchester Piccadilly Existing Boiler Room Strip-Out GA
- 50902-VE-PS-XX-DR-M-5601 Rev P2: Undercroft Proposed Pipework Route GA
- 50902-VE-PS-XX-DR-M-5603 Rev P4: Manchester Piccadilly Existing Undercroft GA (Received 01/04/2026)
- 50902-VE-PS-XX-DR-M5603 Rev P5: Piccadilly Station, Proposed Undercroft G.A. (Received 28/05/2026)
- 50902-VE-PS-XX-DR-M-5604 Rev P3: Undercroft Proposed Pipework Route GA (Received 24/02/2026)
- 50902-VE-PS-XX-DR-M-5605 Rev P2: Manchester Piccadilly Proposed Boiler Room GA
- 50902-VE-PS-XX-E-M-5605 Rev P1: Piccadilly Station, Undercroft, Elevations (Received 28/05/2026)
- 50902-VE-PS-XX-RP-E-6301 P2: Piccadilly Station Dialux Lighting Report (Received 28/05/2026)
- 50902-VE-PS-XX-SC-E-6001 Rev P6: Piccadilly Station HV & LV Single Line Diagram
- 50902-VE-PS-XX-SC-E-6801 Rev P1: Undercroft Area Block Cable Diagram
- 50902-VE-PS-XX-SC-E-6802 Rev P1: System Architecture Diagram
- 50902-VE-PS-XX-SC-E-6803 Rev P1: Boiler Room Panel Block Cable Diagram

- 50902-VE-PS-XX-SC-M-5601 Rev P2: Manchester Piccadilly Existing Boiler Room Strip-out P&ID
- 50902-VE-PS-XX-SC-M-5602 Rev P1: Manchester Piccadilly Proposed Boiler Room P&ID
- 50902-VE-PS-XX-SC-M-5603 Rev P1: Manchester Piccadilly Proposed Undercroft P&ID
- Design, Access and Heritage Statement (Prepared by Network Rail; Dated and received 24/02/2026)
- HiPak Gen4 Product Specification (Received 28/05/2026)

All stamped as received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on 04/03/2026, unless specified otherwise.

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) Notwithstanding the approval of drawing 50902-VE-PS-XX-DR-M-5603 Rev P4 (Received 01/04/2026), prior to the installation of the decorative acoustic screen to Sheffield Street hereby approved, final details in regard to its dimensions, material finish and pattern, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall then proceed in accordance with the approved details which shall be retained and maintained for the lifetime of the development thereafter.

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, saved policy DC19.1 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 4) Prior to the commencement of any soft strip works to the property's boiler room, a methodology for such works that shall include information on how historical material shall be protected during the works duration, 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, saved policy DC19.1 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 5) Notwithstanding the approved drawings listed within condition 2 of this permission, prior to the installation of any M&E, cable trays, lighting, ladder racks and pipework hereby approved, final details in relation to their interface with/affixing

to the listed building, their final material finish and a methodology for their installation and the removal and making good of redundant M&E and cabling, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Any approved scheme shall forbid the installation of fixing points to the property's columns. 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, saved policy DC19.1 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 6) The external lighting hereby approved shall be laid out in accordance with the following drawings and supporting documents:

- 50902-VE-PS-00-DR-E-6301 Rev P2: Piccadilly Station Lighting Layout
- 50902-VE-PS-XX-RP-E-6301 P2: Piccadilly Station Dialux Lighting Report
- HiPak Gen4 Product Specification

All marked as received on 28/05/2026.

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, saved policy DC19.1 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester and the National Planning Policy Framework.