

Planning

Delegated Officer Report

Summary of application details

Application reference:	145698/FO/2026
Application type:	Full planning permission
Proposal:	Proposed alteration to existing window to create new level entrance.
Site address:	1 Hillcourt Street Manchester M1 7HU
Ward(s):	Hulme
Date application valid:	17 April 2026
Applicant name:	Mr Karwan Farooq Mahmood Sewkani
Agent (if any):	Mrs Jouliana Tanous
Case officer:	Michael Pearson
Recommendation:	Approve
Date of recommendation:	08/06/2026

Description of site, building and/or area

The application relates to a ground floor commercial Class E retail unit within the detached three storey property present at 120-124 Grosvenor Street. The site is bounded by Grosvenor Street, as well as Sidney Street and Hillcourt Street. The property is a mid to late Victorian former end terrace building that originally abutted a property to the east, now demolished, and backed onto a row of terrace properties to the north. Due to the age of the property and surviving original features, it is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset. The western facing elevation of the property features a former cart entrance and cobbled access. The building is completed in red brick and a slate tile roof. The northern elevation of the property features a now redundant goods lift, with its eastern facing elevation featuring a rear yard and an elevation completed in render where it had previously abutted another property. The commercial unit in question features a shared stepped access off of Hillcourt Street, and three ground floor and basement windows along Sidney Street. The site features an additional 3no commercial units at ground floor, this being a drinking establishment (Sui Generis) and 2no non-food retail units (Class E(a)). A live planning permission is present on site for the erection of a three storey side extension and the change of use of the site's upper floors to student accommodation (Sui Generis), approved under permission 142467/FO/2025.

The neighbouring area forms that of the Oxford Road Corridor, an extension of the City Centre of Manchester that provides access to its heart and that of the neighbouring university campuses. Built development along the corridor varies significantly in age, design and scale, with larger tower blocks in the form of Circle Square being situated to the north of where the Mancunian Way crosses over Oxford Road. Built development closer to that of the application site is typically smaller scale, with a row of commercial properties situated to the west of it being only three storey. Immediately to the north of the site lies the Sugden Sports Centre. To the south of the application site lies the Grade II listed former Picturehouse and Former Adult Deaf and Dumb Institute. To the

west of the site lies All Saints Park and the eight storey Grosvenor Building, to the east of the site lies the Grade II listed Oddfellows Hall and 94-98 Grosvenor Street. Neighbouring uses largely comprise of light commercial class E retail uses, drinking establishment uses, takeaway uses and educational uses, the latter forming part of the Manchester Metropolitan University Campus.

Description of development

The application seeks consent for the creation of a new level pedestrian access off of Sidney Street.

The unit's most northerly ground floor and basement window would be removed and replaced with a glazed doorway with level access. Situated behind said doorway a new platform lift would be installed to allow disabled persons full access to the property.

The doorway would be coloured black and feature a glazed fanlight above. The removal of the existing ground floor cill would be remediated with reclaimed brickwork.

Relevant planning history

144619/FO/2025 - Proposed alteration to existing elevation at ground floor – Refused January 2026.

142467/FO/2025 - Erection of three storey side extension and associated external alterations to create Purpose Built Student Accommodation (Use Class Sui Generis) comprising 28 no bedspaces – Approved August 2025.

132276/FO/2021 - Change of use of existing unused first floor rear areas from last known use, light industrial (Class B2), to a function room (Class A3) and microbrewery (Class B2) to form part of the Sandbar which is on the ground floor. Second floor rear areas change of use from last known use, light industrial (Class B2) to offices (Class B1). New internal stair from Sandbar to the first floor areas. Internal reconfigurations to create safe separation and access between different uses. New window to Sidney Street – Application Approved June 2022.

115205/FO/2017 - Placement of tables and chairs on the pavement for licensed drinking – Approved April 2017.

113858/FO/2016 - Change of use from storage areas to Shop (Use Class A1) at first floor and 2 No. residential flats at second floor together with erection of new stair and lift access – Approved February 2017.

070461/FO/2003/C2 - Change of use to cafe/takeaway and elevational alterations – Application approved May 2004.

052942/FU/CITY2/97 - Change of use of part ground and part first floor to Class A3 (Food and Drink) – Approved November 1997.

052511/JO/CITY2/97 - Removal of condition 6 on application 046097/FU/CITY2/94 (change of use to A3 (Food & Drink) use) – Approved March 1998.

046097/FU/CITY2/94 - Change of use from office/ storage to restaurant/sandwich bar & cafe/bar and 2 no retail units on ground floor with 1st & 2nd floors manufacturing to offices retaining 2 no retail units on 1st floor – Approved December 1994.

Consultation, notification and publicity responses

Publicity – Neighbouring properties were notified of the proposals by letter. One letter of objection was received, the reasons cited for the objection are summarised as follows:

- The doorway would conflict with an area of pavement subject to a pavement license for tables and chairs.
- The doorway would have the potential for patrons of the commercial unit to utilise the tables and chairs of the aforementioned pavement license, without supervision, leading to anti-social behaviour to the detriment of neighbouring amenity.

Environmental Health – No objection.

Greater Manchester Police – No objection subject to the proposals being in line with secured by design standards.

Highway Services – No objection subject to the door opening away from the highway and informatives relating to highway works.

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 EC3 – The Regional Centre
- Policy CC1 – Primary Economic Development Focus: City Centre and Fringe
- Policy CC2 – Retail
- Policy CC4 – Visitors – Tourism, Culture and Leisure
- Policy CC9 – Design and Heritage
- Policy CC10 – A Place for Everyone
- Policy C10 – Leisure and the Evening Economy
- Policy EN1 – Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas
- Policy EN3 – Heritage
- Policy DM1 – Development Management

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

- Policy DC10 – Food and Drink uses
- Policy DC26 – Development and Noise

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

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

Oxford Road Corridor Strategic Regeneration Framework Guidance (SRFG) (2019)

Assessment

Principle of the Development

The proposed development would see the provision of level and modernised access to an existing inaccessible commercial unit. The application site, as a Victorian property, features a raised ground floor, rendering its commercial units either partially or wholly inaccessible. The commercial unit in question, created through permission 070461/FO/2003/C2, features a steep stepped access off of Hillcourt Street, a narrow cobbled road with inaccessible pavement. In light of this information, it is appreciated that there is a material need to modernise the unit to accommodate access for disabled persons and to improve the viability of the unit and commercial offering on site. In light of this, the development is considered to accord in principle with Places for Everyone Plan Policy JP-Strat1 and JP-Strat2, Core Strategy Policies SP1, EX3, CC1, CC2, CC4, CC10, C10 and DM1, subject to the matters discussed below.

Visual Amenity and Heritage

The application site, a non-designated heritage asset, contributes positively to the local street scene being a well proportioned building and good surviving example of smaller scale commercial Victorian buildings. Notwithstanding this, the site has suffered from numerous unsympathetic alterations that detract from its appearance, with former window openings being bricked up, windows being in poor condition, and low quality signage. The commercial unit subject to the proposals contributes to this, with non-original basement windows and poorly matched brick infill featuring along its Sidney Street elevation, as well as unauthorised fascia signs.

The proposed development would see the removal of a non-original window, original cill, and non-original basement window with modern infill. In its place a crittal style level access door is proposed with matching fanlight. The loss of original material would have some impact on the architectural merit of the building, though it is appreciated that the proposals have been accompanied by an options appraisal that confirms why it is not practical to locate the entrance along the property's Hillcourt Street elevation. The design of the proposed door is considered would be read as a high quality modern intervention within the building, featuring a slim profile so as to avoid an overly bulky appearance, and avoiding an overly solid design that may distract from the architectural merits of the application property. Paragraph 216 of the NPPF, requires that in weigh 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 instance, the harm is only considered to be slight, with only a small amount of original material being concerned, with the majority of that to be removed being non-original material. Furthermore, it is recognised that the proposal would be of be beneficial through its provision of level access to unit which is currently inaccessible to a . Therefore, on balance the harm caused to the non-designated heritage asset would only be slight and would not justify a refusal.

As the cill proposed to be removed is wider than that of the opening for the door, it is considered necessary in the event of an approval, to condition a methodology/strategy for the reuse of bricks, proposed to be removed, in the remediation of the area where the cill is located so that a historically sensitive finish can be achieved. Subject to such a condition, the development is on balance acceptable and accords with Places for Everyone Plan Policy JP-P2, Core Strategy Policy SP1, CC9, EN1, EN3 and DM1, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Residential Amenity

The provision of an additional access on site is considered would not fundamentally alter the noise levels generated by the commercial unit in question. An objection has been received which cites concern over the proposal's potential impact on anti-social and criminal behaviour. It is considered the insertion of a door would not cause a perceivable change in the risk of anti-social or criminal behaviour on site. If such behaviour were to occur, this would be a management/operational issue for commercial units on site rather than a planning matter.

Environmental Health do not object to the proposal. Greater Manchester Police do not object to the proposal subject to new alterations being in line with secured by design standards. Subject to a condition that would require this, the proposal is considered would have a neutral impact on neighbouring amenity in accordance with Core Strategy Policy DM1, Saved Unitary Development Plan Policy DC26, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Accessibility

As stated previously within this report, the existing commercial unit on site is highly inaccessible, featuring a raised ground floor only accessible by a narrow, steep and shared stair access off of Hillcourt Street, a cobbled street with inaccessible pavements. The proposed development would see the creation of a level access off of Sidney Street that would then give way to an access lift, thereby making the commercial unit accessible. This alteration is welcomed in terms of enabling Manchester to be an accessible city. In the event of an approval, planning condition would require the provision of level access throughout the unit. Subject to such a condition, the development is acceptable in this regard and accords with Core Strategy Policy CC10 and DM1, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Highway Safety

The proposed access would front out onto Sidney Street, with the proposed plans depicting the door swinging inwards away from the public highway. Highway Services do not object to the development subject to the proposed door opening way from the highway, and informatives relating to highway works. Subject to such a condition and informatives, the development is acceptable in this regard and would accord with Core Strategy Policy DM1 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Other Matters

The objection received, which cites concern over the proposals impact with an existing tables and chairs license, is considered to be a private matter outside the remit of this planning application. Tables and chair licenses do not require planning permission and are not a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. Furthermore, the proposed doorway would open inwards away from the highway, thereby not presenting a danger to highway users nor users of the tables and chairs situated along the highway.

Conclusion

In light of the above, subject to appropriate planning condition, the development would provide level access to a currently inaccessible commercial unit, thereby improving the commercial offer on site and assisting neighbouring regeneration efforts. Therefore, the development is in accordance with Places for Everyone Plan Policies JP-Strat1, JP-Strat2 and JP-P2, Core Strategy Plan Policies SP1, EC3, CC1, CC2, CC4, CC9, CC10, C10, EN1, EN3 and DM1, Saved Unitary Development Plan Policies DC10 and DC26, the National Planning Policy Framework, and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. On this basis the application is recommended for approval.

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. In this instance negotiation has been able to successfully resolve the identified concerns and issues.

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 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

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

- Location Plan
- AR2: Existing and Proposed Plans
- AR3: Existing and Proposed Plans
- AR4: Details and Finish
- Design and Access Statement
- Heritage Statement
- Entrance Layout Options Appraisal
- Email Correspondence RE Door Type (Received 03/06/2026)
- ISteel EXT-ALuLite Door Specification (Received 03/06/2026)

Marked as received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on 17/04/2026, 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) Prior to the commencement of the making good of the property's Sidney Street elevation following the removal of the cill hereby approved to be removed, a strategy/methodology for the making good of the elevation and the use of reclaimed bricks, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the City Council as Local Planning Authority.

Reason - To ensure that the appearance of the development is acceptable to the City Council as local planning authority in the interests of the visual amenity of the area within which the site is located, as specified in policies SP1 and DM1 of the Core Strategy

- 4) The external door hereby approved, shall open away from the public highway in accordance with drawing no. AR2 (Received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on 17/04/2026) for its lifetime.

Reason – In the interest of highway and pedestrian safety in accordance with Core Strategy Policy DM1 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 5) The development hereby approved shall include for full disabled access to be provided via the main entrances and to the raised ground floor as shown on drawing no.AR2 (Received 17/04/2026).

Reason - To ensure that satisfactory disabled access is provided by reference to the provisions Core Strategy policy DM1.

- 6) The works hereby approved shall be completed in accordance with Secured by Design Standards Commercial Design Guide 2025 Edition 1 (Prepared by Secured by Design).

Reason - To reduce the risk of crime pursuant to policies SP1 and DM1 of the Core Strategy and to reflect the guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Informatives

- 1)
- Should any works to the adopted highway be required as part of the development, these will need to be secured through a Section 278 Agreement with MCC Highways. All associated works will be undertaken at the applicant's expense. Further details are available at: https://www.manchester.gov.uk/directory_record/287709/permission_to_work_on_the_highways_-_section_278_agreements/category/355/highways_and_pavements
 - In the event that basement excavations are proposed adjacent to the highway, structural drawings and calculations for both temporary and permanent support works must be submitted for approval (subject to a fee) to the MCC Bridges/Structures Section. The applicant is advised to contact: highways.structures@manchester.gov.uk
 - The applicant will be required to liaise with MCC Highways Licensing Team to agree any requirements for Hoarding, Scaffolding and Skips, via email highwaylicences@manchester.gov.uk
 - The applicant must liaise with MCC Event and Traffic Management Team to agree any necessary pedestrian and traffic management arrangements during construction via email highwaynetworkmanagement@manchester.gov.uk