AshtonHale

Manchester City Council
Planning and Development
PO Box 532
Town Hall
Manchester
M60 2LA

25 November 2025

FAO Ian Jarvis

Dear Ian,

Fabric Church, Ardwick Green North
Planning and Listed Building Consent Applications (ref: 143236/FO/2025 & 143237/LO/2025)
Applicant's Response to Heritage Comments

This letter has been prepared by AshtonHale Ltd on behalf of the Diocese of Manchester with HTB ('the Applicant') to respond to the feedback received following the consideration of application refs. 143236/FO/2025 and 143237/LO/2025 at the Manchester Heritage Advisory Panel ('the Panel'), held on 09 September 2025. The Panel provided feedback on the full planning permission and listed building consent applications submitted to Manchester City Council ('the Council') for the following description of development at the former Army Reserve Centre, Ardwick Green, M12 6HD ('the site'):

> *Erection of part three/part two storey extension to form entrance and stairway together with the formation of a roof terrace following demolition of existing extensions.*

The applications were submitted to Manchester City Council in June 2025 proposing a series of internal and external alterations to the former army barracks site to secure the long term viable use of the building as a place of worship and community gathering. The submitted proposals seek to enhance the legibility and operation of this heritage asset and ensure compliance with safety, accessibility and inclusive design standards, enabling the building's continued use for public benefit. The applications were supported by a suite of plans and reports, that determined that the principle of development at the site accords with the relevant policies of the adopted Development Plan and the necessary planning balance as required by the NPPF, with regard to design, heritage and technical matters. There are no constraints that would prevent the development coming forward.

At the September 2025 Panel meeting, the Applicant and project team were offered the opportunity to present the proposed scheme to Panel members. The Panel issued its initial written comments on 27 September 2025, with additional feedback received from Manchester's Heritage and Urban Design Team on 03 October 2025

This letter provides the Applicant's response to feedback received and should be read in conjunction with the 'Planning Consultee Feedback' summary note and the 'Response to Planning Consultee Feedback' design document prepared by shedkm. The summary note sets out each of the comments received following the Panel discussion and provides a corresponding response. In addition, shedkm has

produced a design document illustrating further design narrative and, where possible, alternative options to address the comments raised.

Key changes and comments set out by the Applicant's team are set out below.

Main Entrance
Both the Panel and Heritage and Urban Design team requested further architectural detail on the proposed principal entrance facing Ardwick Green, including gate design, glazed lobby treatment and material specification. The Panel also expressed a preference for research into original gate patterns to inform a heritage-appropriate design.

shedkm have provided further elevations and sections to show three different signage options to the entrance point. The design document supporting this information submission shows detail of the glazed entrance screen and an entrance plan, and further shows precedent images of the images, including where elements of the proposal have been incorporated, including at the Crusader Mill site in Manchester. The Applicant has requested that further detailed drawings of this development aspect are conditioned and submitted prior to works at the site when more detail is available to the project team as detailed design progresses.

The reinstatement of this entrance improves building legibility, enhances the heritage setting and supports the re-use of the site in accordance with Core Strategy Policy EN3 and NPPF objectives of securing sustainable and community beneficial uses.

Curtain Wall
Comments from both sets of feedback requested further design information relating to the proposed new glazing to the entrance stair well.

shedkm have provided typical curtain wall details, including elevations, a detailed plan and door fixing detail, and agree that full and final details can be conditioned. Again, the design document provides precedent images that show how these details can be incorporated into project design.

New Extension
The Panel and the Heritage and Urban Design Team raised concerns about several aspects of the proposed western elevation. Comments focused on the potential visual impact arising from the proposed vertical signage, the prominence of the roof terrace stair enclosure, and the long term suitability of locating a secondary entrance facing the existing car park, particularly should the adjoining land be redeveloped in the future and obscure the elevation. It was also noted that a freestanding totem sign may create an unnecessarily busy visual environment and that a more discreet signage strategy may be preferable.

In response to these points, shedkm has explored six alternative design options. These variations include different signage arrangement and materiality options for discussion with officers. Further design options have also been reviewed that either amend or remove the proposed totem element. The Applicant's preferred option is Option 03.

The proposed staircase providing roof access to the terrace is considered an important part of the architectural approach for the scheme. The location of the stair and lift enclosure has been determined after numerous explorations of alternative locations, however, none met current regulatory standards without causing greater harm to the historic fabric. Retaining the rooftop terrace is of significant benefit to the community functions of the building and its removal would represent a loss of important amenity for users. The terrace supports community use of the site and contributes to the full use of the historic site in accordance with Places for Everyone Policy JP-P2 which notes that historic environments should be conserved and enhanced, with opportunities to aid the promotion, enjoyment and understanding of heritage assets, as a means of maximising wider public benefits.

Drill Hall Interventions

Concerns were expressed regarding the proposed amendments to the Drill Hall, specifically the partial removal of the west wall to create new openings and the removal of the surviving elements of the original 19th century balcony. Additional detail was requested to understand internal material finishes and to assess the extent of impact on the character of the Drill Hall.

The design team confirms that the existing balcony has undergone extensive alteration over time, with significant balustrade sections missing, and the structure is unable to meet fire safety standards required today. The project team has explored alternative configurations however, none were capable of providing compliant means of escape without introducing greater harm to the historic fabric or compromising the building's safe occupation.

Further detail of the amended openings on the west wall to the drill hall can be found within the section D-D drawings. In addition to securing improved circulation and access, the new glazed openings will help bring in borrowed light to spaces on the ground floor that currently have no natural daylight.

These works will support sustainable use of the heritage asset, ensuring its continued community value and long-term conservation.

Further Comments

The Applicant's design team has provided responses to a range of further comments, detailed within the Planning Consultee Feedback note, and has identified a series of design matters that can appropriately be addressed through planning conditions as the scheme progresses to later stages of design. Throughout the evolution of the proposals, the heritage and design impacts have been carefully considered. The scheme seeks to mitigate the identified harm through the delivery of substantial public benefits, enhanced legibility and accessibility, and the sustainable reuse of the heritage asset. Accordingly, the proposals are regarded as supportable in principle, subject to the conditions set out within shedkm's accompanying document..

I trust that this submission meets the necessary requirements to address comments. Should any further details be required, please contact me at your earliest convenience. I would appreciate confirmation of receipt of this information.

Yours sincerely,



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Director

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AshtonHale Ltd

Enc. Planning Consultee Feedback Note, shedkm- 03 November 2025
Response to Planning Consultee Feedback, shedkm- 11 November 2025