DESIGN, ACCESS AND PLANNING STATEMENT

Proposal: **Two-Storey Extension Above Existing Church Hall to Provide Six Self Contained Two-Bedroom Apartments & Associated Facilities**

Site Address: 193 Ashley Lane, Moston, Manchester M9 4NQ

1. Introduction

This Design, Access and Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application for the redevelopment and extension of the existing church hall at 193 Ashley Lane, Manchester, M9 7NQ.



Figure 1 Site Location

The proposal seeks planning permission for the construction of a two-storey extension above the existing church hall building to provide six self-contained two-bedroom apartments. The development would result in the loss of the existing church hall and the creation of new residential accommodation within an established urban area.

The proposal has been designed having regard to the character of the surrounding area, the physical constraints and opportunities presented by the site, and the need to make effective use of previously developed land in a sustainable location.

2. Site Context and Surroundings

The application site occupies a sustainable urban location on Ashley Lane within North Manchester. The surrounding area is comprised predominantly of residential properties, local services and public open spaces.

The existing building currently operates as a church hall and occupies a moderate sized plot within the established urban fabric. The surrounding built form is varied in terms of scale, architectural style and age, including semi-detached and terraced dwellings.

The site benefits from convenient access to local open space, shops, schools, healthcare facilities and public transport services, making it a suitable location for residential development.



Figure 2 Local site location

3. Planning Policy Context

The proposal has been prepared having regard to:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF);
- Places For Everyone (Joint Development plan)
- The Development Plan for Manchester;
- Relevant planning policies relating to:

- Housing delivery;
- Efficient use of land;
- Urban regeneration;
- Design quality;
- Residential amenity;
- Accessibility;
- Sustainable transport;
- Community facilities;
- Waste and recycling;
- Sustainability and climate change.

National planning policy promotes sustainable development, the efficient use of previously developed land and the delivery of new housing within sustainable locations.



Existing front streetscape elevation



Existing rear streetscape elevation

4. Principle of Development

The proposal has been assessed against the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the Manchester Core Strategy and the saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP).

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Chapter 2 of the NPPF establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development and confirms that the planning system should contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraphs 7 and 8 identify the three overarching objectives of sustainable development:

- An **economic objective** of supporting growth and productivity;
- A **social objective** of supporting strong, vibrant communities and delivering a sufficient range and supply of housing; and
- An **environmental objective** of protecting and enhancing the natural and built environment whilst making effective use of land.

The proposal seeks to make effective use of an existing developed site within a sustainable urban location whilst contributing towards local housing supply and therefore aligns with the broad objectives of sustainable development.

Chapter 9 of the NPPF requires transport considerations, parking arrangements and patterns of movement to be integral to the design of development, contributing to the creation of high-quality places.

Chapter 12 of the NPPF places considerable emphasis on good design. Paragraph 131 confirms that the creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to the planning process and that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. Paragraph 135 requires development to be sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change.

Manchester Core Strategy

Policy SP1 – Spatial Principles establishes the overarching spatial strategy for Manchester and seeks the creation of neighbourhoods of choice through sustainable development. The policy promotes well-designed places, improved health and wellbeing, inclusive development and the protection and enhancement of the built and natural environment.

Policy H1 – Housing supports residential development that contributes to the creation of mixed communities and provides homes capable of meeting the needs of a diverse population. The policy requires development to provide appropriate standards of amenity space, privacy and design whilst responding positively to local character.

Policy H3 – North Manchester identifies North Manchester as a key location for housing growth during the plan period. The policy supports new residential development, including higher-density schemes in appropriate locations, and seeks the delivery of high-quality housing capable of meeting identified needs.

Policy EN1 – Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas requires development proposals to respond positively to local character and maximise opportunities for good design. Development should contribute positively to the appearance and function of the area in which it is located.

Policy DM1 – Development Management requires development proposals to contribute towards the objectives of the Core Strategy and support the creation of sustainable neighbourhoods of choice. Matters including design quality, residential amenity, accessibility, sustainability and environmental impacts are relevant considerations under the policy.

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan for Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan 2022 to 2039.

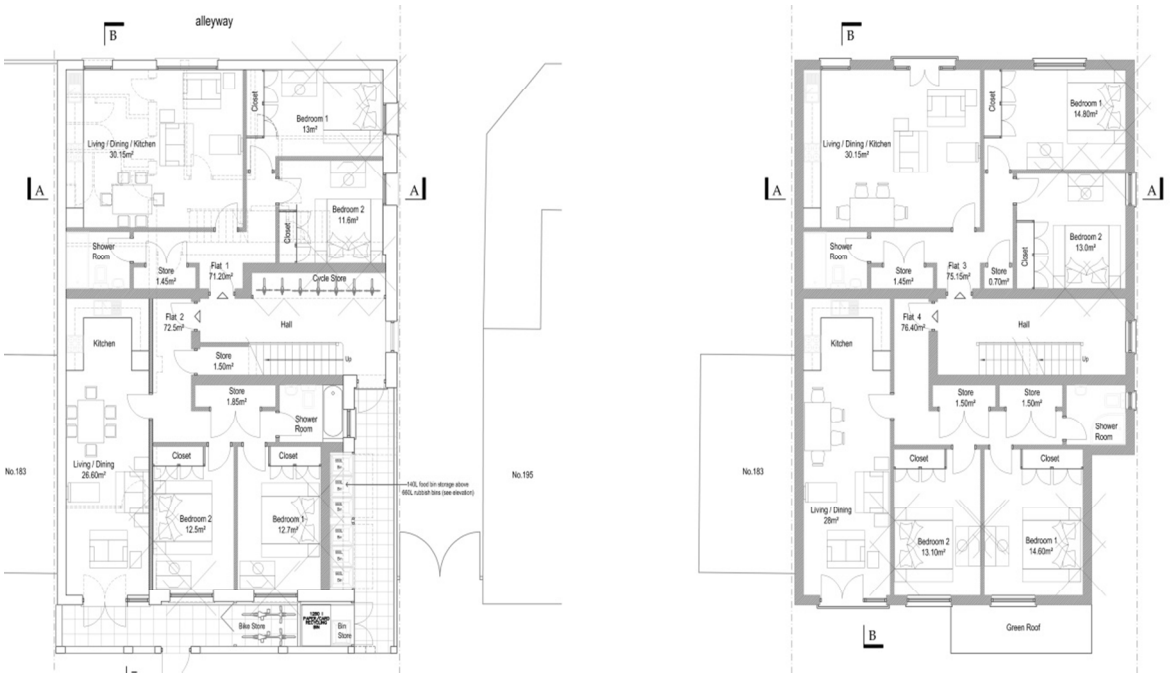
Policy JP-H3: Type, Size and Design of New Housing seeks to secure a range of high-quality, accessible and appropriately sized homes that meet local needs whilst promoting good design and innovation in residential development.

Manchester Unitary Development Plan (Saved Policies)

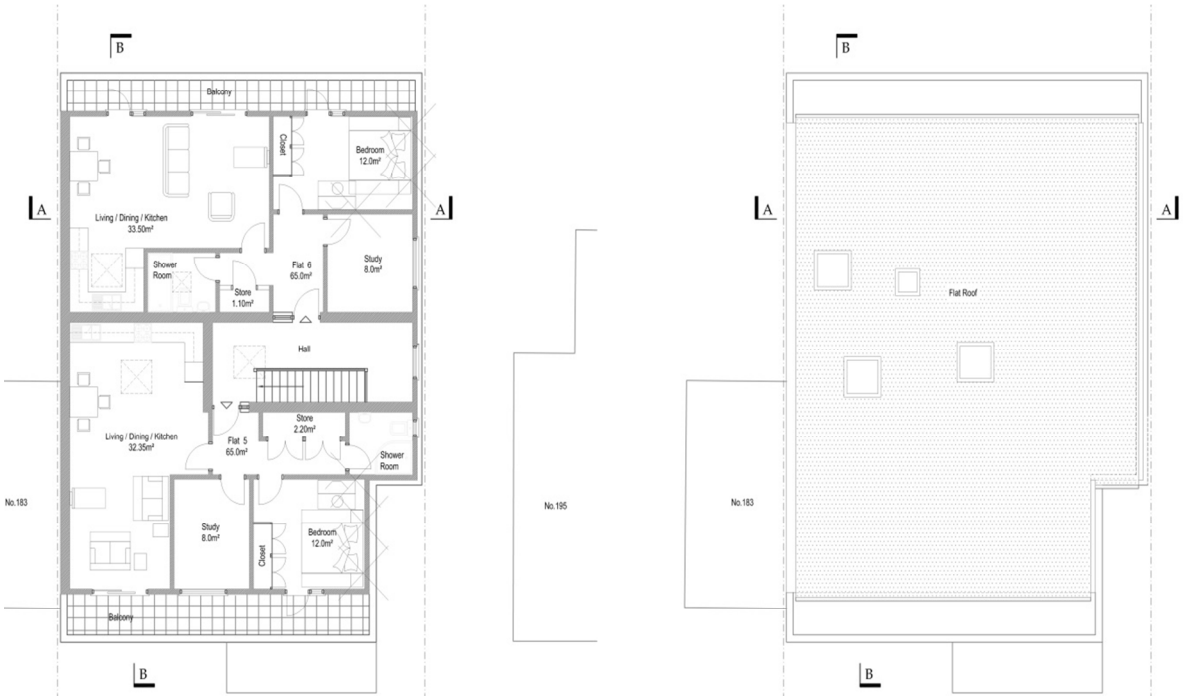
Policy DC5 – Flat Conversions sets out considerations relating to the conversion of buildings into flats. Whilst the proposal involves the extension and redevelopment of an existing building rather than a straightforward conversion, the policy's considerations remain relevant, particularly regarding:

- The standard of accommodation for future occupiers;
- The adequacy of parking provision;
- The impact on the character of the area;
- The provision of external amenity space;
- Accessibility;
- Refuse and recycling facilities.

The proposal provides self-contained residential accommodation, cycle parking, refuse storage and access arrangements designed to meet the needs of future occupiers.



Proposed Ground and First floor Plans



Proposed Second Floor and Roof Plans

Policy DC26 – Development and Noise seeks to ensure that development does not result in unacceptable impacts arising from noise generation or exposure to existing sources of noise. The proposal has been designed as a residential scheme within an established urban area and consideration has been given to the relationship between the proposed dwellings and surrounding land uses.

Summary

The proposal seeks to redevelop an existing site in a sustainable urban location through the provision of six two-bedroom apartments. In principle, the scheme is consistent with the objectives of the NPPF relating to sustainable development, housing delivery, sustainable transport and high-quality design, together with the relevant provisions of Policies SP1, H1, H3, EN1 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy and the relevant considerations of Policies DC5 and DC26 of the saved Manchester UDP.

The proposal represents the redevelopment and intensification of an existing developed site within an established urban area.

The site occupies a sustainable location with access to services, facilities and public transport. The proposal would contribute towards local housing supply through the provision of six additional apartments.

The development makes effective use of land within the urban area and would deliver residential accommodation on a site that is capable of supporting such a use.

5. Loss of Community Facility

Policy C1 – Community Facilities of the Manchester Core Strategy seeks to ensure that community facilities and services are retained unless it can be demonstrated that:

- The facility is no longer needed;
- The existing use is no longer viable;
- Adequate alternative provision exists; or
- Replacement facilities of an equivalent or improved standard are provided in an appropriate location.

The policy recognises the important role that community facilities play in supporting local communities, social inclusion, health and wellbeing. However, it also acknowledges that redevelopment may be appropriate where there is clear evidence that a facility is underutilised, no longer viable, or where the needs previously served by the facility can be accommodated elsewhere

The proposal would result in the loss of the existing church hall building. The current facility is owned and operated by the Deeper Christian Life Bible Church, Manchester, and has experienced a significant decline in use over recent years. Evidence provided by the applicant indicates that the building is substantially underutilised and is no longer regularly occupied for community activities. Furthermore, the applicant has explored opportunities to secure alternative community, commercial and institutional uses for the premises over an extended period of approximately two years but has been unable to identify a viable occupier or alternative use capable of sustaining the continued operation of the building.

The limited level of activity currently taking place within the building further demonstrates its declining role as a community facility. The primary remaining use relates to youth activities which occupy the premises for approximately two hours per week. The applicant has confirmed that these activities would not cease as a result of the proposal and would instead be relocated to the main church building on Church Lane, Moston, M9, which is situated approximately five minutes' walk from the application site. As a result, the existing users of the facility would continue to have access to appropriate accommodation within close proximity to the site, ensuring continuity of provision and avoiding any significant disruption to the activities currently taking place.

In addition to the continued availability of the church's main premises, there are a number of alternative community facilities, churches, meeting halls and community venues located within the wider locality which are capable of accommodating demand previously served by the application site. Consequently, it is not considered that the loss of this particular facility would create a deficiency in community infrastructure or materially prejudice the ability of local residents to access community services and meeting spaces.

Balanced against the loss of the church hall is the significant public benefit arising from the delivery of six new residential units within a sustainable urban location. The proposal would make effective use of a previously developed and underutilised site, contribute towards addressing Manchester's housing needs and support the efficient use of land in accordance with national and local planning objectives. The redevelopment would bring a largely underused building back into productive use whilst continuing to maintain community activities within nearby alternative premises.

Taking all of the above factors into account, it is considered that the proposal would not result in an unacceptable loss of community infrastructure. The evidence demonstrates that the existing facility is substantially underutilised, that reasonable efforts have been made over an extended period to secure alternative occupiers, and that adequate alternative community facilities remain available within the surrounding area. Furthermore, the limited youth activities currently taking place at the site will be relocated to the church's main premises on Church Lane, located approximately five minutes' walk away, ensuring continuity of provision for existing users.

The proposal would also deliver significant public benefits through the provision of six new homes in a sustainable urban location, thereby contributing towards Manchester's housing needs and making effective use of previously developed land.

Overall, the proposal will secure the beneficial redevelopment of an underutilised site, contribute towards local housing supply, and ensure that existing community activities can continue at nearby alternative premises. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with Policy C1 (Community Facilities), Policies SP1, H1 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy, Policy DC5 of the Manchester Unitary Development Plan, Policy JP-H3 of Places for Everyone, and the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework.

6. Impact on Character and Appearance of the Area

Policy DC5 – Flat Conversions sets out a number of considerations that are relevant when assessing proposals involving the creation of residential flats. Whilst the current proposal extends and redevelops an existing building rather than constituting a straightforward conversion, the principles of the policy remain applicable.



Proposed front streetscape elevation



Proposed rear streetscape elevation

In particular, the proposal has been assessed in relation to its impact on the character of the surrounding area, the standard of accommodation provided for future occupiers, accessibility, and the provision of supporting infrastructure. The scheme provides six self-contained apartments together with dedicated cycle storage, refuse and recycling facilities, and safe pedestrian access arrangements.

Cycle parking is provided within the central stair hall as well as within an external storage area located to the left of the principal entrance, ensuring convenient and secure facilities for future residents. Refuse and recycling storage is located to the front of the building in close proximity to Ashley Lane, allowing for convenient access by residents and efficient collection by the local authority.

The proposal seeks planning permission for the erection of a two-storey vertical extension above the existing detached church hall building to provide six self-contained residential apartments. The additional storeys would be designed to integrate with the existing

structure through the use of complementary materials and architectural detailing. Matching brickwork is proposed at lower levels, whilst the upper floor would be finished in anthracite aluminium cladding, creating a contemporary appearance whilst maintaining a visual relationship with the existing building.

The design incorporates fenestration proportions and arrangements that reflect the surrounding residential context. The proposed extension would maintain the established building line along Ashley Lane and would continue to sit comfortably within the existing streetscene. The building is separated from neighbouring properties by an adjoining garage and alleyway, which assist in maintaining the rhythm, spacing and pattern of development that characterise this part of the street.

In terms of scale, bulk and massing, the extended building would be comparable to surrounding residential properties and would not appear excessively dominant within the streetscene. The proposed height is considered appropriate in the context of the varied built form that exists along Ashley Lane, where a range of building forms, scales and heights are present.

The proposed materials palette, comprising brickwork and anthracite aluminium cladding, is considered appropriate for the development and would provide a coherent architectural composition. The fenestration pattern, detailing and overall design approach would ensure that the building presents an orderly and contemporary appearance whilst remaining compatible with the character of the surrounding area.

The existing hard surfaced areas to the front of the site and side access arrangements would largely be retained. Refuse and recycling storage would be located to the front of the building, close to Ashley Lane, whilst cycle parking provision has been carefully incorporated into the scheme without detracting from the appearance of the development.

Overall, the proposal represents a well-designed form of development that responds positively to the prevailing character, appearance and pattern of development within the locality. The scale, massing, materials and architectural treatment are considered appropriate to the site and its surroundings, and the proposal would integrate satisfactorily within the streetscene without appearing visually intrusive or incongruous. The development is therefore considered to accord with Policies SP1, EN1, H1 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy, Policy DC5 of the Manchester Unitary Development Plan, and the design objectives set out within Chapter 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

7. Standard of Accommodation

The proposed development would provide a total of six self-contained two-bedroom apartments. The proposed units comprise four two-bedroom, four-person apartments and two two-bedroom, three-person apartments, with the following Gross Internal Areas (GIA):

- Flat 1 – 71.2sqm (2-bedroom, 4-person)
- Flat 2 – 72.5sqm (2-bedroom, 4-person)
- Flat 3 – 75.15sqm (2-bedroom, 4-person)

- Flat 4 – 76.40sqm (2-bedroom, 4-person)
- Flat 5 – 65sqm (2-bedroom, 3-person)
- Flat 6 – 65sqm (2-bedroom, 3-person)

The proposed floor areas meet or exceed the relevant Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS) for the intended levels of occupancy and are therefore considered to provide an appropriate amount of internal living space for future residents.

The apartments have been designed to provide functional and efficient internal layouts, incorporating clearly defined living, dining and kitchen areas, together with appropriately sized bedrooms, bathrooms and circulation space. The layouts ensure that the available floor area is used effectively and are capable of supporting the day-to-day needs of future occupants.

Each unit includes dedicated storage provision, ensuring that residents have adequate space for the storage of household items without compromising the usability of living accommodation. The internal arrangements have been designed to create comfortable environments for long-term occupation and to support modern living requirements.

All habitable rooms benefit from direct access to natural light and outlook through appropriately sized windows within the external elevations of the building. This ensures that living rooms, kitchens and bedrooms receive satisfactory levels of daylight and natural ventilation, contributing to healthy and attractive living environments. The positioning of the windows also provides an appropriate outlook for future occupiers whilst maintaining acceptable levels of privacy.

The proposed bedrooms are of suitable size and configuration to accommodate their intended occupancies. All bedrooms meet the relevant minimum size requirements for either single or double occupancy and are capable of accommodating furniture and circulation space expected within modern residential accommodation.

The development has also been designed to provide convenient access throughout the building, with apartments arranged around a central circulation core. The layout promotes efficient movement through the building and provides clear and legible access to all residential units.

The proposal has also been designed having regard to the principles contained within Manchester's Residential Quality Guidance.

Overall, the proposed apartments are considered to provide a high standard of accommodation, offering policy-compliant internal space, functional layouts, adequate storage, and good levels of daylight and outlook. The proposal therefore accords with Policies H1, DM1 and EN1 of the Manchester Core Strategy, Policy DC5 of the Manchester Unitary Development Plan, Policy JP-H3 of Places for Everyone, and Paragraph 135(f) of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

8. Impact on Neighbouring Amenity

Policy DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy, together with Policies H1 and EN1, seeks to ensure that new development safeguards the amenities of existing and future occupiers. In particular, development should provide appropriate levels of privacy, outlook, daylight and general amenity, whilst avoiding unacceptable impacts arising from overlooking, overshadowing, loss of light, noise, disturbance or overbearing built form.

The proposal involves the extension and conversion of the existing church hall building to provide six self-contained residential apartments. The site is located within an established residential area and is surrounded predominantly by two-storey family dwellings with pitched roof. Consequently, careful consideration has been given to the relationship between the proposed development and neighbouring residential properties.

The proposed vertical extension would increase the overall height of the existing building; however, the development has been designed with regard to the surrounding residential context and the relationship with adjoining properties. Having regard to the siting of the building, the separation distances to neighbouring dwellings, and the existing built form within the locality, it is not considered that the proposal would result in unacceptable loss of light, overshadowing, loss of outlook or visual intrusion.

In terms of daylight and sunlight, the proposed development would retain sufficient separation from neighbouring dwellings to ensure that habitable rooms and private garden areas continue to receive adequate levels of natural light. Whilst the increased height of the building may result in some additional shadowing during certain times of the day, it is not considered that this would be of such a degree as to cause material harm to the residential amenities of neighbouring occupiers.

The design of the scheme has also sought to minimise opportunities for overlooking. No windows are proposed within the northern flank elevation at ground, first or second floor level, thereby preventing direct views towards neighbouring properties on this side of the site. Windows within the southern elevation have been carefully positioned and designed to reduce opportunities for overlooking whilst ensuring adequate levels of light and outlook for future occupiers. The proposed fenestration arrangement reflects a balanced approach between the residential amenity needs of future occupants and the protection of neighbouring properties.

The orientation of the building, existing boundary treatments and the separation distances between neighbouring properties are all factors that assist in reducing the potential for harmful overlooking. As a result, it is considered that neighbouring occupiers would continue to benefit from satisfactory levels of privacy, outlook and amenity.

Whilst some views towards neighbouring rear gardens may be possible from upper-floor windows, this relationship is typical of residential development within established urban areas and is consistent with the existing pattern of mutual overlooking experienced between neighbouring properties throughout the locality. Such relationships are commonplace in

suburban and urban environments and are not considered to give rise to unacceptable impacts on residential privacy.

With regard to noise and disturbance, the proposal would introduce six self-contained apartments within an existing building. The site is already located within a residential area where domestic activity forms part of the established character of the neighbourhood. The proposed use is therefore considered compatible with surrounding land uses. Whilst the development would generate additional activity when compared to the current use of the building, the level of activity associated with six residential units would not be unusual within a residential environment and is not expected to result in unacceptable levels of noise or disturbance to neighbouring occupiers.

The development has also been designed to ensure that supporting facilities, including refuse storage, cycle parking and access arrangements, are integrated into the scheme in a manner that avoids adverse impacts on neighbouring residents. Refuse and recycling storage is located to the front of the building in close proximity to Ashley Lane, allowing for convenient collection without affecting neighbouring properties. Secure cycle parking is provided within the central stair hall and within an external storage area adjacent to the principal entrance, thereby reducing the likelihood of informal storage within external areas.

The proposed apartments would themselves benefit from satisfactory standards of amenity. Each unit would receive good levels of natural daylight, outlook and ventilation, whilst the internal layouts have been designed to provide comfortable and functional living environments suitable for long-term occupation.

Taking all matters into account, it is considered that the proposal would not give rise to unacceptable impacts on the amenities of neighbouring occupiers in terms of privacy, daylight, sunlight, outlook, overshadowing, overbearing impact, noise or disturbance. The development is therefore considered to accord with the objectives of Policies DM1, H1 and EN1 of the Manchester Core Strategy, Policy DC26 of the Manchester Unitary Development Plan, and Paragraph 135(f) of the National Planning Policy Framework, which seek to secure a high standard of amenity for existing and future occupants.

9. Outdoor Amenity Space

Policy H1 of the Manchester Core Strategy and the relevant residential design policies of the Manchester Development Plan seek to ensure that new residential development provides an appropriate standard of amenity for future occupiers. This includes consideration of the availability of outdoor amenity space and opportunities for recreation and leisure.

The proposed development does not include private communal amenity space within the application site. This is primarily due to the physical constraints of the site and the nature of the proposal, which involves the vertical extension and conversion of an existing building occupying the majority of the plot. As a consequence, there is limited opportunity to provide meaningful private outdoor amenity space without compromising other design, access and operational requirements of the development.

Notwithstanding the absence of on-site communal amenity space, the site occupies a sustainable location within an established urban area that benefits from convenient access to a range of public open spaces and recreational facilities. Several parks, areas of public open space and informal recreation areas are located within comfortable walking distance of the site and are readily accessible to future residents. These facilities provide opportunities for outdoor recreation, exercise, leisure and social interaction, which contribute positively to the wellbeing and quality of life of future occupiers.

The location of the development enables residents to access these facilities on foot, reducing reliance on private vehicles and supporting sustainable travel patterns. The close proximity of these public open spaces is considered to mitigate, to a significant extent, the absence of private communal amenity space within the site itself.

Furthermore, the proposal comprises six two-bedroom apartments within a sustainable urban environment where higher-density forms of development are expected and where reliance upon publicly accessible open space is more common. The availability of nearby open space therefore forms an important part of the overall amenity offer available to future residents.

Future occupiers would benefit from access to nearby public open spaces, located within walking distance of the site.

Accordingly, whilst no private communal amenity space is proposed within the development, the site's constrained nature, sustainable location and proximity to accessible public open space are considered sufficient to ensure that future occupiers would benefit from an acceptable standard of residential amenity. On balance, the proposal is considered to provide satisfactory living conditions for future occupants and is considered to accord with the objectives of Policy H1 of the Manchester Core Strategy, Policy DM1, and the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework relating to the creation of healthy and sustainable communities.

10. Highways, Refuse and Recycling

Policy DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy seeks to ensure that development is appropriately integrated with the transport network, promotes sustainable travel choices, and provides adequate servicing arrangements without adversely affecting highway safety or the operation of the surrounding road network. Similarly, relevant development plan policies require new residential development to make suitable provision for cycle parking, refuse storage and safe pedestrian access.

The application site occupies a sustainable location on Ashley Lane with convenient access to a range of local services, community facilities and public transport connections. Future residents will have realistic opportunities to undertake day-to-day journeys by walking, cycling and public transport, reducing reliance on private vehicles and supporting wider sustainability objectives.

The proposal involves the conversion and extension of an existing church hall to provide six self-contained residential apartments. No carparking is proposed as part of the scheme. It is not anticipated that the development would generate traffic levels that would have a severe impact on the local highway network. Historically, the church hall use had the potential to generate concentrated periods of vehicle activity associated with organised events, meetings and community gatherings, often resulting in peak periods of traffic and parking demand. In comparison, the proposed residential use is expected to generate a lower intensity and more predictable pattern of movements throughout the day and evening. Consequently, the overall impact on the surrounding highway network is not considered to be significant.

The development incorporates secure cycle parking provision to encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport. Internal cycle storage is provided within the central stair hall, offering a secure and convenient facility for residents. In addition, further cycle parking is located adjacent to the principal entrance on the left-hand side of the building, ensuring sufficient capacity for future occupiers and providing easy access for day-to-day use. The provision of secure and accessible cycle parking is considered to accord with sustainable transport objectives and will help reduce dependence on private car travel.

Safe and convenient pedestrian access will be retained from Ashley Lane. Clear and direct routes will be available between the building entrance, cycle parking facilities, refuse storage areas and residential accommodation. The development has therefore been designed to ensure safe movement throughout the site for residents, visitors and service providers.

Refuse and recycling storage facilities are incorporated into the scheme and are located to the front of the building in close proximity to Ashley Lane. This position allows convenient access for residents while also enabling straightforward collection by the local authority without the need for bins to be moved through residential areas of the site. The location of the refuse storage area has been selected to ensure that waste management arrangements can operate efficiently whilst minimising inconvenience to occupiers and maintaining a satisfactory appearance within the streetscene.

Having regard to the sustainable location of the site, the expected level of vehicle movements, the provision of secure cycle parking, the safe pedestrian access arrangements, and the inclusion of dedicated refuse and recycling facilities, the proposal is not considered likely to result in unacceptable impacts on highway safety or the operation of the surrounding transport network.

Given the site's sustainable location, proximity to public transport services and local facilities, together with the provision of cycle parking, the absence of dedicated on-site car parking is considered acceptable.

Accordingly, the proposal is considered acceptable in highways, refuse and recycling terms and is considered to accord with Policies SP1, DM1 and H1 of the Manchester Core Strategy, together with the sustainable transport objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework.

11. Accessibility

Accessibility has been incorporated into the design of the proposed development. Pedestrian access will be retained from Ashley Lane, providing direct and convenient access to the building and surrounding services, facilities and public transport connections.

The internal layout provides clear and straightforward circulation routes, with all apartments accessed from a central communal entrance and stair core. Secure cycle parking is provided within the central stair hall and adjacent to the principal entrance, ensuring convenient access for residents.

The proposed apartments have been designed to achieve the requirements of Building Regulations Part M4(2) Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings. Detailed compliance will be secured through the Building Regulations process.

Overall, the proposal provides a safe, convenient and inclusive environment for future residents and is considered to accord with Policies SP1, DM1 and H1 of the Manchester Core Strategy and the accessibility objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework.

12. Sustainability

The proposed development represents the sustainable re-use and intensification of an existing urban site through the conversion and extension of an underutilised church hall to provide six self-contained residential apartments. The scheme seeks to make efficient use of previously developed land within an established urban area, consistent with national and local planning objectives that seek to maximise the use of brownfield sites and direct new development towards sustainable locations.

The proposal would contribute towards the delivery of new housing within Manchester without the need to release greenfield land for development. By utilising an existing building and site infrastructure, the scheme minimises the pressure for development in less sustainable locations and supports the efficient use of land within the urban area.

The site benefits from a highly sustainable location with convenient access to a range of local services, community facilities, employment opportunities and public transport connections. Future residents will be able to undertake many day-to-day journeys by walking, cycling and public transport, reducing reliance on private vehicles and helping to support sustainable patterns of movement. Secure cycle parking has been integrated into the design of the development to further encourage active travel and low-carbon transport options.

The proposal also contributes to the wider regeneration objectives for the area by bringing an underutilised site back into productive use. The conversion and extension of the existing building will provide additional housing stock whilst ensuring the continued occupation and maintenance of the site, thereby contributing positively to the vitality and sustainability of the local area.

From an environmental perspective, the proposal makes effective use of an existing building and site, reducing the demand for development on undeveloped land and supporting the efficient use of natural resources. The re-use of existing structures inherently reduces the need for extensive new land take and helps to minimise the environmental impacts associated with entirely new development.

The scheme also supports the social dimension of sustainable development through the provision of six new homes within a location that offers convenient access to services, facilities and public transport. The development will contribute towards meeting housing demand and provide residential accommodation within an established community, assisting in the creation of sustainable and mixed neighbourhoods.

Overall, the proposal represents a sustainable form of development that balances social, economic and environmental objectives. The scheme makes effective use of previously developed land, supports urban regeneration, provides additional housing in a sustainable location, promotes sustainable modes of transport and contributes positively to the efficient use of land within Manchester.

Consequently, the proposal is considered to accord with Policies SP1, H1, H3, EN1 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy, together with the sustainable development objectives of Chapters 2, 9 and 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

The proposal seeks planning permission for the construction of a two-storey extension above the existing church hall building to provide six self-contained two-bedroom apartments. The development represents the re-use and intensification of a previously developed site within an established urban area and has been designed having regard to the character of the surrounding area, the amenity of neighbouring occupiers, and the provision of high-quality residential accommodation.

In considering the proposal, significant weight should be afforded to the delivery of six additional residential units within a sustainable location. The site benefits from convenient access to public transport, local services, employment opportunities, educational facilities and areas of public open space, making it well suited to residential use. The proposal would therefore contribute towards meeting local housing needs and support the objectives of national and local planning policy which seek to maximise housing delivery within sustainable urban locations.

The proposal would result in the loss of the existing church hall; however, evidence has been provided which demonstrates that the facility has experienced a sustained decline in use over a number of years. The building has been actively marketed for alternative community, commercial and institutional uses for an extended period without success, indicating an absence of demand for its continued use in its current form. Furthermore, alternative community facilities exist within the surrounding area which are capable of accommodating the needs previously served by the application site. Consequently, it is considered that the

public benefits associated with the delivery of six new homes outweigh the loss of a facility which is no longer considered viable.

The design of the development has been informed by the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The proposed extension makes use of complementary materials, including brickwork and anthracite aluminium cladding, and incorporates a well-considered fenestration pattern that responds appropriately to the existing building and surrounding streetscape. The scale, form and massing of the development are considered compatible with the varied character of Ashley Lane and would not result in a visually intrusive form of development.

In terms of residential accommodation, the proposed apartments provide policy-compliant levels of internal floor space and have been designed to deliver robust living environments. The units benefit from functional layouts, adequate storage, appropriate levels of natural light, ventilation and outlook, and suitably sized bedrooms. The development would therefore provide a good standard of accommodation for future residents.

The impact on neighbouring occupiers has been carefully considered. The proposal has been designed to minimise opportunities for overlooking, loss of privacy, overshadowing and overbearing impact. Given the siting of the building, the separation distances to neighbouring properties and the design of the fenestration, the development is not anticipated to result in unacceptable harm to residential amenity. The use of the building for residential purposes is also considered compatible with the surrounding residential character of the area and is unlikely to generate noise or disturbance beyond that normally associated with residential occupation.

Whilst the site does not provide private communal amenity space, the constraints of the site are acknowledged and significant weight is given to the site's proximity to a range of parks, open spaces and recreational facilities within walking distance. These facilities provide opportunities for recreation and outdoor amenity and are considered sufficient to serve the needs of future residents.

The proposal incorporates satisfactory servicing and transport arrangements. Secure cycle parking is provided within the central stair hall and within an external store adjacent to the principal entrance, encouraging sustainable modes of transport. Refuse and recycling facilities are located to the front of the building in close proximity to Ashley Lane, facilitating convenient access by residents and efficient collection arrangements. Safe pedestrian access is retained and the development is not expected to result in any unacceptable impact on highway safety or the operation of the local highway network.

The proposal therefore performs positively against the key planning considerations relevant to the site, including:

- The provision of high-quality residential accommodation;
- The effective use of previously developed land;
- The contribution towards local housing supply;

- The character and appearance of the area;
- The protection of neighbouring residential amenity;
- Accessibility and sustainable transport;
- Refuse, recycling and servicing arrangements; and
- Wider sustainability objectives.

Taking all matters into account, the proposal is considered to represent a sustainable form of development that accords with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework, Policies SP1, H1, H3, EN1 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy, and the relevant provisions of Policies DC5 and DC26 of the Manchester Unitary Development Plan.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the proposal represents an appropriate and sustainable redevelopment of the site and that planning permission should be granted.