

Delegated Officer Report

Summary of application details

Application reference:	145353/LO/2026
Application type:	Listed building consent (Alt/Ext)
Proposal:	Listed Building Consent for alterations to existing basement undercroft to provide a secure storage area.
Site address:	Basement at Manchester Central Convention Complex Windmill Street Manchester M2 3GX
Ward(s):	Deansgate
Date application valid:	20 May 2026
Applicant name:	Mr Duncan Leavitt
Agent (if any):	Taylor Design Architects Ltd
Case officer:	Jack Naven
Recommendation:	Approve
Date of recommendation:	08 July 2026

Description of site, building and/or area

The current Manchester Central Complex consists of three main buildings:

- Manchester Central, the former Central Station (Grade II* Listed);
- the Manchester International Convention Centre (MICC);
- the Seminar Centre and a large, landscaped forecourt.

There is also a surface car park and service yard to the rear of the building.

The Manchester Central site is bounded by Watson Street/ the Great Northern Tower residential building, Windmill Street, Great Bridgewater Street and Lower Mosley Street.

Surrounding the site are the Bridgewater Hall and the Grade II* Listed Great Northern Warehouse, Radisson Edwardian Hotel and Midland Hotel.

The complex is raised approximately 10m above street level at some points and is separated from Lower Mosley Street by the Metrolink viaduct.

This former Central Station is an impressive example of Victorian transport architecture, designed in 1875-80 by Sir John Fowler for the Midland Railway Company. The former railway terminal station is rectangular on plan and has a substantial footprint. The elevations are faced with red

brick and contain regular rows of windows with bays of divided by brick buttresses. The elevations are partially obscured by modern extensions, however much of the Lower Mosley Street elevation and the network of cast iron lattice grids of the front and rear elevations remain exposed.

The convex roof structure spans 64 metres and is segmentally vaulted, giving the building a horizontal appearance. Arches are linked by lattice purlins carrying intermediate ribs. Internally, the building retains its large open vaulted space which, despite its conversion to an exhibition space, has maintained its character and grand form.

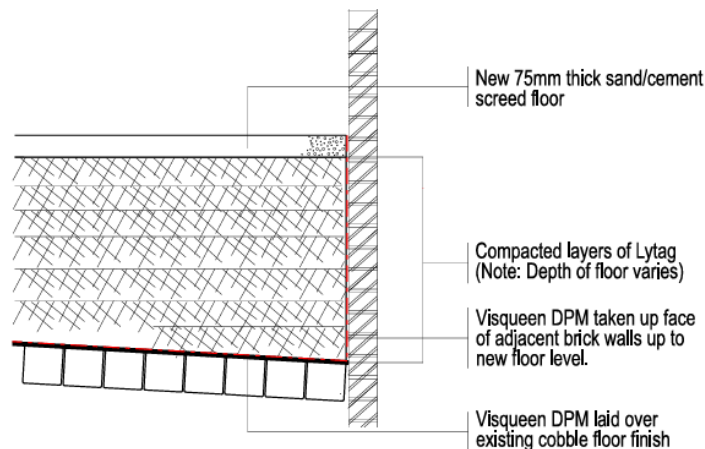
The building was historically and physically linked to the Grade II* Listed Midland Hotel, which provided accommodation for passengers arriving at the station. The site is not within a conservation area but is adjacent to the St Peters Square and Deansgate Conservation Areas. Manchester City Council is a majority shareholder in the complex.

Description of development

The proposal seeks Listed Building Consent for alterations to existing basement undercroft to provide a secure storage area.

These alterations include infilling two of the brick arches in the basement in red brick in order to create a secure storage area as the existing storage area to the rear of the building has been demolished.

The works would also include laying a level floor over the existing cobbles in sand cement screed on a Lylag base course.



**TYPICAL FLOOR CONSTRUCTION
DETAILS 1:20**

Relevant planning history

No relevant planning history.

Consultation, notification and publicity responses

Publicity - Neighbour notification letters were sent to surrounding properties. A site notice and local press advert were also produced. At the time of writing this report, no representations have been received because of this publicity.

Historic England – Had no comments to provide.

Negotiations

The Local Planning Authority attended a site visit and requested some changes to reduce the level of harm caused to the listed building. These amendments were carried out.

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-Strat2 - City Centre
- Policy JP-P1 - Sustainable Places
- 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 Principles and Strategic Character Areas
- Policy EN3 - Heritage
- Policy SP1 - Spatial Principles
- Policy DM1 - Development Management

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

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

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024)

- Chapter 12 - Achieving well-designed places
- Chapter 16 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (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.

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Assessment

Principle of Development

Given that the previous storage area was demolished and that such a storage area is an operational necessity for the use as a convention centre, the principle of the development is acceptable.

In determining whether the proposed works are acceptable, the main issue to consider is the impact these proposed works will have on the historic character and fabric of the listed building itself and to establish whether the public benefits, including heritage benefits, of the proposal will outweigh any harm to the significance of the heritage asset.

Assessment of significance

The assessment of significance section shall only relate to the specific undercroft area that this application is concerned with.

The vaulted arches in the basement area are a distinctive feature and considered to be of high heritage significance. Given the assets Grade II* listing, great weight should be afforded to conserve the asset when considering the impact of proposals.

There has been some modern infill in a red brick to vaults adjacent and the storage area are enclosed with gates and metal partitions, but the majority of the space retains visibility of the vaulted arches and open character currently in use as a car park.

Impact on Heritage

The proposal will infill in red brick two arches which are currently partitioned with metal fencing and gates.

The solid infill is required for greater security to use this space as a storage area, as well as improved fire compartmentation that would be required.

Both infills would be set back from the front face of the brick arch by 600mm, with a shutter door and door integrated within the new infill of one arch.

The proposal will present a modest change which will result in some harm to heritage significance by limiting the appreciation and visibility of two of the vaulted arches and concealment of the cobbled flooring.

The infill will be a reversible intervention. Following discussions during the course of the application, the infill was amended to be set further back from the front face of the arch to ensure blue the existing black feature bricks at the edges of the arch are not concealed.

The design of the infill was also amended from a red brick design to a blue-black, which would give a more recessive appearance and provide contrast to the historic vaulted brick which will ensure the historic material is clearly perceived and the arch retains a clear definition.

The blue-black brick will also blend better with the proposed integrated metal shutter and give a more cohesive appearance. A condition has been added for a sample of this brick to be reviewed to ensure that the brick is of a sufficient quality and design to not detract significantly from the heritage of the space.

New wall fixings will minimise harm to historic brickwork by using wall ties through existing mortar of historic walls, as per submitted detail A drawing ref 360-2, is considered acceptable.

Given the slope in the floor there will also be some harm in concealing the existing cobbles to create a level floor, but the system proposed will still retain the cobbles intact and is fully reversible and as such their concealment is only temporary.

Overall, there will be a low level of less than substantial harm caused by the dividing up of the space and by the covering up of historic cobbles.

Public Benefits

As less than substantial harm has been identified, paragraph 215 of the NPPF requires evaluation of the development against the public benefits that will be provided.

The works are part of ongoing improvements to the events facility to ensure its ongoing success and increasing economic viability. Manchester Central is a significant economic asset to the city, operating as the main Convention Centre, and without sufficient storage space it would not be able to carry out operating as present. The continued occupation of this important historic asset will help to prevent the long-term preservation of a building that is highly significant to the history of Manchester.

Overall, the public benefits identified are considered to outweigh the less than substantial harm caused by the works.

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 policies 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.

Conclusion

It is considered that this application is considered acceptable, as the works are considered to cause a low level of less than substantial harm to the special interest and the historic character of the Grade II listed building which would be outweighed by the public benefits outlined above and therefore are in accordance with Places for Everyone Plan policies JP-Strat2, JP-P1, and JP-P2, Manchester Core Strategy policies CC9, EN1, EN3, DM1 and SP1, Saved Unitary Development Plan for Manchester policies DC18 and DC19, section 16 of the NPPF, and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Recommendation: Approve

Conditions attached to this decision

- 1) The works must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this consent.

Reason - Required to be imposed pursuant to Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended).

- 2) The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following drawings and documents received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority:
 - Location Plan 001
 - Design and Access Statement Prepared by Taylor Design Architects Ltd – March 2026
 - Heritage Statement for Listed Building Consent Prepared by Taylor Design Architects Ltd – March 2026
 - Existing Undercroft Floor Plan and Demolition & Strip out 211

All received 10/04/2026.

- Correspondence RE: blue black bricks

Received 07/07/2026.

- Proposed Basement Floor Plan 230 Amendment A
- Proposed Sections AA and BB 360-1 Amendment A
- Proposed Sections CC and DD 360-2 Amendment A

Received 08/07/2026.

Reason - To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans. Pursuant to PFE Policies JP-P1, JP-P2 and JP-Strat2, policies SP1, CC9, EN3 and DM1 of the Core Strategy and saved policy DC19 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester.

- 3) Notwithstanding the details as set out in condition 2 above, prior to the infilling of the arches hereby approved, a sample panel of blue-black brickwork to be erected and finishing details showing the junctions with the historic walls shall be submitted and approved by the City Council as Local Planning Authority to control the appearance and quality of workmanship. The approved details shall be implemented as part of the development.

Reason - In the interests of visual amenity and because the proposed works affect a building which is included in the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest and careful attention to building work is required to protect the character and appearance of this building and to ensure consistency in accordance with PFE Policies JP-P1, JP-P2 and JP-Strat2, policies SP1, CC9, EN3 and DM1 of the Core Strategy and saved policy DC19 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester.

- 4) Notwithstanding the details as set out in condition 2 above, prior to the infilling of the arches hereby approved, details of the shutter and door within the infill wall including the design, RAL colour, finish and product specification shall be submitted and approved by the City Council as Local Planning Authority to control the appearance and quality of workmanship. The approved details shall be implemented as part of the development.

Reason - In the interests of visual amenity and because the proposed works affect a building which is included in the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest and careful attention to building work is required to protect the character and appearance of this building and to ensure consistency in accordance with PFE Policies JP-P1, JP-P2 and JP-Strat2, policies SP1, CC9, EN3 and DM1 of the Core Strategy and saved policy DC19 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester.

- 5) In the event that the development hereby approved is no longer required to facilitate use of the space as a storage area, a scheme of works for the removal of the brickwork, shutter, door and Lytag screed system over the cobblestones with timeframes for their removal shall be submitted and approved by the City Council as Local Planning Authority. The brickwork, shutter, door and Lytag screed system shall be removed in accordance with the approved scheme and the area shall be restored to its original condition.

Reason - In the interests of visual amenity and because the proposed works affect a building which is included in the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. The works hereby approved are reversible and should be removed in the event that they are no longer required in order to protect the character and appearance of this building and to ensure consistency in accordance with PFE Policies JP-P1, JP-P2 and JP-Strat2, policies SP1, CC9, EN3 and DM1 of the Core Strategy and saved policy DC19 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester.