

Planning

Delegated Officer Report

Summary of application details

Application reference:	145664/LO/2026
Application type:	Listed building consent (Alt/Ext)
Proposal:	Listed Building Consent for installation of internal air condenser units and associated trunking to basement.
Site address:	Basement Lee House Great Bridgewater Street Manchester M1 5JW
Ward(s):	Deansgate
Date application valid:	12 June 2026
Applicant name:	Claire Howard
Agent (if any):	Mr Stephen Last
Case officer:	Michael Pearson
Recommendation:	Approve
Date of recommendation:	28/07/2026

Description of site, building and/or area

The application relates to the basement of the Grade II listed 8no storey former warehouse building, Lee House. The application property is completed in an art deco style with steel frame. The building was designed as an extension to the Grade II* listed Churchgate House, also known as Broadhurst House, and was originally designed to be seventeen storeys until the economic hardship of the Great Depression, 1929-1931, resulted in these plans never being implemented. Internally some original features of note survive, including stain glass along the property's stair core, and support beams throughout the property's floorplate. Regrettably, much of the property has been subject to unsympathetic modern office finishes. The basement space is utilised as site car parking and features a concrete floor and exposed modern breezeblock walls.

The neighbouring area forms the heart of Manchester City Centre, with the site lying to the west of Oxford Road, to the south of St Peters Square and north of the Rochdale Canal. Neighbouring built development ranges significantly in age and design, with the height of properties in the locality ranging from three to eight storeys. Neighbouring properties are in a variety of commercial uses, mainly consisting of offices (Class E), food retail units (Class E) and drinking establishments (Sui Generis). A number of listed buildings neighbour the application site, with the Grade II listed Canada House located to the north along Chepstow Street, the Grade II listed Lee House to the west and the Grade II listed St James Building to the east.

Description of development

The application seeks listed building consent for the installation of internal air condenser units and associated trunking to the property's basement to facilitate the creation of office space within Broadhurst House/Churchgate House.

The proposal would see the removal of 7no redundant wall mounted condenser units and the installation of 15no replacement units that would be arranged in two rows of 7no and 8no units. An additional internal louver would be installed behind an existing external louver which is to be used for air extract.

Trunking would then run from the proposed condenser units through the contemporary extension to Broadhurst House.

Relevant planning history

145410/LO/2026 - Listed Building Consent for installation of 4no louvres to Rochdale Canal elevation and internal alterations to facilitate office use – Application under consideration.

145409/FO/2026 - Change of Use from Class F1 (Education) to Class E (Office) with installation of 4no louvres to Rochdale Canal elevation – Application under consideration.

Consultation, notification and publicity responses

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

Historic England – No objection.

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 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

Lee House, completed in 1931, derives its significance from its 1930s art deco design and its representation of early attempts at the construction of tall buildings within Manchester City Centre. Notwithstanding this importance, the basement space of Lee House is a largely utilitarian space, with it being utilised as a car park and plant area. The basement lacks ornate features and has been subject to modern alteration, including the placement of breezeblock walls. In light of this, the basement space is not considered to significantly contribute to the asset's significance.

The proposals would see the removal of existing internal plant and the installation of additional plant. It is noted that plant would be attached to modern breezeblock and thus would not be affixed to original material. The proposals would see the increase of plant within the basement space and is considered to cause a very low level of less than substantial harm. Notwithstanding this however, it is appreciated that public benefit would be generated through the provision of modern high quality office space.

Conclusion

In line with the above, it is acknowledged that a very low amount 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 the provision of high-quality modern office space securing and the economic and social benefits that would be generated via its provision. 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, 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.

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.

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:

- LHO-SEV-XX-XX-DR-A-01002-Rev P01: Site Location Plan Listed Building Consent (Lee House Only) 145664/LO/2026 (Received 28/05/2026)
- P9317 004: Proposed Wider Context Building Plan Level -01
- P9137 008: Demo GA Level -01
- P9137 010: Proposed GA Level -01
- P9137 013: Proposed Exit Routes Level -01
- P9137 200 Rev A: Proposed Louvre Elevation & Section (Received 12/06/2026)

- 6486-KGA-00-00-DR-M-0400 Rev P03: Proposed Car Park Services Layout (Received 11/03/2026)
- Heritage Statement (Prepared by Seven; Reference number LHO-SEV-XX-XX-RP-A-09101 Rev P03; Received 12/06/2026)
- Technical Communication – Subject Louvre Details to Lee House (Prepared by Seven; Dated 28/05/2026; Received 28/05/2026)
- Technical Communication – Subject Ventilation Louvre Options Appraisal and Justification (Prepared by Seven; Dated 09/07/2026; Received 10/07/2026)

Received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on 10/04/2026, 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.