MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

Planning

Delegated Officer Report

Summary of application details

Application reference:	145651/FO/2026
Application type:	Full planning permission
Proposal:	Installation of roof top mechanical plant
Site address:	Samuel Alexander Building, Manchester University Oxford Road Manchester M13 9PL
Ward(s):	Hulme
Date application valid:	09 July 2026
Applicant name:	Mr G Farmer
Agent (if any):	N/A
Case officer:	Michael Pearson
Recommendation:	Approve
Date of recommendation:	11/08/2026

Description of site, building and/or area

The application relates to the five storey southern wing of the Samuel Alexander Building. The property is a 1970s modernist extension to the Grade II listed Samuel Alexander Building that dates from the 1910s. The southern wing is not physically attached to the 1910s build but rather to an additional extension dating from the 1950s. The property features a concrete façade coloured white, with continuous horizontal bands of glazing. The property features a flat roof with lift overrun and satellite communication dishes.

The neighbouring area lies within the southern reaches of Manchester City Centre and the campus of the University of Manchester. In line with this, the locality is made up of buildings of various ages that lie within educational uses. To the east of the site lies Oxford Road and the Grade I listed Holy Name Church.

Description of development

The application seeks planning permission for the installation of roof top plant.

The proposed plant is comprised of four air conditioning units that would be attached to the western facing side elevation of the property's lift shaft, and an air handling unit. The proposed air conditioning units would have a height of 1338mm, width of 1050mm and a depth of 370mm. The proposed air handling unit would be placed to the west of the property's lift shaft and would have a height of 2653mm, length of 3900mm and a depth of 2000mm.

Relevant planning history

101941/LO/2013/C1 - LISTED BUILDING CONSENT Installation of roof edge protection; replacement of ceiling lantern above main entrance hall in the original building; relocation of 2 no. existing air conditions units on roof above main entrance hall; and installation of green roof and additional insulation on flat roof of original building including subsequent alterations to access door – Approved June 2013.

101790/FO/2013/C1 - Installation of roof edge protection on the west wing and part of the classics wings (roof of the lecture theatre); replacement of ceiling lantern above main entrance hall (classics wing); relocation of 2 no. existing air conditioning condenser units on roof above main entrance hall (classics wing); and installation of 2 no. air conditioning condenser units in the north west corner of quad area – Approved June 2013.

101489/FO/2013/C1 - Installation of railings on roof of south and north wings; new curtain walling system on all elevations of the south wing and southern elevation of the north wing; new/replacement glazed curtain walling on glazed link and link bridge; alterations to the main entrance of the south wing; installation of access enclosure at top of stair tower on the south wing – Approved July 2013.

Consultation, notification and publicity responses

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

Environmental Health – No objection subject to a condition relating to plant acoustics.

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-J1 – Supporting Long-Term Economic Growth
- Policy JP-P2 – Heritage
- Policy JP-P5 – Education, Skills and Knowledge

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 Considerations
Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
Oxford Road Corridor Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF)

Assessment

Principle of the Development

The proposal would see the installation of air conditioning plant equipment to an existing building in educational use, to allow for the implementation of modern air conditioning. The proposal would support and underpin the objectives of the Oxford Road Corridor SRF by modernising an existing building, thereby supporting the continued growth of one of the City's universities which is critical to allowing them to remain competitive and the City's economic performance. In line with this, the proposals are considered to accord in principle with Places for Everyone Plan Policies JP-Strat1, JP-Strat2, JP-J1, JP-P2 and JP-P5, Core Strategy Policies SP1, EC1, EC3, CC1 and DM1, the Oxford Road Corridor Strategic Regeneration Framework, and the National Planning Policy Framework, subject to the matters discussed below.

Visual Amenity & Heritage

The application property is a 1970s modernist extension to the Grade II listed Samuel Alexander Building. Due to the Samuel Alexander Building having multiple large extensions, with that subject to this application being the most southerly and furthest away from the original building, the application site is not considered to form part of nor contribute to the significance of the listed building. Notwithstanding this, the property has its own design merits, that being its continuous horizontal glazing, minimalist external staircase and rounded fifth storey extension. The property already features multiple pieces of plant equipment, as well as a lift overrun. The proposed plant would be situated so as to be set against the aforementioned lift overrun and be set back from the property's parapet so as to constrain views of it from the local footway. It is considered that the proposed plant is only likely to be partially visible from views along Blyton Street when looking directly at the application site and when being set back from it significantly. Due to the set back of the plant and application property from the original build of the Grade II listed Samuel Alexander Building, it is not considered that views of both the proposed plant and aforementioned listed building will be possible. On this basis, the development is considered would not have such a detrimental impact on the local street scene and significance of the Samuel Alexander Building so as to warrant a refusal. The development therefore accords with Place for Everyone Plan Policy JP-P2, Core Strategy Policies SP1, EN1, EN3 and DM1, the National Planning Policy Framework, and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Residential Amenity

The development would see the installation of 4no air conditioning units and 1no air handling unit to the application property's roof. The submission has been accompanied by a technical acoustic note that details the closest neighbouring residential properties lie across Oxford Road within

Horniman House. Environmental Health note that said document does not confirm information on background noise levels at local receptors points. Notwithstanding this, Environmental Health do not object to the development subject to a planning condition that would require the submission of an acoustic assessment and subsequent verification report that would note the background noise levels at the closest noise sensitive receptors and that the proposed plant achieve a rating level of 5dB (LAeq) below the typical background noise level at said receptors. Subject to such a condition, the development is acceptable in this regard and accords with Core Strategy Policy DM1, Saved Unitary Development Plan Policy DC26, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Conclusion

In light of the above, and subject to appropriate planning condition, it has been found that the development is acceptable and is therefore in accordance with Places for Everyone Plan Policies JP-Strat1, JP-Strat2, JP-J1, JP-P2 and JP-P5, Core Strategy Policies SP1, EC2, EC3, CC1, CC9, EN1, EN3 and DM1, Saved Unitary Development Plan Policies DC19 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.

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 polices 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

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.

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:

- A001 Revision A: Location Plans (Received 09/07/2026)
- A003 Revision A: Proposed Elevations
- A004 Revision A: Existing and Proposed Roof Plans & Sections
- PUZ-ZM200/250YKA R32 Product Specification (Received 09/04/2026)
- AHU Fläkt Group AHU-X TW Plans (Received 09/04/2026)
- Technical Memo (Prepared by Hepworth Acoustics; Dated 29/06/2026; Received 30/06/2026)
- Heritage Impact Statement

Received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on 08/06/2026, 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) a) Notwithstanding the documents specified within condition two of this permission, externally mounted ancillary plant, equipment and servicing shall be selected and/or acoustically treated in accordance with a scheme designed so as to achieve a rating level of 5dB (LAeq) below the typical background (LA90) level at the nearest noise sensitive location. Prior to the first use of the plant hereby approved, the scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the City Council as local planning authority in order to secure a reduction in the level of noise emanating from the site. The scheme shall be implemented in full before the first use of the plant and then be retained and maintained for its lifetime thereafter.

b) Prior to the first use of the plant hereby approved, a verification report, which will include post-completion testing, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority to validate that the plant equipment achieves a rating level of 5dB (LAeq) below the typical background (LA90) level in each octave band at the nearest noise sensitive location.

c) In the event of non-conformity with a rating level of 5dB (LAeq) below the typical background (LA90) level in each octave band, then any measures/changes required to achieve conformity shall be carried out. Any required measures/changes and verification shall continue until conformity has been achieved and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, before the use can commence.

Reason - To safeguard the amenities of nearby residents, pursuant to policies SP1 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy.