MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

# Planning

# Delegated Officer Report

## Summary of application details

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| **Application reference:** | PLA-2026-000345 |
| **Application type:** | Full planning permission |
| **Proposal:** | Elevational alterations comprising of installation of new entrance, louvred screens, new windows and doors, and cycle racks. |
| **Site address:** | Y Club, Liverpool Road, Manchester, M3 4JR |
| **Ward(s):** | Deansgate |
| **Date application valid:** | 14 May 2026 |
| **Applicant name:** | Manchester YMCA |
| **Agent (if any):** | Miss Nejla Delkic |
| **Case officer:** | Jack Naven |
| **Recommendation:** | Approve |
| **Date of recommendation:** | 06 July 2026 |

## Description of site, building and/or area

The Manchester YMCA comprises of the Y Club, a leisure centre, and the Castlefield Hotel, with a car parking to the building's rear.

The site is bounded by Liverpool Road to the north, by Potato Wharf (highway) to the west, railway arches to the south, by a canal mooring (the Bridgewater Canal) to the east, and by the Castlefield Bowl music venue further to the east.

The site lies within the Castlefield area, within the setting of the Castlefield Conservation Area.

Both elements of the Manchester YMCA building - the Y Club, and the Castlefield Hotel – comprise of circa four storeys, which are split across two levels. The Castlefield Hotel reception, conference rooms and education rooms align with Liverpool Road at street level, with three storeys of accommodation situated above.

The Y Club has the main gym, swimming pool, YMCA Central training room and changing area at canal level. It also has a Sports Hall and Studio at the Liverpool Road street level.

The Castlefield Hotel is a 48 room 3-star hotel. The Y Club is Manchester's largest health club within the city centre.

The building is broadly L-shaped, constructed of red brick, with blue / grey features / decorative bricks throughout. The Y Club has a flat roof, whereas the Castlefield Hotel's roof is pitched.

Fenestration to, and the gym entrance of, the Y Club comprises of white framing, whilst the Castlefield Hotel has red framing.

The surrounding context is predominantly mixed-use in character, comprising residential, leisure, cultural and commercial uses, including Castlefield Bowl - a major outdoor events venue located directly to the east of the site.

The Bridgewater Canal and associated towpaths form an important landscape and movement corridor nearby.

The Grade I listed 1830 Station and 1830s Warehouse and the Grade II Power Hall building sit opposite Liverpool Road from the site.

The Environment Agency Flood Zone Map indicates that the existing building lies predominantly within Flood Zone 2 (medium risk) with the north of the site in Flood Zone 1 (low risk).

## Description of development

The proposal seeks Planning Permission for elevational alterations comprising of installation of new entrance, louvred screens, new windows and doors, and cycle racks.

A flood resilient external dwarf wall infill system is proposed, which will measure approximately 600mm high to ensure all flood scenarios are covered, whilst also ensuring capacity for the building fabric to dry out.

The opportunity will also be taken to replace the existing ground floor fenestration with high performance glazing and frames. This will upgrade the thermal performance of the building and reduce heat losses, as the existing system is towards the end of its usable life and isn't adaptable – and was found to be a key point of failure during the flooding.

The louvres in front of the plant room in the south-east corner of the site are to be replaced.

## 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.

**MCC Highway Services -** Were satisfied with the submitted Construction Management Plan details. Requested that informatives be attached concerning Highway licensing and temporary pedestrian and traffic management issues.

**MCC Environmental Health -** Are accepting of the acoustic note submitted with the application. Have no further comments to make.

**MCC Flood Risk Management -** Had no objection to the proposal. Requested that an informative be attached to the application.

**Canal and Rivers Trust -** Confirmed that they had no comments to make.

**Environment Agency -** Confirmed that they had no comments to make.

## Negotiations

Discussions were held between the Local Planning Authority and applicant at a pre-application stage. The submitted application required no amendments during the course of the determination period.

## Relevant policies

The following policies are considered to be relevant;

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)
- Policy JP-P3 (Cultural Facilities)
- Policy JP-P7 (Sport and Recreation)
- Policy JP-C5 (Streets for All)
- Policy JP-S4 (Flood Risk and the Water Environment)

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 DM1 (Development Management)
- Policy CC9 (Design and Heritage)
- Policy CC10 (A Place for Everyone)
- Policy EN1 (Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas)
- Policy EN3 (Heritage)
- Policy EN14 (Flood Risk)
- Policy T1 (Sustainable Transport)
- Policy T2 (Accessible areas of opportunity and need)

The **Unitary Development Plan for Manchester** – For the reasons outlined below the following saved UDP Policies are of relevance to this application:

- Policy DC18.1 (Conservation Areas)
- Policy DC19.1 (Listed Buildings)
- Policy DC26.1 (Development and Noise)

**National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024)**

- Chapter 12 (Achieving well-designed and beautiful 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.

**Other Legislative Requirements**

- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

**Council Guidance**

- The Guide to Development in Manchester Supplementary Planning Document and Planning Guidance (Adopted 2007)
- Design for Access 2

## Assessment

**Principle of the Development**

The proposed development seeks permission for flood resilience measures, including the installation of a flood resilient dwarf wall, replacement curtain walling, upgraded glazing, and replacement louvre systems. The proposed works are required to address the site's susceptibility to flooding associated with the adjacent canal and are intended to safeguard the continued operation and longevity of the existing building.

During heavy rainfall, the canal to the immediate east of the site has overtopped its banks. When this has occurred, this flood water has been directed towards the Y Club, which sits at the same level.

In recent years, the Y Club at the Manchester YMCA has experienced two significant flooding events, occurring in July 2019 and January 2025. On both occasions, the owner was forced to close the building whilst restoration took place. The last flood was devastating for staff, members, and the entire Y Club community, including the aforementioned young people who participate in the YMCA's programmes who couldn't access the facilities that they rely upon.

The Y Club has some flood resilience measures at fire exits but they are not sufficient to deal with significant floods and, as such, this flood water is encroaching into the ground floor of the building and has, in the recent past, caused significant damage. Costs have been in the region of £250,000 on both occasions. The extent of the flood damage previously caused means that the owner of the building is no longer able to obtain building or contents insurance to cover the impact were this to happen again in the future.

The development does not involve any intensification or change of use, nor does it introduce any significant additional built form. Instead, the proposals represent a necessary intervention to improve the resilience of the established facility and reduce the impact of future flood events on the building, its users and associated operations.

Therefore, the principle of the proposed development is considered acceptable as it supports the retention and continued functioning of an established longstanding lawful use. The proposals therefore accord with the overarching objectives of local and national planning policy relating to sustainable development, resilience and the protection of existing community and leisure facilities.

**Flood Risk and Drainage**

The Environment Agency Flood Zone Map indicates that the existing building lies predominantly within Flood Zone 2 (medium risk) with the north of the site in Flood Zone 1 (low risk).

A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has been submitted as a part of the application.

The FRA confirms that the principal source of flood risk to the site is fluvial flooding associated with high water levels within the Bridgewater Canal, influenced by the direct interaction with the River Medlock.

The FRA recommends a range of proportionate and site-specific mitigation measures, including flood-resistant doors and windows, localised surface water interception, raised placement of flood-sensitive equipment, improved drainage maintenance regimes, and registration for the Environment Agency's flood alert service. These measures are intended to prevent water ingress into the building while allowing flood water to safely accumulate within the car park area and Castlefield Bowl, before draining through the existing system.

The FRA concludes that the development will not increase flood risk elsewhere and will significantly reduce the vulnerability of the existing building to flooding. The proposed mitigation measures will be able to protect the water ingress up to 600mm which is equivalent to the predicted flood depth for the 1 in 1,000-year flood event. On this basis, the proposed mitigation measures are acceptable in flood risk terms.

MCC's Flood Risk Management Team reviewed the applicant and given the history of flooding and particular circumstances of the application, the Lead Local Flood Authority have no objection to the proposal as submitted. The Flood Risk Management Team did advise the Local Planning Authority to consult the Environment Agency (EA) regarding this application as the building is partially sited within Flood Zone 2. The EA were consulted and stated that they had no comment on the application.

Given the proximity to the Canal, the Canal & Rivers Trust were consulted and also had no comment to provide.

MCC's Flood Risk Management Team did request that an informative be attached to any approved decision notice advising the applicant to incorporate Property Flood Resilience (PFR) measures informed by a PFR survey and drainage survey to a minimum of 600mm above existing ground levels. This informative has been added.

Overall, the proposals accords with both the local and national planning policy objectives relating to flood risk management, including JP-S4 of Places for Everyone, EN14 of the Core Strategy, and the NPPF, particularly paragraph 181(b) which requires development to be appropriately flood resistant and resilient so that, in the event of flooding, buildings can be brought back into use without significant refurbishment.

**Visual Amenity**

The current entrance to the Y Club features an overly complex curtain wall arrangement, which will be replaced by an optimised curtain wall arrangement with minimal framing, which shall create a cleaner and less cluttered look. This entrance shall be framed by high quality metal canopy arch structure, which shall clear demarcate the entrance and create a feature out of it.

An exit door to the side shall be replaced by fixed glazing and a planter.

The proposed material palette has been selected to respond sensitively to the existing building, as well as to the character and significance of the Castlefield Conservation Area.

The use of a bronze cladding system provides a high-quality metal finish with a warm tone that reflects the industrial heritage associated with the areas historic warehouses and infrastructure.

These materials will weather naturally to develop a subtle patina and will contribute positively to the evolving character of the conservation area while remaining identifiable as a modern intervention.

Slim aluminium window frames will help contribute to a refined and recessive architectural expression. By reducing the visual heaviness and complexity of the existing glazing, the proposal allows the architectural qualities of the postmodern building to read more clearly. In particular, this approach helps to emphasise the rhythm, depth, and patterns of the existing brickwork

On the Canalside elevation, the overly complex window and door arrangement, which features a large number of joints, shall be replaced by fritted glazing to the pool area. The fitted glazing has been selected to balance openness and privacy and shall introduce a subtle layered texture to the façade.

Existing ventilation louvres that service the pool are to be replaced. The Local Planning Authority advised the applicant that a visual screen would be required to mitigate the visual harm of these louvres.

The applicant has proposed to have perforated metal panels screen the louvres. These perforated panels have been designed as an integrated architectural feature, with variations in perforation density used to subtly express the lettering of the Y Club, and a layered surface that changes with light and movement.

This approach ensures passive ventilation is accommodated in a visually refined manner, with an architectural expression appropriate to the character of the Castlefield Conservation Area and the modern transformation of the existing building

Planters shall be situated between each arch on the Canalside, sited in front of the perforated metal panels, in order to accord with flood resilience requirements. These planters will be bronze metal faced, which will be in keeping with the materiality and appearance of the bronze cladding system to the entrance, therefore contributing to a visual cohesion across the elevation.

A condition has been attached to ensure that full specifications and samples of the materials are submitted to the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of the development.

As the perforated panel is more bespoke, a separate condition has been added to have a sample of this submitted, prior to the installation of the perforated panel.

Overall, the proposal will contribute to an uplift in the appearance of the building and will have a positive impact upon the visual amenity of the surrounding street scene, which is located within a conservation area. Therefore, in terms of visual amenity, the proposal is considered to accord with policies JP-P1 of Places for Everyone, SP1 and DM1 of the Core Strategy, and chapter 12 of the NPPF.

**Impact on Heritage**

Whilst the site itself is not listed, it is situated within a prominent area of the Castlefield Conservation Area and within the setting of Grade I and II Listed Buildings. It is not considered to be a non-designated heritage asset but does make a positive contribution to the conservation area.

The listed buildings within the setting of the site are not located on elevations where the proposed works will take place. These would only be impacted by works that would take place on the Liverpool Road facing elevation.

The Castlefield Conservation Area represents the only designated heritage asset that has the potential to be sensitive to the development proposals and thus, the impact upon heritage will focus upon the impact upon this conservation area.

This conservation area is primarily dominated by its industrial character, particularly by red brick and sandstone buildings. An important element of the character and appearance of the conservation area are the historic transportation systems. This includes the railway lines with viaducts, and the canal systems. A canal and former wharf are situated adjacent to the Site to the east, including two canal arms. Liverpool Street historically formed an important area with the passenger terminus bounding the street. The green spaces of the Roman Fort, which contribute a quieter and semi-rural environment within the busy urban centre, also contribute highly to the area's significance.

The Castlefield Hotel site itself is considered to make a neutral contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area through its character and appearance. It is a modern hotel building constructed in 1987 with no clear historic association to the development of the area to which the Conservation Area relates. Even so, the building was clearly designed in response to the character and appearance of the immediate surrounds of the Conservation Area. It is built from red brick with blue brick dressings, and whilst it clearly forms a modern hotel building, its size and formation have taken visual cues from the large goods sheds and warehouses to the north.

The proposed works include modest changes to the eastern elevation of the building, utilising existing apertures, and are in-keeping with the designs of the current modern building. These designs would work harmoniously with the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Visibility of the proposed changes to the building within the conservation area will primarily be contained to the open wharf to the east. This is located at a lower elevation than Liverpool Road to the north, where views are anticipated to be only glimpsed at the junction to the roadside.

The designs ensure that the significance of the conservation area is preserved and overall, the proposed works are deemed to cause no harm to the significance of the Castlefield Conservation Area.

Therefore, in terms of impact upon heritage, the proposals are thus in accordance with policy JP-P2 of Places for Everyone, EN1 and CC9 of the Core Strategy, policies contained in Section 16 of the NPPF, and Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

**Noise and Residential Amenity**

As part of the proposed flood resilience works, six existing non-acoustic weather louvres, comprising two louvred doors and four louvred panels, are proposed to be removed and replaced with equivalent non-acoustic weather louvre systems serving the existing plant space.

As outlined in the accompanying Acoustic Note submitted with the application, both the existing and the proposed louvres are non-acoustic.

The assessment confirms that non-acoustic weather louvres do not provide acoustic attenuation and therefore do not reduce noise levels. Therefore, on the basis that the internal plant noise sources are not changing as part of the scheme works, and the existing non-acoustic louvres are being replaced with similarly non-acoustic louvres to provide an equivalent airflow, from an acoustic perspective there will be no change in terms of the plant noise emissions resulting at any nearby receptors.

MCC's Environmental Health team have reviewed this information and are satisfied that the proposal can be approved without any conditions being attached for further information or verification on an acoustic scheme.

On this basis, the proposed development is considered to be acceptable on residential amenity grounds as it shall not result in any increase in noise impacts at nearby sensitive receptors, therefore complying with DM1 of the Core Strategy and DC26 of the UDP.

**Accessibility**

The entrance to Y Club currently benefits from level access. The submitted drawings and sections show that level access will be retained and not impacted in any way.

The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable terms of accessibility, in line with policy JP-C5 of Places for Everyone and policies CC10 and DM1 of the Core Strategy.

**Highway Impacts**

The proposed alterations to the building are all within the red-line boundary of the site and as such, will not impinge upon the adopted highway.

A Construction Management Plan has been submitted as a part of the application. This has been reviewed by MCC Highway Services, who are satisfied that there will not be a significant impact upon the Highway during the construction phase of the development.

## Conclusion

Given the above, the proposal is considered to be consistent with the relevant policies set out above and is therefore approved with conditions attached.

**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.

## Article 35 Declaration

Officers have worked with the applicant/agent in a positive and proactive manner based on seeking solutions to problems arising in relation to dealing with the application.

**Recommendation**: **Approve**

**Conditions attached to this decision**

1) The development must be begun not later than three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason - Required to be imposed by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

2) The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following drawings and documents, received by Manchester City Council as the Local Planning Authority on 14 May 2026:

- Site Location Plan 4812-BDP-ZZ-XX-D-A-000002 P01
- Proposed Site Plan 4812-BDP-ZZ-XX-D-A-000003 P01
- Proposed Lower Ground Floor GA 4812-BDP-XX-XX-D-A-000017 P02
- Proposed West Elevation 4812-BDP-XX-XX-D-A-001018 P02
- Proposed South Elevation 4812-BDP-XX-XX-D-A-001017 P02
- Proposed East Elevation 4812-BDP-XX-XX-D-A-001016 P03
- Proposed Entrance Curtain Wall - Bay Study 4812-BDP-XX-XX-D-A-210001 P03
- Proposed Perforated Screen - Bay Study 4812-BDP-XX-XX-D-A-210002 P03
- Proposed Glazed Panel - Bay Study 4812-BDP-XX-XX-D-A-210003 P03
- External Materials Schedule 4812-BDP-ZZ-ZZ-SH-A-120005 P02
- Design and Access Statement, prepared by BDP
- Flood Risk Assessment, prepared by BDP
- Acoustic Note, prepared by BDP
- Heritage Statement, prepared by Pegasus Group

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) The development shall be carried out in accordance with the details outlined in the Acoustic Note produced by BDP dated 27 April 2026, received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on 14 May 2026.

Reason - To minimise the impact of the development and to prevent a general increase in pre-existing background noise levels around the site. Pursuant to policies SP1 and DM1 of the Core Strategy and saved policy DC26 of the UDP.

4) Notwithstanding the details as set out in condition 2 above, including 'External Materials Schedule 4812-BDP-ZZ-ZZ-SH-A-120005 P02' received by Manchester City Council as the Local Planning Authority on 14 May 2026, no above ground construction works shall take place until details/samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby approved, apart from the Decorative Perforated Metal Panel System which shall be covered by condition 5, have been submitted to and been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The development shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved details/samples.

Reason - In order to ensure a satisfactory appearance in the interests of visual amenity in accordance with policies SP1 and DM1 of the Core Strategy and the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.

5) Notwithstanding the details as set out in condition 2 above, including 'External Materials Schedule 4812-BDP-ZZ-ZZ-SH-A-120005 P02' received by Manchester City Council as the

Local Planning Authority on 14 May 2026, prior to the installation of the Decorative Perforated Metal Panel System, the full and final details and a sample of the design, finish and material of the Decorative Perforated Metal Panel System shall be submitted to and be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The development shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved details/sample.

Reason - In order to ensure a satisfactory appearance in the interests of visual amenity in accordance with policies SP1 and DM1 of the Core Strategy and the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.

6) The construction phase of the development shall be carried out in accordance with the Construction Management section outlined in the Planning Note produced by BDP dated 13 May 2026, received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on 14 May 2026.

Manchester City Council encourages all contractors to be 'considerate contractors' when working in the city by being aware of the needs of neighbours and the environment. Membership of the Considerate Constructors Scheme is highly recommended.

Reason - To safeguard the amenities of nearby residents pursuant to policies SP1, EN19 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy

7) The cycle stands, as shown on 'Proposed South Elevation 4812-BDP-XX-XX-D-A-001017 P02' and ' Proposed East Elevation 4812-BDP-XX-XX-D-A-001016 P03' received by Manchester City Council as the Local Planning Authority on 14 May 2026, shall be implemented as a part of the development and shall thereafter be retained and maintained in situ.

Reason - To ensure there is sufficient cycles provision at the development and the residents in order to support modal shift measures pursuant to policies SP1, T1, T2 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy (2012).

**Informatives**

1) The applicant is advised to incorporate Property Flood Resilience (PFR) measures informed by a PFR survey and drainage survey to a minimum of 600mm above existing ground levels. The building has signed up for the nearby River Medlock at Manchester City Centre flood warning area and considered an evacuation plan.

2) The applicant is required to discuss and agree any requirements for licensing, hoarding / scaffolding, skips and temporary points of access (Section 50) with MCC's Highways Licensing Team via Email to: highwaylicences@manchester.gov.uk

3) The applicant is required to discuss and agree any requirements for temporary pedestrian and traffic management with MCC's Event and Traffic Management Team via Email to highwaynetworkmanagement@manchester.gov.uk

4) Any externally mounted advertisements shown on any drawings or documents are not granted consent under the planning permission. They shall require either advertisement consent to be granted for these advertisements, or confirmation from the Local Planning Authority that they are covered under deemed consent.