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Sent via email: [REDACTED]

10 July 2026

Dear Jen,

Response to objection letter prepared on behalf of Marble Beers Ltd and Heritage Statement

Thank you for forwarding on the objection letter prepared by Plan:8 Town Planning Ltd on behalf of Marble Beers Ltd and the Heritage Statement prepared by Jenny Whetton Conservation also on behalf of Marble Beers Ltd.

Our technical consultant team has reviewed the objection letter and have provided the following comments in response to each technical discipline area.

Heritage

As set out in the NPPF, assessing the impact of development proposals requires an understanding of the significance of heritage assets, including any contribution made by their setting, and an assessment of potential impacts on both the asset itself and its setting. An assessment must take into account proposed mitigation measures and be proportionate to an asset's importance. The assessment of heritage significance and potential impacts by Plan 8 Town Planning and Jenny Whetton Conservation – in the objection letter and accompanying Heritage Statement – is dealt with in more detail below.

Heritage significance (including the contribution of setting)

There is agreement that the application site falls within the setting of the Marble Arch Public House, but there is disagreement regarding the contribution of the application site to the significance of the listed building. Plan 8 Town Planning and Jenny Whetton Conservation place great emphasis on the current openness of the application site. In the objection letter, Plan 8 Town Planning state that *“The remaining openness adjacent to the listed building contributes materially to its appreciation and significance”*. This assertion fails to consider the historical setting of the Marble Arch Public House and how it has evolved over time.

The Marble Arch Public House was historically part of a row of terraced properties along Rochdale Road running through the Site. The other properties have since been demolished. Behind these, to the immediate rear of the pub, were warehouses and previously a large gas works. The 'blank' east elevation of the listed building, which lacks windows and any architectural detailing, reflects this relationship, as it was never intended to be exposed. Indeed, the Marble Arch Public House had significant Victorian heavy industry as its immediate backdrop, including the Rochdale Gas Works and associated railway infrastructure and coal drops. The original setting of the Marble Arch Public House has largely been lost. Openness was never a characteristic of its setting, rather the opposite, it was closely contained by buildings.

The application site immediately adjacent to the listed building is currently characterised by a poor quality, surface level car park. Its character and appearance, including its openness, does not contribute positively to the setting of the Marble Arch Public House. Indeed, it allows views of the building's blank eastern elevation which were never intended. The proposed development seeks to re-instate the historic built frontage along Rochdale Road. Introducing development adjacent to the Marble Arch Public House would not affect the ability to appreciate the decorative fronts of the public house that face Rochdale Road and Gould Street and its role in defining this street corner would remain. The submitted Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment concurs, and concludes that the completed proposed development would have a beneficial impact on the viewpoints in which the Marble Arch Inn is included.

Assessment of impacts

In terms of the assessment of the impact of the proposals on the heritage significance of the Marble Arch Public House, there is inconsistency between the Heritage Statement prepared by Jenny Whetton Conservation and the objection letter prepared by Plan 8 Town Planning. The Heritage Statement states that the proposals would dominate and overwhelm the Marble Arch Public House and distract attention from it resulting in what could be considered as 'substantial harm' in planning terms. It clarifies the harm as "*possibly substantial harm in planning terms*" in its conclusion on the assessment of harm, suggesting a clear level of doubt over the classification, and very much states it will be for the City Council to decide.

In the objection letter, Plan 8 Town Planning refers to the assessment of 'substantial harm' in the Heritage Statement but goes on to state that its client considers the level of harm to be 'less than substantial harm' (sitting towards the upper end of the spectrum), "*Whilst the applicant's heritage assessment concludes that any harm falls within the category of less than substantial harm, Marble Beers considers that the harm sits towards the upper end of that spectrum.*"

As you will be aware, 'substantial harm' is a high test, as set out in *Planning Practice Guidance on Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment*, which states that, "*In general terms, substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases*" (MHCLG, 2019). No doubt Plan 8 Town Planning is aware of the high test of 'substantial harm' and identifies the level of doubt in the conclusions of Jenny Whetton Conservation, which has led them to a different conclusion regarding the level of harm that would result from the proposals to Jenny Whetton Conservation.

In terms of assessing harm, it is worth noting that *Planning Practice Guidance on Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment* also states, "*It is the degree of harm to the asset's significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed*" (MHCLG, 2019). Whilst Plan 8 Town Planning acknowledge that its concern is not merely that the building is tall, the objection

letter refers to the size of the proposed development, stating, for example, *“the proposal is too large and too close to one of Manchester’s most distinctive surviving Victorian public houses.”*

There is no acknowledgment that there would be no direct impacts to the heritage significance of Marble Arch Public House and its historical, architectural (aesthetic) and communal value would be preserved. The letter overly relies on the impact on the openness of its setting, which as we set out earlier is misplaced as the openness is a more modern condition brought about by demolition. The building was never designed to be open to its eastern side. It is noteworthy that the Plan8 letter on page 10 in its conclusion accepts that “.. the redevelopment of the site is accepted in principle”, and whilst the scale is not accepted, it is clear that the pub accepts that development is acceptable being brought forward adjacent to the pub.

Based on the proper assessment of the building’s significance and judgement of impact, we remain of the view that the proposed development would result in ‘less than substantial’ harm (towards the lower end of the spectrum) from the proposed development within its setting.

Former Victoria Hotel

Both the letter and the Heritage Statement state that the former Victoria Hotel could be considered as a non-designated heritage asset due to its historic height, massing and some of its historic design, despite the acknowledged poor and neglected condition.

The applicant’s Heritage Statement states that the Former Victoria Hotel is not a non-designated heritage asset as it is not recorded on the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record. Furthermore, Manchester City Council does not have an adopted list of locally listed buildings. The building has been significantly altered over time, with important exterior features, such as the chimneys and windows, removed along with almost all of its original internal features. Its heritage significance is considered to be negligible, and it is not considered to be a non-designated heritage asset.

Northern Gateway Vision (A.K.A Victoria North SRF)

The objection letter mentions how the SRF envisaged the creation of high-quality public realm around the Marble Arch and identified the location as an important gateway. Whilst it is acknowledged that the SRF marks the intersection of Rochdale Road and Gould Street as a gateway location and mentions the opportunity for a Gateway Square, the SRF is a material consideration in planning decisions and is a guidance document. The SRF is a masterplan, and it does not allocate land uses for specific sites within the SRF area. The Victoria North SRF does not specifically show the phase 2 Rochdale Road site as the location for a ‘Gateway Square’, rather it is shown as stretching across Rochdale Road at the Gould Street intersection, and reference is made to the Gateway Square providing a high-quality streetscape. The SRF is also 7 years old now, and there has been a passage of time since the SRF was adopted and the area has evolved. Across Manchester, it is clear that the SRFs are guidance only, with planning decisions being made which are not in strict accordance with the suggested uses and heights.

The proposed development is providing high quality public realm around the Marble Arch Inn and therefore broadly aligns with the SRF vision, creating a pedestrian and cycle way through the urban block to the north, and therefore increasing permeability through the Victoria North area. Within the new shared public space between phase 1 and phase 2 of the overall Rochdale Road development, there are sections of dwelling space for members of the public and future residents to use and enjoy the new public space.

We acknowledge that the rear section of the proposed building will be approximately 3m away from the single storey rear section of the Marble Arch pub. However, this element of the building does not form part of the original and historic fabric of the pub and recent, modern alterations have been made to it. This is mentioned in the Heritage Statement prepared by Jenny Whetton on page 15 which states that the western elevation has been *“partly infilled and fitted with a modern double-leaf door to provide additional space”* and that the *“north wall of this area appears to be of modern brick”* This single storey rear section of the Marble Arch therefore is of no architectural or historical merit. The proposed development does respect the main building and historical fabric of the of the Marble Arch pub (which is the section of the building which warrants it’s listed status) providing a 13m landscaping buffer which will enhance the setting and appreciation of the Marble Arch Inn. The proposed development was altered to include this additional area of landscaping, following comments raised by the Marble Arch Inn.

Structural Impacts

It is relatively commonplace within inner city development for buildings to be erected in close proximity to each other, and therefore tried and tested strategies will be put in place to minimise risks. Condition reporting before and after together with positional and movement monitoring during the works is considered standard regardless of the Historic significance of the adjacent building. The Historic value of the Marble Arch only serves to concentrate our minds on the task at hand and ensure systems and ongoing monitoring is put in place to minimise the impact on this building, with more onerous trigger levels put in place for the monitoring process. We are confident of our capability and experience to deal with the particular constraints of this site.

As with all such developments it is incumbent on both the designers and the Contractors to develop and agree a strategy to protect potentially vulnerable adjacent buildings. For inner city work, this happens on many, if not most projects.

Booth King (the structural engineers for the project) would develop a robust strategy for surveying, monitoring, demolition/site enabling, temporary and permanent works. We need to know at the outset that there is a viable construction method. This would then be passed onto the Main and interested sub-contractors, in this case ground workers, pilers, surveying specialists, temporary works designers and contractors and monitoring specialists.

Eventually a consensus on the best approach would be achieved. The selected methodology would not compromise the principles set out in Industry guidance which includes but is not limited to:

- Buildings Research Establishment (BRE) document DG 366
- Appraisal of Existing Structures 3rd Edition (IStructE, 2010)
- Guide to Surveys and Inspections of Buildings and Associated Structures (IStructE, 2008)
- BS ISO 4866:2010
- The National Federation of Demolition Contractors’ (NFDC) document ‘DRG102:2022
- Demolition Code of Practice BS 6187 CDM Regulations

At this early stage in the project, without knowledge of nor agreement with the contractor and surveying/monitoring teams it is not possible to develop a final and fully detailed methodology, but we can provide a more detailed example of the measures taken in other similar circumstances.

The letter prepared by Plan 8 states that the proposed building is to be founded on 29m deep piles, with the nearest piled foundation located approximately 1.5m from the walls of the Marble Arch and its cellar. The letter from Plan 8 goes on to state that no detailed assessment has been provided demonstrating the likely vibration, settlement or structural impacts upon the Marble Arch, its historic cellar structures or associated boundary walls.

The usual situation is that greater details on surveying, monitoring and remedial strategies to protect adjacent structures are reserved by planning conditions. Whilst preparing the information to discharge the planning condition, a party wall process would be initiated and early discussions with preferred sub-contractors could take place and the detail for the protection works are ironed out.

The intent of this strategy and the goal of the final contractor team implementation would be to limit settlement, vibration, movement damage to the Marble Arch to imperceptible levels. In the event that movements or vibrations are detected above agreed threshold levels, works on site would cease until an alternative methodology has been developed and agreed.

The letter prepared by Plan 8 also raises concerns that the submitted geo-environmental investigation report confirms that the understanding of below ground conditions remains incomplete. However, prior to commencement of any permanent foundation/substructure works, we would anticipate that the shallow made ground will be sensitively turned over to remove buried obstructions. This would be carried out using a methodology sympathetic to the nearby Marble Arch. These works would only start:

- Once the pre-commencement survey work to the Marble Arch has been completed
- The line & level and condition has been established and agreed with the assistance of Party wall surveyors on both sides
- All vibration, positional and inclinometer monitoring stations have been put in place
- Threshold trigger criteria has been agreed by both sides
- The Ground workers RAMS have been approved.

This type of work is common, particularly in relation to inner city developments.

Some, additional site investigation has now been completed, and we await the updated report. The presence of made ground, buried remnants and the underlying stratigraphy is not unusual when compared with other similar inner city Manchester brown field developments and does not represent an unusual or unique problem with this particular development. Careful turning over of the ground will be carried out to remove these features and all the while, taking cognisance of the monitoring station readings placed onto the marble arch structure.

The Plan 8 letter also mentions that the applicant should be required to make good any damage arising from demolition, excavation, piling or construction activity and should fund all remedial works identified through on-going monitoring of the building during the construction process. With regard to Plan 8's comments on remedial works, the applicant concurs and this is a normal approach.

Impact Upon the Operation of the Marble Arch

A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) has been submitted in support of the planning application. Due consideration has been given to neighbouring properties, such as the

Marble Arch, and site boundary treatments will be installed at the outset of the project to secure the site and minimise potential impacts, including noise, dust, and unauthorised access. Site operations will be restricted to approved daytime working hours, in accordance with local authority requirements, to minimise disturbance to the surrounding community.

As stated on page 2 of the Plan 8 letter, the Marble Arch Inn continues to be a successful business, despite the period of construction works on phase 1 Rochdale Road next door to the pub. Phase 1 is almost complete, with occupation expected at the end of 2026/early 2027, bringing potential new customers to the Marble Arch Inn, whilst phase 2 construction works would be underway.

Wind Microclimate

In relation to Wind Microclimate, the objection letter states that:

“the assessment appears principally focused on circulation routes, entrances and the applicant’s own public realm not upon the impact of wind on the private roof terrace of the Marble Arch or the beer garden.”

The Wind Microclimate Report, dated 25 March 2026, demonstrates the results for the conditions at the private roof terrace of the Marble Arch and the beer garden. These are presented graphically in Figure 1 for safety (also presented as Figure 11 in the Wind Microclimate Report, March 2026) and Figure 2 for summer comfort (also presented as Figure 13 in the Wind Microclimate Report, March 2026)

Figure 1 – Pedestrian wind conditions, proposed development within existing surrounds, annual safety

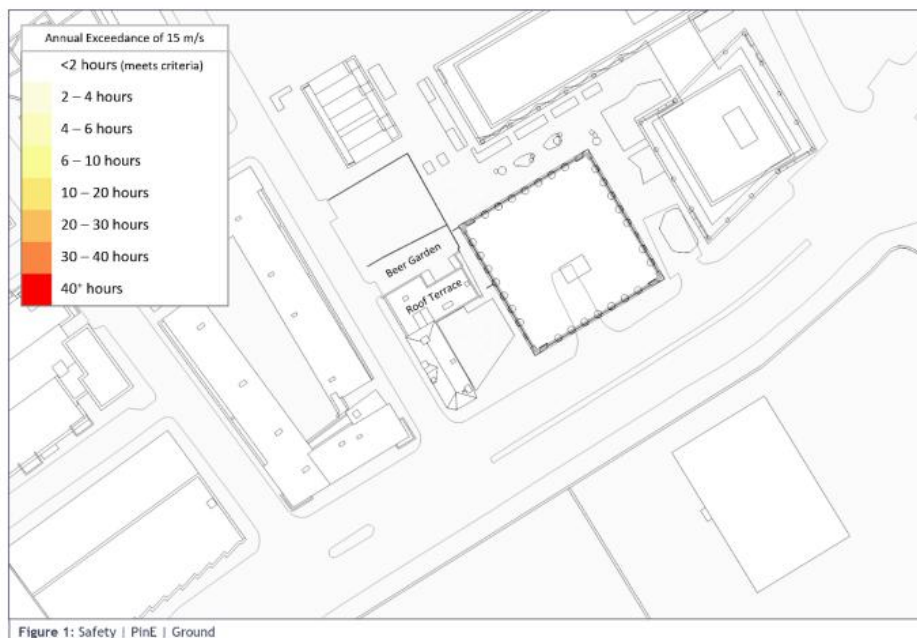


Figure 2 – Pedestrian wind conditions, proposed development within existing surrounds. Summer season



Following the introduction of the proposed development within the existing surrounds configuration, there remain no exceedances of the safety criteria at the private roof terrace of the Marble Arch and the beer garden. The wind conditions within these areas are suitable for long-term sitting during summer, and therefore suitable for prolonged periods of outdoor seating.

Sunlight, Daylight and sense of enclosure

The letter prepared by Plan 8 states the following:

“The applicant's own Daylight and Sunlight Assessment confirms that the proposal would result in reductions in daylight and sunlight amenity. The report therefore accepts that harm will arise and instead seeks to justify that harm by reference to the changing character of the area.”

“It is also noteworthy that the applicant's assessment does not rely solely upon the standard BRE daylight and sunlight criteria. Instead, the report adopts reduced "acceptable tolerance" thresholds, including a reduction in the Vertical Sky Component target from 27% to 21.6%, Annual Probable Sunlight Hours from 25% to 20% and Winter Probable Sunlight Hours from 5% to 4%”

Neither of the above statements are applicable to the Marble Arch. Plan 8 have not identified any habitable rooms within the Marble Arch served by Site-facing windows. Their letter acknowledges that the window facing the Site serves a hallway in the Marble Arch. The BRE Guidance states on page 14 the following:

*“ The guidelines given here are intended for use for rooms in adjoining dwellings where daylight is required, including living rooms, kitchens, and bedrooms. **Windows to bathrooms, toilets, storerooms, circulation areas, and garages need not be analysed.**”* (emphasis added)

In accordance with the BRE Guidance, there are no windows / rooms requiring daylight and sunlight impact assessment within the Marble Arch. Given that none of the habitable spaces in the Marble Arch (and the windows serving them) face the Site, the comment regarding Alternative Targets can be disregarded as they do not apply to the Marble Arch Inn. The Proposed

Development will have no impact on daylight or sunlight amenity of habitable rooms in the Marble Arch Inn.

The letter produced by Plan 8 also mentions the impact on daylight and sunlight amenity of the roof terrace and the external amenity areas. However, there is no daylight amenity test in the BRE Guidance for external amenity spaces, so it is not applicable. There is a BRE sunlight amenity test for external amenity spaces. The BRE Guidance states that *"It is recommended that for it to appear adequately sunlit throughout the year, at least half of a garden or amenity area should receive at least two hours of sunlight on 21 March"*. The roof terrace would exceed this threshold, with 60% of the area achieving at least 2 Hours Time in Sun on 21 March (in the Baseline 65% of this area achieves this 2 hour threshold - i.e. Non-significant impacts with reference to the BRE Time in Sun test)

Privacy

The letter produced by Plan 8 raises that habitable room windows within the proposed building will directly face the first floor roof terrace of the flat of the Marble Arch Inn, having an overlooking impact and loss of privacy on the roof terrace.

We would firstly like to raise to the council's attention that there appear to be no records of Listed Building Consent being granted for the erection of a fence around the perimeter of the flat roof, and the use of the flat roof as an external amenity area. The use of the flat roof as an external amenity area is therefore not formalised.

It is also incorrect that habitable room windows of the proposed development will face the roof terrace. The submitted floor plans demonstrate that the windows in question are bedroom windows, and bedrooms are not classified as habitable rooms. It is however proposed that a planted screen is installed to provide additional privacy.

It is also worth noting that the roof terrace already receives an overlooking impact from the existing 6 storey development at 71 Rochdale Road.

Affordable Housing and Viability

Plan 8 raise a query over the difference in the adopted Benchmark Land Value (BLV) at the subject site (£566,500) and the BLV adopted in the Financial Viability Assessment (FVA) of the neighbouring Phase 1 scheme (£1.215m). The BLV is based upon the existing use value of the site plus a premium. In this instance the existing uses of the phase 1 land and the subject site vary. Phase 1 is larger in size and included industrial premises. The subject site (85 Rochdale Road – phase 2) in comparison included a retail unit with first floor residential accommodation, plus an area of green space. Both sites did have former car parking uses, but of significantly different scale. The phase 1 site comprised of 115 car parking spaces, whilst the phase 2 site comprises of 15 spaces. Assessment of BLV is site specific, reflective of the size and specific uses. The same approach has been taken in both FVA's, with the differences in adopted BLV reflective of site specific uses and sizes.

Plan 8 also raise concern over the different target developer return adopted in the FVA of the phase 2 site (15% on cost) and the FVA of the phase 1 scheme (17% on Gross Development Value (Open Market Sales Scheme) and 15% on cost (Build to Rent Scheme). The adopted levels of return are correct and remain consistent across both FVAs, reflective of the proposed tenures as

detailed in each of the FVA reports. Phase 1 was assessed primarily as an open market sales scheme, whereby developers generally require a return of up to 20% of GDV reflective of the increased risks of disposal post completion, with little guarantee of sales. A further appraisal was run assuming a Build to Rent (BtR) model delivery, whereby the risk profile is reduced (rental occupation is normally quicker) with a target developer return of 15% on cost was adopted. For the phase 2 site, aligned to the proposed BtR delivery, we have adopted the same target developer return of 15% on cost.

Both FVAs reach the same conclusion that neither scheme can viably deliver any level of affordable units. Our approach and inputs remain consistent across both reports, with any variation reflective of changing market conditions given the period of time between the two reports (i.e. rental values) or physical differences between two schemes (i.e scale and unit mix).

Planning Balance

As demonstrated in the Heritage Statement which accompanies the planning application, and as reiterated above, the proposed development would result in 'less than substantial' harm (towards the lower end of the spectrum) to the Marble Arch. The former Victoria Hotel is in a state of disrepair, and has lost many of its original historic features, both externally and internally and it is therefore not considered to be a non-designated heritage asset.

The proposal broadly aligns with the vision within the Victoria North SRF and is providing high quality public realm around the Marble Arch Inn and providing thoroughfare pedestrian and cycle links northwards within the area. The SRF is a material consideration in planning decisions and is guidance only, it does not specifically allocate uses to sites within a SRF area. A piece of landscaping which introduces greenery to the area, and creates openness and a separation distance of approximately 13m between the proposal and the historic element of the Marble Arch Inn forms part of the proposals. The landscaping buffer will enhance the setting and appreciation of the Marble Arch Inn, in comparison to its existing setting.

As outlined above, all due consideration has been taken into the effects of the proposed development construction on the Marble Arch, and appropriate protection, monitoring and mitigation measures have been outlined in the submitted structural report. As mentioned, further details on surveying, monitoring and remedial strategies to protect adjacent structures are reserved by planning conditions, and will be submitted when the planning conditions are being discharged. We re-iterate the fact that it is commonplace in city centres for tall buildings to be built close to existing, older buildings.

The submitted wind microclimate and sunlight and daylight reports have adequately assessed the impacts of the proposals on the Marble Arch and its external amenity areas, and have demonstrated that the proposed development will have no significant impacts on these matters. We would also re-iterate that the private roof terrace at the Marble Arch lacks Listed Building Consent and therefore is not a formal amenity space.

The Financial Viability Assessment has been robustly prepared, and the BLV is based on the existing site's specific conditions and the target developer return is correct and consistent across both the phase 1 and phase 2 reports.

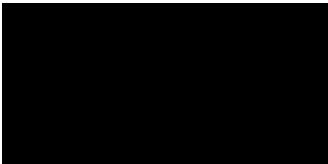
We can confirm that the overheating report does not conclude that compliance relies upon permanently closed windows. The overheating mitigation strategy comprises hybrid MVHR with

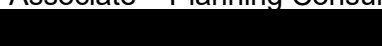
integrated cooling, external shading and solar control glazing. Windows may be openable at resident's discretion for purge ventilation.

The proposed development will create a high quality and striking residential led scheme in an appropriate and accessible city centre location. The redevelopment of the site, in addition to public realm and landscaping will improve the streetscene and enhance connectivity and permeability of the site with the wider community. It will integrate with adjacent developments and the surrounding area, to play its role creating an attractive and prosperous area of Manchester.

In accordance with paragraph 215 of the NPPF, this very minor less than substantial harm has been weighed and balanced against the public benefits of the scheme. The social, economic, environmental and heritage public benefits of the scheme are outlined in section 8 of the submitted Planning Statement. These public benefits outweigh the very minor less than substantial harm to the setting of the Marble Arch Inn.

Yours sincerely,



 **MPlan MRTPI**
Associate – Planning Consultancy


Cliquez ici pour taper du texte.