DRAFT PLANNING STATEMENT

Proposed Change of Use of Social Club to Place of Worship,
with Ancillary Office Use at First Floor

Site Address: 1143 Oldham Road, Manchester, M40 2FU
Applicant: [To be confirmed]
Local Planning Authority: Manchester City Council
Application Reference: [To be confirmed]

1. Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application for the proposed change of use of the existing social club at 1143 Oldham Road, Manchester, M40 2FU, to a place of worship, with ancillary office use at first-floor level.

The application seeks permission for the use of the existing premises as a place of worship, providing a facility for religious services, worship and associated activities. The first floor is proposed to accommodate ancillary office space in connection with the operation and administration of the place of worship.

The proposal represents a change in the use of an existing building and does not seek to introduce a fundamentally different form of built development. The application seeks to establish an appropriate and sustainable use of the premises, while ensuring that the operation of the proposed use does not result in unacceptable impacts upon the surrounding area, neighbouring occupiers or the local highway network.

The application has been prepared having regard to the previous planning refusal relating to the site, the subsequent pre-application discussions with Manchester City Council and the material changes incorporated into the current proposal.

In particular, the current application addresses the matters previously raised in respect of highway impact, access, first-floor residential accommodation and crime and security. The current proposal differs materially from the previously refused scheme and should therefore be assessed on its own merits, having regard to the revised development proposals and supporting technical evidence.

2. Site and Surrounding Area

The application site is located at 1143 Oldham Road, Manchester, M40 2FU. The premises comprise an existing building currently in use as a social club.

The site is situated within an established urban area, within which the existing building forms part of the surrounding built environment. The premises are already in an established non-residential use and have an existing history of activity associated with their operation as a social club.

The proposed change of use would retain the existing building and utilise it for a place of worship, with ancillary office accommodation at first-floor level. The proposal would not introduce residential accommodation, and the first-floor office use would be functionally related to the principal religious use of the premises.

The application site is therefore considered suitable for assessment as an existing building proposed for continued non-residential use, with particular consideration given to the compatibility of the proposed use with its surroundings, the management of activity associated with the premises and the availability of appropriate parking and access arrangements.

3. The Proposed Development

The application seeks planning permission for the change of use of the existing social club to a place of worship, with ancillary office use at first-floor level.

The principal use of the premises would be for religious worship and associated activities. The building would provide accommodation for congregational worship and related activities associated with the operation of the religious organisation.

The first floor would be used for ancillary office purposes, supporting the administration and management of the place of worship. This accommodation would be ancillary to, and directly associated with, the principal use of the building.

The current proposal does not include any residential accommodation. This represents a significant change from the previously refused scheme, which included residential accommodation at first-floor level.

The application also incorporates revised parking arrangements, whereby attendees of the place of worship would utilise an off-site public car park. The church would pay for parking on behalf of its attendees, providing a dedicated and managed approach to parking associated with the proposed use. This is further supported by a Travel Plan.

4. Planning History and Previous Refusal

The application site has previously been the subject of a planning application for the change of use of the premises from a club (sui generis) to a church and community centre, including residential accommodation (sui generis).

That application was refused under planning application reference 144849/FO/2025.

The reasons for refusal related to highway impact, access, the relationship between the proposed ground-floor use and first-floor residential accommodation, and crime and security.

The current application has been formulated with specific regard to those matters. However, it is important to recognise that the current proposal differs materially from the previously refused scheme in a number of respects.

The current application is not simply a resubmission of the previously refused development. It proposes a different arrangement of uses within the building, removes the residential element and introduces revised parking arrangements supported by a traffic assessment.

The current application should therefore be assessed on the basis of the development now proposed and the evidence submitted in support of it, rather than being determined solely by reference to the outcome of the previous application.

4.1 Highway Impact

The first reason for refusal related to the potential highway impact of the proposed use, including parking demand, trip generation, servicing arrangements and the intensification of vehicular movements.

The previous application was considered insufficiently supported by evidence to demonstrate that the proposed use would not result in unacceptable pressure upon existing on-street parking provision or exacerbate highway safety concerns.

Since the determination of that application, the Applicant has obtained a traffic assessment in support of the current proposal.

The revised assessment provides additional technical evidence concerning the anticipated highway implications of the development and should be given appropriate consideration in the determination of the current application.

Furthermore, the parking arrangements have been revised. Rather than relying upon the parking area previously proposed adjacent to the northern elevation of the building, the current proposal utilises an off-site public car park, with the church paying for parking on behalf of its attendees.

This represents a material change to the parking strategy and provides a different basis upon which the highway implications of the proposed use can be assessed.

The current application should therefore be considered in light of the revised traffic assessment and the proposed parking arrangements, rather than relying upon the conclusions reached in respect of the previous scheme.

The relevant details of parking provision and the supporting assessment are to be set out in the parking section of this statement.

4.2 Access

The second reason for refusal related to the proposed parking area adjacent to the northern elevation of the building along Lonsdale Street.

The Council considered that the proposed parking area, when considered alongside the existing parking provision on the opposite side of the street, would result in a constrained arrangement that could impede access to neighbouring commercial premises to the rear.

The current application no longer proposes the same on-site parking arrangement.

Instead, the Applicant proposes to utilise an off-site public car park, which the church will pay for on behalf of attendees. The previously proposed parking area adjacent to the northern elevation is therefore no longer relied upon as the parking solution for the development.

As a consequence, the specific arrangement that formed the basis of the previous access refusal has been removed from the current proposal.

The current application should be assessed having regard to the revised parking arrangements and the supporting information submitted with the application. The previous concerns regarding the proximity of the proposed parking area to neighbouring parking provision and the potential obstruction of access to rear commercial premises do not arise in the same form under the current scheme.

4.3 First-Floor Accommodation

The third reason for refusal related to the proposed first-floor residential accommodation and its relationship with the more intensive ground-floor church and community use.

The Council considered that the proposed relationship between the uses could result in unacceptable noise, disturbance and general activity, adversely affecting the living conditions of future residential occupiers.

The current application removes the residential accommodation entirely.

The first floor is now proposed for ancillary office use associated with the operation and administration of the place of worship. No residential accommodation is proposed as part of the development.

Accordingly, the specific concern identified in the previous refusal, namely the potential for the ground-floor use to adversely affect the living conditions of future residential occupiers within the building, has been removed.

The first-floor office accommodation would form part of the overall non-residential use of the premises and would not introduce a new residential receptor within the building.

The previous refusal therefore related to a materially different arrangement of uses and does not provide a reason to resist the current proposal on the same grounds.

The current application should instead be assessed in relation to the acceptability of the proposed ancillary office use and its relationship with the principal place of worship.

4.4 Crime and Security

The fourth reason for refusal related to the proposed first-floor residential accommodation and its proximity to, and relationship with, the proposed church and community use at ground-floor level.

The Council considered that the arrangement could create opportunities for unauthorised movement between the different uses, potentially increasing the risk of criminal activity in vulnerable areas.

The current proposal removes the residential accommodation and instead provides ancillary office accommodation at first-floor level.

The building would therefore operate as a place of worship with associated office accommodation, rather than as a mixed-use building incorporating separate residential accommodation.

The specific arrangement that formed the basis of the previous crime and security objection is consequently no longer proposed.

The current application should be assessed in the context of the revised use of the building and the absence of residential accommodation. The previous concerns regarding the relationship between the church and residential accommodation do not arise in the same form under the current scheme.

On this basis, the previous crime and security reason for refusal should not be carried forward without consideration of the materially different nature of the current proposal.

5. Pre-Application Advice

Following the previous refusal, the Applicant undertook pre-application discussions with Manchester City Council in relation to the proposed development.

During those discussions, the Council advised that, having regard to the previous refusal, it would not support the application.

The Applicant is concerned that this advice does not adequately recognise the material changes incorporated into the current proposal or the additional evidence now available to inform the determination of the application.

In particular, the current proposal is supported by a traffic assessment that was not adequately addressed in the previous determination, removes the first-floor residential accommodation that formed the basis of the amenity and crime and security objections, and introduces a revised parking strategy based upon an off-site public car park funded by the church for its attendees.

These changes are directly relevant to the previous reasons for refusal and provide a materially different basis upon which the application should be assessed.

While the previous refusal and subsequent pre-application advice are material considerations, they should not predetermine the outcome of the current application. The proposal must be considered on its individual planning merits, having regard to the current development proposals, the submitted supporting information and the relevant development plan policies.

The Applicant respectfully requests that the Local Planning Authority gives full and proper consideration to the revised scheme and its supporting evidence, rather than relying upon the previous refusal as a reason to resist the current application.

6. Planning Policy Context

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 establishes that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The relevant development plan for the application site includes the Manchester Core Strategy 2012–2027, as amended by the 2024 Addendum, the applicable remaining policies of the Manchester Unitary Development Plan and the Greater Manchester Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is also a material consideration in the determination of the application.

Manchester City Council confirms that its development plan comprises the Core Strategy, Places for Everyone, the applicable remaining Unitary Development Plan policies and other adopted development plan documents. The 2024 Addendum should be read alongside the Core Strategy

The following policies are of particular relevance to the current proposal.

6.1 Manchester Core Strategy Policy SP1 – Spatial Principles

Policy SP1 establishes the spatial principles for development within Manchester and seeks to ensure that development contributes towards the sustainable development of the city.

The proposed development would utilise an existing building within an established urban area, providing a place of worship and ancillary office accommodation without requiring the construction of a new building.

The proposal would provide a facility for religious worship within the existing built environment and would make continued use of an established non-residential premises.

The acceptability of the proposal should be considered in the context of its location, the existing use of the building and the measures proposed to manage its operation and associated transport requirements.

6.2 Manchester Core Strategy Policy DM1 – Development Management

Policy DM1 sets out the Council's development management principles and seeks to ensure that development is appropriate to its surroundings and does not result in unacceptable impacts.

The current proposal has been revised to address the principal concerns identified in the previous refusal.

The removal of residential accommodation eliminates the potential for conflict between the proposed place of worship and residential occupiers within the building. The revised parking strategy and traffic assessment provide a basis for assessing the highway implications of the current scheme.

The proposal should therefore be assessed against the relevant development management considerations having regard to the current arrangements and supporting evidence.

6.3 Manchester Core Strategy Policy T1 – Sustainable Transport

Policy T1 seeks to promote sustainable transport and ensure that development is appropriately considered in relation to transport provision and its impact upon the highway network.

The current application is supported by a traffic assessment and incorporates revised parking arrangements, with attendees utilising an off-site public car park funded by the church.

These matters are directly relevant to the previous highway refusal and should be considered in assessing whether the proposed use would result in unacceptable parking demand, traffic generation or highway safety impacts.

The final assessment of compliance with this policy should be read alongside the submitted traffic assessment and the completed parking section of this statement.

6.4 National Planning Policy Framework

The NPPF supports the delivery of sustainable development and recognises the importance of ensuring that development is appropriately located, well designed and compatible with its surroundings.

The Framework also recognises the importance of promoting healthy and safe communities and ensuring that development does not result in unacceptable impacts upon highway safety or residential amenity.

The current proposal should be assessed in this context, having regard to the use of an existing building, the provision of a place of worship and the material changes made to address the previous refusal.

6.5 Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document (2022–2039)

Places for Everyone (PfE) is the adopted joint development plan for the nine Greater Manchester authorities, including Manchester City Council. The Plan took effect on 21 March 2024 and forms part of the statutory development plan for Manchester. It establishes a strategic planning framework for sustainable growth across Greater Manchester up to 2039.

The Plan seeks to support sustainable development across the city-region, including the effective use of existing urban areas, the delivery of necessary infrastructure and the integration of development with the transport network. It provides the strategic context within which development proposals are considered alongside the more locally specific policies contained within Manchester's Core Strategy and remaining Unitary Development Plan policies.

The proposed development involves the reuse of an existing building within Manchester's established urban area for a place of worship, with ancillary office accommodation at first-floor level. It does not involve the development of a new building, the release of Green Belt land or the introduction of a major new development site.

The proposal is consistent with the broad strategic objective of making effective use of existing urban areas and buildings, subject to the detailed consideration of its transport implications, relationship with neighbouring uses and operational arrangements.

The current application also incorporates revised parking arrangements and a supporting traffic assessment, which are relevant to the Plan's objective of ensuring that development is appropriately integrated with Greater Manchester's transport network.

The application should therefore be assessed in the context of the strategic objectives of Places for Everyone, alongside the relevant policies of the Manchester Core Strategy and the other applicable development plan documents. The Applicant considers that the proposed reuse of the existing premises for a place of worship and ancillary office use is capable of being accommodated within this strategic planning framework, subject to the detailed matters addressed elsewhere in this statement.

7. Principle of Development

The proposal seeks to change the use of an existing social club to a place of worship, with ancillary office accommodation at first-floor level.

The existing premises are already in a non-residential use, and the proposal would retain the building for a further non-residential purpose.

The proposed place of worship would provide a facility for religious services and associated activities. The first-floor office accommodation would support the administration and operation of the principal use and would not constitute an independent residential or commercial use unrelated to the place of worship.

The development would therefore represent the continued use of an existing building for a non-residential purpose, without introducing residential accommodation or requiring a fundamentally different form of built development.

The acceptability of the proposal is principally dependent upon its relationship with the surrounding area and the ability to manage its associated activity, parking and highway implications.

Those matters are addressed in the following sections of this statement.

8. Impact upon Neighbouring Amenity

The proposed change of use would introduce a place of worship into an existing building currently operating as a social club.

The potential amenity implications of the development should be considered having regard to the existing use of the premises, the nature of the proposed activities and the relationship of the building with neighbouring properties.

The current proposal does not include residential accommodation at first-floor level. This is a significant distinction from the previously refused scheme.

The removal of the residential element means that the development would not introduce future residential occupiers within the building who could be affected by noise, disturbance or activity associated with the place of worship.

The ancillary office use would be functionally related to the principal use and would provide accommodation for its administration and management.

The proposed opening hours will be provided separately on the application form and should be considered alongside the anticipated pattern of worship, attendance and associated activity when assessing the potential effects upon neighbouring occupiers.

Subject to the final operational details and any necessary planning conditions, the proposal is capable of operating in a manner that respects the amenity of the surrounding area.

9. Highway Impact and Parking

This matter is covered through supporting information provided as part of the application documentation.

10. Crime and Security

The previous application was refused in part due to concerns regarding the relationship between the proposed church and community use at ground-floor level and the first-floor residential accommodation.

The current proposal removes the residential accommodation and replaces it with ancillary office use associated with the place of worship.

The current development would therefore not introduce the same arrangement of separate residential and religious uses that formed the basis of the previous objection.

The building would operate as a place of worship with associated administrative accommodation. The potential for unauthorised movement between different uses, as identified in the previous refusal, should be assessed in the context of this revised arrangement.

The previous crime and security objection was specifically linked to the proposed residential accommodation and its relationship with the ground-floor church and community use. As that residential element has been removed, the circumstances giving rise to the previous objection have materially changed.

The Applicant therefore considers that the previous reason for refusal does not provide a substantive basis for resisting the current proposal.

11. Opening Hours and Operational Management

The Applicant has advised that the opening hours for the church would be 3pm to 6pm on Saturdays and 11am to 1pm on Sundays.

12. Summary of Changes from the Previously Refused Scheme

The current application incorporates a number of material changes from the previously refused proposal.

The previous scheme included a church and community centre with residential accommodation at first-floor level. The current proposal removes the residential element and provides ancillary office accommodation at first-floor level, directly associated with the operation of the place of worship.

The previous scheme also relied upon a parking area adjacent to the northern elevation of the building along Lonsdale Street. The current proposal instead utilises an off-site public car park, with the church paying for parking on behalf of attendees.

In addition, a traffic assessment has been undertaken in support of the current application, providing additional technical evidence to inform the assessment of highway impacts.

These changes are directly relevant to the previous reasons for refusal and should be given appropriate weight in the determination of the current application.

The current proposal should not be treated as an unchanged resubmission of the previously refused scheme. It is a revised development with a materially different arrangement of uses and parking provision.

13. Conclusion

This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of the proposed change of use of the existing social club at 1143 Oldham Road, Manchester, M40 2FU, to a place of worship with ancillary office use at first-floor level.

The proposal would utilise an existing building for a non-residential purpose, providing a facility for religious worship and associated administration.

The application has been formulated with specific regard to the previous refusal and the subsequent pre-application discussions with Manchester City Council.

The current proposal differs materially from the previously refused scheme. In particular, the first-floor residential accommodation has been removed, the parking strategy has been revised to utilise an off-site public car park funded by the church for its attendees, and a traffic assessment has been provided to inform the assessment of highway impact.

The previous concerns regarding residential amenity and crime and security were specifically related to the proposed residential accommodation and its relationship with the ground-floor church and community use. That element has now been removed from the development.

Similarly, the previous access objection related to a proposed parking arrangement that no longer forms part of the current scheme.

The Applicant respectfully submits that the current proposal should be assessed on its individual planning merits, having regard to the revised development, the submitted technical evidence and the relevant development plan policies.

Subject to the final details of parking provision, opening hours and operational management, the proposal is considered capable of providing an appropriate and sustainable use of the existing premises without giving rise to unacceptable impacts upon the surrounding area.

The Local Planning Authority is therefore respectfully requested to give full consideration to the revised scheme and to grant planning permission, subject to any necessary and reasonable planning conditions.