



Planning, Growth and Development

Manchester City Council
P O Box 532
Manchester, M60 2LA

via e-mail.

7 October 2026

Dear Mark Dickens,

The Georgian Group is extremely concerned to have learned of the total demolition of the distinctive Grade-II listed former church of All Souls in Ancoats which took place on 5 October. We understand that the building was regrettably demolished by Manchester City Council on public safety grounds under the Buildings Act.

The most deplorable aspect of this case, however, is that the building was allowed to deteriorate to such a state that it ultimately came to be considered a public safety risk at all. The poor and deteriorating condition of the church was well known, and 2024 sales particulars clearly demonstrated the perilous structural condition of the building, which was supported by extensive scaffolding.

Whilst we recognise that the council attempted to contact the owners following the partial roof collapse in August, this was clearly too little, too late. We therefore ask the Council to provide clarification on what actions were taken, prior to the collapse and demolition, to secure the conservation and preservation of this important listed building. Did the Council exercise your powers to demand or execute emergency works under the provisions of Sections 47, 48 and 54 of the 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act?

The Georgian Group is also severely disappointed that despite Manchester City Council having been directly engaged with the building since at least August 2026, following the partial roof collapse, you did not reach out to engage with any of the relevant stakeholders from the National Amenity Societies or Historic England to seek specialist advice or guidance.

In sad retrospect, we set out below the advice and guidance that the Georgian Group would have provided had we been consulted, together with a series of questions which we would ask the Council to answer.

Structural Assessment

The Group would have strongly recommended that the Council instruct a CARE-accredited structural engineer to undertake a detailed structural survey, with the specific aim of establishing which elements of the building were failing or at immediate risk, and which remained structurally sound. Can you:

- confirm whether a CARE-accredited structural engineer was instructed to undertake a detailed survey of the building?
- provide confirmation that the survey distinguished between areas of the building that remained structurally sound and those that had failed or presented an immediate risk to public safety?

Emergency Works and Stabilisation

On the basis of the structural report, we would then have advised that a phased strategy for stabilisation be developed and implemented, with peremptory emergency dismantling or dewatering limited strictly to those areas identified as being at immediate risk of collapse or failure. Can you:

- confirm that emergency dewatering was limited to those areas of the building identified as being at immediate risk of collapse?
- confirm whether areas of the building not at immediate risk of collapse were stabilised and retained?
- if not, can you explain why it was determined that no areas of the building could have been stabilised and retained?

Engagement with stakeholders and future conservation

Alongside any immediate emergency works, we would have recommended broader engagement with relevant stakeholders to develop a conservation management strategy for the building. This should have identified surviving elements of architectural and historic significance and explored options for the building's future, including its stabilisation, repair, reuse, and long-term conservation. Can you:

- explain why relevant stakeholders, including the National Amenity Societies, were not engaged at any stage following the partial roof collapse?

- confirm whether any assessment was undertaken of the significance of surviving fabric before the decision was made to proceed with total demolition?
- provide details of any alternative options to total demolition that were considered, including options for partial dismantling, stabilisation, repair or retention of significant surviving fabric?

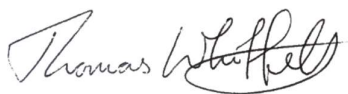
Transparency to Decision Making

To enable us, and the Public, to understand the decision-making process and circumstances which resulted in the demolition and total loss of All Souls, we strongly urge that your Council acts and responds with full transparency. We accordingly ask you to provide copies of the structural assessments, reports and other documentation on which the decision to demolish the building in its entirety was based, including the evidence demonstrating why complete demolition was considered necessary and why less destructive measures were not considered sufficient.

We look forward to receiving a full and substantive response to the questions set out above, together with copies of the relevant reports, assessments and other documentation, so that we can properly understand the circumstances and decision-making process that led to the building's complete demolition.

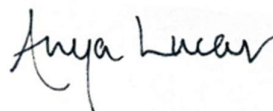
We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



Thomas Whitfield

Senior Conservation Adviser
(Northern England)



Anya Lucas FSA

Director