

5th Floor Barlow House, Minshull Street, Manchester, M1 3DZ

Planning Statement

January 2022



SOLVE
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Introduction

- 1.1. This statement is prepared to support an application for full planning permission on behalf of Arden University for the following development:

Change of use at 5th floor level from office to flexible use for office (Use Class E) and education (Use Class F.1).

- 1.2. The location of the site is shown at Figure 1.

Figure 1: Site Location Plan



- 1.3. Arden University has been a presence in Manchester for a number of years, providing online and blended degree courses offering a full range of graduate and post-graduate degrees. The University currently occupies two floors of Barlow House, ground floor and first floor. This change of use application will provide additional space on the 5th floor, which is required by Arden University to accommodate its growth.

- 1.4. The existing space is currently in use as office. The proposal will allow Arden University to be responsive to the changing needs of the organisation and will be converted to a flexible use of office (Use Class E) and Education (Use Class F.1.).
- 1.5. The proposed change of use will enable Arden University to use the space flexibly for either office or education use and to be responsive to changing needs. It will retain the ability to use the space for office space for at least 10 years following which, whichever use is in force at the time will become the lawful use.
- 1.6. No physical changes are proposed to the external fabric of the building as part of this application, as such the application solely seeks the change of use of the internal space with the associated provision of a cycle rack for students and staff members.

Figure 2: Barrow House



- 1.7. The proposals are assessed in this statement with due regard to the site's context and surroundings, the key planning considerations and the current and emerging local and national planning policy. Consideration of these proposals is set out under the following headings:

- ▣ Section 2: Site and Surrounding Area
- ▣ Section 3: The proposal
- ▣ Section 4: Relevant Planning Policy
- ▣ Section 5: Planning Assessment
- ▣ Section 6: Conclusion

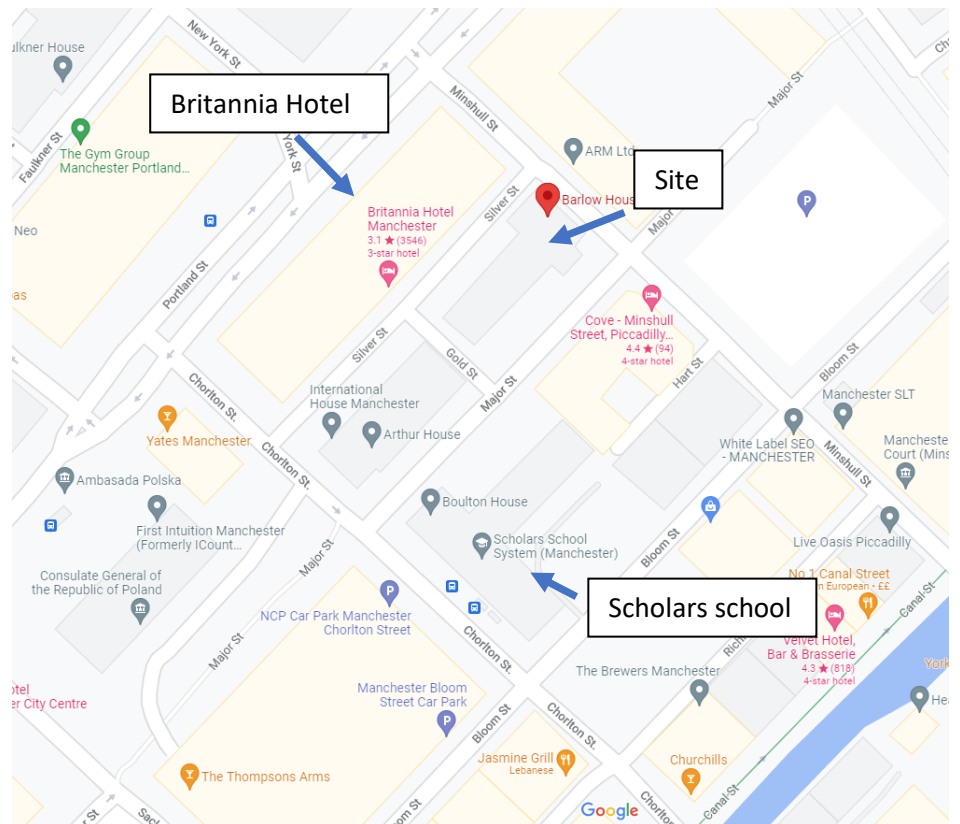


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Site and Surrounding Area

- 2.1. The application relates to the 5th Floor of Barlow House, with a floorspace area of 523 sq m. Two floors of the building are already occupied by the University and the 5th Floor currently was most recently in office use. The previous occupant has now vacated the property.
- 2.2. Barlow House is located between four roads: Minshull Street to the north east, Silver Street to the north west, Gold Street to the south west and Major Street of the South East.
- 2.3. The area has a mix of uses from education to offices, to hospitality, to residential. The Britannia Hotel and two bars are located to the west Barlow House. A number of offices are based around the site providing a range of services. Educational use is also established in the area, both within the existing building and to the south, where the Scholars School System is based. This can be seen in the map extract at Figure 3.

Figure 3: Extract from Google Maps



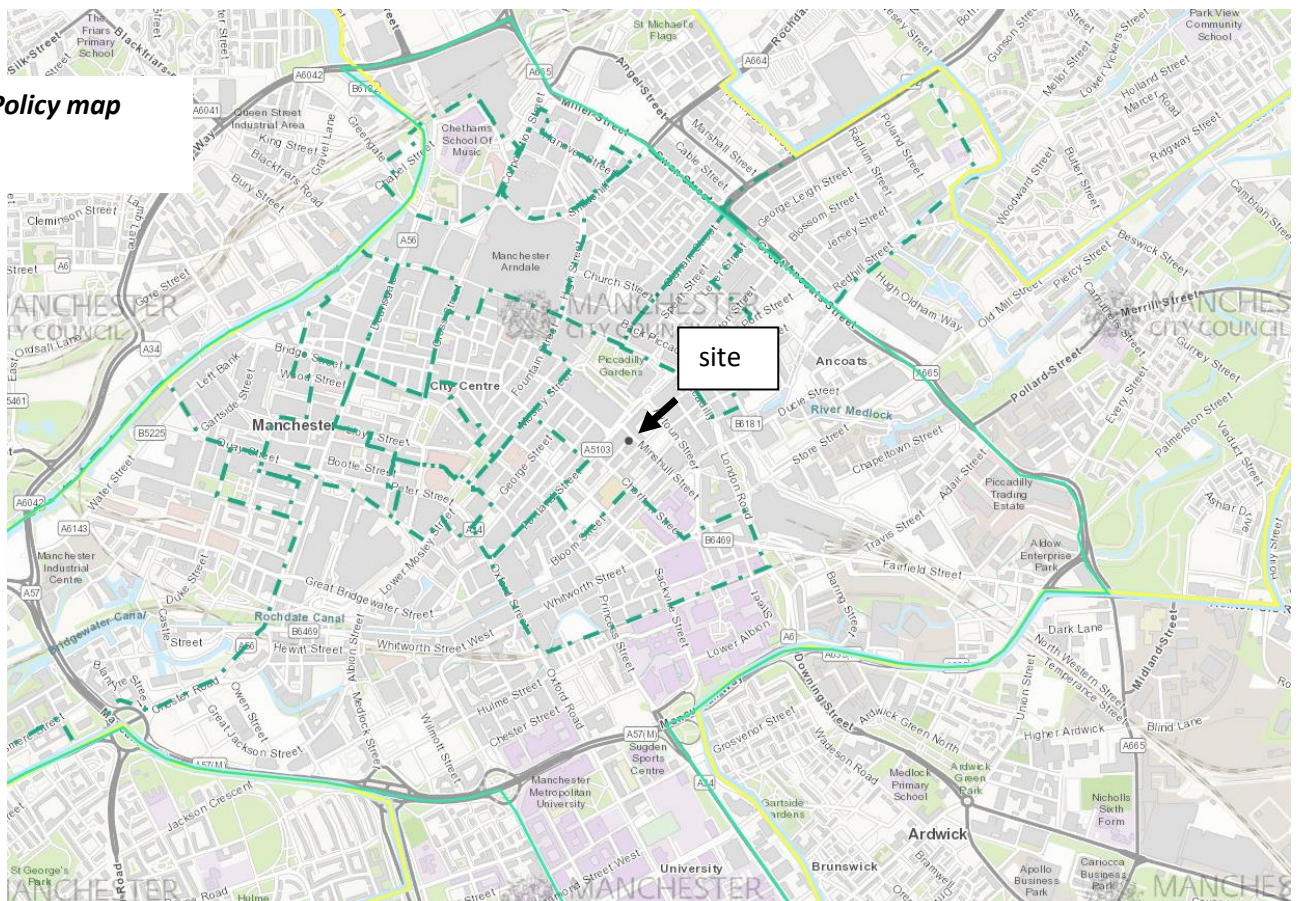
- 2.4. As set out in the accompanying transport statement by ADL, the site is located in the centre of Manchester, with excellent access to public transport. The nearest bus stop is 1 minute walk away and only 6 minutes to Piccadilly Station.

Designations

- 2.5. The site falls within the following designations on the adopted policies map (Figure 4):

- City Centre (Policies CC1 – CC10)
- Regional Centre (Policy EC3)
- Inner Areas (Policy SP1)
- Adjacent to Whitworth Street, George Street, Upper Kings Street, Smithfield and Stevenson Square Conservation Areas.

Figure 4: Policy map



- 2.6. The site is located in the centre of Manchester, therefore the following policies apply: CC1 – CC10, EC3 and SP1.

- 2.7. The area sits between a number of conservation areas, but is not within a conservation area itself. Whitworth Street Conservation Area is located to the south, George Street Conservation Area is located to the south-west, Upper Kings Street Conservation Area is located to the west, Smithfield Conservation Area and Stevenson Square Conservation Area are located to the north. All conservation areas are in close proximity to the building.
- 2.8. The building is also located near to the Britannia Hotel at 35-47 Portland Street, a Grade II* Listed Building.
- 2.9. The area is located within Flood Zone 1 and is at very low risk of flooding, as shown on the Environment Agency Flood Map below.

Figure 5: Flood map



Planning History

- 2.10. A search of Manchester City Council’s online planning records has been undertaken and the recent decisions are included below.

Date	Ref	Description	Decision
25/02/2014	104661/FU/2014/C2	Change of use of ground and first floor from Offices (Class B1) to Offices (Class B1) or Non-Residential Education and Training (Class D1) and external alterations to create new front door.	Approved

24/01/2011	094800/FU/2010/C2	Change of use from Offices (Class B1) to Offices (Class B1) and / or Non-Residential Institution - Clinic, Health Centre, Creche, Consulting Rooms or Non Residential Education and Training (Class D1)	Approved
21/11/2000	060823/FO/CITY2/00	Construction of a fire escape at second floor level and new gate on Major Street	Approved
15/12/2000	060769/FO/CITY2/00	Elevational alterations to form new ground floor doors	Approved
06/12/2000	059809/FU/CITY2/00	Change of use of part ground floor from B1 office use to class D1	Approved
05/08/1999	056853/FO/CITY2/99	Elevational alterations including erection of canopy	Approved
21/12/1998	054967/FO/CITY2/98	Alterations to ground floor elevations including repositioning of entrance	Refused
25/02/1994	044900/FO/CITY2/94	Refurbishment of main entrance including new entrance doors and canopy	Approved



3 Proposals

3.1. This application seeks full planning permission for the following development:

Change of use at 5th floor level from office to flexible use for office (Use Class E) and education (Use Class F.1).

3.2. This will involve the following:

-  The proposed change of use of 5th floor level (523sqm) from office to a flexible use of office (Use Class E) and education (Use Class F.1.) for Arden University.
-  The site will bring forward 9 additional staff across academic and professional services.
-  A maximum of 9 classes will take place at any given time, with an average of 20 students in each class.
-  A total of 120 students would be in attendance at any time.
-  Operational hours will run from 09:00 – 13:00, 13:30 – 17:30, 17:30 – 21:30 Monday to Friday.
-  It is proposed to provide 42 cycle parking spaces in the form of two-tier racks, close to the building entrance, fronting Major Street. This would be covered, secure, lit and accessible to students and staff.
-  Aside from the introduction of additional cycle parking spaces, no physical changes are proposed.
-  No changes are proposed to the servicing arrangements.

3.3. Floor Plans and proposed parking plan are included below.

Figure 5: Existing 5th Floor Plan

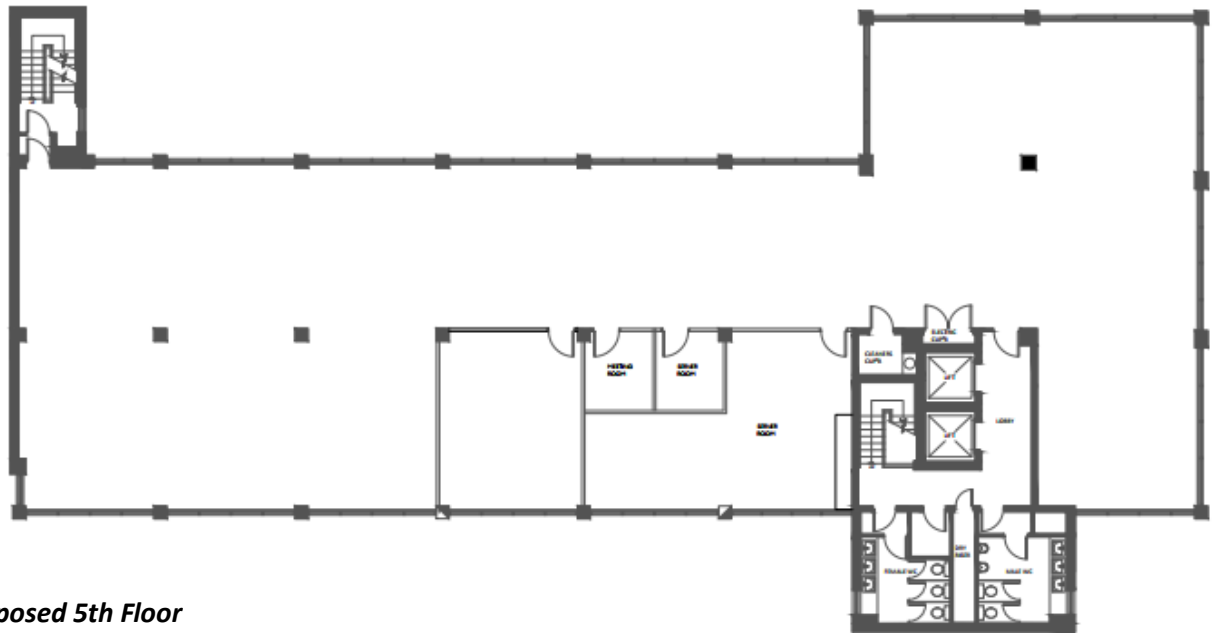
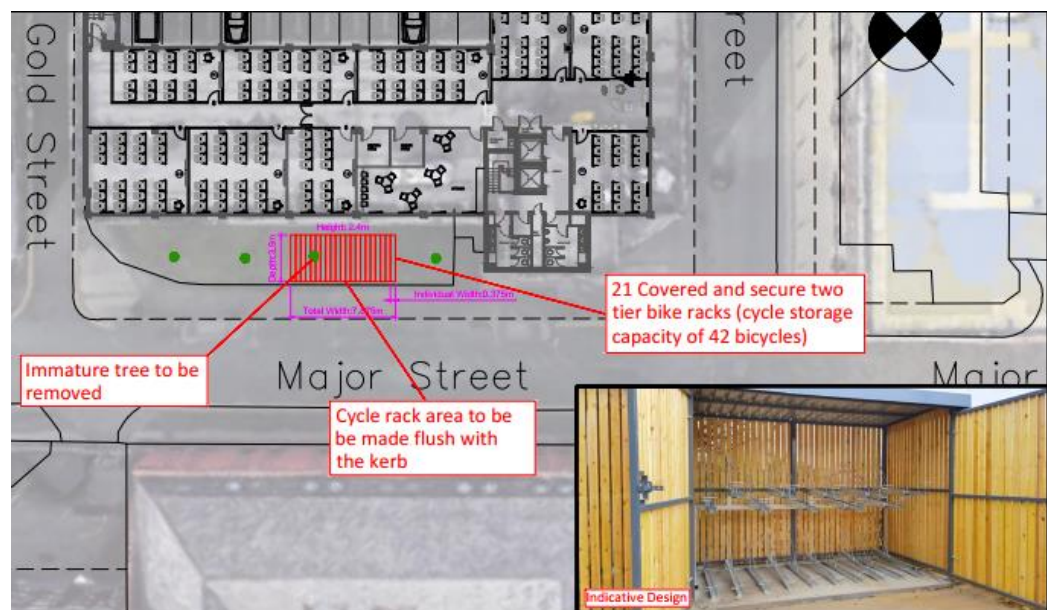


Figure 5: Proposed 5th Floor Plan



Figure 6: Proposed Cycle Parking





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Planning Policy Context

- 4.1. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states:

If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination under the planning acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material consideration indicate otherwise.

- 4.2. The development plan for the purpose of the application proposal comprises the following:

-  Core Strategy 2012 – 2027
-  Extant Unitary Development Policies

- 4.3. The following national policy and guidance are material considerations:

-  National Planning Policy Framework (2021)
-  Planning Practice Guidance
-  National Design Guide (2021)

The National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.4. The NPPF in Section 2 (Achieving Sustainable Development) establishes that while planning decisions should be taken in accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, they should also be made in the context of a presumption in favour of sustainable development which is at the heart of the Framework (paragraph 10). Sustainable development is identified as having a social, economic, and environmental aspect (paragraph 8).
- 4.5. Paragraph 8 sets out the three overarching objectives for achieving sustainable development: an economic objective, a social objective and an environmental objective.
- 4.6. The economic objective is described as helping to build a strong, responsive and competitive economy by ensuring that sufficient land is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation, and improved productivity.
- 4.7. The social objective is described as supporting a strong, vibrant and healthy community, by (inter alia) fostering a well-designed and safe building

environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural wellbeing.

- 4.8. The environmental objective is described (inter alia) as using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.
- 4.9. Paragraph 11 states that plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision taking this means:

Approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay...

Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:
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- The application of policies in this Framework that protect areas of assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed or;

- Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole

- 4.10. Section 6 of the framework (Building a strong, competitive economy) requires planning policies and decisions to help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand, and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.
- 4.11. Section 9 of the framework (Promoting sustainable transport) is concerned with the impact of development on transport networks and seeks to promote walking, cycling and public transport use.

Local Development Plan

- 4.12. The Development Plan for Manchester includes:

-  Core Strategy 2012 – 2027
-  Extant Unitary Development Policies

- 4.13. The Core Strategy was adopted by Manchester City Council on 11th July 2012. It is the key document in Manchester's Local Development Framework and covers a period of 15 years from 2012 to 2027. It describes Manchester today and outlines the Council's vision for Manchester in 2027 along with the planning

policies which will be used to deliver that vision. Relevant policies for this application include:

- ▣ Police SO2 - Economy
- ▣ Policy EC3 – The Regional Centre
- ▣ Policy CC1 – Primary Economic Development Focus
- ▣ Policy CC5 – Transport
- ▣ Policy CC9 – Design and heritage
- ▣ Policy EN1 – Design principles and strategic character areas
- ▣ Policy EN3 – Heritage
- ▣ Policy DM1 – Development management

- 4.14. **Policy SO2 – Economy** states that the Regional Centre will continue to be the main focus for business, retail, higher education, leisure, cultural and tourism development, to further develop its role as the main employment location and primary economic driver of the City region.
- 4.15. **Policy EC3 – The Regional Centre** states that within the Regional Centre development for employment generating uses including offices and other commercial development will be encouraged.
- 4.16. **Policy EC8 – Central Manchester** states that the Corridor (Manchester) within the Central Manchester Regeneration Area is suitable for office, research and development, light industrial, general industrial, education and health.
- 4.17. **Policy CC1 – Primary Economic Development Focus** that the City Centre is a strategic economic location and focus of employment growth. Furthermore, the City Centre and fringe will be considered a suitable location for the consideration of high density buildings and commercially led mixed use schemes.
- 4.18. **Policy CC5 – Transport** states that the Council will seek to ensure that development includes adequate parking provision for cars and bicycles.
- 4.19. **Policy CC9 – Design and heritage** states that development in Manchester City Centre should preserve or enhance the heritage assets that have been identified, including listed buildings and conservation areas.
- 4.20. **Policy EN1 – Design principles and strategic character areas** states that all development in Manchester will be expected to follow the seven principles of urban design, as identified in national planning guidance and listed above and have regard to the strategic character area in which the development is located.
- 4.21. **Policy EN3 – Heritage** states that throughout the City, the Council will encourage development that complements and takes advantage of the distinct historic and heritage features of its districts and neighbourhoods, including those of the City Centre.

- 4.22. **Policy DM1 – Development management** states the key design criteria for development in terms, ensuring that no harm comes to neighbouring amenities or the street scene.
- 4.23. Extant Unitary Development Policies
-  Policy DC18.1 – Conservation areas
 -  Policy DC19.1 – Listed Buildings
- 4.24. Supplementary Planning Guidance:
-  Guide to Development in Manchester SPD (2007)



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Planning Considerations

- 5.1. This section considers the planning aspects of the proposals. The preceding sections have provided the context for this assessment of the planning merits of the proposed development. The proposals have been assessed in relation to the key planning policies set out in the previous sections and are considered in turn below.

Principle of Change of Use to Education Use

- 5.2. The proposed change of use seeks to convert the existing office space into a flexible use of offices (Use Class E) and education (Use Class F.1.).
- 5.3. The existing 5th floor unit is an office, as confirmed by the planning history. Arden University already occupy two floors of the building, and this would be the third. The 5th floor has been vacant for 5 months and the lease ends on 13th December 2021.
- 5.4. The additional floorspace will enable Arden University, which has an existing presence in the City, to adapt and expand and increase the economic and social benefits it currently provides.
- 5.5. The building sits between four conservation areas: Whitworth Street, George Street, Upper Kings Street and Smithfield Conservation Areas. Furthermore, the building is located near to the Britannia Hotel at 35-47 Portland Street, a Grade II* Listed Building. As the proposal would only change the internal use of the existing 5th Floor and two floors already have been converted into the same use, this would not impact the significance of the heritage assets.
- 5.6. The building is sited within the City of Manchester, which is a Regional Centre and a focus for economic development. The proposal would create employment opportunities. There are social and economic benefits stemming from the higher-education provision and further economic benefits due to the increased footfall in the town centre from students visiting the University. However there would be flexibility retained for 10 years to allow the space to be responsive to changing needs over time.
- 5.7. Policy EC2 states that existing employment uses should be retained, unless the existing use is not compatible with adjacent uses or the proposed use would bring greater economic benefits to the city. The existing use of the 5th floor is an office, however two floors of the building are already occupied by the University. The change of use would be compatible with the existing uses in the building and, as stated above, would bring economic benefits.
- 5.8. The university offers an environment for independent learners, distance learners and part-time learning. During this unpredictable time, as a result of COVID-19,

students have turned to Universities such as Arden as students across the UK are continuing their studies via online lectures and tutorials. The provision of space for Arden University will ensure that students are able to access these services and continue their education via online teaching.

- 5.9. Due to its location, the site has excellent public transport links. It is in close proximity to the rail station as well as good links to the bus network services. This will provide students, staff, and visitors a wide range of access to the university.
- 5.10. It is anticipated that students and staff will arrive via public transport (as per the existing situation), given the highly accessible location of the building. The proposal will introduce 42 cycle spaces accessible on the ground floor. This is addressed within the accompanying Transport Statement by ADL.
- 5.11. The proposal is in accordance with Policy CC5 which encourages cycling promotion towards reducing carbon emission and adopting healthier lifestyles.
- 5.12. The expansion of the university will bring wider community benefits due to increased footfall in the area from students visiting the university. Furthermore, the economic benefit includes 9 new jobs across academic and professional services. As such the proposed change of use from office space a flexible use for office (Use Class E) and education (Use Class F.1.) is deemed acceptable in principle according to policies SO2, EC8 and CC1.
- 5.13. The proposed change of use is in accordance with Section 6 of the NPPF which requires planning policies and decisions to help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand, and adapt.



6 Conclusions

- 6.1. This statement is prepared to support an application for full planning permission on behalf of Arden University for the following development:

Change of use at 5th floor level from office to flexible use for office (Use Class E) and education (Use Class F.1).

- 6.2. Arden University has been a presence in Manchester for a number of years, providing online and blended degree courses offering a full range of graduate and post-graduate degrees.
- 6.3. The proposed change of use seeks to convert the existing office space into a flexible use for office (Use Class E) and educational (Use Class F.1.)
- 6.4. The building already contained two floors used by the University, on the ground and first floors, and the proposal would extend this to the 5th floor. This would complement existing adjacent uses.
- 6.5. The proposed change of use will have social and economic benefits stemming from the high-education provision and further economic benefits to the wider community. The development will bring forward 9 new jobs across academic and professional services.
- 6.6. The proposed change of use will support social objective for sustainable development by enhancing the further education facilities to support a strong, vibrant, and healthy community.
- 6.7. Given the location of the building in an area with excellent public transport links and easy access to shops and services, it is a highly sustainable location for the proposed use.
- 6.8. The majority of students are expected to arrive by public transport, however there is sufficient parking available within the communal car park.
- 6.9. The proposed flexible use is in accordance with Section 6 of the NPPF which requires planning policies and decisions to help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand, and adapt
- 6.10. The proposal is compliant with policy CC1, which promotes economic development opportunities in the city.
- 6.11. The proposed development is therefore in accordance with national, regional and development plan policy. It is therefore respectfully requested that planning permission is granted.

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