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Our Ref: 04B713654/AR25

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Planning Department
Manchester City Council
Town Hall
Manchester
M60 2LA

Dear Sir/Madam,

Application for detailed planning permission – 1 Hardman Boulevard, Spinningfields, Manchester, M3 3AQ

On behalf of our client, RBS, please find enclosed a detailed planning application for *'change of use from a public bank (Use Class A2) to offices (Use Class B1(a)'* at 1 Hardman Boulevard, Spinningfields, Manchester, M3 3AQ.

This planning application submission includes the following:

- Application forms, including signed ownership certificate;
- Site location plan;
- Existing and proposed elevations;
- Existing and proposed floor plans;
- Completed waste management pro-forma;
- Application fee of £462, made payable to Manchester City Council (MCC).

Background

1 Hardman Boulevard is occupied by RBS. The upper floors of the building are in use as offices (Use Class B1a). There are also a number of ground floor commercial units. At the corner of Hardman Boulevard/Irwell Square is an existing RBS branch (Use Class A2), subject of this planning application.

RBS is currently undertaking a consolidation exercise in order to increase efficiency and encourage more flexible ways of working. As part of this exercise, RBS intends to vacate the ground floor branch and transfer staff and operations to the St Anne Street branch, also within Manchester City Centre. It is the Applicant's intention for the existing RBS branch to be occupied by Coutts private banking.

Prior to the submission of this planning application, the Applicant has undertaken pre-application discussions with Lucy Harrison (Senior Planner, MCC) to clarify whether a change of use would be required to facilitate the use of the unit by a private bank.

As Coutts will operate on a by prior appointment or invitation only basis, MCC confirmed that a change of use would be required from Use Class A2 (financial and professional services) to Use Class B1a (offices).

Site and Surrounding Area

The existing RBS branch is located at the corner of Hardman Boulevard and Irwell Square and comprises 265 sqm of A2 (Use Class) floorspace. The unit is accessed via a double height glazed entrance off Hardman Boulevard/Irwell Square.
The building is not listed and is not within a Conservation Area.

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The surrounding area comprises a mix of office, retail and leisure uses including the recently completed XYZ office building.

Planning History

LPA ref. 063139/FO/CITY1/01 for the *'erection of 10 floor office building with retail at ground floor level after demolition of existing buildings'* was approved on 15 November 2001.

Proposal

This application seeks to change the use of the existing RBS branch (Use Class A2) to offices (Use Class B1a) to accommodate Coutts. No external alterations are sought as part of this planning application. An advertisement application will be submitted in due course for any signage that may be required.

Coutts will also utilise existing floor space (approximately 50 sqm) on the first floor mezzanine which is already in use as offices (Use Class B1a) – as this part of the building is already in B1(a) use no change of use is required, however we have identified it on the plans for completeness.

The ground floor accommodation will comprise a reception area, WC's and a number of meeting rooms for client use. Additional meeting rooms and office space will be located on the first floor mezzanine. Pedestrian access to the unit will remain from the existing entrance off Hardman Boulevard/Irwell Square. An internal access will also be created between the existing unit and the wider building (location to be confirmed).

Coutts do not receive scheduled weekly deliveries or servicing.

Relevant Planning Policy Framework

The Development Plan for MCC comprises the Core Strategy (CS) (2012) and saved policies from the Unitary Development Plan (UDP (2004).

As defined by the interactive proposals map, the site is located within the defined City Centre boundary.

CS Policy CC1 relates to economic development in the City Centre and fringe. The City Centre is expected to accommodate 33ha and the City Centre fringe 25ha of office or similar employment development. The City Centre and fringe will be considered a suitable location for the consideration of high density buildings and commercially led mixed use schemes. The focus for employment growth will be in B1a high density offices and the Council will give particular encouragement and support development in a number of locations including Spinningfields.

Key Planning Considerations

Set out below is a consideration of the proposal against the relevant planning policy framework.

<u>Principle of office development</u>

The application site is located at the ground floor of 1 Hardman Boulevard, a well-established office (Use Class B1a) building located within Manchester City Centre. CS Policy CC1 seeks to focus office development within the city centre, and more specifically in Spinningfields, where the site is located.

The proposal will provide 265 sqm of additional office (Use Class B1a) floorspace in a location where office use is positively encouraged in accordance with local planning policy.

<u>Loss of an active ground floor use</u>

The unit currently provides an active ground floor use in that the existing RBS branch is fully accessible to the general public. However the number of transactions at this branch has halved since 2012, which has subsequently led to a significant decrease in the amount of customers visiting the branch on a daily/weekly basis.

On this basis, the existing RBS branch currently makes a very limited contribution to footfall in this part of the City Centre. Further, although the proposal to change the bank from public to private will result in a reduction in the

amount of people who are able to access the unit, clients of the bank who have made an appointment will still contribute towards footfall, therefore there will still be a degree of activity associated with the proposed use.

Jobs

The existing RBS branch currently employs 3 members of staff, all of which will be transferred to the St Anne's Square branch i.e. the proposal will not result in the loss of jobs. Coutts will employ 22 staff, formed in part by new positions and in part by existing employees that have relocated. The proposal will therefore result in an increased number of jobs in this location.

Waste Management

Coutts will utilise the existing waste storage and collection arrangements for 1 Hardman Boulevard which is a shared internal service yard/loading bay with general waste and recycling waste storage facilities located within the loading bay. The building management company (ISS) is responsible for waste storage, management and collection.

A completed waste pro-forma is enclosed within the planning submission.

Summary

The proposal seeks a change of use from a public bank (use Class A2) to offices (Use Class B1a) to accommodate Coutts. The proposal fully accords with local planning policy in that it will:

- provide an additional 265 sqm of office floorspace within the City Centre and thus contribute to economic development;
- have a negligible impact on footfall due to the low number of customers currently visiting the existing RBS branch;
- increase the number of employees on site from 3 to 22;
- ensure that waste storage and management is adhered to in line with the building's existing arrangement.

I trust the enclosed is sufficient to secure validation of this planning application. If you require any further information please contact me on the details below.

Yours sincerely

[redacted]

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For and on behalf of GVA Grimley Limited