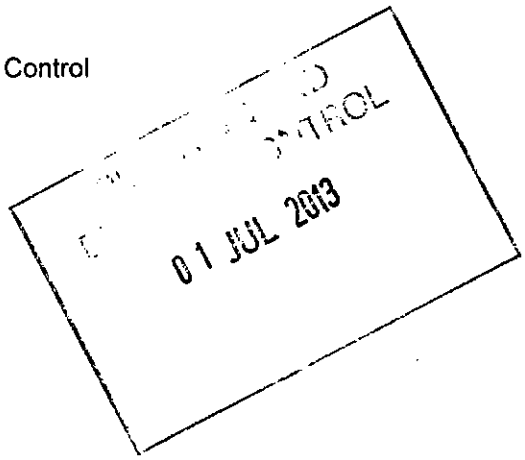
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Manchester City Council
Planning and Development Control
PO Box 532
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Manchester
M60 2LA




27 June 2013
Our ref: JC/LF

Dear Sirs

## Unit 2, 1 Hardman Boulevard, Spinningfields - Application for Change of Use

On behalf of our client, Allied London Holdco Limited (ALHL), please find enclosed an application to extend the permissible uses of Unit 2, 1 Hardman Boulevard, Spinningfields in Manchester City Centre.

Unit 2 currently benefits from Planning Permission (Ref. 063139/FO/CITY1/01) for Use Classes A1 (retail) and A3 (food and drink), which was granted as part of an office-led scheme for 1 Hardman Boulevard in November 2001. The Planning Permission has been implemented and the building was completed in Spring 2004.

The application proposal is to extend the range of permissible uses at Unit 2 to include Class B1 (offices) in order to facilitate the active, economic use of this Unit.

This letter and its enclosures set out the context and rationale for the proposal, appraise it against relevant planning policies and deal with Manchester City Council's planning application validation requirements.

## The Proposals

Despite extensive marketing of Unit 2 by Tushingham Moore and Knight Frank, the unit has remained vacant since they began marketing it in Spring 2006.

The enclosed letter from Tushingham Moore confirms the marketing activity that has been completed and the letting constraints associated with Unit 2, which are summarised as follows:

- Unit 2 is a corner plot, situated at the back of Royal Bank of Scotland's Non Customer Facility Building and facing the vehicular exit of the Quay Street NCP car park and as such has virtually

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no passing pedestrian trade.

The most appropriate alternative use of the unit is considered to be office (Use Class B1), taking into account the highly attractive environment and successful, established business location which Spinningfields offers. Indeed, there are prospective office occupiers who have shown interest in taking up Unit 2 and bringing it into active use.

There is healthy demand from smaller businesses to be part of the Spinningfields' offer, and Spinningfield's office agents, OBI Property, receive a positive level of enquires from occupiers seeking sub 5,000 sq. ft. office suites. Tushingham Moore confirm that the Unit would appeal to a range of business sectors including marketing / design agencies, legal recruitment firms and legal and accountancy firms. However, there are currently limited opportunities for these smaller flootplates within Spinningfields, which has traditionally been new build and larger flootplate buildings.

The proposals will provide the potential to meet this demand for smaller flootplates within the existing high quality Spinningfields' buildings and environment, by enabling the Unit to be used for B1 Office Use.

ALHL are therefore seeking flexibility in the approved uses for this unit, to enable it to be marketed either for office or retail use and thus help to secure a suitable tenant and bring the unit into effective economic use. Both office and retail uses are in accordance with planning policy and appropriate for the Unit given its planning history.

No changes are proposed to the external design of the building as a result of the proposed extension to the permissible uses. An office use would include a public-facing reception area and would generate a significant amount of footfall to and from the building, where currently there is a long standing vacant unit.

## Description of Development

The Description of Development as stated on the Application Form is:

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*"Introduction of office use (Class B1) as an approved use of Unit 2 1 Hardman Boulevard, Spinningfields, in addition to the approved retail uses (Classes A1 and A3) already approved pursuant to Planning Permission Ref. 063139/FO/CITY1/01."*

## Location

Spinningfields is located on the western edge of Manchester City Centre, bounded by Deansgate, the River Irwell, Quay Street and Bridge Street. Deansgate is a key north to south artery running through the City Centre and connects Spinningfields to established retail areas such as King Street, St Ann's Square and New Cathedral Street.

Spinningfields is one of the key regeneration projects in the City Centre, which will enable Manchester to compete on an international stage in the 21st Century. Its on-going success will continue to enhance the City making it an attractive place in which to live, work and spend leisure time. It provides high quality commercial, civic, residential, hotel, leisure and retail space in a carefully planned and managed environment.

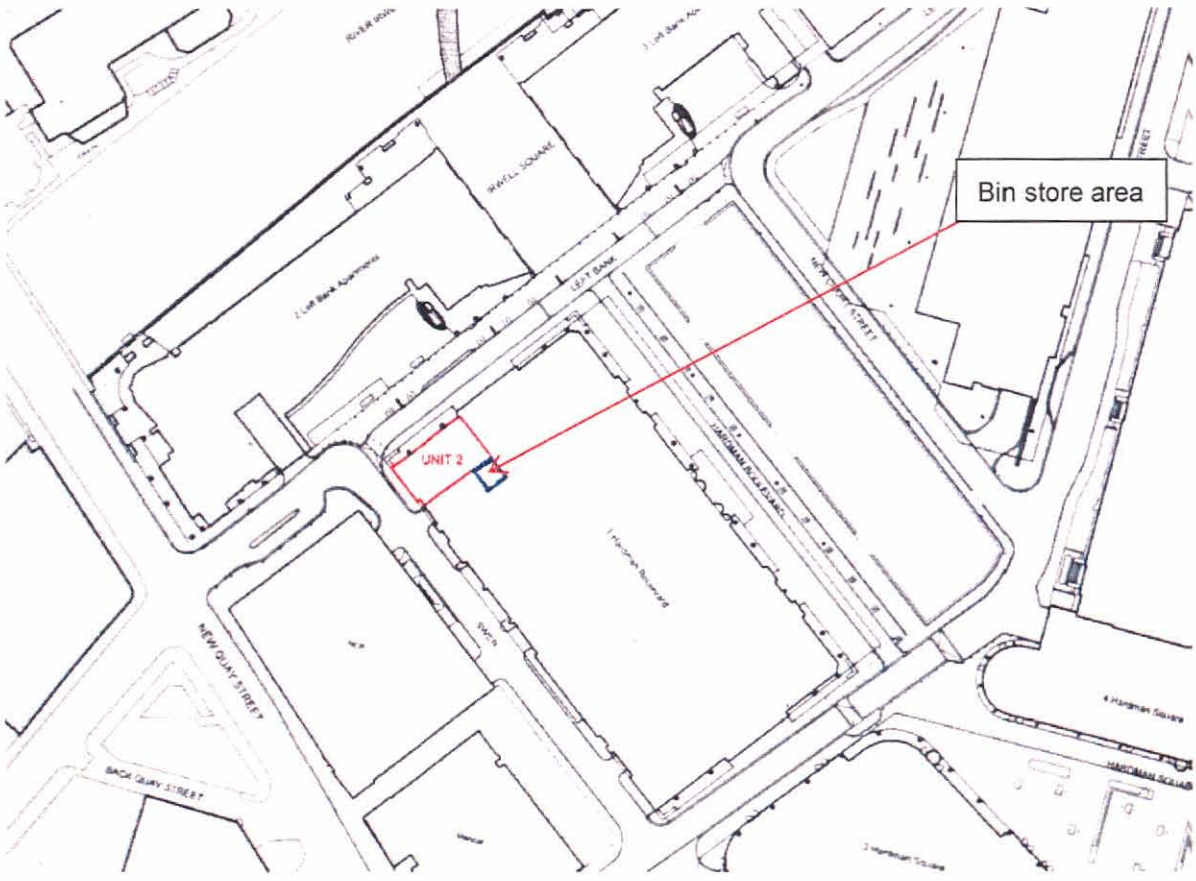
The buildings that comprise Spinningfields are set within high quality public realm consisting of a network of public spaces and thoroughfares, which are outstanding in terms of their quality of materials, lighting, furnishing and all round ambiance.

Deloitte.

1 Hardman Boulevard provides 32,516 sq. m. of floorspace over 10 storeys and forms part of the approved Spinningfields Masterplan. It is one of the largest commercial buildings in the North West region and is one of two Royal Bank of Scotland regional headquarter buildings located at Spinningfields. The building is bound by a pedestrianized /servicing area to the north, Hardman Boulevard to the east, New Gartside Street to the south and New College Street to the west.

To the immediate north of 1 Hardman Boulevard is the Left Bank mixed use building (residential with food and drink / office uses to lower floors) and the River Irwell beyond. Hardman Boulevard, a temporary green space, is located to the east; this site is known as Plot 406 / 407 within the approved Spinningfields Masterplan, and has a lapsed Planning Permission (Ref. 077865/FO/2005/C1) for an office building with ground floor retail uses. 3 Hardman Square lies to the south and to the west is the Manchester College building and the Spinningfields NCP Multi-Storey Car Park.

Servicing of the building takes place from a dedicated internal service bay area, located to the rear and accessed off Water Street and via the South West Service Road. The diagram below shows where bins are stored.




Unit 2, which is the subject of this application, is a ground floor only unit located on the north west corner of the building, fronting Left Bank. The unit is presently double height. Level pedestrian access will be provided to the unit via the existing at-grade entrance on Left Bank. This is one of three remaining ground floor units within the building that are unoccupied; Greggs and Mr (Male Grooming) occupy units on the southern elevation and an RBS Bank branch is located adjacent to Unit 2. There is one further vacant unit to the south east of the building, which was recently vacated by Samsi, but which is subject to a live enquiry for a replacement restaurant use.

## Application Documentation

In support of the application please find enclosed three copies of the following information:

- Application Form, Ownership Certificate A and Agricultural Holdings Certificate.
- Location plan with the unit edged in red.
- Letter from Tushingham Moore confirming the marketing history of the unit.

Please also find enclosed a cheque for £385 in respect of the planning application fee.

In all respects the proposed arrangements for use of the units is in accordance with the details approved and implemented under Planning Permission Ref. 063139. Further details are provided below.

## Site Specific Planning Issues

## Access, Parking and Servicing

Level pedestrian access is available into the unit from Left Bank. No changes are proposed to the existing shop front and the existing entrance doors are to be retained.

The application site is conveniently located within a highly accessible central location for both workers and residents in the city centre. In addition, the site is within walking distance of the free city centre bus link (Metroshuttle) and local bus routes.

No additional car parking is proposed at 1 Hardman Boulevard as a result of this proposal. There is an NCP public car park located within a minutes' walk of the Unit.

The building has been designed to handle the waste and servicing requirements of the Unit and the current arrangements that are in place for goods delivery and waste removal will continue. These arrangements were designed for a retail unit, and will therefore easily accommodate the requirements of a B1 Use, which would be expected to generate fewer deliveries and smaller volumes of waste.

Servicing will take place, off street, via the building's existing internal service area, to which direct access is available from the rear of the unit. A dedicated bin storage area will be provided to the rear of the unit.

## Disabled Access

Unit 2 has been designed to be legible, easy to navigate and accessible by users with mobility, hearing and visual impairments. The design of the access to the Unit has regard to statutory requirements and best practice including, Building Regulations Document M, Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Manchester City Council's Design For Access 2 best practice guidance.

## Noise and Vibration

The original application for 1 Hardman Boulevard (Ref. 063139) was supported by an acoustic report that set out noise criteria and guidance for the proposed use of the Unit as A1 and / or A3 Use. As such, the building has been constructed to accommodate retail uses, which are more onerous in noise terms than a proposed office use. The noise threshold stipulated in that report in respect of the proposed retail or leisure unit will not be exceeded as a result of the introduction of B1 use as an additional use.

## Hours of Operation

The proposed uses will operate in line with standard office and retail opening hours consistent with the Spinningfields area as a whole.

## Accordance with Planning Policy

The proposals have been considered in the context of planning policy at national and local levels, in particular the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012) and Manchester's adopted Core Strategy (July 2012).

## National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

The NPPF articulates the priorities of the Plan for Growth within planning policy. The NPPF introduces a new 'presumption' in favour of sustainable development and supports proposals that are in accordance with policies in an up to date Development Plan. Sustainable development is about positive growth – making economic, environmental and social progress for this and future generations.

The Government is committed to ensuring that the planning system does everything it can to support sustainable economic growth. Planning should operate to encourage and not act as an impediment to sustainable growth. Therefore significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth through the planning system.

The NPPF establishes a set of core planning principles, which underpin both plan-making and decision-taking. These set out that planning should:

- be genuinely plan-led;
- proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs;
- always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity;
- take account of the different roles and character of different areas;
- support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate and encourage the reuse of existing resources;
- encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed; and
- promote mixed use developments, and encourage multiple benefits from the use of land.

Section 1 of the NPPF (Paragraphs 18 to 22) is entitled 'building a strong, competitive economy'. It emphasises the Government's commitment to securing economic growth, and that significant weight should be placed on the need to support it through the planning system. In particular, it identifies the need for Local Planning Authorities to support existing business sectors, taking account of whether they are expanding or contracting and, where possible, identify and plan for new or emerging sectors likely to locate in their area.

As discussed below, the proposal to add office use as one of the approved uses at Unit 2 is in full compliance with the policies of the adopted Manchester Core Strategy, which promote Spinningfields as an area of focus for employment growth in B1 high density offices. As such, the proposal is also supported by the NPPF, which provides a presumption in favour of proposals in accordance with an up-to-date Development Plan.

Unit 2 is located in a highly accessible location by virtue of the variety of public transport modes which serve the surrounding City Centre. This helps discourage private car use, therefore lowering carbon emissions. The proposals also complement and serve other City Centre uses, thereby discouraging multiple trip generation and contributing to a decrease in carbon emissions.

The proposals will not involve any external alteration to the existing elevations of the Unit, which is located within one of the premium office buildings that comprise the world-class Spinningfields development.

The development will contribute to the on-going economic regeneration of Spinningfields by bringing a unit that has been vacant for some years into effective use, and meeting a recognised demand for smaller office units in this regionally significant employment location. The unit has the potential to accommodate between 10 and 50 members of staff.

The proposals therefore accord with the policy aims of the NPPF, and will contribute towards the achievement of sustainable economic growth within Manchester City Centre.

## Manchester Core Strategy (2012)

Manchester Core Strategy was adopted by the Council on 11 July 2012; it sets the overall strategic direction for planning for Manchester over the plan period from 2012 to 2027 and is in line with national policies.

Unit 2 is located within Spinningfields, an area of Manchester City Centre that is identified as a focus for primary economic development in accordance with *Policy CC1 Primary Economic Development Focus: City Centre and Fringe*. Policy CC1 establishes that the main focus for job growth will be in the City Centre, with the majority of employment growth expected to be in business services and primarily B1 jobs. Policy CC1 also promotes a range of economic development uses, including retail and leisure, within the City Centre, including Spinningfields.

The proposal will provide flexibility in the marketing of Unit 2, which has been vacant floorspace since the building was completed in 2004. This will assist in securing an operator for the unit, and therefore bring it into effective use and in so doing contribute to the Manchester economy through the provision of jobs. The proposed office use (Class B1) as an additional approved use of the unit is in full accordance with Policy CC1 of the Core Strategy, which supports the growth of B1 offices at Spinningfields.

Should there be a shift in demand for the unit, the retention of retail (A1 and A3) as approved uses would enable such a use to be implemented. Again, these uses are in full accordance with Policy CC1 and would contribute to the vitality and vibrancy of Spinningfields.

*Policy DM1 Development Management* requires that all proposed development should have regard to a number of specific issues including: affects on amenity such as noise, light, air quality, road safety and traffic generation; accessibility; community safety and crime prevention; refuse storage and collection; and, vehicular access.

Unit 2 is located within an existing, functioning office building, and has approval for A1 and A3 uses pursuant to Planning Permission Ref. 063139. The proposed office use would operate in accordance with the technical reports and strategies approved and implemented under Planning Permission Ref. 063139, including the access, servicing, noise and refuse management provisions. The Unit has an

existing at-grade pedestrian entrance and access and is located entirely on the ground floor; it will therefore be fully accessible by all.

## Conclusion

This existing unit has been vacant for more than 6 years despite extensive marketing efforts from leading retail agents. It has been concluded that offices represent the most appropriate alternative use of the unit and interest has been received from a number of potential occupiers. Extending the number of approved uses for the unit will provide flexibility in its marketing and assist in securing a suitable tenant to bring the unit into effective economic use.

The introduction of B1 office use, in addition to the approved A1 (shops) and A3 (food and drink) uses sought under this application will: contribute to and complement the range of uses at 1 Hardman Boulevard and Left Bank; ensure the unit is brought into economically active use; and, will contribute to the vitality and viability of the Spinningfields area and Manchester City Centre as a whole.

Further economic activity at this unit will also help to support the existing retail businesses located within Spinningfields on the main pedestrian thoroughfares.

The proposals positively contribute to relevant planning policy at all levels. The proposed uses can be incorporated into the scheme in accordance with the approved and implemented access, servicing, noise, refuse management provisions.

The unit will be fully accessible by all. The unit is located at ground floor, over one level, and has an existing at-grade entrance that will be retained. The internal layout will be legible and easy to navigate and will be fully accessible to users with mobility, hearing and visual impairments.

For these reasons, the proposals merit the support of the City Council.

We would be grateful if you could confirm receipt and registration of the application. Please contact me using the details below or Laura Feekins (0161 455 6324, lfeekins@djdeloitte.co.uk) should you have any queries or require any further information.

Yours faithfully

**John Cooper**
For Deloitte LLP

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Encs: