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Dear Danielle,

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

Full planning application for change of use from Use Class E (commercial, business and services) to Use Class F1 (learning and non-residential institutions)

Retail Unit 4D and 2nd Floor, 4 Piccadilly Place, Manchester, M1 3BN

Background

On behalf of Northern Trains Limited ('NTL'), Piccadilly Triangle Developments Ltd, Piccadilly Place Management Ltd and 4 Piccadilly Place Sarl ('the Applicant's') Lambert Smith Hampton ('LSH') apply to Manchester City Council ('MCC') for the change of use of the ground floor retail ('Unit 4D') and part of the second commercial ('2nd Floor') floors at 4 Piccadilly Place, Manchester, M1 3BN from Use Class E to use Class F.1.

NTL is the second largest train operator in the UK and employs more than 7,000 people across the length and breadth of the rail network to provide around 2,500 local and regional services every day to more than 500 stations across the North of England. In total, 100 million passenger journeys are made on our network each year. NTL's role is critical to the ongoing operation of rail services.

The application seeks full planning permission for the change of use to enable Unit 4D and 2nd floor space to be occupied as a training academy that provide NTL drivers, conductors, and other rail apprentices with training critical to the operation of rail services.

The planning application has been submitted online via the Planning Portal (PP ref: 13564953) and the requisite fee of £578 has been paid.

The following documents are submitted alongside this letter in support of the application:

- Application form and certificates;
- Site location plan (ref: RP11700-01);
- Existing floor plans;
  - Ground Floor (ref: 15888 A1001-3)
  - 2nd Floor (ref: 15888 A1002-3)
- Proposed Floor Plans;
  - Ground Floor (ref: RP11700-003);

- 2nd Floor (ref: RP11700-004);
- Elevation Drawings;
  - Front / East Elevation (no change) (ref: RP11700-005)
  - Rear / West Elevation (no change) (ref: RP11700-006)
  - North Elevation (no change) (ref: RP11700-007)
- Waste Management Proforma (ref: 4PP GD04_Waste_Storage_and_Collection Appendix_E_Proforma)

This application and supporting document have been discussed with MCC.

Site Context

Both Unit 4D and the second commercial floor comprise part of the 4 Piccadilly Place ('4PP') development.

4PP comprises of retail space on the ground floor and seven upper floors of Grade A office accommodation – consent was granted for the development in November 2007. The 2nd floor was previously occupied by an insolvency service company and Unit 4D by Simply Fresh, a convenience food retailer. The spaces have been vacant for 1 and 2 years, respectively. Currently they contribute nothing to the local or regional economy.

The proposal follows an extensive site search undertaken by NTL to identify suitable premises to accommodate the proposed training academy within Manchester City Centre. The search culminated with 4PP being identified as the suitable location.

4PP is well positioned within Manchester City Centre and is located adjacent to Manchester Piccadilly Station, which provides national and regional rail services operated by NTL and other service providers. The proximity of the training academy to Manchester Piccadilly Station was one of the key locational criteria for NTL.

The area surrounding 4PP is characterised by other office developments, education, hotels, and other uses associated with its City Centre location and proximity to Manchester Piccadilly Station. The proposed use is considered to be suitable and consistent with other uses within the wider development.

The Proposal

NTL are seeking to occupy 11,226 sq.ft (1,042 sqm) of floor space across the ground floor Unit 4D and the 2nd Floor of 4PP under Class F.1 (Learning and non-residential institutions). The split of floorspace is as follows:

- 2,759 sq.ft (256 sqm) Ground Floor (Unit 4D)
- 8,467 sq. ft (786 sqm) 2nd Floor.

NTL's intended occupation of the floorspace is to deliver training, with some ancillary use of office / meeting space. The split of use is intended to be as follows:

- 80% attending training (visiting/ temporary)
- 7% delivering training;
- 11% using as office space; and,

- 2% using for meeting space.

Training driving simulators and associated equipment would be installed on both floors. The simulators will provide driver, conductor, and other rail apprentices with a full working cab environment for training purposes. The academy will also feature a passenger cabin simulator, for training staff on door operation, dispatch, and emergency evacuation – training classrooms which include static replicas of the driver's cab for additional training are also proposed.

The operation of the training academy is crucial for the ongoing training of staff. As an industry leader when it comes to driver and conductor training the investment in this facility and simulators will only further strengthen NTL's capabilities.

To facilitate the occupation of Unit 4D and the 2nd Floor a change of use is required from the consented Class E (as detailed below) use to Class F.1.

The following section of this letter details the planning history of the Site (and its immediate surroundings), relevant planning policy context and provides an assessment of the change of use against relevant planning policies of MCC's adopted Development Plan, and other material considerations.

Planning History

A review of Manchester City Council's planning public access highlights that the following applications, within the Piccadilly Place development, are relevant to the change of use of floorspace at 4 Piccadilly Place.

LPA Ref: 084025/FO/2007/C3 (consented 12th November 2007)

"*Erection of 8 storey building comprising ground floor units including Use Classes A1 (shop), A2 (financial and professional services), A3 (restaurant/cafe), A4 (drinking establishment), A5 (hot food takeaway) and B1 (office) with 7 floors of office use (Use Class B1) above".*

Planning permission for the development was granted on 12th November 2007, for 10,634 sq.ft of retail floorspace, which included ground floor retail unit 4D. At the time of consent the permission granted flexible use for the ground floor units of related to Use Classes A1 (shop), A2 (financial and professional services), A3 (restaurant/cafe), A4 (drinking establishment), A5 (hot food takeaway) and B1 (office).

The consent identifies that the 2nd Floor of 4 Piccadilly Place comprises 16,494 sq.ft of commercial Use Class B1 (office) floorspace.

Since the grant of consent, changes to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 have taken effect. These changes were implemented in 2020 and resulted in the consolidation of use classes. Classes A, B1 and D1, applicable to retail, office, non-residential institutions and leisure and assembly uses respectively, were replaced with Class E (encompassing commercial, business and service), Class F.1 (learning and non-residential institutions) and Class F.2 (Local Community Uses) introduced in their place.

As a result of the changes made, the use of the current floorspace at 4 Piccadilly Place, subject to this application. now falls under Use Class E.

Other relevant planning history:

Within the wider Piccadilly Place development, two applications have been approved for the change of use of the ground floor retail units. These applications are as follows:

LPA Ref: 109083/FO/2015/C2 (*Consented 4th November 2015)*

Change of use from A1 (retail) to D2 (gym), including the installation of 3 no. external air conditioning condenser units and minor elevational alterations to accommodate new grilles for supply. Extract ventilation, installation of replacement glazing, and 1no. new fire exit door.

122296/FO/2019 (Consented 10th May 2019)

Change of use of ground floor to higher education institution (class D1), together with insertion of a new mezzanine floor amounting to 365 sqm and the installation of 2no. external louvres.

The later of the two highlights the suitability of the change of use from Use Class E (formerly Use Class A1 and D1) is to Class F.1 within the Piccadilly Place development.

Planning Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') was revised in December 2023 and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

The NPPF applies a presumption in favour of sustainable development where development proposals accord with an up-to-date development plan.

Paragraph 85 confirms that planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which business can invest, expand, and adapt. Significant weight is to be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities.

Paragraph 90 establishes that planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play by taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaptation which enables them to grow and diversify in a way that can respond to rapid changes in retail and leisure industries and allows a suitable mix of uses.

Paragraph 108 confirms that transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of development proposals so that opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure are realised and that opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued.

Section 11 seeks to make effective use of land, with Paragraph 124 promoting and supporting the development of under-utilised land and buildings.

Local Development Plan

MCC's adopted Development Plan comprises:

- Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (adopted 2024);
- Manchester Core Strategy Development Plan Document (adopted July 2012);
- Addendum to Manchester Core Strategy 2024;
- Interactive Proposals Map (showing the Core Strategy and the extant (remaining) Unitary Development Plan policies);
- Extant Unitary Development Plan Policies; and
- Greater Manchester Joint Waste DPD (adopted April 2013).

Core Strategy and Proposals Map

The Proposals Map identifies that the building is situated within the defined City and Regional Centres. As such the following policies are applicable:

Core Strategy Policy SP1 (Spatial Principles): establishes the spatial principles which will guide the strategic development of Manchester to 2027. It states that the Regional Centre will be the focus for economic and commercial development, retail, leisure and cultural activity, alongside high-quality city living. Development in all parts of the City should improve access to jobs, services, education, and open space by being located to reduce the need to travel and provide good access to sustainable transport provision.

Policy EC2 (Existing Employment Space): seeks to retain and enhance existing employment space and sites. The policy identifies that alternative uses will only be supported on sites allocated accordingly, or if it can be demonstrated that: the existing use is un-viable in terms of business operations, building age and format; the existing use is incompatible with adjacent uses; the existing use is unsuitable for employment having had regard to the Manchester- Salford - Trafford SFRA; or on balance, proposals are able to offer greater benefits in terms of the Core Strategy's vision and spatial objectives than the existing use.

Policy CC1 (Primary Economic Development Focus: City Centre and Fringe): establishes the City Centre as a strategic economic location and the focus of employment growth in the City and City Region. The supporting text recognises that the City Centre contains many assets that drive growth in the City Region including a dynamic private sector including a strong financial and professional service sector, as well as the highest concentration of higher education facilities in the North West that provides a highly skilled population attractive to businesses.

Policy CC5 (Transport): requires that developers ensure that all users are able to access development by sustainable means, especially taking account of times when developers are likely to be busiest.

Policy CC7 (Mixed Use Development): the City Centre presents the most viable opportunities for mixed-use development, and in general these will be promoted as a means of using land as efficiently as possible.

Policy EN19 (Waste): require all developers to submit a waste management plan to demonstrate how waste will be minimised and recycled on site wherever possible and how the sustainable waste management needs of the end user will be met.

Policy T1 (Sustainable Transport): promotes and seeks to deliver sustainable transport.

Policy T2 (Accessible areas of opportunity and need): seeks to actively manage the pattern of development to ensure that new development is located to ensure good access to the City's main economic drivers and is easily accessible by walking, cycling and public transport.

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE)

PfE adopts a spatial strategy that seeks to deliver sustainable, inclusive growth. One the four key spatial elements is to deliver significant growth in jobs and housing at the core – continuing development in that part of the 'core growth area' encompassing the city centre and beyond to the Etihad in the east, through to the Quays, Trafford Park, and Port Salford in the west. The majority of commercial employment growth is proposed in this area.

The Core Growth Area ('CGA') includes Manchester City Centre. The Core Growth Area offers businesses, residents and visitors access to a highly skilled population, a wide range of premises and accommodation, digital infrastructure, excellent accessibility, a high-quality environment, cultural and retail opportunities.

PfE recognises that the universities and the knowledge economy are other important assets for us, with a high concentration of students, research activity and scientific institutions. This activity is primarily focused within the City Centre, with The Oxford Road Corridor being an internationally important location in this regard.

Policy JP-Strat1: Core Growth Area*:* identifies that the economic role of the Core Growth Area will be protected and enhanced, with sustainable development supporting major growth in the number of jobs provided across the area providing opportunities to create jobs for local communities.

Policy JP-Strat2: City Centre: confirms that the City Centre will continue to provide the primary focus of business, retail, leisure, culture, and tourism activity.

Policy JP-P5: Education, Skills and Knowledge: promotes significant enhancements in education, skills, and knowledge to benefit existing and new residents will be promoted.

Assessment

Suitability of Use Class F.1

As the second largest train operator in the UK and provider of local and regional rail services across the North of England, the provision of training to NTL's employees is critical to the ongoing provision of rail services. The proposed use would significantly enhance NTL's focus of employment growth and its ability to employ and train skilled people, thus improving access to jobs, services, and education by being in sustainable location consistent with Polices SP1 and CC2 of the adopted Development Plan, along with Policies JP-Strat1, JP-Strat2 and JP-P5 of PfE.

In accordance with Paragraph 85 of the NPPF the proposed change of use represents an investment that enables NTL expand and adapt its training provision and support NTL's business needs.

NTL proposed investment in Unit 4D, and the 2nd Floor will allow vacant floorspace to be brought back into use within a prominent City Centre development which in turn makes efficient use of floorspace not currently utilised. The proposal is consistent with Paragraph 124 of the NPPF through the re-use of under-utilised vacant floorspace within 4PP. It also makes efficient use of land in accordance with Policy CC7 of the Development Plan, and Section 11 of the NPPF.

Furthermore, the characteristics of the wider Piccadilly Place development – which includes an established educational (Class F.1) use [the University Campus of Football Business (approved pursuant to LPA Ref: 122296/FO/2019] - illustrate that the change of use to Class F.1 is appropriate in this location.

Notwithstanding the suitability of the use proposed, and the compliance with national, regional, and local policy, the proposal seeks to change the use 786 sqm of commercial floor space (Class E) to Class F.1 which Policy EC2 of the Development Plan seeks to retain. The policy, however, establishes that alternative uses will be supported where proposals are able to offer greater benefits in terms of the Core Strategy's vision and spatial objectives than the existing use.

The proposal also seeks to change of use of 256 sqm of retail floor space (Class E) to Class F.1, which is not considered to be a main town centre use, as defined in the NPPF. The site is not located within the City Centre Primary Shopping Area (as defined by Policy C1 (Centre Hierarchy) of the adopted Development and is within excess of 300m of the defined area. Despite that the use proposed will help to drives footfall within the Piccadilly Place development and is complimentary [and consistent in the case of LPA Ref: 122296/FO/2019] to the other uses.

The use proposed will continue to generate employment and training opportunities on a central site, which involves the efficient re-use of currently vacant floorspace. It also facilitates the introduction of a suitable mix of uses within the wider Piccadilly Place development and will generate additional footfall and use of this central location within Manchester City Centre. The proposed change is consistent with the requirement of Paragraph 90 of the NPPF, and the alternative use should be encouraged as it helps to eradicate vacant floor space within the Piccadilly Place development. As such the proposal offers great benefits in terms of the Core Strategy's vision and spatial objectives and is therefore deemed to be compatible with Policy EC2,and other relevant policies of the Development Plan.

For the reasons set out above, the proposal is consistent with both national policy and polices of the development plan.

Transport and Accessibility

Unit 4D and the 2nd Floor of 4PP have been identified as the suitable premises to accommodate NTL's training academy given its proximity to Manchester Piccadilly Station, its access to local, regional, and national rail services, and its highly sustainable central location within Manchester City Centre with excellent access to other public transport services, as well as pedestrian links.

The majority of NTL staff / visitors will arrive at 4PP on foot (via rail or other public transport) similar to the expected travel patterns of the consented use of both the ground and 2nd floors. Only in isolated instances would staff / visitors arrive by car, they would then use the spaces allocated to the floors within the existing car park associated with 4PP.

In accordance with Paragraph 108 of the NPPF and Policies CC5, T1 and T2 of the adopted Development Plan is can be concluded that the proposed F.1 use will be situated in a highlight sustainable location in the designated City Centre and that it will benefit from established public transport and pedestrian links providing easy access to both sites within the City Centre, and further afield.

Waste Management

Waste streams produced via NTL's occupation of both the ground and 2nd Floor space will be comparable to that of any office use (i.e general office refuse, used car/paper), waste generated will feed into the buildings existing waste management arrangement and provisions.

It is therefore concluded that waste management needs of NTL are met through the existing waste management provision of 4PP, as set out in the supporting waste management proforma. The proposed change of use therefore satisfies Policy EN15 of the Development Plan.

On the whole, when assessed against both national, regional, and local planning policy, it is to be concluded that the proposed change of use constitutes sustainable development, and planning permission should be granted.

Conclusion

On behalf of the Applicants Lambert Smith Hampton submit this full planning application for the change of use of Retail Unit 4D and 2nd Floor space within 4 Piccadilly Place, Manchester, M1 3BN from Use Class E (commercial, business and services) to Use Class F1 (learning and non-residential institutions).

The letter sets out the extent of the change of use proposed, NTL intended use of the floorspace for as a training academy – in respect of ongoing provision of rail services that they provide across the North of England, and the planning history relevant to 4PP.

The proposed change of use has been assessed against national, regional, and local planning policies. This letter confirms that the proposal represents sustainable development, and there are not outstanding reasons for refusal, thus full planning permission for the change of use should be granted.

We trust that the information provided in support of this planning application is sufficient for the Council to validate and determine this application.

Should you require any clarification or additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



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Lambert Smith Hampton