

Manchester City Council
Planning Department
Town Hall
Albert Square
Manchester
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September 2024

APPLICATION FOR CHANGE OF USE OF THE FIRST AND SECOND FLOORS TO CLASS F1 EDUCATIONAL USE

First and Second floors, 12-14 Lever Street, Manchester, M1 1LN

This planning statement accompanies an application for the Change of Use of the premises known as 'First and Second floors, 12-14 Lever Street, Manchester, M1 1LN' from offices, Class E (g), to Educational Class F1(a) Use.

The existing building was formerly occupied by Safety Culture Offices across the ground, first and second floors of the building and was fitted out to a high standard by the previous tenants.

The building is Grade II listed and located within the Stevenson Square Conservation Area. The proposal does not involve any internal or external alterations as part of the application and Listed Building Consent is not therefore required.

Supporting Documents

The application is accompanied by the following documents:

- Planning Application form
- Planning Statement Prepared by EA Town Planning.
- Heritage Statement prepared by EA Town Planning Ltd.
- Architectural Drawings Package prepared by Sheila Bird Studios.
- Marketing Letter from Edwards Property Consultants.
- Manchester City Council Waste Proforma

Application Proposal

The development proposal is for the Change of Use of the first and second floor of the building into Class F1(a) Educational Use. The ground floor use will be retained for use as office space in the form of flexible hotdesking office space available for hire.

The building owners objective with this proposal is to secure a tenant within the vacant space on site and bring the floor space back into productive use. The existing space has proven to be suitable for use as high quality educational space with no internal alterations required for the proposed change of use.

Change of Use

The accompanying application seeks planning permission for the Change of Use of the first and second floors of the building into Class F1(a) use for the Provision of Education in the form of an international language school for foreign and domestic students.

The ground floor of the building will not be affected by this proposal and will be retained in Class E(g) Office use as a 'plug and play' hotdesking workspace available for hire.

The existing floor space across the first and second floors extends across 818sqm which is currently vacant.

The application proposal will enable the reuse of the existing floor space, bringing the building back into productive use.

The college, Kings Hall College, is a new college which is part of a franchise of International schools across Manchester.

The college is an English Language Academy which will offer a variety of courses to both local and international students, including General English, Business English, IELTS. These courses will enable students to access and move on to Higher Education Colleges and Universities.

Manchester is one of the most popular destinations for international students who many wish to study at the universities and students will always look to strengthen their English language skills before moving to university.

The college, although newly established, is in the process of engendering a working relationship with the local universities and other educational institutions. The college will amend the courses they offer to reflect demand and requirement.

The new premises will allow Kings Hall College to recruit up to 650 International students per annum.

On average the college provides course to between 120-150 students year-round, meaning that there will always be between 120-150 students attending the college throughout the year. The intake of students peaks in the summer period in which the college can see between 350-400 students during the peak period (July and August).

Students attending the college are normally on visitor visas which only allow them to stay in the UK for a period of up to 6 months.

Some students may have short term student visas which allow them to stay in the UK for up to 11 months.

On average students studying at the college remain in the UK for a period of 6 months or more.

The courses offered by the college vary in length depending on the intake and demand. The shorter courses run for a period of 4 weeks, whilst the longer courses run for up to 44 weeks. The majority of the courses provided are in the region of 3months long. During peak periods, the courses are adapted to be provided over a period of 6 weeks to accommodate students who come to study over the Summer Holidays.

Approximately 75% of the students that study at the college continue on to Further education courses at local universities after completing the required English language standard required to enter respective courses. The annual contribution to the local economy resulting from students studying at the college is estimated in the region of £2 - £2.5m in tuition fees and an additional £2m in rent and living costs.

The college anticipate that their occupation of this building will lead to the creation of approximately 30 new jobs. Year round, the college have 15 management, admin and sales staff and additional 15 academic staff/teachers. During peak season (July and August), the employ and additional 8-10 staff members.

The proposed change of use of this premises, will secure the ongoing productive use of the upper floors of this building for the immediate future. The space will provide capacity for at least 180 students, educators and staff members at any one time.

Planning History

Our research on the planning history for this building on Manchester City Council's online planning register has identified a modest planning history for the building. This is set out below:

- App Ref: 139666/LP/2024 – Certificate of Lawful Development Application for Use of the basement as a gym (Class E(d) - Indoor sport and recreation). Application was Deemed Lawful 3-June-2024
- App Ref: 050924/LO/CITY2/96 - LISTED BUILDING CONSENT Installation of a 1.3 metre diameter satellite antenna on roof. Application was Approved 27-March-1997
- App Ref: 050590/FO/CITY2/96 - Installation of a 1.3m. diameter satellite antenna. Application was Approved 27-March-1997
- App Ref: 039256 - Change of use to two self contained flats. Application Approved 28-November-1991
- App Ref: F16830 - Formation of a new entrance to wholesale premises from Lever Street. Application was Refused 28-April-1982

The recently granted Certificate of Lawful development application for the change of use of the basement to Class E (d), it was established that the existing use of the upper floors of the building is Class E (g) offices. The building was most recently occupied as offices by Safety Culture who vacated in early to middle of 2023.

Relevant Planning Policy Review

National Planning Policy and Guidance

- National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England with a strong emphasis being on presumption in favour of sustainable development.

The NPPF identifies that there are three overarching objectives to sustainable development: Economic, Social and Environment objectives).

Paragraph 8 of the framework sets out the three overarching objectives for achieving sustainable development in the planning system, these include:

- Economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy
- Social objective – to support strong vibrant and healthy communities
- Environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment

The proposed scheme will contribute to the objective of sustainable development through the delivery of positive economic, social and environmental benefits as detailed below.

Economic Benefits

The proposed change of use of this building will bring a number of economic benefits to Manchester's Economy both in terms of job creation and the injection of annual tuition fees and living costs. The presence of the college will inevitably lead to further investment into local businesses resulting from the influx of students. The increase of students at the college will also encourage further investment into local infrastructure. In the long terms the provision of English Language courses will enable students to attend local universities and potentially stay on in Manchester for work, post university. Once established, the college will seek to establish a Teacher Training Course which will target local students and create opportunities for further jobs/employment.

Social Benefits

The proposed change of use will support social objective for sustainable development by increasing further education opportunities and facilities to support a strong, vibrant, and healthy community. The proposed Change of Use will include the reuse of existing vacant floor space within the city centre, bringing the building back into productive use. The presence of the college with its influx of students will also increase the vibrancy of the local area to the benefit of local businesses, cafes and leisure uses. The college is conveniently located in close proximity to a range of local amenities. Many of the students

attending the college will rent accommodation in and around the city centre improving the vitality and bustling nature of the city.

The college will also cater for a small percentage of UK students. These students will comprise mainly individuals recently settled in the UK who would be looking to improve their English language skills for further education or work.

Environmental Benefits

No internal reconfiguration works are required as part of the proposed change of use and the proposal thus offers an efficient and environmentally friendly alternative use for the property. The buildings position within the City Centre means that the college will be highly accessible with excellent access to public transport links and hubs. The proposal will therefore encourage the use of more sustainable forms of transport.

Local Development Plan documents

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004, requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The following Development Plan Documents are relevant to this application.

- Manchester's Core Strategy Development Plan Document (Adopted July 2012)
- Saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan for Manchester (July 1995);
- Place for Everyone Plan (Adopted March 2024)
- Guide to Development in Manchester Supplementary Planning Document and Guidance (April 2007);
- Design for Access 2 (December 2003).

Manchester's Core Strategy Development Plan Document (Adopted July 2012)

The Core Strategy was adopted in July 2012 and sets out the long term strategic policies for Manchester's future development. The Core Strategy sets out the key challenges facing the City. These include improving the skills of residents to meet the job opportunities, improving access to employment and education, and continuing to ensure that development is of a consistently high quality.

Core Strategy objectives and policies of relevance to the proposed Change of use are listed below:

- Spatial Objective SO1 'Spatial Principles' states that the sustainable development of the City can contribute to halting climate change, and that the framework will guide the scale of education (as well as other uses) across the city.
- Spatial Objectives SO2 'Economy' sets out that the Regional Centre will continue to be the main focus for development including educational development, to further its role as a main employment location and primary economic driver of the City region.
- SP 1 'Spatial Principles' sets out the key spatial principles which will guide the strategic development of Manchester to 2027. These include seeking to improve access to education, to reduce the need to travel and provide good access to sustainable transport provision.
- EC 1 'Employment and Economic Growth in Manchester' states that the Council will support significant contributors to economic growth and productivity including education facilities, and other employment generating uses mainly in the City Centre and Eastlands.
- EC 2 'Existing Employment Space' states the Council will support alternative uses of employment space and sites if it can be demonstrated that employment is unviable or an alternative use would bring more benefits to the City.
- CC 7 'Mixed Use Development' states that the City Centre presents the most viable opportunity for mixed-use development. Active ground floor uses will be appropriate in locations which have an established public function, or as part of a development which will create such an environment.
- CC 9 'Design and Heritage' states that development in the City Centre should preserve or enhance heritage assets including listed buildings and conservation areas; and, that the Council will support high density and mixed use development in the City Centre.
- CC 10 'A Place for Everyone' states that the City Centre will develop as a location which appeals to a wide range of residents/visitors, including uses that increase diversity of activity and high standards of accessibility to buildings and spaces.
- Policy T 2 'Accessible areas of opportunity and need' seeks to ensure that new development is easily accessible by walking/cycling/public transport; provided with an appropriate level of car parking; and, should have regard to the need for disabled and cycle parking.
- Policy EN 19 'Waste' states that developers will be required to submit a waste management plan to demonstrate how the waste management needs of the end user will be met.

- Policy DM 1 'Development Management: sets out various issues that development should have regard to, including: effects on amenity (including proposals which may be sensitive to existing environmental conditions such as noise); accessibility; community safety and crime prevention; vehicular access and car parking; refuse storage and collection; and effects relating to archaeological or built heritage.

The Core Strategy replaced much of the UDP but some UDP policies have been retained.

Saved Policies of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) for the City of Manchester (adopted 1995)

Area 5 City Centre - Small Areas Proposals

RC20 Area 10 Oldham Street/Lever Street/Newton Street – describes the local area as predominantly commercial, with a high proportion of substantial older properties and a textile warehousing base. The area description identifies the shift in city centre shopping away from this section of the City Centre and acknowledges that the general assumption for the area is that 'some degree of non-retail or quasi-retail uses need to be accepted or even encouraged'. The area description also makes specific mention of 'maintaining activity levels in commercial building around Lever Street' and notes that the aim for the area will be to 'both to retain existing activity and encourage further additions to the mixture of Uses'.

18. CONSERVATION AREAS

Policy DC18.1 states that The Council will give particularly careful consideration to development proposals within Conservation Areas.

a. The Council will seek to preserve and enhance the character of its designated conservation areas by carefully considering the following issues:

- i) the relationship of new structures to neighbouring buildings and spaces;
- ii) the effect of major changes to the appearance of existing buildings;
- iii) the desirability of retaining existing features, such as boundary walls, gardens, trees, (including street trees);
- iv) the effect of signs and advertisements;
- v) any further guidance on specific areas which has been approved by the Council.

19. LISTED BUILDINGS

Policy DC19.1 states that In determining applications for listed building consent or planning applications for development involving or having an impact on buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, the Council will have regard to the desirability of securing the retention, restoration, maintenance and continued use of such buildings and to protecting their general setting. In giving effect to this policy, the Council will:

- a. not grant Listed building consent for the demolition of a listed building other than in the most exceptional circumstances, and in any case, not unless it is satisfied that every possible effort has been made to continue the present use or to find a suitable alternative use;
- b. not permit a change of use of a listed building, where it would have a detrimental effect on the character or appearance of the building;
- c. not permit any external or internal alteration or addition to a Listed building where, in its opinion, there would be an adverse effect on its architectural or historic character;
- d. seek to preserve and enhance the settings of listed buildings by appropriate control over the design of new development in their vicinity, control over the use of adjacent land, and where appropriate, by the preservation of trees and landscape features;
- e. permit demolition only where there are approved detailed plans for redevelopment and where there is evidence of a firm building contract;
- f. not permit alterations to a listed building which would prevent the future use of any part of the building, in particular upper floors or basements, or where poor maintenance is likely to result.

26. DEVELOPMENT AND NOISE

Policy DC26.1 states that The Council intends to use the development control process to reduce the impact of noise on people living and working in, or visiting, the City. In giving effect to this intention, the Council will consider both:

- a. the effect of new development proposals which are likely to be generators of noise; and
- b. the implications of new development being exposed to existing noise sources which are effectively outside planning control.

DC26.2 New noise-sensitive developments (including large-scale changes of use of existing land or buildings), such as housing, schools, hospitals or similar activities, will be permitted subject to their not being in locations which would expose them to high noise levels from existing uses or operations, unless

the effects of the noise can realistically be reduced. In giving effect to this policy, the Council will take account both of noise exposure at the time of receiving a planning application and of any increase that may reasonably be expected in the foreseeable future.

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (2024)

The Places for Everyone Plan (2024) was adopted by Manchester City Council in March 2024. A response to each of the following policies is provided:

Policy JP-Strat2: City Centre – In compliance with this policy, the proposal will enable international students to take advantage of the access to education and training offered by the college and the extensive public transport offer, reducing the need to travel to work whilst supporting economic growth.

Policy JP-J1: Supporting Long-Term Economic Growth – The proposed change of use of this building will bring a number of economic benefits to Manchester's Economy both in terms of job creation and the injection of annual tuition fees and living costs. The presence of the college will inevitably lead to further investment into local businesses resulting from the influx of students. The increase of students at the college will also encourage further investment into local infrastructure. In the long terms the provision of English Language courses will enable students to attend local universities and potentially stay on in Manchester for work, post university.

Policy JP-J2: Employment Sites and Premises – Although the proposed Change of use will result in the loss of some office space, the new college will facilitate the creation of at least 30 new jobs. Policy JP-J2 encourages the delivery of new floorspace, but recognises the important roll that 'second-hand' floorspace plays particularly in the provision of lower cost space. The proposal represents a creative approach to meet market demand for education space within the city centre where little demand exists from traditional office tenants. Once established, the college will seek to establish a Teacher Training Course which will target local students and create opportunities for further jobs/employment.

Policy JP-J3: Office Development – This policy notes that at least 2,019,000 sqm of accessible new office floorspace will be provided in the Plan area over the period 2022-2039, with a focus on Manchester City Centre accounting for more than half of all new office floorspace in the sub-region. As evidence within the marketing history for this property, there has been little interest from commercial tenants for the use of the premises as office space. High quality office occupiers focus their attention on new stock

offices, the delivery of which is encouraged by this policy. This in turn means that existing office building operators have to be more creative and think outside the box to avoid long term vacancy of their buildings.

Policy JP-P5: Education, Skills and Knowledge – This Policy seeks ‘significant enhancements in education, skills and knowledge to benefit existing and new residents’. The college will provide accredited English Language Courses for primarily International Students looking to improve their English language skills and access higher education courses at other colleges and universities. The college will thus help to support the continued growth and success of the knowledge economy within Manchester by enabling access to higher educational courses and universities for international and foreign students. This will contribute towards Greater Manchester position as one of the UK’s best destinations for students.

Guide to Development in Manchester Supplementary Planning Document 2007 (SPD)

This document aims to support and enhance the on-going shaping of the City by providing a set of reasoned principles which will guide developers, designers and residents to the sort of development that everyone wants to see in Manchester. Whilst the proposed development relates only to internal works to the building, the SPD has been useful nonetheless and provides useful guidance, particularly in terms of the following:

- Accessibility (Section 3)
- Environmental Standards (Section 4)
- Parking Guidelines (Section 6)
- Community Safety and Crime Prevention (Section 8)

Assessment of Proposal against Local Planning Policies

The primary considerations against which this application has been assessed are detailed below:

- Principle of the change of use from Office to Educational use
- Principle of Education use
- Accessibility and Parking Provision
- Noise and Management Considerations

- Access for Disabled Users
- Servicing: Waste Management and Deliveries

Principle of Proposed Change of Use from Office to Educational Use

As stated above, the proposal is for the change of use of the upper floors of the building into Class F1 Educational Use in the form of an International Language College. The entire building has been sat vacant for over a year and the applicants/building owner are eager to bring the building back into efficient and productive use to the benefit of the local community and local economy.

The proposed use as an educational facility is entirely appropriate for this building given its location within the heart of the Northern Quarter, close to all amenities, infrastructure, the town centre shopping offer, key public transport links and the nearby Piccadilly Gardens.

A key policy consideration is the loss of existing 'employment floorspace'. Policy EC2 – Existing Employment Space states:

The Council will seek to retain and enhance existing employment space and sites. 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.

The first and fourth bullet points are relevant to this proposed change of use.

Although finished to a high standard internally and providing a great standard of internal amenity in terms of modern and comfortable office space, the existing building has remained vacant for in excess of 12 months. The property has been advertised by Edwards Property Consultants as a "Plug + Play Office building" fully ready for occupation. The building has been offered to the market for rent as a whole single unit and separately on a floor by floor basis. No commercial tenants have come forward nonetheless. The market demand for this type of office building is clearly limited and the existing use is thus un-viable in terms of business operations, the buildings and its format.

The proposal will see the retention of Class E office space on the ground floor of the building in the form of office space for the proposed college or alternatively flexible hot desking office space available for hire. In addition, it is possible that the floor space will be easily reverted back into office use at some point in the future should the use of the premises as an Educational Facility prove unviable.

The re-use of the existing vacant space into productive use represents a creative response to existing market demand, ensuring that despite the lack of interest from office occupiers, the space can be economically productive, enable the creation of employment, as well as contributing to the surrounding economy.

The building owner has provided evidence in the form of a marketing letter from Edwards Property Consultants, which provides marketing evidence for a period of at least 12 months demonstrating little to no interest from commercial 'office' tenants for use of the building as Class E(g) office space.

In terms of the benefits offered by the proposed change of use in relation to the Council's Core Strategy's vision and spatial objectives, please find our assessment of the proposal against the council Spatial Objectives below:

It should be acknowledged that the property in its current vacant state does not provide any benefit to the Core Strategy's vision and spatial objectives. An extended period of vacancy will likewise not contribute towards the Core Strategy's vision and objectives.

MCC Core Strategy Objectives and Policies	Summary of Spatial Objective/Policy	Proposals Alignment with Core Strategy Objectives and Relevant Policy Justification
Spatial Objective SO1 'Spatial Principles'	Within the context of mitigation and adaptation to climate change, the framework will guide the scale and distribution of various uses including education across the City.	The application site is located in a highly accessible town centre location and students and staff will not be reliant on the use of cars to arrive at the college. The proposal will allow for the reuse of the currently vacant space bringing it back into productive use with limited changes required. The existing layout of the premises lends

		itself for use as an Educational facility with no internal alterations required to facilitate the proposed change of use and initial occupation.
Spatial Objective SO2 'Economy'	The Regional Centre will continue to be the main focus for development including educational development, to further its role as a main employment location and primary economic driver of the City region.	The proposed Change of use will lead to the creation of up to 30 new job opportunities for teachers and admin/support staff. The college will also enable access to Local Universities via the accredited language courses it offers. The college will bring a significant investment to the local economy in terms of tuition fees, living accommodation fees and living costs.
Spatial Objective SO5 'Transport'	Improve the physical connectivity of the City, through sustainable and accessible transport networks, to enhance its functioning and competitiveness and provide access to jobs, education, services, retail, leisure and recreation.	Given the nature of the college as an International college for predominantly foreign students, it can be assumed that students attending the college will not be car owners and will not be arriving at the college by car. Students and staff attending the college will make use of the excellent public transport links surrounding the property which should contribute towards further investment within the existing transport infrastructure.
Spatial Objective SO6 'Environment' and	Protect and enhance both the natural and built environment of the City and ensure the	The proposed use of the premises as a College will allow the building owners to secure a tenant within a long

CC 9 'Design and Heritage'	sustainable use of natural resources, in order to mitigate and adapt to climate change, support biodiversity and wildlife, improve air, water and land quality, recreational opportunities and provide networks of high quality green infrastructure, ensuring that the City is inclusive and attractive to residents, workers, investors and visitors.	standing vacant building and thereby secure its viability and long term maintenance into the future. The occupation of this building by a viable tenant will ensure the retention of this Grade II listed building and thereby contribute towards the preservation of the city's historic environment. No internal alterations are required to facilitate the proposed change of use.
CC 7 '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. A range of uses should be considered for all sites with a view to providing a mix of residential and commercial uses and active ground floor uses (shops, food and leisure).	The basement has recently been granted a Certificate of Lawful Development for its conversion to a Class E Gym use. The ground floor will be retained in Class E office use as flexible hotdesking office space available for hire. The upper first and second floor will be occupied as a Language School and Teacher Training Centre thus representing an appropriate mix of uses within the city centre.
CC 10 'A Place for Everyone'	Outlines that the city centre will develop as a location which appeals to a wide range of residents and visitors. Developments which promote this objective will be supported,	Manchester is one of the most popular destination for international students to study at the universities and students will always look to strengthen their English language skills before moving to university.

	in particular uses which increase the diversity of activity in the City Centre, and also, high standards of accessibility to buildings and across spaces in the City Centre.	The college will provide English Language Courses for primarily International Students looking into improve their English language skills and access higher education courses at other colleges and universities. The proposed change of use will assist in the development of Manchester city centre as a location which appeals to a wide range of residents and visitors, and will increase diversity of activity. The college will work with refu-aid to offer some free seats to refugees enabling them to improve their English language skills.
Policy T2 'Accessible areas of opportunity and need'	Outlines that the council will manage the patterns of development to ensure that all development is easily accessible by walking, cycling and public transport and there is good access links to the city's main economic drivers.	The application site is centrally located within the Piccadilly Ward of Manchester City Centre and is easily accessible by walking, cycling, and excellent public transport links.
DM1 Development Management	States that all development should have regard to specific issues including siting, layout, scale, form, massing, materials as well as impact on amenity and surrounding land uses.	The proposed change of use has given due to consideration to the matters set out within Policy DM01 including impact on amenity of existing and proposed users, accessibility, community safety and crime prevention; vehicular access and car

		parking; refuse storage and collection; and effects relating to the impact on built heritage.
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The overall benefits of the proposed Change of use of the upper floors of this property from Office use to Education use are provided below:

- Will allow for the occupation of a long standing vacant building and secure its viability into the future.
- Preserve the city's historic environment by ensuring the long term maintenance of a Grade II listed building.
- Will enable foreign and domestic students to strengthen their English language skills to higher education standards and access relevant higher educational courses by offering accredited English Language courses and qualifications.
- Will contribute towards the city's knowledge based economy.
- Encourage and facilitate the influx of international students into local universities and potentially encouraging their long term interest to stay and reside in the UK post university.
- Contribute towards the city's strong National and Internal Connections.
- The new college will create new jobs and provide employment opportunities to teaching, admin and support staff.
- The larger premises will provide both functional and practical benefits to the college, allowing for an increased number of courses and classes to be held at the same time, and will of course enable an increased number of students per year.
- Will enable to the reuse of a Grade II listed building will no alterations.
- Will provide an educational offer in a highly sustainable and accessible location, thereby contributing to the viable and sustainable regeneration of the surrounding area.

- Is part of a broader project for the building which will also include the retention of the ground floor for use as hotdesking offices space available for hire.
- Will increase the use of City's public transport Infrastructure.
- Will encourage further investment into the City Centre and the provision of a use that will encourage natural surveillance to help reduce crime and the fear of crime.
- The college will also cater for a small percentage of UK students. These students will comprise mainly individuals recently settled in the UK who would be looking to improve their English language skills for further education or work.
- Once established, the college will also look to establish a Teacher Training Course which will target local students and create opportunities for further jobs/employment.

Policy CC7 Mixed Use Development identifies that Mixed use developments are an essential part of City Centre development, as it reflects the variety of uses which co-exist in this environment and is crucial for the promotion of the efficient use of land.

There has been interest from a tenant for use of the Basement of the building as a Gym premises and a Certificate of Lawful Development was recently granted for that proposal. The Basement of the building is separate from the rest of the building and will be tenanted independently. Assuming the proposed change of use is deemed acceptable, the upper first and second floor would be occupied as a Language School and Teacher Training Centre, the ground floor would be retained in office use and the basement would be occupied as a Gym, thus representing an appropriate mix of uses within the city centre. In addition, as stated above, the proposals will enable the re-use of the currently vacant space in accordance with the Core Strategy Vision and Spatial objectives and to avoid long term vacancy.

In any case, the existing layout of the premises lends itself for use as an Educational facility with no internal alterations required to facilitate the proposed change of use and initial occupation.

Given the significant investment which the building owners have made into the building to make it into a high quality attractive offices, they are keen to retain at least some of the building in office use. They have therefore decided that the ground/third floor will be retained for use as offices and advertised in the form of hotdesking workspace available for hire. Together with the approval granted for the use of the basement as a Class E gym, it should be appreciated that more than 50% of the building will be retained in office use.

Principle of Educational Use

Planning policy guidance supports development that makes the best use of previously developed land and vacant buildings within an urban setting, which are well located in terms of existing activities and infrastructure.

The Places for Everyone DPD acknowledges 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. Our strong cultural identity is another distinguishing factor, with a global reputation for sports and the arts. Once again, the greatest concentration is within and around the Core Growth Area, but importantly it is also seen across the rest of our boroughs with a diverse range of identities and activities.”*

The proposal would fall under the category ‘knowledge economy’ which as an appropriate use within the Core Growth Area.

- Spatial Objective SO2 states that the Regional Centre will continue to be the main focus for higher education development ‘in order to further develop its role as main employment location and primary economic driver of the City Region’.
- Policy SP1 ‘Spatial Principles’ states that development should improve access to education by being located to reduce the need to travel and provide good access to sustainable transport provision.
- Policy EC1 ‘Employment and Economic Growth in Manchester’ states that the Council will support other significant contributors to economic growth and productivity including education ‘mainly in the City Centre and Eastlands’ in line with Policy C1.
- Policy T2 ‘Accessible areas of opportunity and need’ states that MCC will actively manage the pattern of development to ensure that new development is easily accessible by walking, cycling and public transport that connects residents to educational opportunities.

In addition to the above, the UDP policy RC20 Area 10 Oldham Street/Lever Street/Newton Street acknowledged that the general assumption for the area is that ‘some degree of non-retail or quasi-retail uses need to be accepted or even encouraged’ and identified that the aim for the area will be to ‘both to retain existing activity and encourage further additions to the mixture of Uses’

We are aware of several other education premises currently functioning within the Piccadilly Ward of City Centre and others which are currently in the process of conversion. The City centre has proven to be an ideal and sustainable location for this use.

The proposed hours of use for the College will be:

- 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.
- Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holidays – Closed.

Accessibility and Parking Provision

Access to the building for both the College and Office premises will be via the existing entrances at no.12 and no.14 fronting onto Lever Street. Attendees will follow the steps leading into the entrance hall areas and continue onwards to either the office space at ground floor level of the college premises on the upper floors. Additional disabled access will be available from the rear of the building via the rear entrance to ground floor from Little Lever Street.

The site is highly accessible by various means of public transport. Students and staff attending the college will have a good range of public transport options including the nearby trams at Piccadilly Gardens, nearby bus routes, is within walking distance of Manchester Victoria and Oxford Road Train Stations and several key walking routes.

The application property does not include any car parking spaces. Given the sites highly accessible location within the city centre, the absence of car parking provision should be acceptable. The lack of car parking opportunities should also encourage the use of alternative sustainable forms of transport.

Off street short terms parking options for staff working at the college are available within nearby multi storey car parks.

The building benefits from bicycle parking with 4 enclosed and secure lockable bicycle parking spaces available within the lobby area at the entrance to no.14 Lever Street and an additional 6 bicycle parking spaces within the rear gated service yard entrance at the rear of no.14, from Little Lever Street. Additional bicycle parking is available within Stevenson Square which has excellent natural surveillance from surrounding cafes and restaurants.

Servicing for the college and office use alike will be carried out via the service yard entrance at the rear of no.14, from Little Lever Street. Refuse collection will be similarly be from the service entrance at the rear of the building, along Little Lever Street. Deliveries to the college will follow the existing servicing arrangement and will be delivered via the service entrance at the rear of the building along Little Lever Street.

Noise and Management Considerations

The proposed use of the floor area within the building will be as classrooms, study spaces, a library and offices. No music room or other noise generating use is proposed as part of the proposed Change of Use. The proposed hours of use for the college will reflect its former office use and the anticipated levels of noise resulting from the college use are not expected to be drastically different than its former use. The college will not require the use of speakers or other noise generating devices for their purposes. The college is projected to cater for students ranging from the age of 16 and over. The building includes an internal courtyard amenity area at first floor level however this space is fully surrounded by the proposed classrooms and offices within the building and the passage of noise from this area will inevitably be mitigated by the building which surrounds it, and limitations imposed by the college to prevent disturbance to ongoing classes. The proposal does not include the installation of any plant or machinery to facilitate its change of use and a Noise Impact Assessment should not be required to accompany the proposed change of use.

Access for Disabled Users

Access for disabled students and office attendees will be via the rear entrance to the rear of no.12, from Little Lever Street. A ramp exists internally leading from the rear entrance of the building at Little Lever Street into the building providing level access to the ground floor of the building. Additionally, the ground floor of the building benefits from a large bathroom suitable for disabled users.

The existing building is Grade II listed and the building owners are reluctant to make any additional changes to the building that will detract from its unique characteristics and heritage significance. Listed buildings are recognised as finite resource with cultural importance. The building does not benefit from a lift and access for disabled users will only have access to the ground floor of the building. The building owners have considered the installation of a stairlift within the main stairwell however this has been ruled out on the basis that the installation of a stair lift would detract from the character and appearance of the existing internal stairwell which has been identified as an original character feature of

the property. Please see images of the original stairwell in Appendix 1 of this document. The second stairwell is located within the entrance lobby from no.14 Lever Street. Access to this lobby is via a set of three stairs leading from Lever Street into the building with no direct level access. Disabled users would need to enter from the rear of the building via Little Lever Street, wheel or traverse across the entirety of the ground floor premises to arrive at this stairwell which would be both inconvenient and potentially demeaning. The applicants have therefore discounted the option of installing a stairlift within this secondary stairwell. An alternative strategy is proposed which will allow disabled students to have access to all of the facilities and classroom space at ground floor level, and will provide disabled students with access to all of the same facilities provided on the upper floors of the building.

Within Class M Building Regulation Requirements, the guidance acknowledges at paragraph 0.18. "In such work, the aim should be to improve accessibility where and to the extent that it is practically possible, always provided that the work does not prejudice the character of the historic building or increase the risk of long-term deterioration to the building fabric or fittings. In arriving at an appropriate balance between historic building conservation and accessibility, it would be appropriate to take into account the advice of the local authority's conservation and access officers, and English Heritage, as well as the views of local access groups, in order to make the building as accessible as possible."

The proposal is for the change of use of the upper first and second floors of the building into Class F1 educational use. The ground floor of the building will be retained in Class E(g) office use in the form of flexible hotdesking office space available for hire. The building owner has agreed with the hypothetical tenant, that they will be able to book in and utilise the rooms at the rear of the ground floor as teaching/classroom space for disabled students. The College will have the preferential choice of using the space for classes and the space will only be available for use by others when not in use by the college. Disabled students will have access to all of the facilities within the Hotdesking office space at ground floor, including the kitchen and breakout area. The proposal will thus ensure that disabled students are not disadvantaged in any way by the proposed arrangement.

Servicing: Waste Management and Deliveries

Appropriate provision for the internal storage of refuse and recycled waste will be provided for both the college and office floorspace.

Refuse and recycling will be transferred to the bin storage area within the service yard area at the rear of no.14 by the maintenance staff employed to clean and maintain the premises. The waste and

recycling bins will be wheeled to the street side directly outside the service yard area along Little Lever Street by the site manager on designated bin days and will be collected weekly by a private waste collection company. Please see the attached Waste Proforma for further details of the proposed waste and recycling strategy for this proposal.

Conclusion

This statement has been prepared to support an application for full planning permission for the proposed change of use of the existing office space into a flexible use for office (Use Class E) and educational (Use Class F.1.)

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.

National and Local planning policy supports the reuse of previously developed and sustainable land for identified development needs. This application plays a small but important role in line with the existing uses in the area, and accords with the Council's long term ambitions and objectives for this part of Manchester.

The scheme would bring about a meaningful use to a vacant unit in an existing building, within a core city centre location. The proposal benefits from excellent transport access and the proposed change of use will have a positive impact on its surroundings in terms of vibrancy, vitality and the expected contributions to local business and the local economy. This is a prime opportunity for the re-use an existing vacant site that complies fully with national and local level policy, which clearly demonstrates proper planning and sustainable development.

EA Town Planning are pleased to submit this application for planning permission and look forward to engaging and working together with officers to progress the application through to a positive determination. Should you require any further information or wish to discuss the application then please do not hesitate to contact me at zalman@eatownplanning.co.uk or 0330 221 0449.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Z. Hanovitch', written in a cursive style.

Zalman Hanovitch MSc
Town Planning Consultant
EA Town Planning LTD

Appendix 1

Pictures of stairwell





