

Planning Statement

Arden University

Floors 5 & 6, 2 Hardman Street, Manchester



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1. Introduction

Introduction

1.1. This planning statement has been prepared to accompany an application seeking permission on behalf of Arden University (the 'Applicant') to change the use of the existing office space at Floors 5 and 6, 2 Hardman Street, Manchester into an educational facility.

1.2. The application also seeks to utilise Class V of the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) to secure a flexible permission at the Site. Flexible permission is sought to allow change of use between F1(a) and/or E(g)(i) over a period of 10 years.

1.3. The proposed development is described as follows:

'Full Flexible Planning Permission (Under Class V of the General Permitted Development Order 2015) for change of use of floors 5 and 6 from E(g)(i) (Office) to F1(a) (Education) and/or E(g)(i) (Offices) and associated works'

1.4. Arden University currently occupy two locations in Manchester City Centre at 4 Minshull Street and Linley House. 2,163 students are enrolled and travel in from the surrounding local area via public transport, predominantly.

1.5. Arden University wish to consolidate all students into one building within the City Centre and therefore seek to relocate all students from 4 Minshull Street and Linley House into Floors 5 and 6 at 2 Hardman Street, Manchester.

1.6. The planning application is accompanied by the following supporting documents

- Location Plan (generated on Planning Portal)
- 5th Floor Existing Plan (ref: 1198-05-EX-01) (prepared by bluesky Design)
- 6th Floor Existing Plan (ref: 1198-06-EX-01) (prepared by bluesky Design)
- 5th Floor Proposed Plan (ref: 1198-05-PR-01) (prepared by bluesky Design)
- 6th Floor Proposed Plan (ref: 1198-06-PR-01) (prepared by bluesky Design)

1.7. This planning statement identifies and addresses the issues relevant to the consideration of the application submission, as follows

- Description of Site and Surrounding Area;
- Planning History of Site;
- Proposed Development;
- Relevant Planning Policy;
- Pre-Application Discussions;
- Relevant Planning Considerations; and
- Conclusions.

2. Site and Surroundings

The Site

- 2.1. The Planning application relates to Floors 5 and 6 at 2 Hardman Street, Manchester. 2 Hardman Street ('the building') is located within central Spinningfields and shown in Figure 1 below.

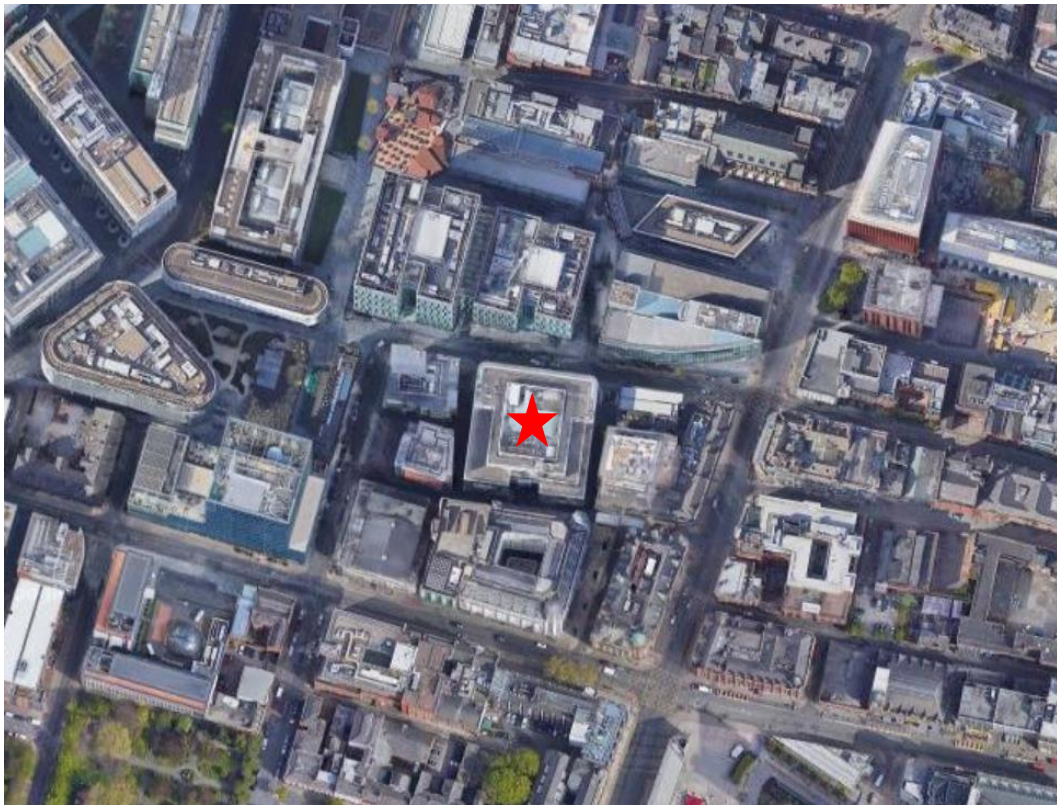


Figure 1 -Aerial View of Site

- 2.2. The building is arranged over nine floors. The six upper floors provide 14,620 sq m of predominantly office space, while the ground floor is comprised of the reception area, breakout out space and a coffee bar. The building includes 2no. basement levels, comprising car parking, a bike store, wellness suite and showers.
- 2.3. The 5th and 6th floor are currently vacant and were previously occupied by Deloitte.
- 2.4. The building is predominantly surrounded by neighbouring office buildings with 3 Hardman Street and 1 Spinningfields Square located to the north. 1 Hardman Street and Invicta House located to the east, Sunlight House located to the south and 4 Hardman Street and 1 Byrom Place are located to the west.

Surrounding Area

- 2.5. The property is located on Hardman Street within the Spinningfields development in Manchester which is well connected and easily accessible on foot or by public transport. Deansgate runs to the east of the site.

- 2.6. The site is in a sustainable location with a wide range of public transport routes available.
- 2.7. Numerous bus stops are located within 250 – 300m of the building along Quay Street, Bridge Street and Gartside Street. Bus routes provide links to Bolton, Leigh, Salford, Warrington and Trafford. Bus stops permitting access onto Free Bus Route 1 are also located within 250m of the building and provide regular routes to Piccadilly Railway Station and Deansgate Station.
- 2.8. 2 Hardman Street is situated 600m from Salford Central Station and 750m from Deansgate Station with metro links within a similar distance.

Constraints

- 2.9. The site lies adjacent to a number of grade II listed buildings, including 184 and 186 Deansgate, Royal London House, Sunlight House and The Opera House. However, as the application is for a Change of Use, it is considered that the proposal will have no impact on the neighbouring heritage assets.

3. Planning History

The site

- 3.1. A planning history search has been undertaken via a desktop search of Manchester City Council's website
- 3.2. There have been numerous planning applications for the site, The relevant permissions are as follows.

Planning Reference	Description	Decision and Date
133231/NMC/2022	Non-Material Amendment to planning permission ref. 130580/FO/2021 for minor alterations relating to the approved lighting scheme	17 March 2022
130581/FO/2021	Installation of replacement plant on roof (comprising 12no condenser units)	25 June 2021
130580/FO/2021	External works to two entrances of 2 Hardman Street including the installation of a light box	25 June 2021
102907/FO/2013/C1	Inclusion of office use (Class B1) as an approved use of Unit 2B in addition to the approved retail and leisure uses (Classes A1, A2, A3, D1 and D2) already approved pursuant to planning permission ref. 072779/FO/2004/C1	01 July 2013
088148/AO/2008/C1	Installation of 1 no. individual letter sign to glazing and 2 no. freestanding totem signs	20 February 2009
080430/AO/2006/C1	Installation of 2 No branded signs behind the glazing	26 October 2006
072779/FO/2004/C1	Construction of an office building (use class B1) with use class A1 (shops), A2 (financial and professional services) A3 (food and drink), D1 (non-residential institutions) and D2 (assembly and leisure) at ground floor level. The creation of a new pedestrian Street (Little Quay Street) and related access, servicing and associated works (amendment to previous approval 066967/FO/CITY/03)	15 September 2004

4. Proposed Development

Introduction

- 4.1. The proposed development is described on the application as follows:

'Full Flexible Planning Permission (Under Class V of the General Permitted Development Order 2015) for change of use of floors 5 and 6 from E(g)(i) (Office) to F1(a) (Education) and/or E(g)(i) (Offices) and associated works'

- 4.2. This planning statement is submitted to support a flexible planning application which proposes the change of use of floors 5 and 6 in the existing building from use class E(g)(i) (Offices) to use class F1(a) Education and/or use class E(g)(i) Offices and other associated works.
- 4.3. The application seeks to utilise Class V of the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) to secure a flexible permission which allows for the building to change use between use class F1(a) Education and/or use class E(g)(i) Offices for a period of 10 years. This allows the building to respond to market changes and provides increased flexibility for the applicant and landowner.

Proposed Occupier

- 4.4. Arden University was established in the UK in 1990 and offers a learning experience, which provides both online and blended learning degree courses. They currently offer a wide range of flexible undergraduate and postgraduate degrees with more than 90 career-focused qualification many of which are accredited by leading professional bodies such as the British Psychological Society, the Chartered Management Institute, the Chartered Institute of Marketing, the Agency for Public Health Education Accreditation, the Association for Project Management, and many others.
- 4.5. Arden University is a leading provider of flexible online and blended learning degree courses, and currently have more than 23,000 students studying globally both online and at nine study centres in the UK and Germany.
- 4.6. Arden University currently occupy two locations in Manchester City Centre at 4 Minshull Street and Linley House. 2,163 students are enrolled and travel in from the surrounding local area via public transport, predominantly.
- 4.7. Arden University wish to consolidate all students into one building within the City Centre and therefore seek to relocate all students from 4 Minshull Street and Linley House into Floors 5 and 6 at 2 Hardman Street.
- 4.8. To allow for the relocation, a proposed change of use is required at Floors 5 and 6 at 2 Hardman Street.

Proposal

- 4.9. The proposals comprise the change of use of floors 5 and 6 from E(g)(i) (Office) to F1(a) (Education) and/or E(g)(i) (Offices) and associated works.

4.10. It is proposed that the space would be used by the current 2,163 students and 70 staff, with an increase in student numbers proposed in 2024.

4.11. The space proposed would become Arden Universities main building in Manchester, providing several courses including, but not limited to, Law, Business, Engineering, Psychology, Sociology, Graphic Design, Computer Science and Tourism. Further BA courses and apprenticeships are also offered.

4.12. The change of use application seeks to provide educational services with associated amenities spaces across the floors. The breakdown of which is set out below.

4.13. Floor 5 provides 1,911sqm (GIA), comprising of the following indicative layout:

- 19No. Classrooms
- 1No. Open Plan Area
- 7 No. Office
- 10 No. Meeting Rooms
- Gateway / Helpdesk
- Breakout Area
- Toilets (including Accessible provision)
- Additional Toilet Block
- Comms Room / Store

4.14. Floor 6 provides 1,929sqm (GIA), comprising of the following indicative layout:

- 18No. Classrooms
- 1No. Open Plan Area
- 5 No. Office
- 8 No. Meeting Rooms
- Gateway / Helpdesk
- Breakout Area
- Staff Breakout Area
- Toilets (including Accessible provision)
- Additional Toilet Block
- Comms Room / Store

4.15. Due to the nature of the facility, students will not be expected to be present throughout the day. Arden University have morning classes (9.30 – 1pm) and afternoon classes (1.30 – 5pm) and students will attend one of those sessions. Therefore, arrival and leaving times will be staggered.

- 4.16. The proposal seeks a flexible consent, allowing floors 5 and 6 to revert back to Office Use (E(g)(i)). Thereby allowing the building to respond to market changes and providing flexibility for the applicant and landowner.

Access

- 4.1. The site is sustainably located and highly accessible via public transport.
- 4.2. Students currently travel into Manchester City Centre via public transport to attend classes and seminars at 4 Minshull Street and Linley House. It is therefore considered that students will continue to make use of the various forms of public transport to travel into the proposed 2 Hardman Street site.
- 4.3. Several car parks are located within proximity to the site should staff or students travel in via car. Moreover, 4 car parking spaces are provided in the basement of the building.

Employment

- 4.4. The proposals will result in the retention of existing jobs and creation of approximately 10 to 15 new jobs. This will result in approximately 70 jobs overall.

Opening Times

- 4.5. The proposed opening times are as follows:

- 8am – 10pm (Monday to Friday); and
- Saturday 8am – 4pm

Security

- 4.6. A staffed reception and fob access will be required to access the proposed Arden University floors.

Refuse

- 4.7. Any waste will be dealt with as part of the buildings existing recyclable waste strategy.

5. Planning Policy Context

Introduction

- 5.1. The Local Planning Authority, Manchester City Council, will be obligated under Section 38(6) of the Planning Authority and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to make their determination according to the Development Plan when determining a planning application on the site unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.2. Planning policy, development plan documents and guidance applicable to the development proposals are contained in the following:
- The Development Plan comprising:
 - The Core Strategy (Adopted 2012)
 - Saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan (Adopted July 1995)
 - National Planning Policy and Guidance comprising:
 - National Planning Policy Framework
 - National Planning Practice Guidance
 - Other material considerations include:
 - Places for Everyone Plan
 - Guide to Development in Manchester SPD

Local Planning Policy

- 5.3. As set out in the below extract, the site is not allocated by the Local Authority for a particular use, however it is noted that it does fall within the Deansgate Conservation Area and in the designated City Centre.

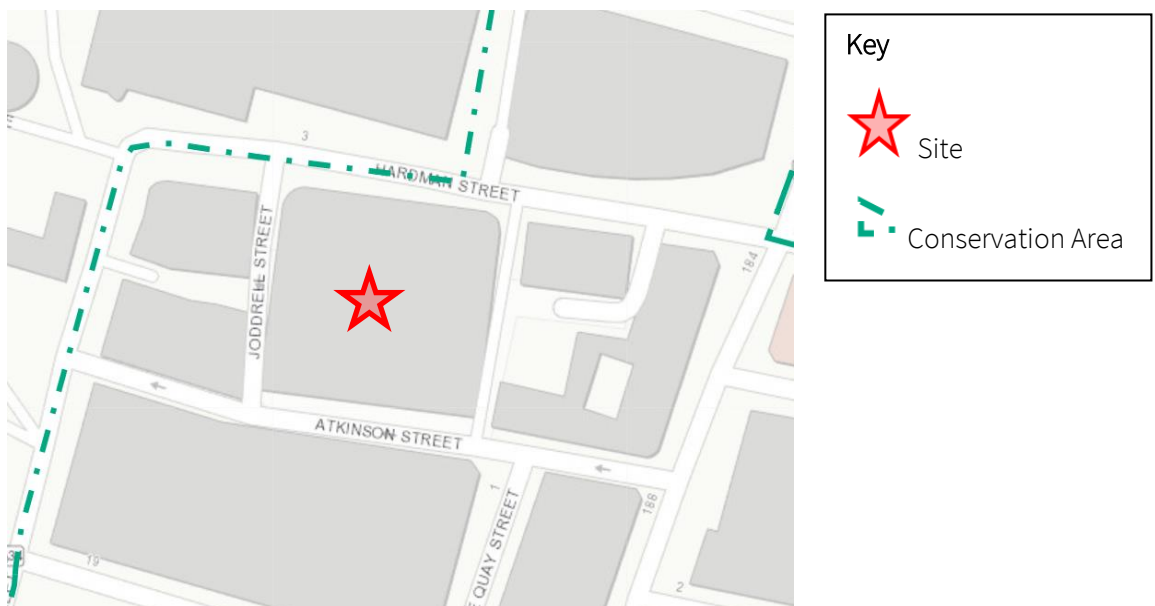


Figure 2 - Extract taken from adopted policy map

Core Strategy

- 5.4. The Core Strategy was adopted by Manchester City Council in July 2012 and is the key document in Manchester Local Development Framework. It outlines the Council's vision along with planning policies which will be used to deliver this vision.
- 5.5. As aforementioned, the site falls within the defined City Centre area.
- 5.6. Policy SP 1 sets out the key spatial principles to guide the strategic development of Manchester. It highlights the City Centre as a regeneration area where development should have regard to the character, issues, and strategy. The policy goes on to set out that development should make a positive contribution to neighbourhoods, creating well designed places, protecting and enhancing the built environment and improve access to jobs, services and education.
- 5.7. Policy EC 1 supports employment and economic growth in Manchester, for example by ensuring the continued social, economic and environmental regeneration of the City.
- 5.8. Policy EC 2 seeks to retain 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, incompatible, unsuitable and/or, on balance the proposals are able to offer greater benefits.
- 5.9. Policy CC 1 identifies the City Centre as a strategic economic location and focus of employment growth in the City and City Region.
- 5.10. Policy CC 10 sets out that the City Centre will develop as a location which appeals to a wide range of residents and visitors. Uses which increase the diversity of an activity in the City Centre will be supported.
- 5.11. Policy EN 1 expects all development in Manchester to follow the seven principles of urban design, as identified in national planning guidance.
- 5.12. Policy EN 2 encourages development that complements and takes advantage of the distinct historic and heritage features of its districts and neighbourhoods, including those of the City Centre.
- 5.13. Policy EN4 seeks to reduce fuel poverty and decouple growth in the economy, growth in CO2 emissions, and rising fossil fuel prices by reducing the need for energy through passive design, improved insulation, and using low or zero carbon generating technologies.
- 5.14. Policy DM 1 sets out that all development should have regard for appropriate siting, layout, scale and form; impact on the surrounding area; effects on amenity; accessibility, etc.

UDP Saved Policies

- 5.15. The Core Strategy replaced much of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP), but some UDP policies are extant. Of these, the below policy is of relevance.
- 5.16. Policy DC18.1 sets out that the Council will give particularly careful consideration to development proposals within Conservation Areas.

Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework

- 5.17. The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was updated in July 2021 and contains national planning policy for England.
- 5.18. The 2021 NPPF in paragraph 8 states that there are three overarching objectives to sustainable development. The economic role that the planning system must perform involves building a strong, responsive and competitive economy. This will be achieved by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity.
- 5.19. Plans should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11), which means they should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area and provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses. Planning policies should also promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for housing and other uses (paragraph 117).
- 5.20. Section 6 is entitled 'Building a Strong, Competitive Economy'. Paragraph 81 sets out that *'planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development'*.
- 5.21. Section 8 is entitled Promoting Health and Safe Communities. Paragraph 95 sets out that *'it is important that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities. Local planning authorities should take a proactive, positive and collaborative approach to meeting this requirement, and to development that will widen choice in education. They should: a) give great weight to the need to create, expand or alter schools through the preparation of plans and decisions on applications; and b) work with school promoters, delivery partners and statutory bodies to identify and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted'*.
- 5.22. Paragraph 96 set out that *'to ensure faster delivery of other public service infrastructure such as further education colleges, hospitals and criminal justice accommodation, local planning authorities should also work proactively and positively with promoters, delivery partners and statutory bodies to plan for required facilities and resolve key planning issues before applications are submitted'*.
- 5.23. Section 11 is entitled 'Making effective use of land' and within paragraph 119 recognises that *'planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or 'brownfield'*.

Places for Everyone

- 5.24. Nine Councils in Greater Manchester have now submitted the Places for Everyone plan to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and communities. The plan is a joint development

plan of the nine districts which will determine the kind of development that takes places in their boroughs, maximising the use of brownfield land and urban spaces while protecting Green Belt land from the risk of unplanned development.

- 5.25. They have now produced their final plan, which will be submitted to the Secretary of State. It is noted that the plan is not yet adopted however is in late stages of preparation and therefore may hold some weight in the determination of planning applications. The following policies in the PfE Plan are of relevance to this planning submission.
- 5.26. Emerging Policy JP-Strat 2 identifies the City Centre as the most significant economic location in the country outside of London and that development will enable people to take advantage of the access to education and training.
- 5.27. Emerging Policy JP-S 1 states that development should aim to maximise its economic, social and environmental benefits simultaneously, minimise its adverse impacts, utilise sustainable construction techniques and actively seek opportunities to secure net gains across each of the different objectives.
- 5.28. Emerging Policy JP-S 2 aims to deliver a carbon neutral Greater Manchester no later than 2038, with a dramatic reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, through a range of measures, including retrofitting, increasing nature-based solutions, and an expectation for new development to be net zero.
- 5.29. Emerging Policy JP-S 4 states that development will be managed so as to increase considerably the capacity of its citizens, communities, businesses and infrastructure to survive, adapt and grow in the face of physical, social, economic and environmental challenges, including climate change.
- 5.30. Emerging Policy JP-P 5 states that significant enhancements in education, skills and knowledge to benefit existing and new residents will be promoted.

Guide to Development in Manchester SPD

- 5.31. Supplementary Planning Document is a means of guiding those involved in the development process, setting out the City Council's stance on a wide range of issues, demonstrating, where applicable, their links to the Manchester UDP. The document acts as both an SPD and planning guidance and aims to provide guidance which will help to develop and enhance an environment within Manchester which is visually attractive, has a unique and positive sense of place and which properly caters for the functions which it accommodates both now and in the future.

6. Informal Pre-application

- 6.1. JLL approached Manchester City Council ('MCC') for informal pre-application advice on 1st February 2023. JLL sought advice relating to the principle of the proposed education use and whether it would be acceptable in planning terms at 2 Hardman Street, Manchester.
- 6.2. It was confirmed that Education use (Use Class F1(a)) would be acceptable in principle.
- 6.3. The client sought further advice regarding the ability to revert the floors back to office use (E(g)(i)) should market forces dictate a need.
- 6.4. An MCC Principal Planning Manager confirmed that the client would be able to change the use back to Class E within a 10 year period as stated Under Schedule 2 Part 3 Class V of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order.
- 6.5. JLL sought further clarity from the Council regarding the use of Class V. JLL queried that if education use was in place at the end of the 10 year term, then education would be the lawful use. Therefore, beyond 10 years, an application for office use would be required to revert the use back to office.
- 6.6. JLL sought comfort from MCC that reverting back to office use after 10 years would be both supported by the Council and acceptable. MCC confirmed that they didn't see any reason why it wouldn't be [supported or considered acceptable] at this stage. MCC also confirmed that it [change of use from Education (F1(a) to Office (E(g)(i))] would require planning permission as it would be outside of the 10 year window.

7. Planning Considerations

Principle of Development

- 7.1. The proposal comprises a change of use from class E(g)(i) (Offices) to use class F1(a) Education and/or use class E(g)(i) Offices and associated works at Floors 5 and 6 at 2 Hardman Street, Manchester.
- 7.2. The Site is in a sustainable location close to public transport links and services in accordance with NPPF Paragraph 11, which applies a presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 7.3. Informal pre-application advice has been sought from the Council, who have confirmed that Education use would be acceptable in principle at this location.
- 7.4. The application seeks to utilise Class V of the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) to secure a flexible permission which allows for the building to change use between use class F1(a) Education and/or use class E(g)(i) Offices for a period of 10 years. This allows the building to respond to market changes and provides increased flexibility for the applicant and landowner.
- 7.5. Informal pre-application advice has also been sought from the Council in relation to the above approach. The approach was considered to be acceptable, and it was confirmed that if the Client wishes to revert back to Office Use after 10 years, it should be supported by the Council and considered acceptable.
- 7.6. Floors 5 and 6 existing use is Class E(g)(i) (offices) which falls under an employment use in planning terms. Policy EC 2 of the Core Strategy seeks to retain existing employment space and sites. The proposal to implement a flexible office/educational use therefore accords with this policy, as it retains office use and provides the opportunity to diversify the offer in the City Centre and improve the provision of education in a sustainable location. Furthermore, the educational element of the proposal would involve the retention of circa 70 jobs and would therefore provide employment value on an existing employment site in accordance with local policy.
- 7.7. Additionally, the emerging Places for Everyone Plan sets out the importance of providing education and training in the City Centre (Emerging Policy JP-Strat 2). This is echoed in Emerging Policy JP-P-5 which promotes enhancements in education, skills and knowledge to benefit existing and new residents. The proposal accords with this policy by providing an educational facility from an established University Group in a well-connected location.
- 7.8. As the proposed development is for a change of use with no external alterations, there will be no impact from the development on the locality and therefore the Conservation Area will not be affected, in accordance with Core Strategy Policy EN 2 and NPPF Paragraph 194 which seeks to protect heritage.
- 7.9. Overall, the proposal represents sustainable development by utilising an existing site to diversify the offer in the City Centre in accordance with national and local planning policy and should therefore be approved.

8. Conclusions

8.1. The proposed development is described in the application as follows:

'Full Flexible Planning Permission (Under Class V of the General Permitted Development Order 2015) for change of use of floors 5 and 6 from E(g)(i) (Office) to F1(a) (Education) and/or E(g)(i) (Offices) and associated works'

- 8.2. The proposed development comprise the change of use of floors 5 and 6 in the existing building from use class E(g)(i) (Offices) to use class F1(a) Education and/or use class E(g)(i) Offices with other associated works.
- 8.3. The application seeks to utilise Class V of the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) to secure a flexible permission which allows for the building to change use between use class F1(a) Education and/or use class E(g)(i) Offices for a period of 10 years. This allows the building to respond to market changes and provides increased flexibility for the applicant and landowner.
- 8.4. Informal pre-application discussions have been held and it was concluded that the proposed approach, which seeks a flexible consent allowing the floors to revert back to Office use, is acceptable.
- 8.5. The proposed use is considered to be appropriate for the location, in keeping with the local character and are compatible with the surrounding uses.
- 8.6. The application proposals constitute a sustainable economic development which impacts positively on the local economy and retains existing jobs and creates an additional 10 to 15 jobs.
- 8.7. We trust the information submitted with the application is sufficient to consider the proposals, which we consider to be acceptable in the location and in accordance with adopted planning policies and the NPPF.
- 8.8. We look forward to receiving confirmation that the application has been validated. Should you have any queries in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me.

**JLL**

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