

7<sup>th</sup> September 2022

Development Management - City Centre Planning  
Growth and Development Directorate  
Manchester City Council  
Level 6, Town Hall Extension  
Manchester  
M60 2LA

Dear Sir / Madam,

## **CITY TOWER – FULL PLANNING APPLICATION FOR LOUVRES**

On behalf of our client, City Tower Unit Trust c/o Schroder Real Estate Investment Management, (the 'Applicant'), please find enclosed a Full Planning Application to Manchester City Council (MCC) for the installation of additional louvres at floors 3-27 of City Tower, Piccadilly Plaza, Manchester, M1 4BT (the 'Site'). The Site location is edged red on the accompanying Site Location Plan.

Full planning permission is sought for the following development:

*'Full planning permission for the installation of additional louvres at levels 3-27 of the north-west and south-east elevations of City Tower, Piccadilly Plaza, Manchester, M1 4BT.'*

The following documents and drawings are enclosed to support the application:

- This supporting Covering Letter (dated 7<sup>th</sup> September 2022);
- Completed Application Forms and Certificates;
- Site Location Plan;
- Floor Plan Existing and Proposed (Drawing no: MHBC-011-DD-GA101 Rev 01);
- Proposed Partial Elevation and Vertical Section (Drawing no: MHBC-011-DD-DE102 Rev 03).

This Planning Application has been submitted and the application fee of £494.20 has been paid electronically via the Planning Portal (Ref: PP-11524399).

## **SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA**

The Site comprises floors 3-27 of the north-west and south-east elevations of City Tower. City Tower is a 30-storey office building dating from the 1960s.

The surrounding area is characterised by a range of uses, reflecting the Site's location at the heart of Manchester City Centre. The surrounding buildings share similar characteristics and uses as City Tower, comprising a range of uses at ground floor level with office and education uses above.

The site is not subject to Conservation Area, Listed Buildings, or Schedule Ancient Monument heritage constraints. However, the Upper King Street Conservation Area is adjacent to the site to the north-

west. The site is not located in an area at risk from flooding, as confirmed by the Environment Agency flood maps.

In November 2021, planning permission was approved for the installation of window louvres to levels 3-27 of City Tower ('the site'). This application included the installation of eight louvres at each level of floors 3-27, to be positioned within the top-lights of the existing windows of bays 6, 8, 33, and 35, running uniformly up the building.

## **PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

This Full Planning application seeks permission to install twelve additional louvres at each level of floors 3-27 of City Tower. The louvres are to be positioned within the top-lights of the existing windows of bays 1-5 and 36-40 and would run uniformly up the building.

The proposed works are required to enable supplementary air supply fans to be installed within the floorplates to increase the air volumes delivered within the building.

The proposed louvres are the Gilberts WH75 model which are designed specifically for high-rise buildings to take account of high wind speeds. The RAL colour would match the existing cladding. The proposed louvres are 350mm in height and 1220mm in length.

The additional louvres are proposed in order to increase the ventilation and improve the provision of clean air within the building. Additional ventilation will ensure that an acceptable level of air quality is provided for both current and future occupancy levels of the building. The improved ventilation also provides additional environmental and health benefits, such as reducing the risk of exposure to COVID-19 and providing an effective internal heating control system.

## **PLANNING POLICY**

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 ("The Act") establishes the legislative framework for town planning in England and Wales. Section 38(6) of The Act requires that proposals are determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This is reiterated in Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990).

### **Statutory Development Plan**

The statutory development plan for MCC comprises the Core Strategy (adopted 2012) and extant ('saved') policies of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (adopted 1995).

### **Allocation**

The site is located within the Regional Centre and City Centre policy areas, and within the City Centre Primary Shopping Area (PSA), as denoted on MCC's adopted proposals map.

In addition, the site is located within City Centre Small Area 9 'Piccadilly and Oldham Street', as denoted on the Part 2 Area 5 Map of City Centre Small Area Policies.

## **MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

In terms of emerging policy, MCC is producing a Local Plan which, once adopted, will form part of the statutory development plan, and is expected to replace the adopted Core Strategy and the 'saved' policies of the UDP. The emerging Local Plan is in its infancy having undergone a Regulation 18 consultation on the Local Plan Issues in Spring 2020, and therefore can be attributed limited weight in decision-making.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021) and Guide to Development in Manchester Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (2007) are material considerations to the application.

### **Guide to Development in Manchester Supplementary Planning Document**

The Guide to Development in Manchester SPD (2007) provides context to the design criteria outlined within the Core Strategy and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

Paragraph 2.3 sets out how development should be designed with regard to the context and character of the area. Whilst Paragraph 2.5 states that there should be no conflict between good design and buildings that function well and meet the needs of the occupants.

Paragraph 12.5 also sets out that development will be expected to contribute positively to the identity and quality of the City Centre and designed for place not simply for purpose.

Tall building design needs to be carefully considered, as they can be viewed from long distances and can have an impact on a much wider area. The effect of tall buildings is significant in a City Centre where its conservation area status means that the relationship of buildings and spaces is as important as the quality of individual buildings (Paragraph 12.26).

### **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021)**

The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied and is a material consideration in decision making.

Paragraph 38 notes that local planning authorities should approach decisions in a positive and creative way and secure developments that will improve the economic, social, and environmental conditions of an area.

Meanwhile, Paragraph 81 of the NPPF states that planning 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 the needs of local businesses and wider opportunities for development.

## **PLANNING ASSESSMENT**

As set out above, this application seeks planning permission to install twelve additional louvres on each level of floors 3-27 at City Tower. The proposed works are required to enable supplementary air supply fans to be installed within the floorplates to increase the air volumes delivered within the building.

## DESIGN

The Council requires all development to have regard to appropriate siting, layout, scale, form, massing, materials, and detail in accordance with Core Strategy Policy DM 1 Development Management. Core Strategy Policy EN 1 Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas states that opportunities for good design to enhance the overall image of the City should be fully realised. In the justifying text the Council state that the quality of development at landmark buildings is of particular importance.

The proposed louvres are to be positioned within the top-lights of the existing windows to minimise interventions at the building. The RAL of the proposed louvres would match the existing cladding and the louvres would be equally spaced and run uniformly up the building.

The design of the louvres has been chosen to reduce the visibility of the louvres. The top-lights are small in size and blend into the building's façade, and therefore are not easily discernible from street level. It is considered that the proposal would not adversely affect the appearance of the building, in accordance with Policies DM 1 and EN 1.

Furthermore, in the spirit of Paragraphs 38 and 81 of the NPPF, the proposal should be seen favourably as it seeks to upgrade employment provision for the betterment of occupiers and the long-term fortunes of the office provision.

## IMPACT ON THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA

The Site is located within the Piccadilly Gateway character area in Manchester City Centre (Core Strategy Figure 2.1, page 12), and City Centre Small Area 9 'Piccadilly and Oldham Street' in the UDP.

Development should have regard to the impact on the character of the surrounding area in terms of design and appearance, as set out at Policy DM 1 Development Management. UDP Policy RC Area 9 states that the Council will place an emphasis on enhancing the character and appearance of the area.

The built environment in the Piccadilly Gateway area, and the environs surrounding City Tower, are diverse with a wide range of architectural styles discernible. The Council describe the area as a *'lively, commercial, and (an) undeniably urban environment'* (UDP Policy RC20 Area 9).

There are a wide range of uses in the area catering to a variety of needs, reflecting the area's location at the heart of the City Centre. The buildings which accommodate these uses have different functions and this is reflected in their diverse external appearances.

The proposed louvres would not be an unusual feature within the surrounding area and would be consistent with the area's function as a commercial area at the heart of the City Centre, as they are required to ensure adequate amenity for occupiers at City Tower.

It is considered that the proposed development would not be out of keeping with the character of the area and would not detract from its overall appearance, in accordance with Policy DM 1 and RC20.

## HERITAGE

Development in Manchester City Centre should preserve or enhance heritage assets, as set out at Policy CC 9 Design and Heritage.

The City Tower complex is located adjacent to the Upper King Street Conservation Area. As a landmark building, it is also visible from various vantage points across the City Centre.

Although City Tower is visible from the Upper King Street Conservation Area, and therefore forms part of its setting, the positioning of the proposed louvres as set out above would mean that they would not be easily discernible from street level. The louvres would be in keeping with the building due to the RAL colour, shape and size and are similar to the recently approved louvres. Therefore, there would be no identifiable change from the existing situation in long range views and the proposed development would not have an adverse impact upon the setting of the Upper King Street Conservation Area, in accordance with Policy CC 9.

In this context, we consider that the proposed development is suitable and appropriate at the Site and should be granted planning permission without delay.

## SUMMARY

Full Planning Permission is sought to enable the installation of twelve additional louvres at each level of floors 3-27 of City Tower. The proposed works are required to enable supplementary air supply fans to be installed within the floorplates to increase the air volumes delivered within the building provision.

The additional louvres will increase the ventilation to the building, to ensure an acceptable level of air quality is provided for both current and future occupancy levels of the building, and providing additional environmental and health benefits.

The louvres are to be positioned within the top-lights of the existing windows and would run uniformly up the building. Positioned within the top-lights, the louvres would not be easily discernible from street level and would not have an adverse impact on the appearance of the building or character of the area.

It is considered that the proposal is in accordance with local and national planning policy and we therefore respectfully request planning permission is granted without delay.

We trust that the above information is sufficient for you to consider this application and look forward to receiving formal confirmation of the application's validation. If you have any questions or comments, or require additional information in relation to this application, please feel free to contact me on the contact details provided.

Yours sincerely



**Laura Hughes**  
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT - CBRE LIMITED