12 December 2025
Sunlight House Block Covering Letter - Levels 1 and 2

Development Management
Manchester City Council
Ground Floor
Town Hall Extension
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For the Attention of James Brigdman

Submitted via Planning Portal PP-14559527

Dear Sir / Madam

Listed Building Consent Application for Internal Fit Out of Levels 1 & 2 - Sunlight House, Quay Street Manchester, M3 3JZ

Introduction

We write on behalf of our client Cheriton Group Melville Ltd, to apply for Listed Building Consent for the internal fit out works to levels 1 & 2 of the above building.

The description of development is as follows:

"Listed Building Consent Application for Internal Fit Out Works to levels 1 & 2"

Background

Sunlight House is located on the corner of Quay Street and Little Quay Street in the city centre of Manchester. The part of the building which relates to this application fronts Quay Street and incorporates part of the ground floor, basement and sub-basement.

Sunlight House is a Grade II listed building completed in 1932 by Joseph Sunlight, architect and developer, as the headquarters for his property business, with offices and shops to let. At the time, it was Manchester's tallest building.

The building is within the Deansgate Conservation Area, with other listed buildings including the Manchester Opera House on Quay Street, Royal London House at the junction of Deansgate and Quay Street and the former County Court building on Deansgate, which are all Grade II Listed and the former County Court building on Quay Street, which is Grade II* Listed.

Recently, the building has undergone a complete refurbishment undertaken by the owners of the building, Karrev. The building has been refurbished in a way that both fully celebrates its heritage whilst also ensuring its long term future as usable office space. Recent works include the creation of a new reception area, repair and restoration of parquet flooring and the creation of new cycle, shower and gym facilities within the building. The central atrium has been opened up to allow tenants to use this area as a social space. The iconic glazed dome that sat over the former swimming pool has been carefully refurbished and repaired. Externally, the massive stone facades have been repaired and a new nighttime building lighting design installed.

Offices and associates throughout the Americas, Europe, Asia Pacific, Africa and the Middle East..

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Following on from the above landlord works, this application seeks consent for the internal fit out for levels 1 & 2 to be occupied by BLOCK workspace.

BLOCK create stylish, dynamic workspaces with vibrant communities for people & businesses to thrive. We're breaking the mould of the conventional coworking hub, with ultra flexible membership packages, no hidden costs and no surprises. BLOCK have a track record of working with heritage buildings (e.g. Grade I Listed The Royal William Yard, Plymouth), and best in class refurbished buildings (The Fairfax, Bristol). BLOCK currently have 4 centres in the South West with an additional centre due to open shortly in Birmingham, with Cardiff and Liverpool to follow shortly amongst others.

BLOCK's business model is based on leasing entire floors from a landlord and then subdividing them into smaller, self-contained office suites, complemented by shared coworking areas, meeting rooms and breakout spaces. This subdivision is essential to the operation: it enables BLOCK to offer a mix of private offices of varying sizes, responding directly to market demand for flexible, affordable, move-in-ready workspace. Extensive market research undertaken by BLOCK demonstrates that there is limited demand for large office suites within this sector, and that providing these would fail to differentiate BLOCK's offer from conventional leased space in the wider market. This approach is consistent with existing patterns elsewhere in the building, including the 13th floor, where smaller suites of comparable sizes already exist.

Sunlight House will be BLOCK's flagship centre in the North West.

By creating smaller, accessible suites, BLOCK opens Sunlight House to a wider and more diverse range of businesses, enabling SMEs and growing organisations to occupy space within a landmark building that would otherwise be accessible only to larger corporate tenants. In doing so, BLOCK contributes to the building's long-term viability, broadens its tenant mix, and supports the ongoing activation and sustainable occupation of this important heritage asset

Relevant Planning History

The following recent applications are relevant to the proposals:

- 136161/LO/2023 - Listed Building Consent for the refurbishment of the office areas including ground floor reception area together with elevational alterations (Approved 24 July 2023) & Associated Condition Discharge CDN/25/0074 Discharge of Condition 15 (Tenant Fit Out) (Approved 1 May 2025)

- 140958/LO/2024 - Listed Building Consent Application for Internal Refurbishment of Levels 1 and 6 (Approved 5 December 2024) & Associated Condition Discharge CDN/25/0789 - Discharge of Condition 4 (Tenant Fit Out Guide) (Approved 25 September 2025)

Proposals

The scheme comprises office fitout for two floors (levels 1 and 2) in preparation for occupancy by BLOCK and in accordance with the approved Tenant Fitout Guide detailed in the above section. The fitout includes partitions to provide flexible work space and meeting rooms, installation of tea points and creation of break-out spaces, as well as the introduction of acoustic rafts in limited locations.

The majority of the new partitions are glazed to maximise natural light and views through the building, enhancing the user experience and creating bright, open circulation routes. All existing parquet flooring at Level 1 of the building is to be retained. The proposals introduce soft fabric rugs to create acoustic, zoned areas, and utilises raised access flooring with a mix of durable LVT and carpet tiles to provide flexibility, functionality and a cohesive design. Works to ceilings include the introduction of floating upholstered acoustic panels only where needed for performance, while retaining full visibility of existing downstand beams and cornices. Ceiling areas in key breakout spaces are painted to create a striking and atmospheric aesthetic.

The proposals are outlined in detail on the enclosed plans and within the supporting Design Statement prepared by Interaction.

Submission Package

The application comprises this covering letter and a number of documents, namely:

Application Drawings prepared by Interaction

- 80-101 Site Plan
- 80-102 Site Location Plan
- 01-101 Existing Partitions Layout - 01
- 01-102 Existing Partitions Layout – 02
- 02-101 Existing Flooring Layout – 01
- 02-102 Existing Flooring Layout – 02
- 03-101 Existing RCP Layout – 01
- 03-102 Existing RCP Layout – 02
- 10-101 General Arrangement – 01
- 10-102 General Arrangement – 02
- 20-101 Partitions & Doors Layout 01
- 20-102 Partitions & Doors Layout – 02
- 20-401 Partition Details
- 31-101 Floor Finishes Layout - 01
- 31-102 Floor Finishes Layout - 02
- 41-101 Teapoint Allocation - 01
- 41-102 Teapoint Allocation - 02
- 42-101 Joinery Allocation - 01
- 42-102 Joinery Allocation - 02
- 50-101 Reflected Ceiling Layout - 01
- 50-102 Reflected Ceiling Layout - 02
- 50-401 Proposed Ceiling Details

Other Supporting Information

- Design Statement Prepared by Interaction
- Heritage Statement Prepared by Savills

Planning Policy

Section 38(6) of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act requires that all planning applications are determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Development Plan for Manchester comprises the Core Strategy that was adopted on 11 July 2012 together with the saved policies from the Manchester UDP and the Proposals Map. The adopted Manchester Core Strategy sets out the City Council's Vision for Manchester to 2026.

The Strategy identifies the Site as falling within the 'City Centre'. Key policies relevant to the site are as follows:

Policy	Description
Policy SP1 Spatial Principles	Details the key spatial principles which will guide the strategic development of Manchester to 2027. The policy states that the Regional Centre of Manchester will be the focus for economic and commercial development, retail, leisure and cultural activity, alongside high quality city living.

Policy EC1 Employment and Economic Growth in Manchester	Priorities for ensuring continued economic growth include demonstrating that employment generating development has fully considered opportunities to provide jobs for local people, through construction or use; and ensuring the continued social, economic and environmental regeneration of the City.
Policy EN1 Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas	All development in Manchester will be expected to follow the seven principles of urban design (character, continuity and enclosure, public realm, ease of movement, legibility, adaptability and diversity) and have regard to the strategic character area in which the development is located.
Policy EN3 Heritage	Throughout the City, development that complements and takes advantage of the distinct historic and heritage features of its districts and neighbourhoods, including those of the City Centre will be encouraged. New developments must be designed so as to support the Council in preserving and enhancing the historic environment, the character, setting and accessibility of areas and buildings of acknowledged importance, including listed buildings, and conservation areas. Proposals which enable the re-use of heritage assets will be encouraged where they are considered consistent with the significance of the heritage asset.
Policy CC1 Manchester City Centre	The city centre is a strategic economic location and focus of employment growth in the City and City Region. Within the city centre and the fringe a variety of high quality accommodation types, sizes and foot-plates will be encouraged to boost investment by local, national and international businesses. The city centre and fringe will be considered a suitable location for the consideration of high density buildings and commercially led mixed use schemes. The policy states that *"Developments which lead to the more intensive use of employment land (in terms of floorspace provided) will be supported".*
Policy CC4 Visitors – Tourism, Culture and Leisure	Policy CC4 posits a focus on the City Centre as a hub for culture and leisure in the City Region. As such, proposals which improve the appearance, use and accessibility of all cultural and visitor attractions and associated facilities will be supported.
Policy CC9 Design and Heritage	Development in Manchester City Centre should preserve or enhance the heritage assets that have been identified, including listed buildings and conservation areas. The Council will support high density and mixed use development in the City Centre, but developers must recognise the specific design challenges that must be overcome to ensure complementarity of function and form. New development must support the range of uses the Council expects in the City Centre and contribute to a coherent and integrated physical environment.
Policy CC10 A Place for Everyone	The City Centre will develop as a location which appeals to a wide range of residents and visitors. Development which promotes this objective will be supported, particularly through increasing the diversity of activity in the City Centre and high standards of accessibility to buildings and across spaces.
Policy DM1 Development Management	All development should have regard to the specific issues including: effects on amenity such as noise, privacy, light, air quality, road safety and traffic generation; accessibility; community safety and crime prevention; vehicular access; and, green infrastructure.

Planning Context

Sunlight House is located on the corner of Quay Street and Little Quay Street where it occupies an important strategic location, immediately adjacent to the Spinningfields district of Manchester City Centre. The location is within walking distance of all the services and facilities offered by Manchester City Centre. It has direct connectivity to the City's Inner Ring Road and the M62, M61, M60 motorway. Manchester City Centre is also a public transport hub providing accessibility to a range of modes of sustainable transport including rail, bus and tram services. The site is served by the free City Centre Metroshuttle service, which provides frequent and fast connections to the four major rail hubs: Piccadilly, Oxford Road, Victoria and Salford Central stations (closest train station being Deansgate approximately 0.5miles from the site), as well as destinations across the City Centre.

Manchester City Centre is a strategic economic location and focus of employment growth in the City and City Region (as identified within Manchester's adopted Core Strategy, 2016). The Core Strategy confirms that in the City Centre and the fringe a variety of high quality accommodation types, sizes and foot-plates will be encouraged to boost investment by local, national and international businesses. The City Centre and fringe will be considered a suitable location for the consideration of high density buildings and commercially led mixed use schemes. The focus for employment growth will be high density offices and the Council will give particular encouragement and support for such development in locations which include the City Centre (Policy CC1).The same policy identifies Spinningfields as a key location for office growth and same policy confirms developments which lead to the more intensive use of employment land will be supported.

Spinningfields has become established as a world class office destination, characterised by new build office buildings aimed at the financial and professional services sector and wide mix of uses including high quality civic, residential, hotel, leisure and retail space in a carefully planned and managed environment offering very high quality public realm. The St John's area is located to the south (along Quay Street) at a key gateway to the city centre. Formerly home to Granada TV St John's has been transformed into a new unique city centre neighbourhood where people both live and work. Alongside new residential and office development, St John's is home to Factory Manchester, a nationally unique, flexible arts and performance space and arena with a seated capacity of 1,600 and overall event capacity of 6,600. The Civic Centre and St Peter's Square are located approximately 500m to the east along Peter Street. Alongside Spinningfields, this area has been transformed by a range of commercial office led developments in recent years to drive the response to the city's need for Grade A office space. New office led developments have focused on creating the opportunity for more high-quality commercial floor space to enhance the location of the city's key heritage assets.

The fit out proposals within this application will help Sunlight House make a full contribution to Manchester City Centre's economy, whilst at the same time celebrating its unique and special heritage characteristics.

The proposed changes are considered to be acceptable and accord with the objectives of Core Strategy EC1 and EC3, in that they will ensure the continued use of parts of the building to deliver high quality, flexible office space in the City, contributing to continued economic growth. The positive economic, regeneration and heritage benefits associated with the refurbishment will contribute to the ongoing regeneration at St John's and Spinningfields.

The proposals have been assessed against policies EN3 (Heritage) and CC9 (Design and Heritage) to ensure that the refurbishment works and improvements respect the listed building.

The proposed office fitout for the first and second floors of Sunlight House is considered to be sympathetic to the character of the listed building and will provide a high quality finish which will celebrate the building's heritage, whist at the same time making it more attractive to range of office occupiers.

The approved Tenant Fitout Guide has been adhered to through the proposals, and key architectural features such as the parquet flooring and coffered ceilings are therefore incorporated as vital elements of the proposed design. Proposed partitions are also aligned with the historic framework for incoming tenant fitout, and will be largely glazed to avoid over - compartmentalisation of the space. Acoustic rafting will be introduced within

coffers as needed, but has been sensitively designed to remain subservient to this key architectural feature, and does not detract from their significance accordingly.

Overall the proposals are therefore considered to result in no harm to the significance of the Grade II listed Sunlight House, instead providing a positive continuation of the ongoing high quality rejuvenation of the listed building.

Conclusions

The proposed fit out works hand in hand with the building's ambitions to provide Grade A, iconic, fit for the future workspace in the heart of Spinningfields.

The design has carefully considered and minimised harmful intervention The proposed works will fulfil the building's economic contribution to the City in line with adopted planning and regeneration policy. The proposed development will contribute to the economic, social and environmental improvement of the city.

Should you have any questions please do contact me using the details above.

Yours faithfully,



Jay Patel

Director