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Our Ref: 04C500208/ED/KW

Your Ref: PP-14698148

11th May 2026

Micheal Pearson
Manchester City Council
P.O Box 532
Town Hall
Manchester
M60 2LA

Dear Micheal,

FULL PLANNING APPLICATION FOR A CHANGE OF USE OF PART OF FLOOR 6, AT LINELY HOUSE, DICKINSON STREET, MANCHESTER, M1 4LF

Introduction

On behalf of our client Castleforge ('the Applicant'), please find enclosed a full (minor) planning application regarding the change of use from Office (Use Class E) to a proposed dual use of Office (Use Class E) and Education/Training (Use Class F1) at part of Floor 6 at Linley House, Dickinson Street, Manchester M1 4LF ('the Site').

The proposed description of the development for the proposed development is as follows:

"Full planning application for a change of use from Use Class E (Office) to dual use of Use Class E (Office)/ Use Class F1 (Education/ Training)"

Supporting Documentation

The following documents have been submitted as part of this planning application:

- Application Form;
- Planning Fee (£701) paid via the Planning Portal;
- Supporting Covering Letter and Economic Statement (this document) prepared by Avison Young;
- Site Location Plan (Ref: CF577-MSL-XX-XXX-DR-A-00000) prepared by Morey Smith;
- Proposed Floorplan (February 2026) – prepared by Castleforge Partners;
- Existing Floorplan (February 2026)- prepared by Castleforge Partners;
- Student Management Strategy prepared by IJ Tours;
- Waste Audit and Waste Strategy prepared by Savills
- Waste Proforma prepared by Savills;

Avison Young (UK) Limited registered in England and Wales number 6382509. Registered office, 3 Brindleyplace, Birmingham B1 2JB. Regulated by RICS

- Agent Letter prepared by Sixteen Real Estate.

Site Context

Linley House is an existing mixed-use building within the City Centre, with a long-standing and successfully managed presence of both office and education providers. The proposals relate to a discrete area of floorspace located on part of the sixth floor, measuring 4,409 sq ft, equating to approximately 5.6% of the total building area. This floorspace is currently vacant; therefore, there will be no loss in employment associated with the application and no relocation for the existing use is proposed. The education uses have a separate entrance to reduce mixing of tenants (see Figure 1). The building benefits from a large open stairwell, making it well suited to high traffic and reducing pressure on the two main passenger lifts at peak times. Given the presence of large education occupiers over the past 15+ years, a robust strategy is already in place to manage student activity effectively.

The area is well served by numerous local amenities and transport links, with Manchester Oxford Road and Manchester Piccadilly stations both a short walk away. The Metrolink tram network is easily accessed at nearby St Peter's Square, connecting the rest of the city.

Surrounding the site are a mix of uses including other education uses, existing offices, residential apartment blocks, hotels and food and beverage establishments.



Figure 1: Photograph showing the two separate entrances into Linley House with the Clockwise entrance on the left and other entrance (for education providers) to the right.

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Planning History

A review of Manchester City Council's planning portal shows that the Site has been subject to several applications over the past 5 years. The most relevant applications are summarised in Table 1 below.

App. Reference	Description	Decision
141815/FO/2024	*Installation of new external plant to roof.*	Approved Mar 2025
140557/FO/2024	*External facade works on the west elevation to the second and sixth floors, including the removal of existing louvres and reinstating of new windows within current louvre positions, alongside alterations to the current plant deck area and replacement of air-conditioning units located on the roof at second floor.*	Approved Nov 2024
131446/FO/2021	*Change of use of part of the third floor and all of the fourth floor from non-residential institution (Class F1-a) to offices (Class E-g) (part retrospective).*	Approved Nov 2021

Technical Matters

It is considered that there are no environmental constraints (e.g. TPOs, air quality, habitats, ground conditions at the Site and according to the Environment Agency's flood risk map for planning, the Site is located in Flood Zone 1, which means there is a low risk of flooding at the site.

The proposed development is considered to be exempt from Biodiversity Net Gain requirements as it is comprised of a small part of a floorspace of an existing building.

In regard to heritage matters, the Site is located within Whitworth Street Conservation Area and there are several Listed Buildings neighbouring the Site (as shown in Figure 2). However, Linley House itself is not Listed and considering that the proposed development relates only to internal works, the heritage is not considered to be a constraint for the proposed development.



Figure 2: Snapshot from Manchester City Council's Whitworth Street Conservation Area Boundary Map showing the location of Linley House in green.

Proposed Development

Linley House has been subject to ongoing refurbishment works over the past 3 years by the current Landlord, with aspirations to upgrade the building from an otherwise distressed asset, into a bustling and attractive commercial offering for both businesses and educational providers.

In recent years, Clockwise who are a co-working provider have occupied the 1st, 4th and part of the 8th floor, creating office spaces which are 'amenity-led' with attractive benefits for occupiers of the building, including an on-site café, meeting rooms for rental, showers, bicycle storage facilities and other end of journey benefits for both co-working and traditional tenants. Ongoing internal works to the 6th floor have taken place since its former occupier (My Home Move) vacated the space in December 2023. Works which have already taken place include a full strip back of Floor 6 and asbestos removal works.



Figure 3: Photograph of the Site's entrance foyer

The unit in question has been vacant since 2023. Despite extensive marketing by Sixteen Real Estate and JLL, there has been limited occupier interest into the space. Thus, demonstrating that the site is no longer appropriate for offering solely office (Class E) uses.

To allow the building to become fully occupied, the proposed development seeks to change the existing use from office space (use Class E) to a dual use of office (use Class E) and education/ training (Class F1).

Proposed End User

IJ Tours, operating as International House Manchester are an established educational provider who provide English classes in Manchester and online. Part of their business offering includes (but is not limited to) the teaching and practicing of English courses, 1 to 1 lessons, and facilitating summer courses. IJ Tours are seeking to continue their operations in the City Centre, and have identified Linley House as the only suitable alternative, subject to the approval of a change of use of part of the 6th Floor, to allow for both Use Class E and Use Class F1 to operate.

The teaching centre currently employs 12 local full-time staff and up to 20 trainers. IIJ Tours is currently located on the 5th floor of Arthur House on Chorlton Street, and has occupied these premises, as a tenant, since December 2018. The training centre currently accommodates up to

135 students at any one time. Students are taught face to face in groups of up to 15 in classrooms on site

Policy

Manchester City Council's adopted Development Plan is currently comprised of:

- Remaining policies of the Extant UDP (adopted 1995)
- Manchester Core Strategy (adopted 2012)
- Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (adopted 2024)
- Greater Manchester Joint Waste Development Plan (adopted 2012)
- Greater Manchester Joint Minerals Plan (adopted 2013)

The following sections identify the policies of relevance to the proposals, which will be considered and addressed in the planning assessment section.

As shown on Manchester City Council's interactive policy map, the Site is not allocated for any specific use. However, it is located in the City Centre, Regional Centre and Whitworth Street Conservation Area.



Figure 4: Image from MCC's Local Development Framework Area Map

Extant Unitary Development Plan (UDP)

The majority of policies from the UDP have since been replaced by the Core Strategy and PFE Plan, however, Policy DC18 (Conservation Areas) remains of relevance to the proposed development.

Policy DC18 (Conservation Areas) 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.

b. The Council will not normally grant outline planning permission for development within Conservation Areas.

c. Consent to demolish a building in a conservation area will be granted only where it can be shown that it is wholly beyond repair, incapable of reasonably beneficial use, or where its removal or replacement would benefit the appearance of character of the area.

d. Where demolition is to be followed by redevelopment, demolition will be permitted only where there are approved detailed plans for that redevelopment and where the Council has been furnished with evidence that the development will be undertaken.

e. Development proposals adjacent to Conservation Areas will be granted only where it can be shown that they will not harm the appearance or character of the area. This will include the protection of views into and out of Conservation Areas.

Manchester Core Strategy (2012)

The Core Strategy was adopted by Manchester City Council on 11th July 2012. It is the key document in Manchester's Local Development Framework and covers a period of 15 years from 2012 to 2027. It describes Manchester today and outlines the Council's vision for Manchester in 2027 along with the planning policies which will be used to deliver that vision.

The main policy of relevance to the proposals is **Policy EC2 (Existing Employment Space).**

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 following policies are also considered to be of relevance to the proposals:

- **Policy SP1 (Spatial Principles)** states several core development principles, including making a positive contribution to the neighbourhoods of choice, including creating well

designed places that enhance or create character, making a positive contribution to the health, safety and wellbeing of residents, considering the needs of all members of the community and protecting and enhancing the built and natural environment.

The policy states that development in all parts of the City should have improved access to jobs, services, education and open space by being located to reduce the need to travel and provide good access to sustainable transport provision.

- **Policy CC1 (Primary Economic Development Focus: City Centre and Fringe) P**olicy CC1 identifies the City Centre and its immediate fringe as Manchester's key focus for economic development, directing major employment, commercial, and high-density growth into this area to strengthen its role as the regional economic driver. It supports intensification of development, improved connectivity, and the clustering of key economic sectors to reinforce the City Centre as the primary location for business and investment activity.
- **Policy CC8 (Change and Renewal)** promotes the ongoing transformation and revitalisation of the City Centre through managed redevelopment, encouraging the reuse of under-utilised sites, enhancement of public spaces, and delivery of high-quality design. It supports coordinated regeneration that improves vibrancy, accessibility, and sustainability, ensuring the City Centre can continue adapting to economic and social change.
- **Policy CC10 (A Place for Everyone)** focuses on ensuring that the City Centre is inclusive and accessible to all residents, workers, and visitors. It seeks to create welcoming, safe, and diverse environments by supporting mixed-use neighbourhoods, improved public realm, community facilities, and equitable access to services, helping ensure the City Centre caters for a wide range of needs and is socially sustainable.
- **Policy EN1 (Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas)** - states that all development in Manchester will be expected to follow the seven principles of urban design, as identified in national planning guidance and have regard to the strategic character area in which the development is located. For reference, the site is located within the City Centre Character Area.
- **Policy EN3 (Heritage)** states that throughout the city, the Council will encourage development that complements and takes advantage of the distinct historic and heritage features of its districts and neighbourhoods, including those of the City Centre.
- **Policy EC1 (Employment and Economic Growth in Manchester)** underpins Manchester's wider economic strategy by directing employment growth to the most accessible and sustainable locations, particularly the City Centre and key regeneration areas. It supports expansion of employment floorspace, development of growth sectors, and creating opportunities for local residents, helping Manchester strengthen its economic performance and long-term competitiveness.
- **Policy DM1 (Development Management)** states that all development should have regard to the following specific issues for which more detailed guidance may be given within a supplementary planning document, including appropriate design siting and

layout, impact on surrounding areas, effects on amenity, accessibility, community safety, design for health and other matters.

- **Policy CC9 (Design and Heritage)** states that development in Manchester City Centre should preserve or enhance the heritage assets that have been identified, including listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled ancient monuments. 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.

Places for Everyone

The PfE Joint Development Plan was adopted by Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) in March 2024 and is the regional framework for nine of the Boroughs within Greater Manchester. The following policies are of relevance to the determination of the proposed development:

- **Policy JP-J1: Supporting Long-Term Economic Growth** states that a thriving, inclusive and productive economy will be sought in all boroughs, and states key growth locations (including Manchester City Centre) will deliver inclusive growth across the sub-region by ensuring that employment growth opportunities are well connected and accessible to all residents.
- **Policy JP-J2: Employment Sites and Premises** states that a diverse range of employment sites and accessible premises, both new and second-hand, will be made available across the Plan area in terms of location, scale, type and cost. This will offer opportunities for all kinds and sizes of businesses, including start-ups, firms seeking to expand, and large-scale inward investment, which will help to tackle inequalities.
- **Policy JP-P5: Education, Skills and Knowledge** states that significant enhancements in education, skills and knowledge to benefit existing and new residents will be promoted, including by enabling the delivery of new and improved accessible facilities for all ages, such as early years, schools, further and higher education, and adult training to ensure our workforce is ready to benefit from new employment opportunities.
- **Policy JP-P2: Heritage** states that GMCA will proactively manage and work with partners to positively conserve, sustain and enhance our historic environment and heritage assets and their settings.

National Planning Policy Framework

The revised NPPF was published in December 2024, with minor updates issued in February 2025. The NPPF places importance on building a strong, competitive economy. Paragraph 87 of the NPPF states that decisions should recognise and address the specific locational requirements. Paragraph 96 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive

and safe places which promote social interaction which can be achieved through mixed-use developments.

Emerging Local Plan

Manchester City Council are currently in the process of developing The Manchester Local Plan, which will sit alongside the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Local Plan and will replace the Core Strategy and remaining policies of the UDP.

The Manchester Local Plan will provide the detailed local strategy for Manchester reinforcing and, where needed, adding detail to the PfE policies to address Manchester-specific issues.

The Manchester Local Plan is currently undergoing consultation. Most recently, the Manchester Local Plan has undergone consultation on the Draft Local Plan (Regulation 18) and is expected to go back to consultation in July 2026 (Regulation 19). It is anticipated that the Local Plan will be adopted in July 2027.

As the Manchester Local Plan is still undergoing consultation, it is not considered relevant in the assessment of the proposed development.

Pre-app Feedback.

A request for pre-application was originally issued to Manchester City Council on 6 October. During the pre-app, the Council outlined their concerns (outlined in *italics)* and the applicant responded to these concerns with the following responses:

1) *Occupancy rate of 94.4%. With such a high rate of occupation it is not considered by the City Council that Linley House is a commercial premises that is struggling to attract tenants.*

   Applicant's response: The proposals will allow for the building to complete the jigsaw and achieve full occupancy through a modest addition. Despite the strong performance of the building, the suite in question has struggled to attract an occupier. The market evidence demonstrates that only three prospective tenants have viewed the space and none have expressed further interest.

2) *The site is considered to be well located being within the commercial heart of the City Centre just off of Portland Street. The building has also recently been renovated. In light of this, it is not considered Linley House would fit the typical profile of office buildings that would be suitable for education providers, which are typically buildings that are less favourably located, lacking in investment/in need of renovation and struggle with maintaining higher levels of occupancy.*

   Applicant's response: It is important to note that Linley House has only been partially refurbished. The refurbishment works have been undertaken in specific parts of the building for occupier Clockwise. Therefore, other areas of the building have outdated features and are in need of further work, including this suite.

   Linley House is tucked away from Portland Street and does not have a prominent frontage. This is not as centrally located as other buildings that have been approved for educational use, such as The Exchange, City Tower and Bridgewater House.

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3) *The proposed occupier would see an increase in the number of education providers on site, taking the percentage of the building in educational uses to 23.6%, resulting in a near ration of 1 to 3 for educational to office uses on site.*

Applicant's response: It is acknowledged that the proposed use would increase the proportion of education occupiers in the building. However, the total share would remain below one quarter of total floor space. This is a modest and balanced mix that maintains the building's primary office function.

There are practical advantages of locating education providers in close proximity to each other, including improved student management, better safeguarding and operational efficiency.

Concentrating such uses reduces potential for wider dispersion of students across the city centre, supporting better oversight and integration with neighbouring businesses.

4) *Manchester City Centre has a high number of English language learning schools and as of this time, it is difficult to understand how the potential occupier would add value to the City Centre's educational offering, other than adding further supply to an already well stocked sect of the education sector.*

Applicant's response: The prospective occupier is an established and successful education provider that is already operating in Manchester. The proposal will not add further supply to the education sector in Manchester, instead, the proposals will allow for the re-location of this occupier.

It is hoped that Manchester City Council recognise the value of retaining such a well-regarded business within the city centre.

The new location of this business is more appropriate given the surrounding education uses and education uses located within the building.

The proposals provide an opportunity to support the continued presence and growth of a trusted local education provider.

5) *As of this time, the proposal fails to meet the tests put forward by Core Strategy Policy EC2, in that it does not clearly demonstrate that the current use is un-viable in terms of business operations, building age and format. I understand that there may be difficulties with this particular suite, however, no information has been provided to demonstrate what measures have been undertaken to make it more attractive to an officer occupier e.g. renovation, discounted rent etc or if there is anything in particular that makes its unsuitable for an office use.*

The table below assesses the proposed development in line with the Policy requirements of EC2:

Applicant's response:

Policy EC2	Applicant's Assessment
The existing use is un-viable in terms of business	1. The space has been marketed for over 12 months at a realistic rent. Despite this, no viable office enquiries have come forward.

operations, building age and format	2. The floor in question has not been re-furbished up to modern standards, so is unattractive to modern office needs. 3. Manchester has an oversupply of office floorspace, which is declining due to changing working patterns. Thus, the existing use is not as viable.
The existing use is incompatible with adjacent uses	1. The building is located in an area which is growing in education, student accommodation and cultural uses, making office use less desirable. Office use is more concentrated in other areas of the city centre, such as the Central Business District, Spinningfields or Deansgate. 2. Linley House is accessed via two entrances, one which caters the co-working uses (office space) and one that caters to the existing education uses on site. The vacant unit in question is located in the part of the building which shares the entrance with education providers. Thus, the existing office function is less compatible with this set up compared to the proposed education provider. This would allow for better student management.
The existing use is unsuitable for employment having had regard to the Manchester-Salford - Trafford SFRA	1. Linley House is not located within a SFRA.
On balance, proposals are able to offer greater benefits in terms of the Core Strategy's vision and spatial objectives than the existing use	1. Education provision contributes more strongly to Manchester's core objectives of inclusive economic growth than retaining a low-demand, secondary office floorspace. 2. Increasing employment opportunities – not only does the proposed occupier provide employment opportunities, it also helps provide essential language skills to help create new pathways into employment. 3. The proposals help activate a vacant space within the city centre and diversify the offering of the city centre.

Following extensive pre-application engagement, Manchester City Council concluded that, in light of the supporting information submitted and the unique characteristics of the application site, in particular reference to that of the segregated entrance, the LPA are satisfied that the proposals subject to planning condition would be acceptable.

Planning Assessment

In summary, the proposed change of use of part of the sixth floor at Linley House represents a modest, intervention that would support the continued vitality and effective operation of the building as a mixed-use asset within Manchester City Centre.

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The proposals relate to long-term vacant suite which, despite extensive and sustained marketing, has failed to attract a viable office occupier. The evidence demonstrates that the retention of this space in sole office use is increasingly unviable, whereas the proposed dual office and education use would enable the space to be brought back into active use without undermining the building's overall employment function.

The resulting level of education floorspace would remain below one quarter of the total building area, ensuring that Linley House continues to operate predominantly as an office building, in accordance with Core Strategy objectives. The proposals would also align with the building's existing access arrangements, established management strategy and surrounding mix of uses, and would support the of a well-established education provider within the city centre.

As shown in the table above, when assessed against Core Strategy Policy EC2, the proposals meet all of the relevant criteria. On balance, it is considered that the proposals meet the tests set out in Policy EC2 by offering greater benefits than the continuation of a low-demand secondary office use. These benefits include the reactivation of vacant floorspace, support for inclusive economic growth, enhanced utilisation of existing city centre buildings and the retention of employment and skills-based activity in a sustainable and accessible location. Thus, the proposals also accord with Core Strategy Policies SP1 and CC1.

It is considered that the proposals support the broader aims of the Places for Everyone Plan, particularly Policies JP-J1, JP-J2 and JP-P5. These policies promote inclusive economic growth, the efficient re-use of existing premises, and the provision of accessible education and skills facilities. Retaining a well-regarded language-training provider within the Regional Centre directly contributes to the delivery of these strategic objectives.

The proposal also accords with the aims of the NPPF, which emphasises the importance of building a strong and competitive economy, optimising the use of previously developed land and enabling healthy, inclusive and safe places.

The applicant therefore respectfully seeks the Case Officer's further advice on the principle of the proposed change of use and any additional information that may be required to support a future planning application.

Summary

This full planning application has been submitted electronically via the Planning Portal (PP-14698148).

I trust that the information provided is sufficient to enable you to validate and determine this planning application. However, if you require any further details, please do not hesitate to contact me. In the meantime, I await your receipt for the planning application fee and confirmation of registration, and I shall contact you in the near future to discuss the timescale and means of determining the application.

Yours sincerely

AVISON YOUNG

[redacted]

Kate Wilson
Planner
[redacted]
For and on behalf of Avison Young (UK) Limited