

Greater Manchester Police Authority approves move to Central Park

Ask:Goodman, developers of Central Park - the 1.4m sq ft urban business park in east Manchester – is delighted with the approval made at the Police Authority Meeting to locate Greater Manchester Police's Force Head Quarters at the Park, in what is one of the UK's largest property deals so far this year.

The £64m 240,000 sq ft Force HQ, designed by Aedas, will be a highly sophisticated office building, with a BREEAM rating aspiring to reach Excellent, supporting modern day policing requirements and ensuring a smarter, more effective work force. Coloured glass and stone will be key features of the six-storey building, which will be visible from Piccadilly and lit blue at night. Situated on plot 16, the 6- acre site will also include a two-level decked car park.

Planning approval was given by Manchester City Council in April 2009 and work will begin on site this month, with completion scheduled for March 2011.

Ask:Goodman, developing the park on behalf of urban regeneration company New East Manchester, said that it was hugely positive that the GMP have chosen to relocate over 1,000 staff to a bespoke building at one of Manchester's premier business parks.

David Burkinshaw, Director at Ask Developments said: “GMPA's decision is great news for Central Park and the wider Greater Manchester area. Located on a prime plot adjacent to the new Gateway transport interchange and Metrolink station, GMP will be moving in to an extremely sustainable and outstanding corporate HQ building. Central Park will provide GMP with a fantastic base giving access to the community to operate state of the art policing services. The relocation of more than 1,000 staff will significantly increase Central Park's business community, creating a critical mass of 600,000 sq ft when the building completes.”

James Raven, Development Director UK Business Parks at Goodman, said: “This is a major success for Central Park and a commitment of this scale in current market conditions highlights it as a first class location. GMPA and GMP's decision, alongside the NHS's recent letting at Madison Place, underlines the significant demand for business space from the public sector that is becoming an increasing trend for many regional cities. We look forward to working with the Authority and Force through each stage of the development, building both a long-term relationship and bespoke turnkey solution.”

GMPA chairman Cllr Paul Murphy said: “The Authority is extremely proud of what this deal represents – significant investment in east Manchester for the benefit of the whole of Greater Manchester.

“We have one of the best forces in the country. It is vital that we have a fit for purpose, cost effective HQ. The relocation will ensure this is the case and I look forward to seeing the project develop.”

Eddie Smith, chief executive of New East Manchester said: “This is another coup for east Manchester and will put Central Park firmly on the map. Having such a high profile organisation based here will bring significant investment and jobs to the area. GMP has recognised what a great location Central Park is, with the transport interchange and proximity to the city centre. This part of the City is becoming an increasingly popular choice for business relocation within the Greater Manchester conurbation. With the support of our partners the NWDA and the HCA, regeneration in east Manchester continues to gather momentum and this move plays an important part in this process.”

Central Park is located just 1.5 miles from the city centre, and with its dedicated Metrolink and high quality office space has proved to be major attraction for occupiers looking for an out of town location. It has already had notable success in attracting major occupiers, including Fujitsu Services and One Central Park, the 100,000 sq ft educational hub of the business park which comprises the city's three universities, MANCAT (The Manchester College of Arts and Technology) and Manchester Science Park which provides a range of services including vocational training, a business creation unit and research and development facilities.

The new £36.5m transport gateway is already in place, and there will be a dedicated tram stop – just five minutes away from Manchester City Centre, which is expected to be completed by 2011.

Ask:Goodman were advised by Lambert Smith Hampton and Cushman & Wakefield.