

Your Ref: PP-11107551

14 March 2022

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

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Application for full planning permission for the installation of roof mounted solar panels at 60 Fountain Street, Manchester, M2 2FE.

On behalf of Custodian REIT PLC ('the Applicant'), please find enclosed an application for full planning permission in a conservation area for:

'The installation of roof-mounted solar panels'

At: 60 Fountain Street, Manchester, M2 2FE.

The following documents have been submitted in support of this application:

- Planning application forms, ownership and agricultural holdings certificates;
- £490 (including £28 service charge) covering the cost of the planning application fee;
- Photovoltaic System Proposed Roof Plan (drawing no. 3740SHA-XX-06-DR-E-900-S2-T1); and,
- Site Location Plan (drawing no. FS-JS-XX-00-DR-I-0001).

The Site

The site comprises a 7-storey office building located within the administrative boundary of Manchester City Council ('MCC'). The site is located within the heart of Manchester City Centre and fronts Fountain Street. A Site Location Plan is enclosed within this application.

The building is located within the Upper King Street Conservation Area. While the building itself (60 Fountain Street) is not listed itself, a number of the surrounding buildings are listed. This includes:

- 60 and 62 Spring Gardens (Grade II) - List UID: 1270662;
- 66 and 68 Fountain Street (Grade II) - List UID: 1282966; and,
- Chancery Chambers (Grade II) - List UID: 1197810.

Background

This proposal is being submitted to Manchester City Council following a recent planning application for the redevelopment of the existing office space at 60 Fountain Street. This recent application, reference 132585/FO/2021, is currently under consideration having been validated by Manchester City Council on the 23rd December 2021. The proposed redevelopment comprises the installation of a new glazed structure to cover the existing 6th floor terrace, new glazing to front elevation at 6th floor and reconfiguration of the basement including installation of cycle parking, shower facilities and EV charging points with associated works. This present application for the installation of roof mounted solar panels intends to complement the outstanding refurbishment proposal.

Proposal

This application is for the installation of photovoltaic solar panels mounted to a flat section of the roof towards the front of the building. As shows in drawing no. 3740SHA-XX-06-DR-E-900-S2-T1, the proposal is for 11 photovoltaic solar panels arranged in a line. Each solar panel will be 1m x 1.6m and arranged so that the entire display measures 11m x 1.6m.

The positioning of the solar panels has been selected to get the maximum exposure to sunlight, the panels are angled south-east. The addition of solar panels at 60 Fountain Street aims to reduce the buildings carbon emissions by providing energy via a renewable source. This will increase the sustainability of the building.

Planning Policy

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that decisions should be made in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The relevant adopted Development Plan Documents for Manchester include the Manchester Core Strategy (2012) (MCS) and the saved policies from the Unitary Development Plan (2004) (UDP).

The key policies which would be of relevance for this application are included below:

- **MCS Policy EC 1 (Employment and Economic Growth in Manchester)** states that a minimum of 200ha of employment land will be developed between 2010 and 2027. Priorities for ensuring continues economic growth include improving the portfolio of employment premises by providing a range of employment sites and premises for small, medium and large businesses. Development proposals should have regard to climate change resilience with an aim of zero carbon emissions, ensuring the design makes the best possible use of a building in terms of efficient space, enhancing the sense of place and considering the needs of access via walking, cycling and public transport.
- **MCS Policy CC 9 (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.

- **MCS Policy EN1 (Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas)** states all development in Manchester will be expected to follow the seven principles of urban design and have regard to the strategic character in which the development is located. Development in the City Centre Character Area should, consider the City's heritage and continue the rich pattern of activity in the core area, contribute positively to the experience of all at street level, and where possible provide new areas of open space.
- **MCS Policy EN 3 (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. New developments must be designed so as to support the Council in preserving or, where possible, enhancing the historic environment, the character, setting and accessibility of areas and buildings of acknowledged importance, including scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings, registered parks and gardens, conservation areas and archaeological remains.
- **MCS Policy EN4 (Reducing CO2 Emissions by Enabling Low and Zero Carbon Development)** All development must follow the principle of the energy hierarchy, being designed to meet residual energy requirements through the use of low or zero carbon energy generating tools. Wherever possible retrofit projects must be designed in a manner that allows advantage to be taken of opportunities for low or zero carbon energy supplies.
- **UDP Policy RC20 Area 7** states that, in view of the area's importance as a major source of employment and its vital contribution to the regional role of the City Centre, the prime consideration here will be to sustain the existing level and character of activity.
- **Policy DC18.1 (Conservation Areas)** states that the Council will give particularly careful consideration to development proposals within Conservation Areas, such as the effect of major changes to the appearance of existing buildings.

In addition to local planning policy, there are also several national policy documents which provide guidance relating to solar panels and form a material consideration in the assessment of this proposal. A summary of relevant national policy documents is included below:

UK Renewable Energy Strategy (2014)- This Strategy recognises the potential offered by solar to grow low carbon sources of energy and the Government confirms it wants to see more investment in this sector without public subsidy.

UK Climate Emergency (2019)- In May 2019 a National Climate Emergency was declared by the UK Parliament. MPs called on Government to make changes that included setting a new target of reaching net zero emissions before 2050.

Net Zero (2019)- The UK's National Climate Emergency declaration was informed by the publication of this report. It recommended the new emissions target for the UK of net-zero greenhouse gases by 2050. The accompanying Net Zero Technical Report (May 2019) suggested the potential for 145-615 GW of solar power.

The Climate Change Act (2050 Target Amendment) (2019)- On 27 June 2019 the UK Parliament approved the net zero target in law, thereby changing the original target of 80% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (compared to 1990 levels) in the UK by 2050 to 100%. Meeting this Net

Zero Target will require major and urgent investment in new technologies and prioritisation of sustainable energy and cleaner power generation, including the use of solar.

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)- In setting out the presumption in favour of sustainable development, the NPPF is clear that planning has a key role in supporting renewable energy and associated infrastructure. Whilst there is no specific policy for solar energy development contained in the NPPF, Paragraph 8 c) sets out the environmental objective of sustainable development, including moving towards a low carbon economy, and Paragraph 148 proposes that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future.

Assessment

This proposal accords with local planning policy as it will contribute towards Policy EC1 which states that development proposals should have regard to climate change resilience with an aim of zero carbon emissions, this proposal will produce renewable energy to serve the building, which will reduce the building's carbon emissions. Furthermore, the installation of solar panels will accord with MCS Policy EN4 which requires all development to follow the principle of the energy hierarchy, being designed to meet residual energy requirements through the use of low or zero carbon energy generating tools. This proposal is an example of a zero carbon energy generating tool.

In addition to the proposals accordance with local planning policy there are also several national policy documents which relate to renewable energy schemes. The National Planning Policy Framework encourages the planning system to support the transition to a low carbon future, this proposal represents a low carbon scheme which contribute towards such a goal. The UK's declaration of a climate emergency in 2019 and subsequent Net Zero agenda, in addition to the Climate Change Act, demonstrates the UK's need to prioritise sustainable energy generation, which a solar scheme comprises an example of. Solar schemes, such as this will aid the UK in meeting ambitious carbon reduction targets. The UK's Renewable Energy Strategy encourages investment in renewable energy sources, which again this scheme is an example of.

As the site is located within the Upper King Street Conservation Area, heritage impacts comprise another consideration in determining this application. Due to the solar panel's positioning on the roof, it will not be visible from the ground level, or from any surrounding listed buildings. As such, this proposal is considered to accord with policies CC9, EN1, and EN3 of the Manchester Core Strategy and Policy DC18.1 of the Unitary Development Plan as the proposal will not impact the appearance of the Upper King Street Conservation Area.

Conclusion

This application for planning permission for the installation of roof mounted solar panels at 60 Fountain Street, Manchester has been assessed in terms of both national and local policy. The proposals are wholly in accordance with the statutory development plan and other material considerations, and it is respectfully requested that planning permission is granted.

The planning application fee has been calculated at £490 (including £28 administration fee) and has been paid by BACS transfer directly to the Planning Portal.

I trust the submitted information is sufficient to enable this planning application to be validated. If you require any additional information to validate and determine this application, please do contact me on the details below.

Yours faithfully,

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Associate Director

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For and on behalf of Avison Young (UK) Limited