

Application Number/s: 132696/FO/2022

Applicant: Unite Students

Agent: Hadfield Cawkwell Davidson Ltd.

Location: New Medlock House, Chester Street

Proposal: 3x Modular Plantrooms to roof to house air source heat pumps and associated equipment

Ward: Deansgate

Description of Site and Surrounding Area

The application relates to New Medlock House, a purpose-built student accommodation development made up of 2 separate buildings built around a central courtyard within Manchester City Centre. The buildings are 7-8 storeys in height and are predominantly brick built with cladding. The building is to the northwest of the Mancunian Way-Cambridge Street interchange and adjacent to the First Street Regeneration Area.

Description of Proposal

The application seeks permission for addition of 3x modular plant rooms to the roof of the buildings. Two of the plant rooms are to be the larger, north building with one to the smaller south building. The plant rooms are to enclose air source heat pumps and associated equipment that will serve the buildings. The proposal will involve the relocation of several photovoltaic units, though all remain on the roof of the two buildings. A roof guardrail is to be added to the roof.

During the course of assessing the application, the units proposed were repositioned, moving back towards the elevation of the internal courtyard. Additionally, more information was included in the submitted acoustician report.

Publicity LBC

Site Notice/s Posted and Dates: Posted 02/02/22, Expired 23/02/22

Press Adverts Published and Dates: Not Required

Neighbour Notification: Notified 26/01/2022

Representations Received: None

Consultations

Save Unitary Development Plan Policies:

- Development and Noise (26)

The council intends to use the development control process to reduce the impact of noise on people living and working in the City. This requires that the effect of new development proposals that are likely to be generators of noise (including plant

equipment such as that proposed) is duly assessed and considered with regards to potential noise breakout and the impact on nearby residents etc.

Core Strategy Policies:

- Spatial Principles (SP1)

All development should, amongst other things, make a positive contribution to neighbourhoods and aim to minimise emissions.

- Reducing CO2 Emissions by Enabling Low and Zero Carbon Development (EN4)

The Council seeks to reduce fuel poverty and decouple growth in the economy from a growth in CO2 emissions. This can be achieved by, amongst other things, by meeting residual energy requirements through the use of low or zero carbon energy generating technologies.

- Energy Infrastructure Opportunities (EN7)

There shall be a general presumption in favour of low and zero carbon decentralised energy schemes, subject to considerations including that plant is designed to a high quality and will integrate into the townscape.

- Development Management (DM1)

All development shall have regard to specific issues detailed under this policy. This includes appropriate siting/layout/appearance, amenity considerations etc.

National Planning Policy Framework Policies:

- Achieving Sustainable Development (2)

Sets out the overarching purpose of the planning system, which is to ensure sustainable development (economic, social and environmental). There is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and sustainable development that accords with up to date policies should be approved without delay.

- Decision-making (4)

LPAs should approach decision in a positive and creative way, engaging in pre-application advice and frontloading wherever possible. Decisions should be determined in accordance with a development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Planning conditions should be considered if they can make otherwise unacceptable development acceptable, though should be kept to a minimum.

- Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change (14)

The planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future, including by supporting renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure. This includes by way of increasing the use and supply of renewable and low carbon heat and energy, as well as identifying opportunities for development to draw its energy supply from decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy supply systems.

Applicants shall not be required to demonstrate the need for the renewable energy and recognise that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions.

Assessment

Principle of Development

The proposed rooftop plant is to house air source heat pumps, providing a zero or low carbon source of energy that would serve the New Medlock House buildings. As such, the development in principle would contribute to a reduction in carbon emissions and therefore be consistent with Section 2 of the NPPF.

Design and Appearance

Although one of the planning system's overarching aims is to facilitate and achieve a reduction in CO₂ emissions, this cannot be achieved without due consideration to the design and appearance of apparatus and equipment to achieve this, as well as any impact upon the townscape.

The applicant has confirmed that the colour of the proposed apparatus to the roof is to be grey, with RAL 7035 (light grey) preferable. It shall be conditioned that this is the case, with any departure from this proposed colour to be agreed by the LPA.

During the course of assessing the application, the proposed rooftop plant was repositioned away from the external roof elevation of the building. the plant equipment housing is still significant and will be visible from the surrounding area. However, the impact is reduced and would not, on balance, have a significant impact on the surrounding townscape or street scene in the area.

Other miscellaneous alterations to the roofscape, including the rearrangement of existing photovoltaic cells and introduction of railings would have negligible impact and is acceptable.

Overall, the proposed development would have minimal impact on the surrounding townscape and generally be in accordance with Core Strategy policies DM1 and SP1.

Amenity

The proposed plant equipment to the roof has the potential to change the noise profile of the area. Given that the proposed plant is elevated significantly below street level and set back from the external walls of the building, it is not expected that the units would change the noise profile at street level. However, there is potential for the units to impact on nearby habitable rooms on the floors immediately below the roof.

The units will house 6. No 'Mitsubishi Q-ton' Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHPs). The manufacturer of the units has supplied information relating to noise levels of the proposed plant. There are two different running modes for the equipment, being 'de-rated' and 'high operation' at different times of the day. The submitted acoustician report confirms that it is not expected that there would be undue impacts to nearby receptors by way of noise or vibration transfer. A suitably scoped condition will be required to verify these findings.

It is not considered that the development proposed would have any other undue impacts in terms of amenity. Aside from the need to verify the findings regarding acoustics, the proposal is acceptable and accords with saved UDP Policy DC26.1 and policies DM1 and SP1 of the Core Strategy.

Environmental Protection

As per Core Strategy Policy EN7, the LPA states that there shall be a general presumption in favour of development that is considered to be low or zero carbon or contribute to a reduction in carbon emissions. This proposed decentralised energy infrastructure represents proposals that can and would contribute to a reduction in emissions and are thus viewed favourably. It is not considered that this type of development would have significant impact in terms of amenity or visual impact. As such, when duly weighed against the benefits in terms of climate change mitigation, the proposal is acceptable and accords with Core Strategy policies EN4 and EN7. In addition, it is considered that the development accords with paragraphs 157 and 158 of the NPPF in terms of climate change impacts and mitigation considerations.

RECOMMENDATION:

That planning permission be granted subject to the following planning conditions:

1. The development must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason - Required to be imposed pursuant to Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following drawings and documents:

- Location Plan (Drawing A-09-100 Revision P03 dated 11/11/2021) – Received 14/01/2022
- Existing GA Elevations Sheet 1 (Drawing A-01-001 Revision P01 dated 11/01/2022) – Received 14/01/2022
- Existing GA Elevations Sheet 2 (Drawing A-01-002 Revision P01 dated 11/01/2022) – Received 14/01/2022
- Existing GA Elevations Sheet 3 (Drawing A-01-003 Revision P01 dated 11/01/2022) – Received 14/01/2022
- Existing Roof Plan (Drawing A-01-100 Revision P01 dated 11/01/2022) – Received 14/01/2022
- Proposed GA Elevations Sheet 1 (Drawing A-05-001 Revision P02 dated 01/04/22) – Received 04 April 2022
- Proposed GA Elevations Sheet 2 (Drawing A-05-002 Revision P02 dated 01/04/22) – Received 04 April 2022

- Proposed GA Elevations Sheet 3 (Drawing A-05-003 Revision P02 dated 01/04/22)
– Received 04 April 2022
- Proposed Roof Plan (Drawing M401 Revision T2 dated February 2022) – Received 04 April 2022
- General Arrangement Level 08 (Roof) – (Drawing A-04-008 Revision P3, dated 31/03/2022) - Received 04 April 2022
- Email received from John Hedder of Hadfield Cawkwell Davidson Limited confirming treatment of external plant (Email dated and timed 04/03/2022 at 14:49)
- Plant Noise Assessment (Reference 11427.RP01.PNA.1, dated 30 March 2022) - Received 04 April 2022

Reason - To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans. Pursuant to policies SP1 and DM1 of the Core Strategy.

3. The development hereby approved shall be in accordance with the findings and conclusions as set out in the Plant Noise Assessment 11427.RP01.PNA). Within 3 months of the completion of the development hereby approved, a verification report shall be prepared and submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval, to verify that the noise and vibration limits set out in the approved report are not exceeded at the sensitive receptors identified in Section 5.4 of the Plant Noise Assessment.

Reason: In the interests of the amenity of nearby occupiers and in accordance with saved Manchester Unitary Development Plan policy DC26.1 and Manchester Core Strategy policies DM1 and SP1.

The applicant/agent and the local planning authority worked proactively to identify issues with the proposal and work towards solutions that allowed the development to be approved subject to conditions. In this instance, the development was amended and additional information in relation to acoustics was provided.