

Planning

Growth & Development

Delegated officer report for planning application

Application no. 130663/P14J/2021

Date registered valid: 1 June 2021

Proposal: Prior Approval for the installation of Solar Photovoltaics (PV) equipment on the roofs of nondomestic buildings.

Address: The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ

Ward(s): Miles Platting & Newton Heath Ward

Applicant: Mr Dipak Shah, Ameresco Limited, 3rd Floor, 14-16 Dowgate Hill, London, EC4R 2SU

Agent (if any): Mr David Tye, Paul Butler Associates Ltd, 31 Blackfriars Road, Salford, Manchester, M3 7AQ

Case officer: Steven McCoombe
Tel: 0161 234 4607
Email: steven.mccoombe@manchester.gov.uk

Recommendation: Approve

Date of recommendation: 2 August 2021

Application details

Type of application: Prior approval - PV to non-dwelling

Development type: Notifications

Date of site visit: 15 July 2021

Standard consultations:

Printed: 15 June 2021 Expired: 6 July 2021

Neighbour notifications

Printed: 15 June 2021 Expired: 6 July 2021

Site notice

Posted: 15 July 2021 Expired: 5 August 2021

Press advert

Published: 22 June 2021 Expired: 13 July 2021

Departure from Development Plan: No

Environmental Statement: Not required

Description of site/building

The application site relates to the site of the Sharp Project - a media Centre situated within a building which was formerly an old Sharp TV warehouse and has been converted to house approximately 70 tenanted office units for digital businesses.

This application proposes works to the former datacentre, a white metal clad building constructed above a red brick base and to an extension at the rear of the complex. The proposal PV panels are to a shallow pitched roof and on the flat roof of the rear extension adjacent to the rear service yard as shown on the submitted proposals plan.

Listed building: Not applicable

Conservation area: No

Tree Preservation Order: No

Description of area

The immediate area is mixed use in character containing a variety of office, warehouse and residential uses. A short distance to the north is a transport interchange and operational railway and Metrolink lines, beyond which is Central Park – a purpose built business park. To the south is the main arterial route of Oldham Road, which links the city centre with the M60 motorway.

Description of development

Prior Approval is sought for the installation of Solar Photovoltaics (PV) equipment on the roof of a non-domestic building. In this case, Sharp

A Phase 1 solar installation is currently being installed under a previous initiative and involves the construction of new solar capacity at the site. Phase 1 is expected to provide an 'existing' capacity of 582.30kWp after which the Phase 2 solar installation works proposed by this application will commence. Phase 2 proposes 607 PV panels, each 450Wp giving a peak capacity of 273.15KWp on the shallow pitched roof of the former datacentre and on the flat roof of the rear extension adjacent to the rear service yard as shown on the submitted proposals plan.

The former data centre roof has parapet walls around the perimeter which exceed the height of the solar panels, therefore the panels will not be visible at ground level, and elevational views of the buildings will not be affected. The same is understood to apply to the rear extension.

Consultations & Notification Responses

Local Residents/Occupiers – No representations received.

Metrolink – It has been determined from colleagues that there are no tram signals in the length affected and can confirm that Metrolink consider the overall impact to Metrolink Operations will be minimal and therefore there are no further comments to make in respects of this application.

Background

Greater Manchester has been awarded over £78m in Central Government funding to support energy efficiency upgrades to more than 150 public buildings across the city-region, helping to cut emissions and create new jobs.

The award was the result of a successful bid from Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and 14 other partners to the Government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme.

Buildings and organisations across the public estate set to benefit from retrofitting measures include Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust, Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service, Transport for Greater Manchester, Greater Manchester Police, the Royal Northern College of Music, the National Cycling Centre, and facilities including leisure centres, schools, and offices.

The proposed retro-fitting of solar panels to existing buildings will produce more renewable energy and offer an opportunity to immediately cut emissions.

Issues

In accordance with The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, Schedule 2, Part 14 Renewable Energy, Class J, the installation of solar PV equipment on the roof of a building is regarded as 'permitted development' subject to an application being made to the local planning authority for determination as to whether prior approval is necessary.

On the basis of the scheme being considered as a whole, the proposal does not constitute 'microgeneration' solar PV equipment as power generation output exceeds 50kWp. The proposals can however be considered under the Permitted Development regulations, as the collective power output does not exceed 1MW. In this case, the power output would be 55.5 kW peak and therefore well under the 1 MW threshold.

No part of the installation would protrude more than 0.2 metres beyond the plane of the roof slope when measured from the perpendicular with the external surface of the roof slope. The

highest part of the solar PV equipment would be no higher than 1 metre above the highest part of the roof, and the installation will also sit below the existing roof parapet wall.

The proposed equipment is to be installed entirely on roof areas and no part of the installation will lie within 1 metre of the external edge of that roof.

The site is not on article 2(3) land, designated as a scheduled monument, nor does it contain any listed buildings.

The total capacity of the solar PV equipment to be installed to generate electricity at the site does not exceed 1 megawatt.

The solar PV equipment has been so far as practicable, sited so as to minimise its effect on the external appearance of the building and the amenity of the area and will sit below the existing parapet of the roof and will not therefore be directly visible from ground level.

The solar PV equipment is to be removed as soon as reasonably practicable when no longer needed.

Given the surrounding context, the proposed panels are highly unlikely to result in any impact in terms of glare on occupiers of neighbouring land.

The application has been accompanied by a Glint and Glare Assessment to assess whether there would be any impact and in particular, the potential impact on the neighbouring Metrolink line receptors.

The assessment maintains that as solar panels are designed to absorb sunlight, rather than reflect, they are generally considered to be of low risk within the UK.

The assessment goes on to state that there is no specific methodology for assessing the effect of glint and glare on a receptor and due to the unpredictability of weather patterns, movement of receptors within the landscape and minor variances in onsite topography and vegetation there is no definitive threshold for acceptance or refusal. As such an accepted approach is to identify areas of potential issue and, where necessary, provide mitigation for the potential impact rather than attempting to provide a non-permeable barrier to receptors.

It is generally accepted that glint and glare assessments should be assessed against receptors within 1km of the development.

The predicted glare times are based on bare-earth terrain and utilising the current maximum solar area design and layout. No screening has been included in the assessment. The assessment summarises the predicted impact considering the level of predicted screening, orientation of receptor and angle of view based on a desk-based review of the available imagery.

The report concludes that whilst there is the potential for some glare impact on Route 2, the timings and duration of this impact cross referenced against the likely journey timings give rise to a realistic impact on around 3 journeys per day. Further refining this, the receptor locations are limited to over 75m metres from the nearest part of the array, giving rise to a wide angle of view and orientation at an oblique angle to that of travel. The route angle which has direct orientation towards the array is covered by points 1 – 5 on Route 2, which does not account for the Sharp Project building, which is likely to partially, if not wholly obscure the view of the array.

It is concluded that whilst there may be a low impact on Route 2 during the winter months, the assessment software assumes all-year-round sunshine. The reality of local climatic conditions combined with the mitigating factors of angle of view, built-area screening and orientation of the receptor is likely to lead to minor-negligible impact on a very limited number of journeys. No mitigation or system redesign is considered to be required as the level of impact is deemed acceptable.

In response, Metrolink have confirmed that there are no tram signals in the length of line affected and can confirm that Metrolink consider the overall impact to Metrolink Operations will be minimal, As such, they have no further comments to make.

On the basis of the criteria, which has been cross referenced with the relevant legislation contained within Schedule 2, Part 14 Renewable Energy, Class J of the GPDO, the proposed installation is considered permitted development.

Human Rights Act 1998 considerations

This application needs to be considered against the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998. Under Article 6, the applicants (and those third parties, including local residents, who have made representations) have a right to a fair hearing and to this end the local planning authority must give full consideration to their comments.

Protocol 1 Article 1, and Article 8 where appropriate, confer(s) a right of respect for a person's home, other land and business assets. In taking account of all material considerations, including Council policy as set out in the Core Strategy and saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan, the Director of Planning, Building Control & Licensing has concluded that some rights conferred by these articles on the applicant(s)/objector(s)/resident(s) and other occupiers and owners of nearby land that might be affected may be interfered with but that that interference is in accordance with the law and justified by being in the public interest and on the basis of the planning merits of the development proposal. She believes that any restriction on these rights posed by the recommendation given is proportionate to the wider benefits of and that such a decision falls within the margin of discretion afforded to the Council under the Town and Country Planning Acts.

Recommendation: Approve

Article 35 Declaration – Not Required.

Condition(s) to be attached to decision for approval OR Reasons for recommendation to refuse

1) The proposed development raises no adverse issues in respect of external appearance, glare or the general visual amenity of the area and accords with the requirements of Class J of Part 14 of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 as amended.

Therefore, consent is hereby granted in accordance with the following information received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on 1 June 2021:

Longi Solar Panel Datasheet;
K2 Solar Panel Support Mount Datasheets;
Solis Inverter Datasheet;
Location Plan;
Drawings referenced 000/Rev/003 and 005/Rev/003;

In addition, the submitted Glint and Glare Assessment produced by Cogeo (V.1) received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on 26 July 2021.

Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified

Manchester Cathedral
Metrolink

12 Eldridge Drive, Manchester, M40 2DF
GMP Force HQ, 4 Northampton Road, Manchester, M40 5BR
142 Blue, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
36 Red, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
34 Red, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
37 Red, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
35 Red, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
38 Red, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
129 Silver, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
4 Eldridge Drive, Manchester, M40 2DF
19 Limerston Drive, Manchester, M40 2DQ
3 Limerston Drive, Manchester, M40 2DQ
13 Limerston Drive, Manchester, M40 2DQ
25 Limerston Drive, Manchester, M40 2DQ
7 Limerston Drive, Manchester, M40 2DQ
11 Falsgrave Close, Manchester, M40 2DH
7 Falsgrave Close, Manchester, M40 2DH
19 Falsgrave Close, Manchester, M40 2DH
15 Falsgrave Close, Manchester, M40 2DH
5 Falsgrave Close, Manchester, M40 2DH
3 Falsgrave Close, Manchester, M40 2DH
1 Falsgrave Close, Manchester, M40 2DH
9 Falsgrave Close, Manchester, M40 2DH
17 Falsgrave Close, Manchester, M40 2DH
13 Falsgrave Close, Manchester, M40 2DH
6 Eldridge Drive, Manchester, M40 2DF
10 Eldridge Drive, Manchester, M40 2DF
156 Gold, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
155 Gold, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
152 Gold, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
67 Gold, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
62 Gold, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
140 Blue, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
139 Blue, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
5 Limerston Drive, Manchester, M40 2DQ
Part Green Screen Studio 8, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
Part Green Screen Studio 6, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
17 Red, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
158 Gold, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
Stages 2 To 3, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
74 Gold, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
70 Gold, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
61 Gold, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
26 Red, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
146 Gold, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
29 Limerston Drive, Manchester, M40 2DQ
1 Limerston Drive, Manchester, M40 2DQ
19 Red, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
16 Red, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ

72 Gold, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
32 Red, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
30 Red, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
27 Red, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
20 Red, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
11 Red, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
8 Red, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
6 Red, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
17 Limerston Drive, Manchester, M40 2DQ
Part Green Screen Studio 5, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
150 Gold, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
15 Red, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
21 Red, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
147 Gold, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
7 Red, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
9 Limerston Drive, Manchester, M40 2DQ
8 Eldridge Drive, Manchester, M40 2DF
Part Green Screen Studio 7, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
Security Lodge, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
18 Red, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
154 Gold, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
Provision Part Ground Floor Black, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
Part Ground Floor Black, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
157 Gold, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
153 Gold, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
Stage 1, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
69 Gold, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
65 Gold, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
55 Blue, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
33 Red, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
31 Red, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
24 Red, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
141 Blue, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
14 Red, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
10 Red, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
9 Red, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
5 Red, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
4 Red, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
3 Red, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
31 Limerston Drive, Manchester, M40 2DQ
23 Limerston Drive, Manchester, M40 2DQ
21 Limerston Drive, Manchester, M40 2DQ
80 Hertz Recording Studio, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
66 Gold, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
64 Gold, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
60 Gold, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
59 Gold, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
56 Blue, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
138 Blue, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
1 Red, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
151 Gold, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
149 Gold, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
148 Gold, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
Stage 4, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ

71 Gold, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
54 Blue, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
27 Limerston Drive, Manchester, M40 2DQ
29 Red, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
23 Red, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
2 Red, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
28 Red, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
25 Red, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
22 Red, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
137 Blue, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
63 Gold, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
57 Blue, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
68 Gold, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
73 Gold, The Sharp Project, Thorp Road, Manchester, M40 5BJ
15 Limerston Drive, Manchester, M40 2DQ
11 Limerston Drive, Manchester, M40 2DQ

Appendix 2 – Planning constraints

Article 4 Direction - North Manchester PD Restriction - Class B1(a) To C3
Article 4 Direction - Removal Of PD Rights Change Of Use From Class C3 To Class C4
Article 4 Direction - North Manchester PD Restriction - Class B1(c) To C3
Aircraft Safeguarding Zone - Aircraft Safeguarding - Not Affected
Coal Authority - Development Low Risk - Name: DEVELOPMENT_LOW_RISK_AREA
Historic Landfill Site 250m Buffer -
Manchester Cathedral Ownership - Manchester Cathedral Newton Heath Manor
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Middle) -
Area Team Boundary - Name: NORTH1