

Heritage Statement

Cathedral Gardens, Corporation Street, Manchester, M4 3BG

15 September 2025



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Chapter 1

Introduction

- 1.10 This Heritage Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application for the installation of a single temporary wind turbine at Cathedral Gardens, Corporation Street, Manchester, M4 3BG. The turbine is proposed as part of the seasonal infrastructure supporting the Skate Manchester Ice Rink, a temporary, high profile and well-established public event in the city's cultural calendar. The development seeks to enhance the sustainability of the attraction through on-site renewable energy generation, in alignment with Manchester City Council's wider environmental objectives.
- 1.11 The 15kW wind turbine is expected to provide around 13,000 kWh of renewable energy to power the Ice Rink and contribute towards Manchester's sustainability and net-zero ambitions. It is proposed to remain in place for a period of four months, coinciding with the duration of the Christmas event.
- 1.12 The proposed wind turbine, would have three blades and have a blade tip height of 20.35m. The turbine would be a colourful design with a purple tower and pink blades. The tower of the turbine would also be adorned with Christmas decorations.
- 1.13 The proposed turbine would be located towards the southern end of Cathedral Gardens, on an open grassed area integrated within the layout of the event. The site lies within Cathedral Conservation Area and is surrounded by several designated heritage assets, including the Grade I listed Manchester Cathedral, the Grade II listed south east wing to Chetham's hospital (now part of Chetham's School of Music), the Grade II listed Corn Exchange (The Triangle) and the Grade II listed City Buildings on Todd Street. The site occupies a prominent and sensitive location within the city's medieval core, where the historic urban fabric coexists with contemporary development and civic activity.
- 1.14 This Statement assesses the potential impact of the proposed temporary wind turbine on the significance of nearby heritage assets and the character and appearance of the Cathedral Conservation Area. It considers the temporary nature of the installation, the context of the surrounding environment, and the measures taken to ensure the development is sensitively designed and appropriately integrated into the festive layout of the Ice Rink.

Chapter 2

Policy

National

2.10 Policy and guidance for the conservation of the historic environment are now contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, December 2024). The relevant guidance is reproduced below:

2.11 Paragraph 202:

Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value. These assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.

2.12 Paragraph 207:

In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

2.13 Paragraph 208:

Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

2.14 A further key document is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, in particular section 66(1), which provides *statutory protection* to the setting of Listed buildings:

In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or

any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Local Policy

- 2.15 Manchester's Core Strategy was adopted on 11 July 2012 and is the key Development Plan document in the Local Development Framework (LDF).

Manchester City Council Core Strategy

- 2.16 Policy EN3 – Heritage

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.

Proposals which enable the use of heritage assets will be encouraged where they are considered consistent with the significance of the heritage asset.

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document 2022-2029

- 2.17 The Places for Everyone (PfE) Joint Development Plan took effect and became part of the statutory development plan for each of the nine PfE authorities on March 21, 2024

- 2.18 Policy JP-P2

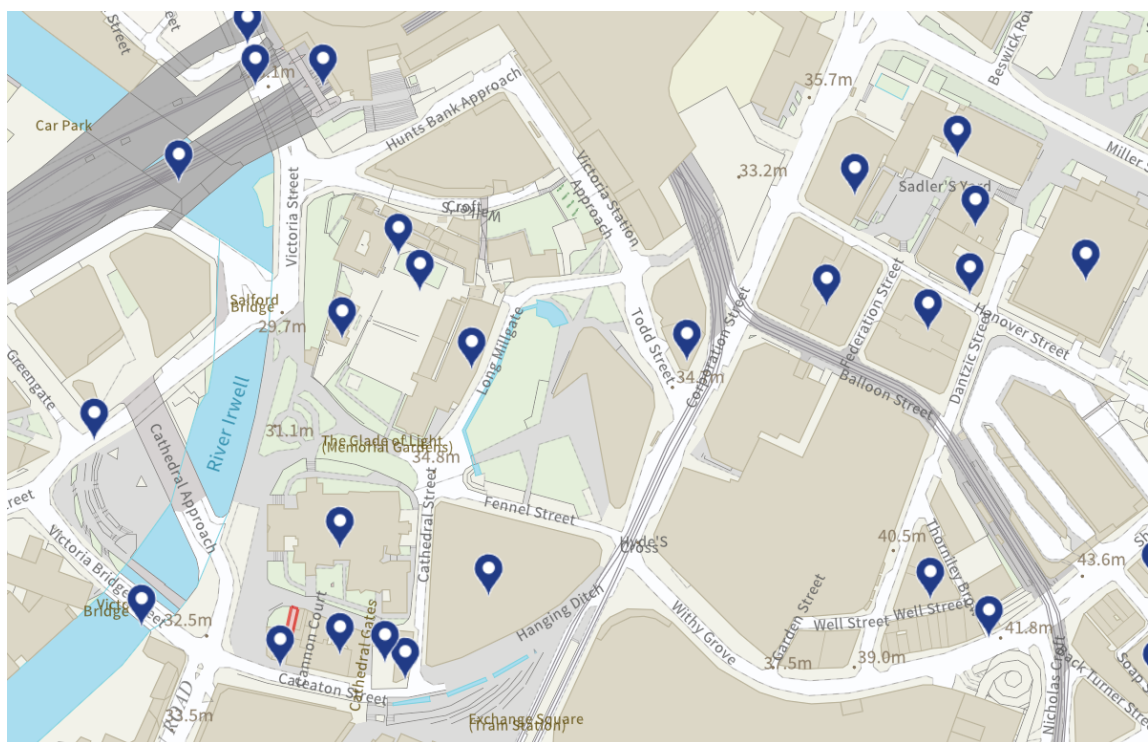
We will proactively manage and work with partners to positively conserve, sustain and enhance our historic environment and heritage assets and their settings. Opportunities will be pursued to aid the promotion, enjoyment, understanding and interpretation of heritage assets, as a means of maximising wider public benefits and reinforcing Greater Manchester's distinct character, identity and sense of place.

Development proposals affecting designated and non-designated heritage assets and/or their settings will be considered having regard to national planning policy.

Chapter 3

Significance of Heritage Assets

- 3.1 This chapter describes the significance of relevant heritage assets, including the contribution made by their settings, in line with the requirements of Paragraph 207 of the NPPF, to ensure that any potential effects of the proposed development are fully understood.
- 3.2 Assessing the significance of heritage assets provides a valuable opportunity to understand and celebrate their architectural, historic, and cultural importance. By identifying the features that contribute to their special interest, both individually and as part of the wider townscape, proposals can be designed to respect, respond to, and in some cases enhance these qualities. This proactive approach not only ensures compliance with national and local policy but also helps to demonstrate how sensitive development can sit alongside heritage assets in a way that sustains their significance while delivering wider public benefits.
- 3.3 There are four listed buildings in the immediate surrounding area, which are referenced in this Chapter.



Listed Buildings

Scheduled
Monuments

Former Corn and Produce Exchange – Grade II Listed Building (list entry number 1282970) – located to the south of the site



Photo: English Heritage

- 3.4 The Former Corn and Produce Exchange, built in 1903, is a large Baroque-style commercial building of iron frame construction clad in sandstone ashlar, with a slate roof and glazed atrium. It occupies a distinctive curved triangular plan on an island site.
- 3.5 The exterior is highly ornate, featuring four diminishing storeys with basement and attic. Architectural highlights include:
- A grand triumphal-arch style entrance framed by polished pink granite pilasters with Ionic capitals, surmounted by the inscription "PRODUCE EXCHANGE."
 - Symmetrical bays, shaped gables, domed corner cupola, tall chimney piers, and decorative features such as colonnades, pulvinated friezes, and mutule cornices.
 - Ground-floor shopfronts with varied window forms above, including round-headed and mullioned windows.
- 3.6 The interior retains significant original features, most notably:
- An unaltered entrance hall and staircase.
 - A large central atrium with round-headed arcades, glazed roof, and central dome.
- 3.7 Heritage significance - The building is listed for its architectural and historic value as a prominent early 20th-century Baroque commercial structure in Manchester, notable for its scale, ornate

detailing, and innovative iron-framed construction. Its atrium and intact interior elements further enhance its significance.

Cathedral Church of St Mary – Grade I Listed Building (List entry number 1218041) – located to the south-west of the site



- 3.8 The Cathedral Church of St Mary, elevated to cathedral status in 1847, is one of Manchester's most significant historic landmarks. The core structure dates largely from c.1422–1520 in the Perpendicular Gothic style, with subsequent alterations, restorations, and additions spanning the 19th and 20th centuries by notable architects including J.P. Holden, J.S. Crowther, Basil Champneys, and Sir Hubert Worthington. The cathedral was extensively damaged during the Manchester Blitz of 1940 and later restored.
- 3.9 Key architectural features include the rebuilt west tower and porch, the six-bay nave and choir with north and south aisles, chapels, chantries, porches, the 15th-century Chapter House, and the reconstructed east Lady Chapel. The building fabric is sandstone, and the interior is especially notable for its survival of early 16th-century fittings, including choir stalls with misericords, the pulpitum, parclose screens, and restored medieval roofs.
- 3.10 Significant historic furnishings include the Saxon angel stone, a brass memorial to builder John Huntingdon, a fragmentary brass to Bishop Stanley, and commemorative statues of Humphrey Chetham and Thomas Fleming. Later notable works include a statue of Queen Victoria by Princess Louise (1853), and a 1933 carving by Eric Gill.
- 3.11 Heritage Significance - The Cathedral is of exceptional architectural and historic interest, reflecting Manchester's medieval origins, its development as a collegiate parish church, and its resilience following wartime damage. The survival and restoration of late medieval fabric and fittings, combined with later interventions by prominent architects and artists, secure its status as

a building of the highest national importance.

City Buildings, Todd Street – Grade II Listed Building (List Entry 1380200) – located to the north-east of the site



3.12 City Buildings, constructed between 1865 and 1875, was originally designed as a warehouse, shops, and offices, and is now adapted for mixed commercial use. Built of sandstone ashlar with red brick to the sides and rear, the building features a Welsh slate roof and occupies a prominent corner site arranged around a small internal courtyard with vehicular access.

3.13 Architectural highlights include:

- A four-storey elevation with original stone pilasters and foliated capitals framing the ground-floor shop divisions.
- Surviving cast-iron barley-sugar mullions, original vehicular entrance gates, and double doorway to Corporation Street with a stone name panel reading CITY BUILDINGS.
- Varied window treatments across upper storeys: square-headed windows with cornices on the first floor, segmental-headed windows on the second, and round-headed windows on the third.
- An elaborately treated corner, featuring paired round-headed windows, rusticated quoins, balconies with decorative iron railings, name panels, and a distinctive fish-scale slate spirelet with cast-iron finial.

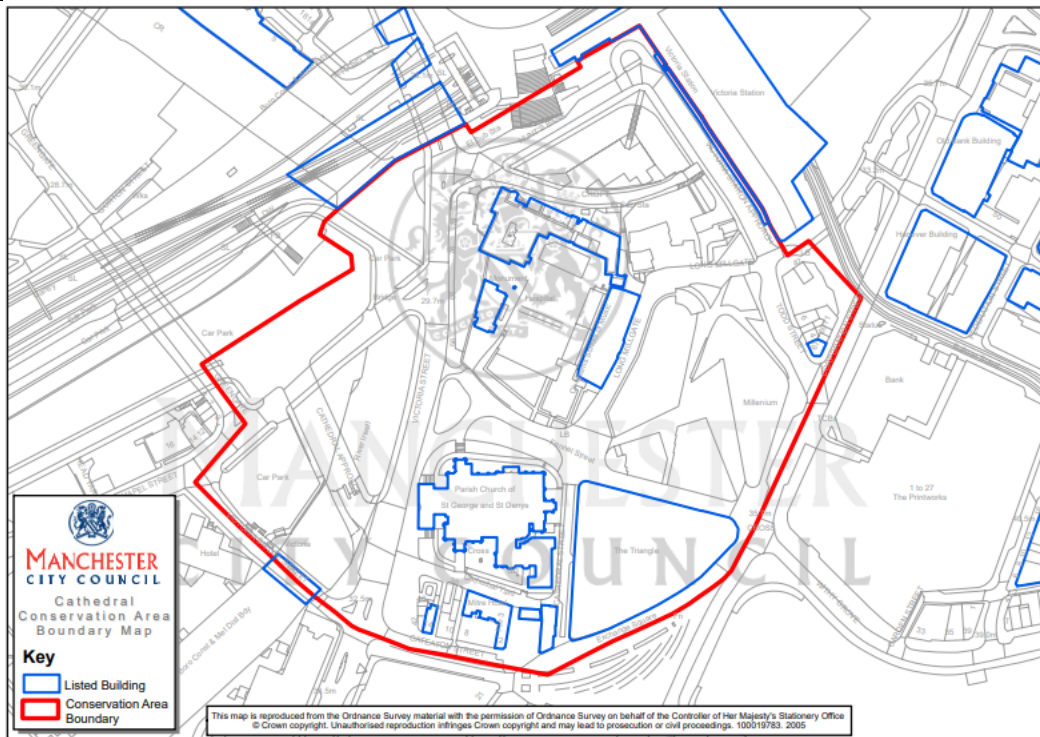
3.14 Heritage Significance - City Buildings is listed for its architectural interest, townscape value, and high level of intact detailing. Its prominent corner location, distinctive elevations, and decorative treatment make it an important contributor to the historic character of this part of Manchester,

particularly in grouping with nearby listed structures such as Victoria Station.

South east wing to Chetham's Hospital (former Manchester Grammar School) – Grade II Listed Building – located to the north-west of the site



- 3.15 Built between 1873 and 1878, this red brick and sandstone building was designed by Alfred Waterhouse in the Tudor Revival style as part of the former Manchester Grammar School, later adapted for use as part of Chetham's Music School. It forms the east side of the Chetham's Hospital courtyard.
- 3.16 The three-storey structure (over a basement) features a prominent four-storey gate tower with embattled parapet, pinnacles, and an octagonal turret. Architectural highlights include a grand arched doorway inscribed "SCHOLA MANCUNIENSIS 1870", mullioned and sash windows, a rose window, and a distinctive two-storey canted oriel. The range is unified by stone banding, coupled chimneys, and consistent Tudor stylistic detailing.
- 3.17 Heritage Significance - The building is listed at Grade II for its architectural and historic interest as a well-preserved example of Alfred Waterhouse's Tudor Revival work. It contributes to the significance of the wider Chetham's Hospital complex, reinforcing the site's long-standing associations with education and philanthropy in Manchester. Its prominent gate tower and detailed façades add strong townscape value to Long Millgate and the historic core of the city.



- 3.18 The Cathedral Conservation Area is centred on Manchester Cathedral and Chetham's Hospital School, which together form the historic and architectural heart of the area. The streets within the Conservation Area reflect a long-established medieval street pattern, around which a variety of building types have developed, including Victorian commercial buildings such as the Corn and Produce Exchange, later civic structures, and modern infill that respects the historic context.
- 3.19 The Cathedral Yard forms a quiet, enclosed space to the south and east of the Cathedral, framed by Victorian buildings that provide a transitional edge to the wider city centre. To the north and west, the area opens onto Victoria Street and the River Irwell, with visual and physical links extending into Salford. The cobbled forecourt of the former Exchange Station defines the western edge, contributing to the area's distinctive character.
- 3.20 Heritage significance - The Cathedral Conservation Area is of historic and architectural significance for its long-standing role as Manchester's ecclesiastical and educational core. It preserves the setting of Manchester Cathedral and Chetham's Hospital School, while the surrounding streets and buildings reflect the city's growth from a medieval settlement into a major civic and commercial centre. The combination of historic streetscapes, landmark buildings, and surviving townscape elements provides a strong sense of place, demonstrating the continuity of the area's cultural, religious, and civic functions over several centuries.

Chapter 4

Assessment

- 4.1 The temporary and reversible nature of the scheme is central to the assessment of its impact on the historic environment, as the turbine will only be in place for the duration of the event before being fully removed. In this regard, the proposal must be considered against the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024), the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the Manchester Core Strategy (Policy EN3), and the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (Policy JP-P2).

Direct Impacts

- 4.2 In terms of direct impacts, the proposal does not involve any intervention into, or alteration of, the fabric of a designated heritage asset. No listed buildings, scheduled monuments, conservation areas, or registered parks and gardens will be physically affected. No groundworks or foundations are required as the proposed turbine will be secured using 12 ballast blocks. This ensures there will be no disturbance of below-ground archaeological deposits. It is therefore concluded that no adverse direct impacts on the significance of heritage assets would arise.

Indirect Impacts

- 4.3 The more relevant consideration relates to indirect impacts, particularly in relation to the setting of heritage assets. The city centre contains a high concentration of listed buildings, many of which derive part of their significance from their group value and contribution to the historic townscape. The character and appearance of the Conservation Areas also reinforce the importance of coherent views, architectural character, and historic context. The introduction of a modern turbine, as a vertical element within the townscape, has the potential to alter the character of local views and the perception of nearby assets' settings. However, several factors reduce the significance of this effect. First, the turbine is modest in scale when compared to commercial wind energy infrastructure, and it will not dominate the skyline or compete with established landmark structures. When viewed from the Cathedral and Cheetham's Hospital School, the wind turbine will be set within the view of the modern Urbis Building which already introduces a modern influence on this viewpoint from these locations.
- 4.4 Second, the development forms part of a seasonal event which already introduces temporary structures, lighting, and activity into the urban realm. The turbine can therefore be reasonably understood as an extension of this temporary seasonal character, rather than a permanent intervention. Third, the short-term nature of the installation ensures that any changes to the experience of setting are fully reversible. For these reasons, the indirect impact on the setting of nearby heritage assets is assessed as minor and temporary in nature.

National Policy Level

4.5 When tested against national policy, the proposal is consistent with the principles of the NPPF. Paragraph 202 emphasises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and must be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. As no loss of fabric occurs and the effects on setting are limited and reversible, the proposal satisfies this requirement. Paragraph 207 requires applicants to describe significance and potential impact proportionately, which has been undertaken in the previous Chapter. Paragraph 208 requires decision-makers to balance heritage significance with the requirements of the proposal, and in this case the negligible level of harm is outweighed by the public benefits of renewable energy provision and support for a popular seasonal facility. The duty under Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is also met, as the turbine does not harmfully affect the settings of listed buildings in any significant or lasting way.

Local Policy Level

- 4.6 At the local policy level, the proposal aligns with Policy EN3 of the Manchester Core Strategy, which seeks to preserve or enhance the historic environment. The absence of direct harm and the negligible, time-limited nature of indirect impacts ensures that the historic character and accessibility of nearby assets is preserved. Similarly, the scheme is consistent with Policy JP-P2 of the Places for Everyone Plan, which promotes the integration of heritage conservation with sustainable development and encourages proposals that contribute to environmental quality and social wellbeing. By providing on-site renewable energy, the turbine directly supports wider sustainability objectives without compromising the city's historic character.
- 4.7 The assessment demonstrates that the proposed development results in no direct harm to heritage assets and only very limited indirect impacts arising from temporary visual change. These impacts are minor, reversible, and proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposal. When weighed against the benefits of renewable energy provision and the continued viability of a well-established seasonal community facility, the proposal is fully consistent with both national and local heritage policy.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

- 5.1 This assessment has considered the potential impacts of the proposed temporary wind turbine at the Manchester Skate Ice Rink on the significance of heritage assets within the surrounding area, including listed buildings and the Cathedral Conservation Area. The assessment has been undertaken in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024), the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and relevant local policy, including Manchester Core Strategy Policy EN3 and Places for Everyone Policy JP-P2.
- 5.2 The proposed turbine is a temporary and reversible installation, secured on ballast blocks beneath the raised platform of the ice rink, requiring no excavation or permanent alteration to the ground. As such, the development will result in no direct physical impacts on the fabric of any listed building, scheduled monument, or other designated or non-designated heritage asset. Its presence will not affect below-ground archaeology or other sensitive elements of the historic environment.
- 5.3 Potential indirect impacts have been assessed in terms of the contribution that the settings of heritage assets make to their significance. The turbine is modest in scale and designed as part of a seasonal facility that already introduces temporary structures into the area. Any visual effects on the setting of nearby assets—including Manchester Cathedral, Chetham’s Hospital School, the Corn and Produce Exchange, and other listed buildings — are therefore minor, temporary, and fully reversible. The turbine will not obstruct key views, diminish the legibility of historic streetscapes, or detract from the character of the Cathedral Conservation Area or other historic environments.
- 5.4 All of the immediate listed buildings will have views of the turbine that also encompass the modern and dominant Urbins Building and the turbine will be viewed within this existing context and not have a significant change on the appreciation of the assets in this regard.
- 5.5 In accordance with national and local policy, this assessment demonstrates that the proposed development has been designed and located with regard to the significance of heritage assets, ensuring that their architectural, historic, and communal value is respected. The installation offers positive benefits, providing renewable energy to support the sustainable operation of a popular seasonal facility, while contributing to the continued vitality and public enjoyment of the city centre.
- 5.6 Furthermore, the proposal contributes to the wider public realm by supporting a high-quality, seasonal leisure destination that attracts local residents and visitors. By integrating sustainable energy provision into a temporary, low-impact structure, the development demonstrates how modern interventions can coexist with Manchester’s historic environment, enhancing the sense of place without compromising heritage significance. This approach reinforces the role of heritage-led development in promoting cultural engagement, placemaking, and community benefit, while ensuring that historic assets continue to be valued and appreciated by current and future generations.

5.7 Overall, the proposed temporary wind turbine is fully compatible with the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. Its reversible nature, limited scale, and careful siting ensure that it does not cause harm to heritage assets, while delivering demonstrable public and environmental benefits. The proposal aligns with the requirements of the NPPF, statutory duties under the 1990 Act, and local planning policies, representing a sensitive and positive approach to sustainable development within Manchester's historic city centre.

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