

PLANNING APPLICATION FOR INSTALLATION OF ROOF MOUNTED SOLAR PV ARRAYS

DESIGN, ACCESS & PLANNING STATEMENT

Loreto College
Chichester Road South
Manchester
M15 5PB

eENERGY GROUP PLC

TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (AS AMENDED)
PLANNING AND COMPULSORY PURCHASE ACT 2004

Date of issue – Aug 2025

INTRODUCTION

This Planning, Design and Access / Heritage Statement accompanies a planning application.

This application seeks approval for the installation of a 365 kWp solar photovoltaic (PV) system on the rooftops of four existing non-domestic buildings within the grounds of the college.

The proposed development involves the placement of solar panels across a suitable roof areas to maximise energy generation while minimising visual and structural impact.

The primary objective of the project is to enhance the sustainability of the site through on-site renewable energy generation, contributing to both carbon reduction goals and operational energy efficiency.

This Statement has been prepared to aid the Council's consideration of the application proposals.

Planning Application Documentation

In addition to this Planning, Design and Access Statement, the application is supported by a Location Plan and a comprehensive suite of Planning Application Drawings that illustrate the proposed photovoltaic (PV) panel arrangement in detail. The submission is further accompanied by a covering letter and all requisite completed application forms.

This Planning, Design and Access Statement reflects the careful and informed approach adopted by the applicant and their experienced consultant team. The proposal has been developed with full consideration of environmental, ecological, and sustainable development principles, ensuring a scheme that is both technically robust and environmentally responsible.

The Application Site

The application site comprises an existing non-domestic buildings with shallow angle / flat roofs. The buildings are situated within a busy educational environment, where operational continuity and minimal disruption are key considerations.

Relevant Planning History

There is no relevant planning history associated with the application site.

The Proposal

The proposal involves the installation of roof-mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) panels in accordance with the Prior Approval Permitted Development rights for non-domestic buildings, as set out under the relevant provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order.

The proposed equipment has been carefully sited, so far as is practicable, to minimise its impact on the external appearance of the building and to preserve the amenity of the surrounding area. The panels are to be installed on flat roof areas, and:

- Will not exceed one metre in height above the highest part of the roof.
- Will be located more than one metre from the external edges of the roof.
- Will not protrude beyond the roof slope by more than 200mm.
- Will be non-reflective and light-absorbent, with installation behind parapet walling to eliminate the potential for glare on nearby properties.
- Will not generate noise, ensuring no disturbance to neighbouring occupiers.

The application site contains a listed building and therefore full planning permission is required as opposed to prior approval. The proposals have been designed to meet the criteria for prior approval.

In accordance with permitted development conditions, the solar PV equipment will be removed as soon as reasonably practicable once it is no longer required.

PLANNING AND POLICY CONTEXT

This section of the Planning Statement identifies the national and local planning policy and guidance pertinent to the site and development proposal. The plan-led approach to development as enshrined by Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, requires development proposals to accord with the adopted development plan unless material consideration indicate otherwise. Government's Planning Practice Guidance on Determining Planning applications (last updated 15 March 2019) sets out what may be a material consideration. Paragraph 8 of the guidance states

“A material planning consideration is one which is relevant to making the planning decision in question (e.g. whether to grant or refuse an application for planning permission). The scope of what can constitute a material consideration is very wide and so the courts often do not indicate what cannot be a material consideration. However, in general they have taken the view that planning is concerned with land use in the public interest, so that the protection of purely private interests such as the impact of a development on the value of a neighbouring property or loss of private rights to light could not be material considerations”.

MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** supports the development of renewable and low-carbon energy, including **solar photovoltaic (PV) installations**, as part of the UK's commitment to tackling climate change and improving energy security.

NPPF Provisions for Solar PV (June 2023 version – still current as of June 2025):

Section 14 – Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change

Paragraph 152 - Emphasises that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future, shaping places that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and support renewable and low carbon energy.

Paragraph 158 - States that when determining planning applications for renewable and low carbon development, local planning authorities should:

- Not require applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewable energy;
- Recognise that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution;
- Approve applications if the impacts are (or can be made) acceptable.

Paragraph 157 - Encourages local authorities to take a proactive approach to identifying opportunities for renewable energy generation, including through roof-mounted solar panels.

Application Relevance:

The proposed installation of roof-mounted solar PV panels aligns with the NPPF's strategic aims by:

- Delivering on-site renewable energy generation;
- Making efficient use of existing non-domestic roof space without impacting greenfield land;
- Contributing to carbon reduction and climate resilience goals;
- Having no unacceptable impacts on visual amenity, heritage assets, or neighbouring land users.

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

Government's Planning Practice Guidance is a web-based resource providing that provides planning guidance on various planning policy and development management topics. The key topics relevant to this application proposal are:

- Climate Change;
- Renewable and Low Carbon Energy; and
- Natural Environment.

Climate Change - Last updated 15 March 2019

Government's Practical Guidance on Climate Change identifies how addressing climate change is one of the core land use planning principles which the National Planning Policy Framework expects to underpin in both plan-making and decision-taking. Paragraph 3 sets out examples of mitigating climate change by reducing emissions, these include (i) Providing renewable and low carbon energy technologies and (ii) providing opportunities for decentralised energy. The proposal would achieve both.

Paragraph 5 of the guidance identifies how impacts of climate change needs to be taken into account in a realistic way. It goes on to state that local planning authorities should consider identifying no or low-cost responses to climate change that also deliver other benefits. In this instance the proposals are landowner and developer led; and as such there is no financial costs associated with the delivery of this response to climate change for Leeds City Council.

Renewable and Low Carbon Energy - Published 18 June 2015

This guidance reaffirms Government's commitment towards increasing the amount of renewable energy and low carbon technologies within the UK. The introductory paragraph states ***"Increasing the amount of energy from renewable and low carbon technologies will help to make sure the UK has a secure energy supply, reduce greenhouse gas emissions to slow down climate change and stimulate investment in new jobs and businesses. Planning has an important role in the delivery of new renewable and low carbon energy infrastructure in locations where the local environmental impact is acceptable"***

Committee on Climate Change May 2019

The UK Committee on Climate Change advises the government on progress on tackling climate change.

In May 2019, the Committee on Climate Change published its Net Zero report which responded to a request from the Governments of the UK, Wales and Scotland, asking the Committee to reassess the UK's long-term emissions targets.

The paper identifies how: -

- Current policy is insufficient for even the existing targets and a net zero target would not be credible unless policy is ramped up significantly.
- Delivery must progress with far greater urgency.
- The supply of low-carbon power must continue to expand rapidly, and increasingly, from around 2030, some conventional power plants may need to run for only part of the year. While many options no longer need subsidies, Government intervention may still be needed, for example by backing long-term contracts aligned to expected wholesale prices. Policy and regulatory frameworks should also encourage flexibility (e.g. demand response, storage and interconnection).
- The Energy White Paper planned for 2019 (published December 2020) should aim to support a quadrupling of low-carbon power generation by 2050.
- Consistently strong deployment of low-carbon generation will be needed in order to quadruple low-carbon supply by 2050.

The explicit need to introduce a step change in how the country deals with climate change has been recognised by the Government who, on 1 May 2019, declared an Environmental and Climate Change Emergency following the finding of the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change that to avoid more than 1.5°C rise in global warming, global emissions would need to fall by around 45 per cent from 2010 levels by 2030, reaching net zero by around 2050. Through the declaration, the Government recognises a need to move swiftly to capture economic opportunities and green jobs in the low carbon economy while managing risks for workers and communities currently reliant on carbon intensive sectors.

SPD Sustainable Design and Construction 2011

This supplementary planning document (SPD) specifies measures that can be taken to limit emissions of CO₂ into the atmosphere that arise from the operation of a building. Increasing solar gain is one such measure specified, stating 'Passive solar gain alone can save up to 10% of heating demand (Energy Saving Trust 2006) and does not impose significant additional costs or design constraints on a development'

Climate Change Act 2008

As part of its contributions to international efforts, the UK also has domestic legislation and policies in place to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Climate Change Act 2008 established long-term statutory targets for the UK to achieve reductions in greenhouse gases by 2050 against a 1990 baseline. The Act originally set a legally binding target of an 80% cut in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. On 12 June 2019, as a direct response to the climate change emergency declaration, the Government laid the draft Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment) Order 2019 to amend the Climate Change Act 2008 by introducing a target for at least a 100% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (compared to 1990 levels) in the UK by 2050. This is otherwise known as a net zero target because some emissions can remain if they are offset by removal from the atmosphere and/or by trading in carbon units. The legislation was signed into law in late June 2019, following approval by the House of Commons and the House of Lords.

UK Renewable Energy Strategy

The 'UK Renewable Energy Strategy' was published in July 2009 by DECC, identifying how to radically increase renewable energy use in the UK as part of an overall strategy for tackling climate change. This strategy would also meet the UK's European obligations and legally binding targets to ensure that 20% of our energy comes from renewable sources by 2020.

Clean Growth Strategy

The Clean Growth Strategy, published in October 2017, provides the Government's latest position on solar development and sets out a comprehensive set of policies and proposals that aim to accelerate the pace of "clean growth", i.e. deliver increased economic growth and decreased emissions.

To achieve the clean growth, the Government identifies how the UK will need to nurture low carbon technologies, processes and systems that are as cheap as possible. The Government places significant emphasis on securing increased investment across the energy systems whilst minimising, as much as possible, the public costs for securing such investments and makes multiple references to how they are seeking the delivery of solar without subsidy. Moreover, page 99 specifically states how the **'Government want to see more people investing in solar without government support'**

Energy White Paper: Powering Our Net Zero Future

The Energy White Paper was published by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy on 14th December 2020, and builds on the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan to set the energy related measures and a long-term vision for our energy system, consistent with the Government's commitments to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. The White Paper sets out the Government's policies and commitments that will put on course to achieving net zero. One of the key objectives relayed by the White Paper is that the Government will drive to achieve greatly improved energy performance in both existing buildings to reduce consumption and help keep bills affordable. With regards to existing non-domestic buildings the white paper sets out the Government's policy to ensure that all rented non-domestic buildings will be EPD band B by 2030, where cost effective.

Heritage Assessment

The following section describes the Listing of each nearby Designated Heritage Asset, assesses the setting of the asset, and demonstrates the impact of the proposed development on each of the Designated Heritage Assets and their setting. Chapel Building, Loreto College (Grade II)



Above: Chapel Building, Loreto College (Grade II) - Listing Entry: 1389525

Description: - "Roman Catholic chapel. Building began c1874, completed c1876.

Herbert Edward Tijou was the architect. Victorian Gothic style. Grey, orange and red brick in header bond with stretcher decorative bands, moulded brick window surrounds; panels of diagonal patterned brickwork below the upper windows.

Painted stonework bands, window tracery, east end cross, hoodmoulds with head stops. Two tall storeys, canted east end, gabled west end with lower west stair and organ loft bay. 5 bays, including the west staircase bay with organ loft above; the chapel standing high over ground floor.

Interior: The chapel is reached from the west end bay with timber straight-flight staircase, wood block floor, stained glass west wall stair window of 8 lights: religious figures in frames with foliage.

A holy water stoup to left of the chapel entrance, and stone steps to the organ loft in the north wall. The wooden double entrance doors are original, with large panels, elaborate brass fittings. 2 steps up to sanctuary and 1 more step to altar. The chapel is richly decorated throughout with tiling, moulded stone strings, and mosaics. The upper levels are decorated with mosaics up to eaves level: rectangular framed panels of cream, with blue motifs and symbols. The stations of the cross on the side walls. Four 2-light nave windows on the north side, one on the south side, and two 2-light sanctuary windows flank the reredos. Stained glass with fruit and flower motifs in the side walls, and lettering recording donations.

The south side chapel has a mosaic representing a nun and the Sacred Heart; a carved stone panel below, the altar not visible. The large room below the chapel has three east windows with transom and mullion tracery. Moulded eaves cornice, blocked fireplace in south wall."

Assessment:

The Chapel Building is located within the boundary of Loreto's College Campus, approached on foot from the college's main entrance to the north of the building. The users of this building will be students and staff of Loreto College.

The chapel is surrounded by contemporary buildings and was granted permission for a modern two-storey extension in 2007. To the rear of the chapel is a five-storey contemporary college block, the E&K building.

Solar panels have been approved on the application under previous permissions.

From the chapel, the views are mostly of other college buildings. The area around the building is landscaped and well kept. There are plenty of trees around the building, some of which are protected.

Impact of Proposal:

The proposed solar panels are non reflective and will be sited on existing roofs.

The proposal will not change the current views to or from the chapel, nor will they have an effect on the way that the chapel is currently used or experienced by students and staff of the college.

- It is our belief that the proposal will have minimal impact on this Designated Heritage Asset and its current setting.

CONCLUSION

The existing buildings are located within a busy educational environment, and as such, the proposed solar PV installations will not appear as an isolated or incongruous feature within its setting.

The proposals contribute to on-site renewable energy generation, supporting both environmental sustainability goals and energy efficiency objectives. It is fully in accordance with relevant Local and National Planning Policies that promote the transition to low-carbon energy sources and encourage the integration of renewable technologies into existing developments.

Furthermore, the proposal meets the criteria set out under the Prior Approval provisions for solar PV installations on non-domestic buildings and is therefore considered acceptable in principle, subject to compliance with the relevant limitations and conditions.