

Planning Department
Manchester City Council
PO Box 532
Town Hall
Manchester
M60 2LA

Manchester
One Express
1 George Leigh Street
Manchester M4 5DL
nexusplanning.co.uk

17 June 2025

Dear Sir/Madam

Application for Prior Approval under Schedule 2, Part 14, Class J of the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 for the installation of solar photovoltaic (PV) panels at the Printworks, Manchester

On behalf of our client, DTZ Investors, please find enclosed an application for prior approval under Class J, Part 14, Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 for the installation of solar photovoltaic (PV) equipment on the roof of The Printworks, 27 Withy Grove, Manchester M4 2BS ("the Site").

Submission Documents

- Completed Application Forms
- Cover Letter (Nexus Planning)
- Site Location Plan (PRW-CDA-ZZ-00-DR-A-PL-3000 P3)
- Panel Placement (Genfit)
- String Design Report (Solar Edge)
- Project Report (Solen)
- Product Specification (Dynamic FM)
- Application Fee (£325.00)

Application Site

The Printworks complex is a key driver for the leisure economy in the city centre and accommodates a wide and dynamic range of leisure operators that together form a clear focus for the city centre's leisure economy. The application site therefore represents part of a very significant building within the city centre, and its prominent role must be reflected in the general appearance and upkeep of the units and operators throughout Printworks. The Printworks is classed as a non-designated heritage asset and is a recognised Manchester landmark.

The application site comprises the extensive flat roofscape of The Printworks building. The roof is subdivided into multiple flat roof areas, characterised by various existing plant and servicing equipment, ductwork, and ventilation infrastructure.

The site is surrounded by the Arndale Shopping Centre to the south, Shudehill Interchange to the east, the National Football Museum and the Corn Exchange to the west and commercial and residential uses to the north.

There are several Grade II listed buildings in proximity to the site including:

London

Birmingham

Bristol

Manchester

Reading

- City Buildings to the west of the site
- Cooperative Wholesale Society to the immediate north of the site
- Cooperative Society Building to the immediate north of the site
- Victoria Buildings to the east of the site
- 29 Shudehill to the east of the site

The site lies within the Manchester city centre boundary as defined on the adopted proposals map and is located within the Shudehill Conservation Area

The building is not listed, not within the curtilage of a listed building, and not a scheduled monument. The installation is wholly roof-mounted and does not involve any wall-mounted panels.

Proposed Development

The proposal seeks to install 489 solar PV panels across multiple flat roof areas of the building using a ValkPro+ mounting system. The panels are to be installed at a 10° tilt and will sit on ballast frames without roof penetration. The size of the panels vary and will measure either 30cm x 15cm x 4.5cm or 30cm x 30cm x 4.5cm.



Figure 1: Proposed location of solar panels

Summary of Class J Criteria

Class J – Installation or alteration etc of solar equipment on non-domestic premises. J.1 Development is not permitted by Class J if -

a) the solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment would be installed on a pitched roof and 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.

b) The solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment would be installed on a flat roof, where the highest part of the solar PV equipment would be higher than 1 metre above the highest part of the roof (excluding any chimney).

c) The solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment would be installed on a roof and within 1 metre of the external edge of that roof.

e) The solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment would be installed on a site designated as a scheduled monument.

f) The solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment would be installed on a listed building or on a building within the curtilage of a listed building.

J.2 Development is not permitted to Class J(a) or (b) if –

a) The solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment would be installed on a wall and would protrude more than 0.2 metres beyond the plane of the wall when measured from the perpendicular with the external surface of the wall.

b) The solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment would be installed on a wall and within 1 metre of a junction of that wall with another wall or with the roof of the building.

c) In the case of a building on article 2(3) land, the solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment would be installed on a wall which fronts a highway.

Summary of Class J Criteria Compliance

Criterion	Requirement	Compliance
J.1(a)	No more than 0.2m protrusion on a pitched roof	The solar panels will be installed on a flat roof.
J.1(b)	PV must not extend more than 1m above highest part of flat roof	Max height of the panels is under 0.5 metres.
J.1(c)	PV must not be within 1m of external roof edge	Panels are setback to be over 1m from the edge of the roof.
J.1(e)	Not a scheduled monument	The application site is not the site of a designated scheduled monument.
J.1(f)	Not on/within curtilage of a listed building	The Printworks building is not listed neither is it within the curtilage of a listed building.

J.2(a–c)	Wall-mounted restrictions	The panels will be installed on the roof of the building.
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The installation therefore meets all applicable criteria under Class J and does not require full planning permission. A full breakdown of mounting and spatial arrangement is provided in the accompanying system specification and layout plans.

The Printworks building, while a recognised Manchester landmark and a non-designated heritage asset, is not listed, not located within the curtilage of a listed building, and not a scheduled monument. The proposal has been designed to preserve the visual amenity of the site and respect the setting of surrounding heritage assets.

The proposed PV installation is limited to modern flat roof areas of the Printworks complex that are already occupied by existing plant and ductwork. These areas are not original to the building, have no architectural detailing, and have been identified as the least visually prominent zones. The installation has been confined to rooftops that are well-screened from public vantage points, either due to parapet walls or surrounding buildings.

All panels will be installed using a low-profile ballasted mounting system, with a maximum system height of approximately 500mm above the roof level and a 10° tilt angle. All equipment will be located at least 1 metre back from the roof edges, minimising any chance of visibility from surrounding streets.

Conclusion

In accordance with Class J of the GPDO, the proposal qualifies as permitted development. We therefore respectfully request that Manchester City Council confirms in writing within 56 days that prior approval is not required, or alternatively, grants prior approval for the proposed development.

Should you require any additional details or clarification, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely



Heather Lindley-Clapp
Director