MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

Heritage, Urban Design and Sustainability
Consultation Response

Address:	Dene House, Nazarene Theological College, Dene Road Manchester M20 2GU
Application Ref.:	142908/LO/2025
Proposal:	Listed Building Consent for installation of roof mounted solar photovoltaic system comprising of 28no. solar modules
Case officer:	Holly Wright
Consultee:	Linda Marciniak
Date:	21st May 2025

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1. Position

The proposed installation of 28no. roof mounted solar PVs is supported.

2. Introduction

The application site is a modern (2003), unlisted educational building orientated north-south on Dene Road. The 3-storey building known as the Emmanuel Centre, sits within a group of 4 buildings together known as Nazarene Theological College. One building, White House, is grade II listed (20 June 1988).

The Emmanuel Centre building is of red brick and red tile roof construction the roof having both pitched and flat elements. It is connected on its eastern elevation to the unlisted Dene Cottage by a single storey extension. The listed White House building is situated 12 metres from the western elevation, separated by an intervening car park.

In detail, the setting of the site includes the listed college building (1914) and associated grade II listed rear boundary wall and steps (listed 20 June 1988), Dene Cottage an early C20 light red brick building has value as an NDHA, and Hurlet House, another candidate NDHA west of the listed building. The site is not within a conservation area.

The site is bounded by dense mature tree planting to the Dene Road frontage with many TPOd trees, and a large lawn at the rear that is also well screened.

Beyond the curtilage of the site, the area is residential comprising mainly of mid-C20 to early C21 detached family housing which extends to the cul-de-sac known as Dene Park to the east.

3. Significance

The significance of heritage assets is embedded in government and local planning policy and is key to managing change in the historic environment. The NPPF covers both designated and non-designated heritage assets and states that they should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.

As directed by the NPPF, significance is required to be identified by applicants and the local planning authority (LPA) and the impact of development weighed against it considering any harm and public benefits.

The applicant has submitted a Design and Access Statement prepared by the solar energy provider. It notes that the listed building is grade II and concludes that there will be no resultant harm due to intervening built form. Impact on the NDHA has not been considered.

The listed White House is assessed by the LPA as having a high level of significance whilst Dene House is assessed as having moderate significance, both on the basis of their architectural and historical interests.

White House was designed in 1914 by Frank Brookhouse Dunkerley as a private family residence for Will Melland, a prominent figure within Manchester City Council, and is in the Vernacular Revival style.

Little is known about the NDHA Dene Cottage, though it bears similar Arts and Crafts stylistic characteristics with 'Garden Village' houses from the early C20. Its early C20 date, similar design features and spatial relationship with White House when historic map regression shows little else was developed nearby, suggests it could also have been the work of Dunkerley.

4. Application

The application comprises of the installation of 28no. solar photovoltaic panels on two roof slopes of the unlisted Emmanuel Building arranged as follows:

21no. panels would be arranged on the east facing roof slope, and 7no. panels would be arranged on the south-facing roof of a projecting gable towards the rear of the site.

5. Policy Context

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2024)

Para 8(c) – The environmental objective of sustainable development is to protect and enhance the natural, built, and historic environment, including adapting to climate change and moving to a low carbon economy.
Para 161 – The planning system should support the transition to net zero and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.
Para 167 – Local planning authorities should give significant weight to supporting energy efficiency to existing buildings. Where proposals affect conservation areas, listed buildings or other designated heritage assets, the policies in Chapter 16 should also be applied.
Para 168b - When determining applications for all forms of renewable and low carbon energy developments, local planning authorities should recognise the value that small scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions.
Para 202 - Heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.
Para 207 - Local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

Para 208 - LPAs should ensure that any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal is avoided or minimised.
Para 210 - In determining applications, LPAs should take account of, the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
Para 212 - When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.
Para 213 - Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification.
Para 215 - Proposals of less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset should be weighed against the wider public benefits of the proposal.
Para 216 – The effect of a proposal on non-designated heritage assets needs to be considered in assessing an application.
Para 219 - Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance.

Manchester City Core Strategy

Policy DM1 – Development Management
Policy EN3 – Heritage
Policy EN4 - Reducing CO_2 Emissions by Enabling Low and Zero Carbon Development

Places for Everyone (2022-2039)

Policy JP-P2 – Heritage – Positive management and integration of heritage can be achieved by exploring opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that restoration of historic buildings offer.

Policy JP-S1 – Sustainable Development – Includes the 2038 carbon neutrality objective which can be achieved by significantly upscaling solar photovoltaic energy and promoting the retrofitting of existing buildings.

Historic England guidance and Planning policy (NPPF, Core Strategy and PfE) encourage a conservation-led approach with an emphasis on the preservation of heritage assets.

6. Discussion

The NPPF para.207 requires that an applicant describes the significance of heritage assets giving great weight given to their conservation (para.212). It goes on to say that any harm should be clearly and convincingly justified (para.213) and that any public benefits are weighed into the assessment (para.215).

Carbon savings through transitioning to net zero is a government policy objective in the NPPF (para.161) which includes the installation of renewable technologies on existing buildings (NPPF para.167). These objectives flow through both Core Strategy and PfE policies.

The application is accompanied by a Design and Access Statement which includes a brief statement on the grading of the listed building. It does not refer to the presence of NDHAs which also need to be taken into consideration in the assessment as directed by the NPPF

(para.216).

Impact on the listed building

Installation of the solar PVs will have a neutral impact on White House, the front elevation of which holds the most special interest. The majority of the PVs (21no) will be sited on the east-facing roof slope of the Emmanuel Centre which is the opposite side of the roof from that which runs perpendicular to White House. As such, views of the PVs from Dene Road will not be read in context alongside the listed building, protecting its special interest.

The remaining 7no. PVs will be sited on a rear/south facing cross gable roof slope which is partially screened by the rear pitched gable roof. This, and their 20-metre separation east of the listed White House, means that there will be very limited views of them from within the rear garden behind White House. Views from this aspect will be further limited by the boundary of rear gardens on Dene Park which extend into the application site behind Dene Cottage and the Emmanuel Centre. The Council therefore agrees with the conclusion in the D&A that the impact on the listed building will be minimal. In NPPF terms, this amounts to less than substantial harm.

Impact on the NDHA Dene Cottage

Siting the majority of panels on the eastern roof slope is likely to have a moderate impact on Dene Cottage. 21no. PVs on this elevation will be read in the context of Dene Cottage, particularly on approaching the college along Dene Road where glimpses of both roofs are visible.

Like White House, the special interest of Dene Cottage lies in its architecture, and particularly that of its front elevation which is considered to have medium significance. As the majority of the PVs will sit on the roof slope perpendicular to this building, separated by the single storey linked extension, the PVs will not be readily apparent on approaching Dene Cottage from the entrance on Dene Road. On this basis, the special interest of the NDHA will be preserved by reason of the relationship of these two buildings.

Outside of the site curtilage which is not within a conservation area, the roofs of Dene Cottage and the Emmanuel Centre can be glimpsed from the junction with Dene Park where they form a harmonious group. Although the roof is an integral part of the building, it carries less significance than the front elevation.

The PVs on the eastern elevation will be set down 835mm off the ridge but extend its full length. They measure 1762mm deep and are 1134mm wide, making them quite large panels.

Their siting, size, geometry and black modern material contrasted against the red tile roof will make them more visible in the street scene which will disrupt the presently uncluttered appearance. The proposal is justified as set out below.

Justification

The installation is justified on the basis that the two buildings have distinct architectural languages and spatial separation with the PVs clearly associated with the modern

Emmanuel Centre and not read as part of Dene Cottage. The level of harm to the NDHA is less than substantial and is outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal.

Public benefits

The public benefits are primarily the reduction in carbon emissions of the Emmanuel Centre and support for its transition to net zero. This will contribute to the college's continued presence on the site and the care and active use of the listed and non-listed buildings. This is to the benefit of the city's heritage assets as a whole.

The installation will generate 11,470kWh of electricity and save 3 tonnes of CO_2 per annum over a projected 20-year lifespan - 60 tonnes in total, which is a significant amount, and is fully reversible at the end of life.

The carbon savings have a wider public benefit beyond the college boundary, contributing to the city's cumulative carbon savings total following declaration of a climate emergency in 2019 and stated climate goals within the Climate Change Action Plan 2025 (2025-2030 in production).

It is supported in NPPF policies 161, 167 and 168b and PfE JP-S1 which requires a significant upscale in renewable energy to meet the city regions' net zero carbon objective by 2038 and fulfils the environmental pillar of sustainable development, contributing to the city's transition towards a sustainable, low carbon economy as set out in NPPF para.8c.

7. Conclusion

Based on the above, the installation of the 28no. solar PVs will have a neutral impact on the listed White House building which is the asset of highest significance within the site curtilage, whilst there will be a less than substantial amount of harm to the NDHA Dene Cottage. The carbon savings resulting from the proposal are valid public benefits which outweigh any harm to the NDHA.

The proposal accords with NPPF para.202 which requires that development preserves heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance and meets the objectives of sustaining and conserving heritage assets within Core Strategy policies EN3 and DM1 and NPPF paras.208, 212, 215 and 216.

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