

Planning Statement

For Greg's Properties Limited | 23-426

Installation of solar panels – Greg's Building, 1 Booth Street, Manchester, M2 4DU

Project: 23-426
Site Address: Greg's Building, 1 Booth Street, Manchester, M2 4DU
Client: Greg's Properties Limited
Date: 19 October 2023
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This supporting planning statement accompanies an application seeking full planning permission and listed building consent for the installation of solar panels to sections of the roof of Greg's Building, 1 Booth Street, Manchester, M2 4DU.
- 1.2 This statement should be read in conjunction with the Heritage Statement prepared by Kathryn Sather & Associates and the Energy Saving Report prepared by Heatsource Direct.
- 1.3 Greg's Building is Grade II Listed and is situated within the Upper King Street Conservation Area. It will be demonstrated that the principle of development is acceptable and there would be no adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area or the amenity of neighbouring properties as a result of the proposals.
- 1.4 The proposed development would comply with policies set out in the development plan and the Framework and therefore in accordance with paragraph 11 of The Framework, planning permission should be approved. There are no material considerations to indicate otherwise.



2. Context

Site location and description

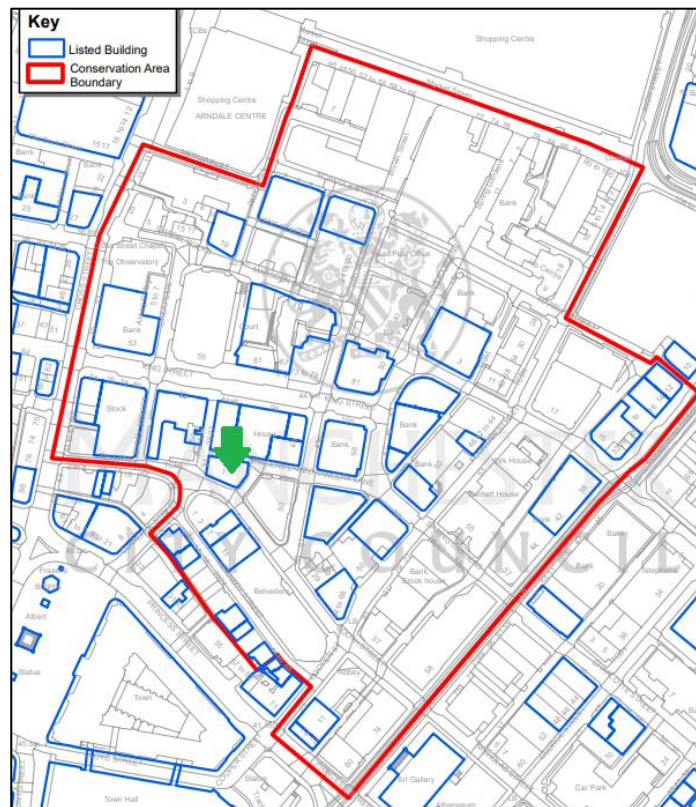
- 2.1 Greg's Building is located in Manchester city centre, north of the Town Hall on Albert Square, east of Cross Street and south of Upper King Street.
- 2.2 The building has been used for offices since 1906, with individual suites on each floor.
- 2.3 The property faces south on to Booth Street, with Chancery Place adjacent to the east and Pall Mall adjacent to the west. Chancery Lane is situated to the north of the building and runs parallel to the rear of Greg's Building. This is detailed in the Location Plan situated below:



- 2.4 Greg's Building is a Grade II Listed Building, referred to with the List Entry Name of "31, Pall Mall, 1, Booth Street" on the National Heritage List for England. A detailed description of the building is set out in the Heritage Statement.
- 2.5 The site is located in Upper King Street Conservation Area, which the Council's website notes comprises the central financial district around the eastern portion of King Street.



2.6 The site is surrounded by other listed buildings, as outlined blue in the below plan.



Relevant planning history

2.7 A search of Manchester City Council's online planning application history search identified the following applications:

- 125815/FO/2019 – Change of use of part ground floor to a private library (sui generis) – Approved 20/03/2020
- 089411/LO/2009/C1 – LISTED BUILDING CONSENT for refurbishment of top (7th) floor offices, including new windows, door, rooflight and balustrade to parapet – Approved 17/06/2009
- 089410/LO/2009/C1 – Refurbishment of top (7th) floor offices, including new windows, door, rooflight and balustrade to parapet – Approved 17/06/2009
- 086756/LO/2008/C1 – LISTED BUILDING CONSENT for installation of a new power supply at basement level and refurbishment with alterations to the main building entrance – Approved 10/12/2008
- 081062/FO/2006/C1 – Installation of air handling equipment at roof level – Approved 06/02/2007



- 081628/LO/2006/C1 – LISTED BUILDING CONSENT for internal alterations to fourth floor and installation of air handling equipment at roof level – Approved 06/02/2007
- 045320/CO/CITY2/94 – LISTED BUILDING CONSENT for erection of security railings to ground floor windows on Pall Mall, Chancery Lane and Booth Street elevations – Approved 16/05/1994
- 043218/LO/CITY1/93 – Installation of toilets to existing office suite on 3rd floor – Approved 23/02/1993
- 042547/LO/CITY1/92 – Internal refurbishment of entrance hall and main staircase – Not Proceeded With 22/06/1993
- 042565 – New entrance screen required in association with internal refurbishment works proposed to the entrance hall and main staircase – Approved 04/11/1992
- F00783 – Formation of new entrance doors to existing office block – Not Proceeded With 06/12/1974
- F01970/LB – Renovation of existing entrance to office block – Approved 14/05/1975



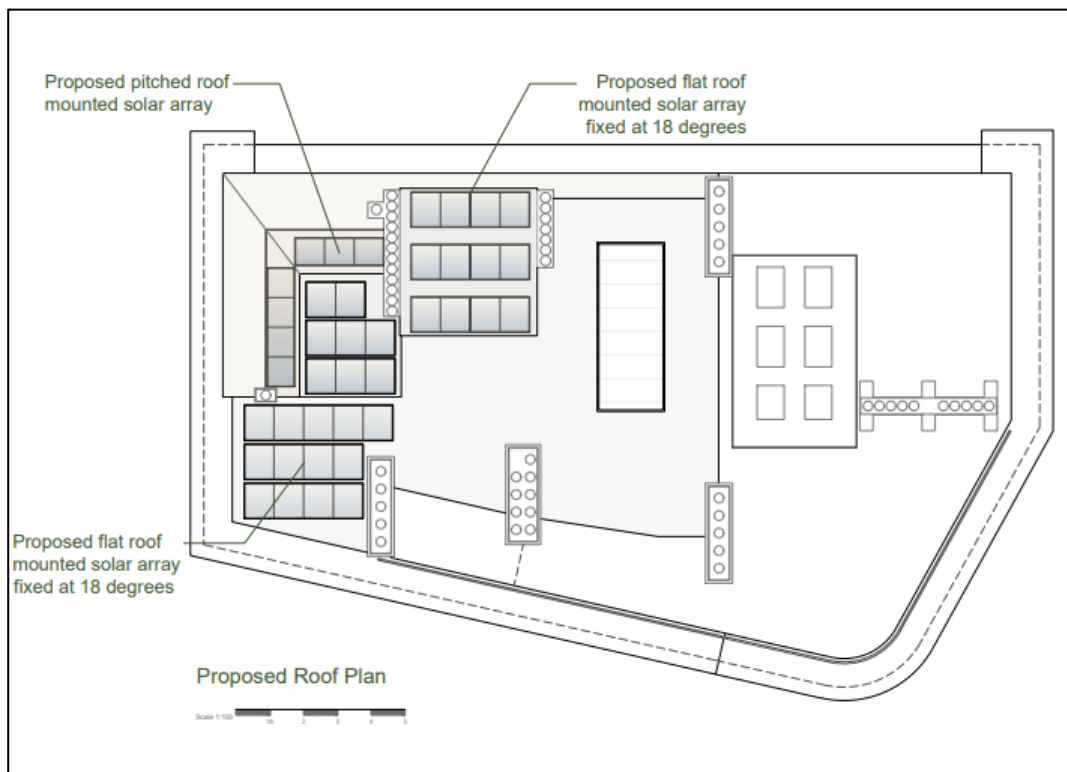
3. The application

3.1 As set out above, this application seeks full planning permission and listed building consent for the installation of solar panels on the roof of Greg's Building. This will include forty-four 420W panels.

3.2 The panels will be located in the following locations on the roof:

- On the inside roof slopes of the L-shaped roof of the west offices, 8 panels
- On the flat roof of the lift shaft building, 12 panels
- On the flat southwest and central roof areas, 13 and 11 panels respectively

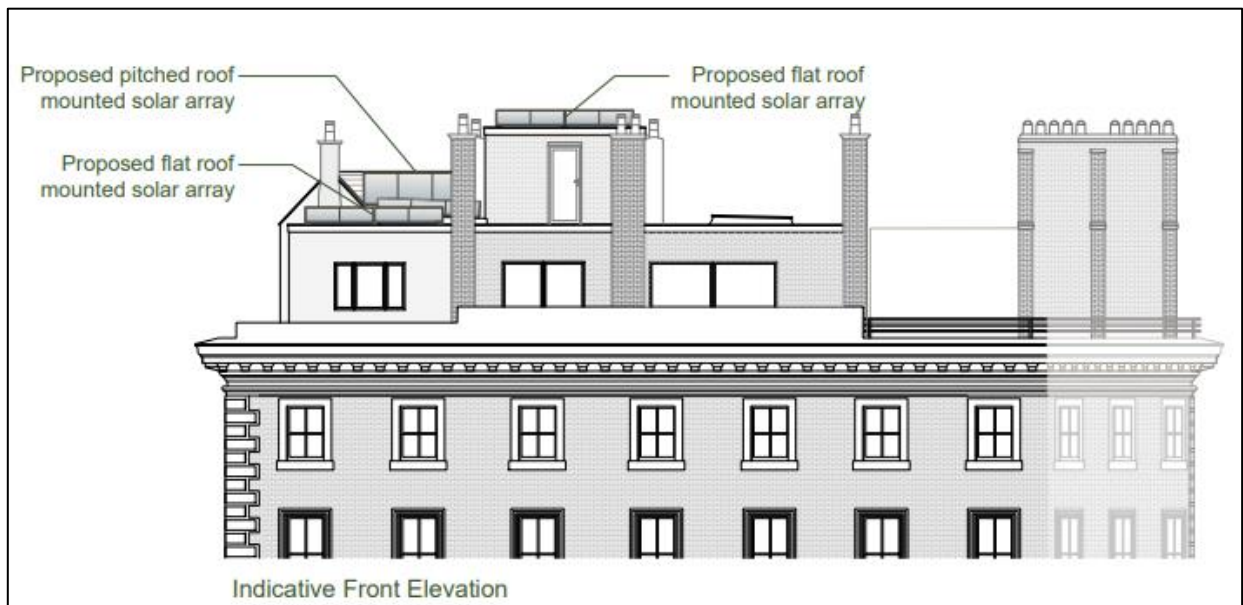
3.3 The below roof plan shows the proposed locations of the solar panels.



3.4 These solar panels will allow Greg's Building to generate its own renewable energy and reduce the building's overall electricity consumption and CO₂ emissions.



3.5 A proposed section plan showing the solar panels in situ is located below.



4. Policy context

The Development Plan

- 4.1 The Development Plan comprises the Manchester Core Strategy, which was adopted in 2012, and the saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP), which was adopted in 1995. Policies considered relevant to the determination of this application are set out below:

Core Strategy (2012)

- Policy SP 1 – Spatial Principles
- Policy EC 3 – The Regional Centre
- Policy CC 1 – Primary Economic Development Focus: City Centre and Fringe
- Policy CC 9 – Design and Heritage
- Policy EN 1 – Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas
- Policy EN 3 - Heritage
- Policy EN 4 – Reducing CO₂ Emissions by Enabling Low and Zero Carbon Development
- Policy EN 5 – Strategic Areas for low and zero carbon decentralised energy infrastructure
- Policy EN 7 – Energy Infrastructure opportunities
- Policy EN 8 – Adaption to Climate Change
- Policy DM 1 – Development Management

Saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP (1995)

- UDP Policy DC18.1 – Conservation Areas
- UDP Policy DC19.1 – Listed Buildings

Other material considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

- 4.2 Paragraph 11 states that “Plans and decision should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development”. It states that for decision-taking this means:



c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or

d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed, or

ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework as a whole.

4.3 The following sections of the Framework are considered relevant in the determination of this application:

- 2. Achieving sustainable development
- 4. Decision-making
- 14. Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- 16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

4.4 The PPG was originally published on 6th March 2014 and has been updated since. The relevant sections of the PPG are discussed in the following sections of this statement.

Places for Everyone

4.5 The Examination into the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document was held between November 2022 and July 2023. The Inspector's letter was published on 11 August 2023. The next stage is to carry out a further consultation on the proposed main modifications, changes to the policies map, and updated sustainability appraisal and habitat regulations assessment reports. The Plan is not yet adopted and limited weight is given to this document in respect of this application.

Other material considerations

4.6 Other material considerations comprise:

- CLASP Environment Resilience Resources & Support Renewable Factsheet #5 (Solar)
- Manchester City Council's Climate Change Action Plan 2020 – 2025 (Refreshed plan 2022-2025)



5. Planning considerations

Principle of development

- 5.1 The Climate Change Act 2008 establishes a legally binding target to reduce the UK's greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% by 2050 from 1990 levels.
- 5.2 National Planning Policy Guidance states that addressing climate change is one of the core land use planning principles within the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and is expected to underpin both plan-making and decision-taking (paragraph ID: 6-001-20140306).
- 5.3 The Framework (2021) states under Section 14 that:
- “158. When determining planning applications for renewable and low carbon development, local planning authorities should:
- a) not require applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy, and recognise that even small-scale projects provide a valuable contribution to cutting greenhouse gas emissions; and
- b) approve the application if its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable. Once suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy have been identified in plans, local planning authorities should expect subsequent applications for commercial scale projects outside these areas to demonstrate that the proposed location meets the criteria used in identifying suitable areas.”
- 5.4 Policy EN4 of the Core Strategy notes that where possible, retrofit projects will be used as a mechanism to help improve energy efficiency and provide low and zero carbon energy supplies to existing buildings. It notes that where possible, retrofit projects will be required to connect to, make contributions to low or zero carbon energy schemes and incorporate provision to enable future connection to any potential decentralised energy schemes.
- 5.5 Policy EN5 of the Core Strategy states that The Regional Centre is a strategic area for low and zero carbon decentralised energy infrastructure and has a major role to play in achieving an increase in the level of decentralised, low and zero carbon energy supplies.
- 5.6 The proposal provides Greg's Building with its own decentralised, renewable energy supply which will result in the building's decrease in electrical consumption.
- 5.7 Advice / supplementary research documents such as Renewable Factsheet #5 – Solar provide guidance and background information on renewable energy such as solar panels.



- 5.8 Addressing climate change is a core land use planning principle at a national level and renewable energy schemes are positively supported at a local level, subject to the provisions referred to in Policy EN7 of the Core Strategy.
- 5.9 Policy EN7 of the Core Strategy notes that there will be a general presumption in favour of low and zero carbon decentralised energy schemes, subject to any energy centre being located and designed to a high quality so as to integrate with and contribute to the townscape. As previously noted, Greg's Building is a Listed Building located in a Conservation Area. The impact of the proposed development on the heritage assets is discussed below.
- 5.10 In summary, the Government is clear that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate. The proposed solar panels are entirely consistent with this and meet the requirements of development plan policy.

Heritage considerations

- 5.11 A detailed assessment of heritage impacts is provided in the Heritage Statement prepared by Kathryn Sather & Associates. We summarise this assessment against the relevant planning legislation below.

Key policy and legislative summary

- 5.12 Section 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the decision maker to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting. Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act (1990) states that special attention must be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the conservation area. The test can be met by either development which makes a positive contribution to an area's character or by development which leaves the character and appearance unharmed.
- 5.13 Paragraph 197 of the Framework states that in determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:
- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation.
 - The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic viability.
 - The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.



- 5.14 The Framework confirms that in 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 (paragraph 199).
- 5.15 Paragraph 200 of the Framework states that “Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.
- 5.16 Paragraphs 201 and 202 of the Framework set out the circumstances to be considered where a development leads to ‘substantial harm’ or total loss of significance (paragraph 201), to a heritage asset or less than substantial harm (paragraph 202).

The significance of the heritage assets

- 5.17 The designated heritage assets in this case are the Grade II Listed Greg’s Building and the Upper King Street Conservation Area. The Heritage Statement prepared by Kathryn Sather & Associates concludes that the Greg’s Building is of **medium significance** although the roof structures, with the exception of the chimneys are of little or no significance (section 5.2 of the Heritage Statement) and that the Upper King Street Conservation Area is assessed as being of **medium significance** (table 8.4 of the Heritage Statement).
- 5.18 The heritage statement then provides an assessment of the special interest of the Upper King Street Conservation Area and the contribution of Greg’s Building to it. The conclusion at 6.5 is that the Greg’s Building makes a **medium contribution** to the conservation area (section 6.5 of the Heritage Statement).

Effects on the heritage assets

- 5.19 The impact of the development on the significance of the heritage assets is assessed in the Heritage Statement prepared by Kathryn Sather & Associates. The panels would not be visible in any views of the building from ground level. The Heritage Statement concludes that:
- The contribution the Greg’s Building makes to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area will not be affected by the proposed works (paragraph 8.2.7 of the Heritage Statement).
 - The proposed alterations would have a neutral impact on the character and appearance of the Upper King Street Conservation Area (paragraph 8.2.7 of the Heritage Statement).
 - The proposed development would have neutral impact on the significance of the Greg’s Building (paragraph 8.3.3).
- 5.20 In summary, the overall impact of the proposals would have a neutral impact on both the Conservation Area and the listed building. As such, paragraphs 200-203 of the Framework do not apply and the requirements of national and local policy are met.



- 5.21 Notwithstanding this conclusion, although we would reiterate that the applicant's case is that there is no harm, there are public benefits that would flow from the development. Public benefits are not prescribed by the Framework. The NPPG provides guidance on public benefits at paragraph 18a-020-20190723. It states that public benefits may follow from many developments and could be anything that delivers economic, social or environmental objectives as described in the Framework (paragraph 8).
- 5.22 The proposals would provide a decentralised energy source and contribute towards mitigating the effects of climate change. The solar panels would contribute to the Government's and City Council's aim of increasing the use of renewable energy and are entirely in keeping with Manchester's framework for climate change. In turn this would contribute towards the economic viability of the building. These benefits are material considerations that weigh in favour of the proposals.
- 5.23 In summary, the proposal would have a neutral impact on the heritage assets and the requirements of policy are met. In addition, there are public benefits that weigh in favour of the proposals.

Amenity

- 5.24 Policy DM1 of the Core Strategy states that all development should have regard to amenity, including privacy, light, noise, vibration, air quality, odours, litter, vermin, birds, road safety and traffic generation.
- 5.25 The proposal would not give rise to any amenity concerns, given that it is located on the roof of Greg's Building, away from the highway. Greg's Building is situated adjacent to many other commercial buildings of a similar nature and therefore there would be no impact on residential amenity.



6. Summary and conclusions

- 6.1 This planning statement is submitted in support of a full planning application seeking planning permission and listed building consent for the installation of 44 solar panels on the roof of Greg's Building, 1 Booth Street, Manchester, M2 4DU.
- 6.2 The scheme would have a neutral impact on the Grade II Listed Greg's Building and the character and appearance of the Upper King Street Conservation Area. It would result in Greg's Building having its own source of decentralised, renewable energy and both a lower electricity consumption and carbon emissions.
- 6.3 The proposed development would comply with policies set out in the development plan and the Framework and therefore in accordance with paragraph 11 of The Framework, planning permission should be approved. There are no material considerations to indicate otherwise.



