

04 August 2023

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

FAO Anthony Mitchell

Dear Anthony,

Application for Prior Notification to determine if prior approval is required for the Installation of Photovoltaic Equipment on the roof of Manchester Metropolitan University's Students Union

Please find enclosed an Application for Prior Notification to determine if prior approval is required for the installation of photovoltaic (PV) equipment on the roof of Manchester Metropolitan University's Students Union ('the Proposed Development'). The Applicant is Manchester Metropolitan University ('the Applicant').

The Description of Development is as follows:

"Application for prior notification to determine if prior approval is required for the installation of photovoltaic equipment on the roof."

Site Location and Description

The Site comprises the flat roof of the four-storey section of Manchester Metropolitan University's Students Union, located east of Higher Cambridge Street in the Oxford Road Corridor and Manchester City Centre.

The Site is principally surrounded by existing university buildings and student accommodation. It is bound by Boundary Street West to the north with student accommodation beyond this rising to 4 storeys. To the east of the Site is the taller section of the Students Union roof, rising to five storeys and separating the Site from Manchester Metropolitan University's School of Digital Arts (SODA) located to the east. Rosamond Street West separates the Site from the 9-storey Unite Students accommodation to the south. Higher Cambridge Street is located to the immediate west of the Site and separates the Site from the four-storey Unite Students accommodation to the west.

The Site comprises the lower section of the roof of the Students Union, with the centre of the roof rising to a higher height and thus providing a visual block to the Site from the east and the majority of the student accommodation to the south.

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The Site is outlined in the Site Location Plan submitted in support of this Application.

Proposed PV Equipment

This application for prior notification relates to the installation of solar PV equipment on the roof of the Students Union, as detailed within Table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1 Details of Solar PV Equipment on the Roof of the Students Union

Building	Minimum distance to roof edge (m):	Where installed on a flat roof, maximum protrusion above the highest part of the roof (excluding any chimney) (m).	Capacity of the proposed solar PV equipment(kW):
Students Union	1.25	0.31	14.25

The Regulations

Class J, Part 14 of Schedule 2, of *The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, Schedule 2 (as amended)*, outlines the permitted development rights for the installation or alteration etc of solar equipment on non-domestic premises, which includes the following:

“The installation, alteration or replacement of—

(a) microgeneration solar thermal equipment on a building;

(b) microgeneration solar PV equipment on a building; or

(c) other solar PV equipment on the roof of a building, other than a dwellinghouse or a block of flats.”

Class J development is permitted subject to the condition that before beginning the development the developer must apply to the local planning authority for a determination as to whether the prior approval of the authority will be required as to the design or external appearance of the development, in particular the impact of glare on occupiers of neighbouring land.

Class J outlines several criteria where the permitted development rights do not apply. Table 1.2 outlines each criterion to evidence that permitted development rights under Class J apply to the proposed PV equipment.

Table 1.2 Applicant’s Response to Development not permitted under Class J (as defined in J.1, J.2, and J.3)

Applicant’s Response	
J.1 a)	The solar PV equipment is not proposed to be installed on a pitched roof.

J.1 b)	The solar PV equipment is proposed on a flat roof. As evidenced in Table 1.1, the highest part of the solar PV equipment would be lower than 1 metre above the highest part of the roof (excluding any chimney).
J.1 c)	As evidenced in Table 1.1, the solar PV equipment is not proposed to be installed within 1 metre of the external edge of the roof.
J.1 d)	The solar PV equipment is not proposed to be located on any article 2(3) land.
J.1 e)	The solar PV equipment is not proposed to be installed on a site designated as a scheduled monument.
J.1 f)	The solar PV equipment is not proposed to be installed on a listed building or on a building within the curtilage of a listed building.
J.2 a), b), c)	The solar PV equipment is not proposed to be installed on a wall.
J.3	The capacity of the solar PV equipment installed does not exceed 1 megawatt.

Site Specific Considerations

The following further conditions also apply to Class J permitted development rights and are addressed in further detail below:

- a) *“the solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment must, so far as practicable, be sited so as to minimise its effect on the external appearance of the building and the amenity of the area; and,*
- b) *the solar PV equipment or solar thermal equipment is removed as soon as reasonably practicable when no longer needed.”*

The solar PV equipment is proposed to improve the sustainability and efficiency of the Applicant’s estate, supporting Manchester City Council in their targets for net zero carbon by 2038.

It has been specifically designed to adhere to the permitted development rights and associated criteria and conditions under Class J of the *Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, Schedule 2 (as amended)*.

The proposed solar PV’s have all been designed to step-back from the edge of the roofs and have been specifically designed to avoid unnecessary protrusion beyond the highest part of the flat roof.

The solar PVs are proposed to be installed on a flat roof and thus will not be visible from street level. They are proposed to be positioned to the north of the roof and thus the taller element of the roof shields the view of the PVs from the east and from most student accommodation units in the upper storeys of the

taller Unite Students accommodation to the south. There will be a very limited number of student accommodation units within the upper storeys of the western corner of the Unite Students building to the south of the Site that would have a view of the proposed solar PVs. In acknowledgement of this, the PVs are positioned to the north of the roof and are proposed to be neatly arranged to minimise any potential visual impact. The PVs would not be visible from other surrounding buildings.

The application is supported by a Solar Glare Report, prepared by Proximity. It outlines that the proposed solar PV equipment would not cause any unacceptable impacts on solar glare and reflected sunlight to highways, neighbouring properties.

In line with the regulations, should they be no longer needed, the solar PV equipment would be removed as soon as reasonably practicable.

Summary and Conclusions

This Covering Letter accompanies an Application for Prior Notification to determine if prior approval is required for the installation of photovoltaic equipment on part of the roof of Manchester Metropolitan University's Students Union.

Manchester Metropolitan University is a key component of the Oxford Road Corridor where ensuring buildings are resilient, future-proofed, and adaptable to climate change is a key ambition. The solar PV equipment is proposed to improve the sustainability and efficiency of the Applicant's estate, supporting Manchester City Council in their targets for net zero carbon by 2038.

Equipment has been carefully designed to minimise the effect on the external appearance of the building and the amenity of the area, including in terms of glint and glare. It adheres to the permitted development rights and associated criteria and conditions under Class J of the *Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, Schedule 2 (as amended)*, as evidenced in Tables 1.1 and 1.2.

As such, the proposed solar PV equipment is deemed to be suitable and appropriate for the Site and should be considered to fall under the definition of permitted development within Class J, Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).

Application Submission

This Application for Prior Notification has been submitted via the Planning Portal (Reference PP-12028807), alongside the requisite application fee in the sum of £96, plus an administrative fee from the Planning Portal.

This Covering Letter forms the supporting statement submitted in support of this Application and should be read in conjunction with the following supporting documentation:

- Site Location Plan, prepared by Castle Owen;
- Detailed Design Summary, prepared by HelioScope; and
- Solar Glare Report, prepared by Proximity.

The list of supporting documentation was agreed during pre-application discussions with a planning officer at Manchester City Council (MCC) on 29 July 2022.

We would be grateful if you could notify us of validation of the Application and please do not hesitate to contact my colleague Jennifer Chatfield (jchatfield@deloitte.co.uk / 0161 455 8084) should you have any questions.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deloitte LLP". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

For Deloitte LLP

Encl.