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12th April 2023

Submitted via Planning Portal (Ref. PP-12086870)

Manchester City Council
Planning,
Manchester City Council,
P O Box 532,
MANCHESTER,
M60 2LA

Dear Sir or Madam

Re: Application for planning permission and listed building consent in respect of proposed rooftop photovoltaic panels

Site: easyHotel Manchester, 33 Dale Street, Manchester M1 2HE

On behalf of the applicant, easyHotel Manchester Limited, we have today submitted via Planning Portal an application for planning permission and listed building consent in respect of proposed photovoltaic panels at easyHotel Manchester, 33 Dale Street, M1 2HF (the Site).

The Site

The site is a five storey, Grade II listed building, used as a hotel. The site sits within the Stevenson Square Conservation Area. The site sits within a dense city centre environment, and is surrounded by a variety of hotel, community and commercial uses.

The site sits within the jurisdiction of Manchester City Council (MCC).

Planning History

We have undertaken a desk-based review of the site's planning history based on the records available on MCC's online planning database. The relevant planning history is summarised in Table 1, below.

Date	Ref	Description	Decision
Sep 2004	071494/FO/2004/C2	Elevational alteration to create level access door entrance from existing window arrangement	Permission granted
Sep 2004	071495/LO/2004/C2	Listed building consent to install partitioning to create additional wholesale unit; removal of existing windows to create entrance door and the installation of a platform lift	LBC granted
July 2009	086601/FO/2008/C2	Change of use to offices (Use Class B1) on the first to fourth floors and retail (Use Class A1) at ground and basement floors including the refurbishment of the building and the provision of disabled access	Permission granted

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July 2009	086602/LO/2008/C2	Listed building consent for internal and external works associated with a change of use of the existing building to office use (Use Class B1) and retail use (Use Class A1) including works to allow disabled access	LBC granted
Aug 2012	099664/REP/2012/C2	Extension of time limit on planning permission ref 086601/FO/2008/C2 for the change of use of the existing building to offices (Use Class B1) on the first to fourth floors and retail (Use Class A1) at ground and basement floors including the refurbishment of the building and the provision of disabled access	Planning permission granted
Aug 2012	099665/REP/2012/C2	Extension of time limit on listed building consent ref 086602/LO/2008/C2 for internal and external works associated with a change of use of the existing building to office use (Use Class B1) and retail use (Use Class A1) including works to allow disabled access	LBC granted
Nov 2015	109696/FO/2015/C2	Use of the building as a 116 bedroom hotel (Use Class C1), associated elevational alterations and the installation of externally mounted equipment	Permission granted
Nov 2015	109697/LO/2015/C2	Listed building consent relating to internal and external works associated with the use of the building as a hotel.	LBC granted
Sep 2017	116460/AO/2017	Installation of a non-illuminated low level orange strip, an externally illuminated low level projecting sign and a non-illuminated low level fascia sign	Advertisement consent granted
Sep 2017	116466/LO/2017	Listed building consent in relation to Installation of a non-illuminated low level orange strip, an externally illuminated low level projecting sign and a non-illuminated low level fascia sign	LBC granted

Table 1: Site Planning History

Proposed Development

The proposed description of development is as follows:

‘Installation of photovoltaic panels at rooftop level’

The existing building is five storeys tall. The proposed photovoltaic (PV) panels are proposed at roof level, set back from the roof edge to minimise visual impact from the street scene.



The current hotel operator and applicant, easyHotel, is seeking to improve the green credentials of the site. The proposed PV panels are located on the eastern side of the roof (Port Street), which is the only viable location for the PV panels factoring performance.

The materiality and design principles have been carefully selected to minimise visual impact and glare, as detailed within the submitted Design and Access Statement (Axiom Architects).

Planning Policy Analysis

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states:

“If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.”

MCC’s development plan includes the following policy documents relevant to the applications proposals:

- The Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2012 -2027 (July 2012);
- Saved Unitary Development Plan Policies (UDP); and
- Guide to Development in Manchester Supplementary Planning Document (2007) (Development SPD).

The relevant national and local planning policies relating to the proposed development are set out and analysed below.

Sustainability

The central tenet of the NPPF is a ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’ (paragraph 11). Chapter 14 of the NPPF seeks to ensure development meets the challenge of climate change and states the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, helping to shape places that contribute to reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

Core Strategy Spatial Objective 06 ‘Environment’ is to ensure the sustainable use of natural resources, in order to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Policy EN 8 ‘Adaptation to Climate Change’ states all new development will be expected to be adaptable to climate change in terms of the design, layout, siting and function both of buildings and associated external spaces. The supporting text identifies ‘The Council is keen to see all measures taken to reduce the negative impacts of climate change and ensure buildings are fully future proofed.

The Development SPD promotes energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy technologies (paragraphs 4.5 – 4.6).

Beechfield Consulting Engineers, the mechanical engineers instructed by the applicant, have confirmed the following sustainability benefits of the proposed development:

‘The proposals are to install a Photovoltaic array to generate electricity solely to be used by the hotel to reduce its carbon footprint and become more sustainable. The PV will a



minimum 400w output and generate 21.6Kw Peak via 54 number panels. The electricity generated will be exported and be used totally by the hotel against its constant base load.

The PV system will be mounted on a purpose-built frame and ballast system. The PV Panels are circa 1722mm x 113mm and average 20KG in weight and would be ballasted on a mounting system giving an average weight per Panel, all-inclusive at a little under 100KG per panel but spread over the relevant mounting system. Commonly the angle of fitting is 10 or 15 degrees depending on whether we use the Van der Valk system or the Renusol Consoles.'

The proposed solar panels will provide a renewable energy source to an existing commercial operator and enhance the site's sustainability credentials throughout its operation, in accordance with national and local planning policy.

Heritage and Design

National Planning Policy seeks to conserve and enhance the historic environment (NPPF, Chapter 16). 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 (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be) (paragraph 199). Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification (paragraph 200).

The thrust of the above national planning policy is reflected in the Core Strategy, which states development in Manchester City Centre should preserve or enhance heritage assets (Policy CC9 Design and Heritage and Policy EN 3 Heritage). Policy EN1 Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas states developer's will be expected to consider the City's heritage and continue the rich pattern of activity in the core area. Policy DM 1 'Development Management' states all new development should have regard to the character of the surrounding area.

Saved UPD Policy DC18.1 'Conservation Areas' states the Council will give particularly careful consideration to development proposals within Conservation Areas and the council will seek to preserve and enhance designated areas.

Saved UDP Policy DC19.1 'Listed Buildings' states the Council will not permit alterations that have an adverse effect on the building's architectural or historic character, and will seek to preserve and enhance the settings of listed buildings by appropriate control over the design of new development in their vicinity.

The applicant instructed Heritage Collective UK (HCUK) to prepare a Heritage Impact Assessment in support of the application. The HIA describes the significance of the Grade II listed building and conservation area in accordance with paragraph 194 of the NPPF and assesses the impact of the proposed development on the heritage assets.

The HIA notes 'the PV cells would possess a clear lack of visibility in the area from street level as a result of a number of factors including, their location on the southern side of the building only, as a result of the building's height, the obscuring nature of surrounding townscape, and the relatively shallow pitch of the roof' (paragraph 4.3). Whilst visibility may be possible from the upper floor



windows of surrounding buildings, 'these are not deemed to be key views of the listed building or designated views'.

The HIA also highlights the PV cells and supporting structures will be dark in colour to avoid them being visually intrusive and the PV cells will have no impact upon the building's skyline or silhouette. The HIA concludes on this matter that 'the proposals would not dominate or detract from the clear architectural and historic value of the building or the role it plays within the wider conservation area' (paragraphs 4.6 – 4.8).

The HIA identifies the method of fitting will ensure no historic fabric is removed (paragraph 4.10).

The HIA concludes that the proposals would preserve the significance of the heritage assets (paragraph 5.5):

'The significance of the listed building, which is derived from its architectural form, fabric and character as a mid 19th century shipping warehouse and associated historic illustrative and group values, would be entirely preserved even if some PV cells were visible. Similarly, the significance of the conservation area as a high quality Victorian and Edwardian commercial area would be entirely preserved.'

The proposals therefore conserve designated heritage assets, in alignment with national and local planning policy.

Amenity

National and local planning policies seek to protect the amenity of current and future occupiers, and nearby residents in terms of amenity, including visual amenity and noise (NPPF paragraph 174).

Local Plan Policy DM1 states all development should have regard to specific issues, including effects on amenity such as noise.

The proposed PV panels are located on the fifth floor the existing building in the dense urban environment and are not considered to have a negative impact on neighbouring visual amenity or generate significant amounts of noise.

Conclusions

The proposed plant will enhance the energy efficiency of an existing building, aligned with national and local sustainability objectives.

Supporting Information

In addition to this covering letter, the following information is submitted in support of these proposals:

- Application Forms and Ownership Certificates
- easyHotel Manchester Design and Access Rev. A – Axiom Architects, March 2023
- Drawings – Axiom Architects, March 2023 (see table overleaf)
- Heritage Impact Assessment – HCUK, March 2023



The application fee of £462.00 has been paid online via the Planning Portal.

We look forward to receiving confirmation of application receipt and validation in due course. Finally, if you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'M' and 'C' followed by a long horizontal stroke.

Michael Clements

Planner

NTR Planning

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Enc.



Drawing	Drawing No.
Site Location Plan and Block Plan	5964-P-001
Existing and Proposed Roof Plan	5964-P-002
Existing NW and SW Elevations	5964-P-003
Existing SE Elevations	5964-P-004
Proposed NW and SW Elevations	5964-P-005 Rev. A
Proposed SE Elevations	5964-P-006 Rev. A