



Chadwick Town Planning

PLANNING, DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

Installation of 80 no. photovoltaic (PV) panels (37.2
kWp) on rear roof slope and associated works

Lincoln Hall, Museum Road, Oxford, OX1 3PX

For
Lincoln College



Lincoln College
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

April 2024

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning, Design & Access Statement ('the Statement') has been prepared by Chadwick Town Planning Limited ('CTPL') on behalf of Lincoln College ('the Applicant' or 'the College') in support of a full planning application for the proposed installation of 80 no. photovoltaic (PV) panels on the rear (south) roof slope and associated works ('the proposal' or 'proposed development') at Lincoln Hall, Museum Road, Oxford, OX1 3PX ('the site' or 'the application site').
- 1.2 Lincoln College owns twelve of the three-storey Victorian terraced houses on the south side of Museum Road, which are used for student accommodation. In 2003–05, these buildings were refurbished and named Lincoln Hall; they accommodate 70 undergraduate students. Behind Lincoln Hall lies a modern student accommodation block, the Edward Penley Abraham ('EPA') Science Block, built in the gardens behind the former Victorian houses; the EPA building accommodates 48 graduate students in the life sciences. The EPA was built with a grant from the Edward Penley Abraham (EPA) Trust. Sir Edward Penley Abraham, CBE, FRS (1913-1999) was an English biochemist instrumental in the development of the first antibiotics - penicillin and cephalosporin.
- 1.3 The southern roof slope of Lincoln Hall is failing and further repair and refurbishment works are required to strip the roof, re-felt and re-batten it and replace the slates. As part of these works the College proposes to install a PV system across the extent of the southern facing roof to supply power to the EPA building adjacent. When embarking upon building projects, energy efficiency and sustainability are always at the forefront of the College's strategy, which is also aimed at degasification across the College's buildings over the coming years. All of the College's electricity is now obtained and supplied through renewable sources as part of its involvement with the University of Oxford's energy procurement scheme.
- 1.4 The College understands the importance of creating a "greener" and more sustainable environment and is committed to ensuring that Lincoln plays its part in preventing and reducing the harmful effects of climate change wherever possible. With concerns over emissions, reliability of supply and rising costs the College has decided to install a PV system at the site.
- 1.5 The country's and global energy costs have been rising for some time following the Covid-19 pandemic, inflation and world events (e.g. Ukraine) which have pushed them even higher. The College wants to phase out the use of gas and replace it with an energy source that is renewable, sustainable, clean and secure.

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- 1.6 This is supported at a national level by Government advice in the *National Planning Policy Framework* ('NPPF') and *Planning Practice Guidance* ('PPG') and at the local level by Oxford City Council's ('the Council') declaration of a climate emergency in January 2019. In the Autumn 2019, Oxford was the first UK city to hold a Citizen's Assembly on Climate Change and since then has continued to work to tackle the climate emergency and reduce its own carbon emissions, the emissions of the city as well as empowering residents to take action via the "Oxford to Zero" initiative. This is all reflected in the adopted *Oxford Local Plan 2036*, which supports the production of energy from local, renewable and low carbon sources as part of Policies S1 (Sustainable development) and RE1 (Sustainable design and construction). The City Council is committed to a 100% reduction in total carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions produced in the City by 2050 from 1990 levels to limit climate change and seeks to balance this in terms of design and heritage so that these matters are not compromised and accord with Policies DH1 and DH3 of the adopted *Oxford Local Plan 2036*.
- 1.7 The *National Planning Policy Framework, 2023* ('NPPF') also supports such proposals whilst seeking to protect heritage assets. Where there may be harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset – in this case the Central (City & University) Conservation Area – this needs to be weighed against any associated public benefits.
- 1.8 The proposed PV system at Museum Road and associated works will provide a clean, renewable, reliable, sustainable and self-sufficient power supply for the College's EPA building including student accommodation that would benefit some 48 graduate students, support the College's sustainability and degasification strategies, assist with tackling climate change and reduce carbon emissions. These are all public benefits that would significantly outweigh any harm caused by the proposal.
- 1.9 The proposal is therefore considered to not only be in accordance with the relevant policies in the adopted *Oxford Local Plan 2036* but also strongly supported by other material considerations, including the NPPF, other Government initiatives and the Council's actions on climate change, energy efficiency and sustainability.
- 1.10 Therefore, in line with Section 38(6) of the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004)* and Section 70(2) of the *Town and Country Planning Act, 1990*, we respectfully request that this application be approved so that the PV panels can be installed to provide renewable, sustainable and cleaner power for the benefit of the College, its students and the wider environment.

2.0 SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The site comprises twelve, three-storey Victorian terraced houses on the south side of Museum Road, to the north of Oxford City Centre, which are used for student accommodation by Lincoln College. In 2003–05, these buildings were refurbished and named Lincoln Hall; they accommodate 70 undergraduate students.
- 2.2 Behind Lincoln Hall lies a modern student accommodation block, the Lincoln Edward Penley Abraham ('EPA') Science Block, built in the gardens behind the former Victorian houses; the EPA building accommodates 48 graduate students in the life sciences. The EPA was built with a grant from the Edward Penley Abraham (EPA) Trust. Sir Edward Penley Abraham, CBE, FRS (1913-1999) was an English biochemist instrumental in the development of the first antibiotics -penicillin and cephalosporin. The buildings are shown on Figure 1.



Figure 1 – Site Location

- 2.3 The site lies close to the Oxford University Museum of Natural History and the Radcliffe Science Library at the junction of Museum Road and Parks Road. To the west, Museum Road continues as the Lamb & Flag Passage towards the Lamb & Flag public house on St Giles. Blackhall Road leads from Museum Road to the north. Museum Road was formerly known as Museum Terrace in the 1870s–1880s, with Museum Villas on the north side.
- 2.4 Lincoln College has owned the twelve terraced houses on Museum Road for well over 100 years. They provide en-suite, self-catering accommodation for 70 undergraduate students on twelve staircases. This terrace - now known as Lincoln Hall - has an entrance lodge and computer room for students' use.

- 2.5 The front elevation of Lincoln Hall or the Museum Road terrace of properties owned by Lincoln College can be seen at Figure 2.



Figure 2 – Front elevation of Lincoln Hall, Museum Road

- 2.6 The Victorian terrace is not listed as a building of special architectural or historic significance but lies within the designated Central (City & University) Conservation Area. However, it may be considered to be locally listed, although there is no other record of this on the Oxford Heritage Assets Register. If this was the case, it would be considered a non-designated heritage asset. See *Heritage Impact Assessment* by Donald Insall Associates.
- 2.7 There are no other known constraints affecting the site, which lies within Flood Zone 1 as shown on the Government's flood maps.

3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 The site has a limited planning history, most of which is historic and pre-dates the use as student accommodation by the College.
- 3.2 In February 2003, a full planning application (02/01426/FUL) for the refurbishment of the terraced properties to include removal of various single-storey rear extensions and dormers, part re-fenestration of the rear elevation, and internal alterations to increase student study rooms from 70 to 74 was approved by the Council.
- 3.3 At the same time in February 2003, an application for the construction of the new EPA Science Centre to contain 48 graduate student study bedrooms, a lecture theatre, multi-purpose room, cycle stores, porter's lodge and ancillary facilities at basement, ground and 3 upper levels along with part demolition of Nos. 11 and 13 Museum Road to provide access to the new Centre at the rear was approved by the Council pursuant to App. No. 02/01425/FUL.
- 3.4 An accompanying Conservation Area Consent application for demolition of a single-storey training building and sections of boundary walling to the rear of the site (App. No. 02/01424/CAC) was also approved on 27th February 2003.
- 3.5 About a year later, an application for the erection of an electricity sub-station in connection with new EPA Science Building (03/02408/FUL) was approved by the Council on 6th February 2004.

4.0 THE PROPOSAL – RATIONALE, DESIGN & ACCESS

Rationale

- 4.1 Lincoln College seeks planning permission for 80 no. roof-mounted photovoltaic panels on the rear (south) roof slope of Lincoln Hall, Museum Road, Oxford. See Figure 3.

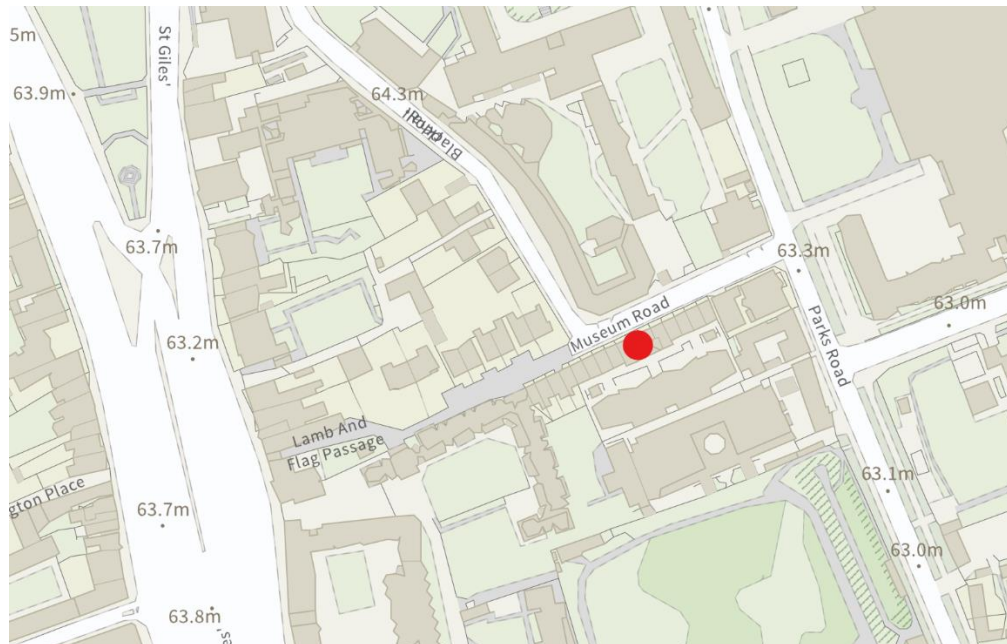


Figure 3 – Lincoln Hall, Museum Road, Oxford

- 4.2 The PV panels will serve the EPA building to the rear of Lincoln Hall. The reasons for this are as follows: 1) There is only one meter covering the EPA building, making it easier to connect the PV system rather than through all the individual houses that comprise Lincoln Hall; 2) This meter is an half-hourly meter, allowing the College to compare savings more easily; 3) Linked to this, the baseload consumption in the EPA building will be higher so all the PV electricity generated will be consumed directly.
- 4.3 The heating system at Lincoln Hall is fully electric at present. The EPA building's student accommodation is also fully electric, but the ground floor is gas heated and this proposal is linked to the College's plans to move away from gas heating across its estate. By adding PV, the College will reduce the load on the grid, which is going to increase due to electrification for decarbonisation of heating systems elsewhere and, at some point, also in the EPA. The PV system will have a 25-year life.
- 4.4 The PV system will provide power and energy as set out in Figure 4 overleaf.

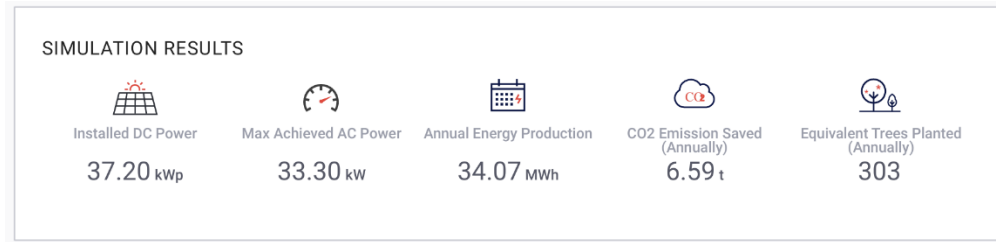


Figure 4 – PV power and energy outputs

- 4.5 The PV system will be accompanied by an inverter, which will be located in the sub-station at the rear of Lincoln Hall, and solar optimisers which are added to PV panels to increase the overall efficiency of the PV system. They include solar technology that tracks how much energy each panel produces at any given time and adjusts the voltage accordingly before sending it to the inverter. The inverter is an electronic device that converts direct current (DC) power into alternating current (AC) power. This then allows the electricity to be passed through to appliances for use in the building.
- 4.6 Modern inverters are quiet and are switched off at night so will not disturb students sleeping or studying at night time. The inverter will be located within the sub-station building.
- 4.7 Lincoln College is committed to ensuring that the College plays its part in preventing and reducing the harmful effects of climate change. The PV system at Lincoln Hall is aimed at energy efficiency and sustainability including an on-going degasification policy across the College’s buildings. It is estimated that the PV proposal will result in savings of 6.59 tonnes of CO2 carbon emissions per annum equivalent to the planting of 303 trees annually, which is a considerable carbon saving and environmental and energy efficiency benefit.

Proposal – Design and Access

- 4.8 The 72 REC 470W Alpha Pure-RX's and 8 of the slightly smaller REC 420W Alpha Pure-R's - datasheets for both modules submitted with the application - panels to be used incorporate gapless cell layout technology, which increases the active area of the panel and captures more sunlight. This achieves higher power in a compact panel size and in appearance terms it has an elegant full-black design. This can be seen on the manufacturer’s image reproduced as Figure 5 overleaf.



Figure 5 – Manufacturer’s image of REC Solar PV panels

4.9 The indicative coverage of the rear roof slope at Lincoln Hall will be as shown on Figure 6.

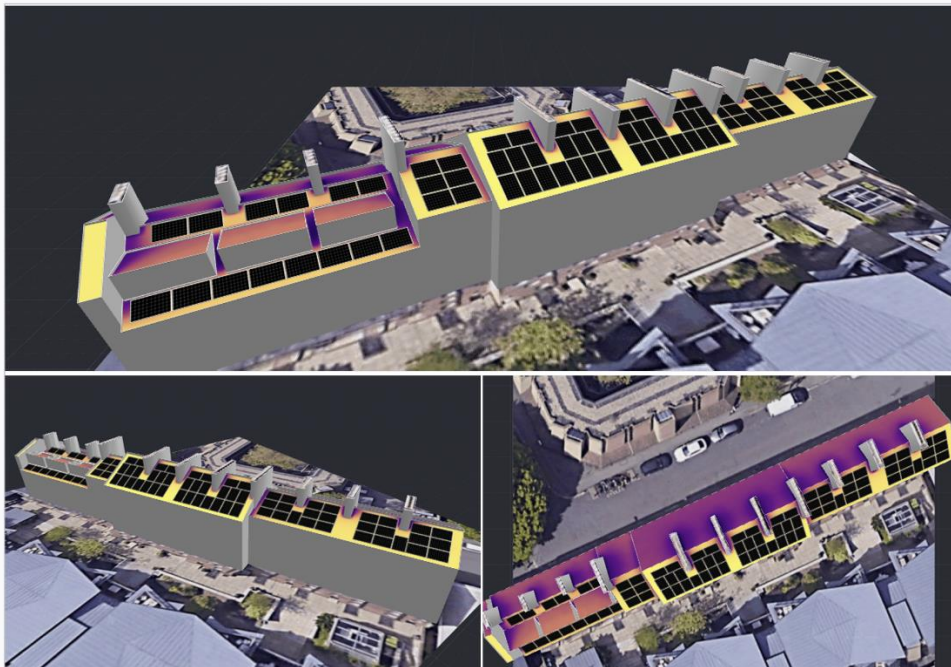


Figure 6 – Proposed PV Panels at Lincoln Hall (Simulation)

Layout

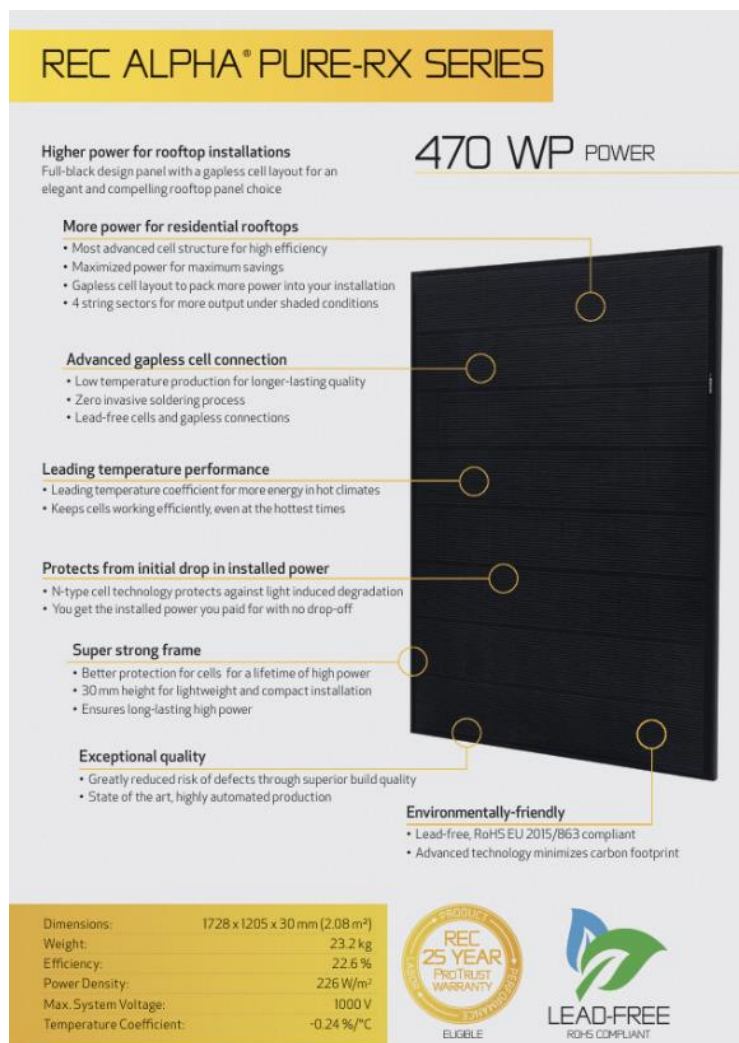
- 4.10 The PV panels are arranged in rows between the chimneys and above and below dormer windows on the rear roof slope, as shown on Figure 6. They are angled to follow the existing varying roof pitches and face south-east.

Amount and Scale

- 4.11 There are a total of 80 no. photovoltaic modules providing a total of 37.2 kWp. See submitted technical details.

Appearance

- 4.12 The photovoltaic modules have a typical appearance. See Figure 7 below.



REC ALPHA® PURE-RX SERIES

470 WP POWER

Higher power for rooftop installations
Full-black design panel with a gapless cell layout for an elegant and compelling rooftop panel choice

More power for residential rooftops

- Most advanced cell structure for high efficiency
- Maximized power for maximum savings
- Gapless cell layout to pack more power into your installation
- 4 string sectors for more output under shaded conditions

Advanced gapless cell connection

- Low temperature production for longer-lasting quality
- Zero invasive soldering process
- Lead-free cells and gapless connections

Leading temperature performance

- Leading temperature coefficient for more energy in hot climates
- Keeps cells working efficiently, even at the hottest times

Protects from initial drop in installed power

- N-type cell technology protects against light induced degradation
- You get the installed power you paid for with no drop-off

Super strong frame

- Better protection for cells for a lifetime of high power
- 30 mm height for lightweight and compact installation
- Ensures long-lasting high power

Exceptional quality

- Greatly reduced risk of defects through superior build quality
- State of the art, highly automated production

Environmentally-friendly

- Lead-free, RoHS EU 2015/863 compliant
- Advanced technology minimizes carbon footprint

Dimensions:	1728 x 1205 x 30 mm (2.08 m ²)
Weight:	23.2 kg
Efficiency:	22.6 %
Power Density:	226 W/m ²
Max. System Voltage:	1000 V
Temperature Coefficient:	-0.24 %/°C

REC 25 YEAR PRO-TRUST WARRANTY
ELIGIBLE

LEAD-FREE
ROHS COMPLIANT

Figure 7 – Manufacturer’s details of PV panels to be used

Use

- 4.13 The PV panels are to be used to serve the EPA building to the rear of Lincoln Hall.

Landscaping

- 4.14 There is hard and soft landscaping in the courtyard at the rear of Lincoln Hall – see Figure 8.

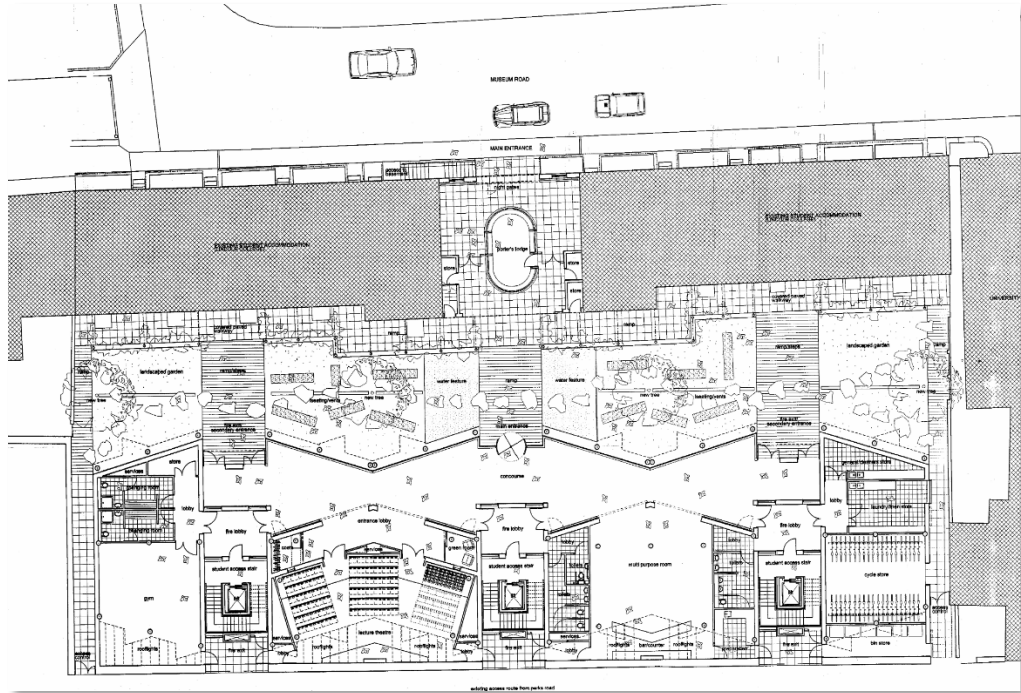


Figure 8 – Hard and soft landscaping in the courtyard

Access

- 4.15 The site is served by Museum Road, which will be used for access to undertake the repair of Lincoln Hall and the construction of the PV panels.
- 4.16 Pedestrian access is unaltered and will be via the main entrance to Lincoln Hall and the EPA building off Museum Road and past the porter's lodge.
- 4.17 There is convenient pedestrian access to the City via the Lamb and Flag Passage and Parks Road. The access from Museum Road is level and accessible by all.

5.0 DEVELOPMENT PLAN & OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS – APPRAISAL

- 5.1 Section 38(6) of the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004* and Section 70(2) of the *Town and Country Planning Act, 1990* require that planning applications be determined in accordance with the adopted development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.2 The development plan in this case comprises the adopted *Oxford Local Plan 2036*. The *National Planning Policy Framework* ('NPPF'), *Planning Practice Guidance* ('PPG'), similar PV/solar developments¹, Government support and policies for renewable energy and the Council's climate change initiatives are important material considerations that lend considerable support for the proposal. The Council has published the first draft of its *Oxford Local Plan 2040*, which aims to build more affordable homes, tackle the climate emergency and make Oxford's economy work for all residents. However, this Plan is at a very early stage of preparation so has little weight in the assessment and determination of planning applications.
- 5.2 The proposal raises the following four main planning considerations:
- 1) Principle of the proposal;
 - 2) Effect upon heritage assets;
 - 3) Access and highway safety; and
 - 4) Effect on residential amenity.

1) Principle of the proposal

- 5.3 The *Oxford Local Plan 2036* was adopted on 8th June 2020 and sets out the shape of Oxford city, how it will look and feel in years to come and guides and shapes new developments, so that they respect the past and present of Oxford, while improving its future by supporting the city's people and their environment. It includes a number of pertinent policies. The most relevant to this proposal are Policies S1 (Sustainable development), DH1 (High quality design and placemaking), DH3 (Designated heritage assets), RE1 (Sustainable design & construction) and RE7 (Managing the impact of development), which are examined and appraised in this section of the Statement.
- 5.4 Paragraph 12 of the NPPF states that the development plan is the starting point for decision making. Proposed development that accords with an up-to-date Local Plan should be approved unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.5 The *Oxford Local Plan 2036* and its "Vision" are focused on delivering sustainable

¹ For example, Application No. 21/02412/FUL at 1-3 George Street, Oxford

development, in line with the *NPPF*. In environmental responsibility terms, the Council has pledged to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions within the second half of the century. It intends to maintain its position as a leading UK local authority in tackling climate change and intends that by 2050 it will use only 100% renewable energy. The "Vision" set out in the Local Plan sees Oxford as an environmentally sustainable city with the following main characteristics:

- Being an exemplar of low carbon development;
- Having made progress towards the Council's commitment to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions in Oxford this century;
- Producing energy from local, renewable and low carbon sources;
- Being resilient to the impacts of climate change;
- Having led the way in developing and adopting new technologies to help create a clean and green environment;
- Insisting on high levels of energy efficiency;

5.6 This is to be achieved via the spatial strategy and principally Policy S1 (Sustainable development) of the *Local Plan 2036* which states – much like the *NPPF* – that when considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the *National Planning Policy Framework*. It adds that the Council will work proactively with applicants to find solutions jointly which mean that applications for sustainable development can be approved where possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area. Planning applications that accord with Oxford's *Local Plan* (and, where relevant, with Neighbourhood Plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

5.7 Policy RE1 (Sustainable design and construction) relates primarily to new build developments but states that planning permission will only be granted where it can be demonstrated that a number of sustainable design and construction principles have been incorporated, including maximising energy efficiency and the use of low carbon energy, as in this case.

5.8 The Council declared a Climate Emergency in January 2019, following which it has taken numerous steps including: a) holding a Citizen's Assembly on Climate Change; b) publishing the Zero Carbon Oxford roadmap, which divides almost all the city's emissions into the five sectors with the greatest climate impact - domestic, commercial, industry, institutional, and transport; c) taking steps to reduce the Council's average annual emissions by 10% every year until 2030 - equivalent to approximately 530 tonnes of carbon annually, which is double the previous carbon reduction rate; d) empowering zero carbon communities; and other initiatives. This includes supporting solar PV to replace grid electricity consumption in a number of ways and with financial support in some

circumstances.

- 5.9 These City Council actions dovetail with the Government's intentions in relation to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Over a significant period of time there have been national objectives and policies which seek to encourage renewable energy developments where they are appropriate.
- 5.10 The Government recognises that climate change is happening through increased greenhouse gas emissions, and that urgent action is required to mitigate its effects. One action being promoted is a significant boost to the deployment of renewable energy generation. The *Climate Change Act 2008*, as amended, sets a legally binding target to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions from their 1990 level by 100% to be Net Zero, by 2050. The *British Energy Security Strategy 2002* recognises the contribution that solar PV will make to future energy needs and achieving such targets.
- 5.11 The *NPPF* provides positive encouragement for renewable energy projects. Paragraph 157 of the *NPPF* states that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future and should support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure. Paragraph 163 of the *NPPF* states that when determining applications for renewable and low carbon development local planning authorities should approve such applications if impacts are or can be made acceptable. Indeed, Paragraph 163 (a) of the *NPPF* states that local planning authorities should 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 significant cutting greenhouse gas emissions.
- 5.12 This positive approach in the *NPPF* is supported by other national statements including the now somewhat aged *National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1)* and its draft replacement and guidance in the *Planning Practice Guidance* ('PPG') on renewable and low carbon energy to help councils in developing policies for renewable and low carbon energy and identify the planning considerations.
- 5.13 Also of note are the *Energy White Paper – Powering our Net Zero Future* of December 2020, which reiterates that setting a Net Zero target is not enough, it must be achieved through, amongst other things, a change in how energy is produced. The *White Paper* sets out that solar is one of the key building blocks of the future electricity generation mix. In addition there is the *UK Solar PV Strategy 2013* [a solar PV roadmap and strategy setting out the guiding principles for deployment of solar in the UK] and the *Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener of 2021*. One of the key policies in the latter is to enable the UK to be powered entirely by clean electricity by 2035. Included in this key policy is the provision of more solar renewable energy.

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- 5.14 Although some of these policies and objectives are aimed at nationally significant infrastructure projects above 50MW in size, the direction of travel applies equally to schemes such as the small PV solar scheme proposed by this application.
- 5.15 The need for energy security has been highlighted by recent international events and was the focus of the Government statement in April 2022 announcing a major acceleration of homegrown power in Britain's plan for greater energy independence and for cleaner and more affordable energy to be made in the country to boost long-term energy independence, security and prosperity. This proposal albeit very small would assist in achieving this aim. Clean, renewable and affordable energy which contributes to security of supply should attract substantial positive weight.
- 5.16 For all of these reasons, and with clear benefits for the College, its students, the City, climate change and wider environment, it is considered that the principle of the proposed PV proposal must be considered to be acceptable in principle, as being in accordance with the *Oxford Local Plan 2036*, *NPPF*, *PPG*, other Government advice, policies and statements on climate change and renewable energy and the Council's declaration of a Climate Change Emergency and its numerous subsequent initiatives.
- 5.17 In accordance with the *NPPF* it is recognised that the overall acceptability of development of this nature is dependent upon other material considerations and site-specific factors being acceptable, which are now addressed in the rest of this section of the Statement.

2) Effect upon heritage assets

- 5.18 The site is located on the southern side of Museum Road in the Central (City & University) Conservation Area. Museum Road is aligned east to west and sits between Parks Road and the southern end of St Giles. The application site consists of a Victorian terrace of buildings with a distinctive street façade onto Museum Road. To the rear is a courtyard shared with the EPA building, which is concealed from Museum Road. There are listed buildings in the wider area. However, none of these would be directly or indirectly affected by the proposal given their separation, distance and lack of visibility from the site.
- 5.19 Section 72(1) of the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990* obliges the local planning authority to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.
- 5.20 In Development Plan terms, Policy DH1 of the *Oxford Local Plan 2036* states that planning permission will only be granted for development of high-quality design that creates or enhances local distinctiveness. It adds that proposals must be designed to meet the key design objectives and principles for delivering high quality development, set out in Appendix 6.1 of the Local Plan.

- 5.21 Policy DH3 of the *Oxford Local Plan 2036* states that planning permission will be granted for development that respects and draws inspiration from Oxford's unique historic environment (above and below ground), responding positively to the significance, character and distinctiveness of the heritage asset and locality.
- 5.22 The *NPPF* – in Chapter 16 - makes it clear that the manner of conservation should be appropriate to the significance of the heritage asset (in the case of built heritage this significance can be read as equivalent to the special architectural or historic interest in national legislation), and the *NPPF* requires the significance of the heritage asset and any impact of that significance to be evidenced and taken account of. This is addressed in the accompanying *Heritage Impact Assessment* produced by Donald Insall Associates.
- 5.23 The *NPPF* states that when considering the potential impact of a proposal on the significance of a designated heritage asset (i.e. a conservation area in this instance), great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Paragraph 208 of the *NPPF* states that where a development proposal will cause less than substantial harm, that harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
- 5.24 In proposals of this nature, Paragraph 164 of the *NPPF* is also highly relevant since it states that:
- 'In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should give significant weight to the need to support energy efficiency and low carbon heating improvements to existing buildings, both domestic and non-domestic (including through installation of heat pumps and solar panels where these do not already benefit from permitted development rights). Where the proposals would affect conservation areas, listed buildings or other relevant designated heritage assets, local planning authorities should also apply the policies set out in chapter 16 of this Framework.'*
- 5.25 The proposed PV panels would create a small degree of change and the addition of non-traditional elements to the roof of the existing building. This would have some minor impact upon the presently largely uncluttered appearance of the roofscape of the existing building and could potentially detract from the appearance of the Conservation Area. However, views of the rear roof slope from Museum Road and its immediate environment are not possible or extremely limited from the Conservation Area and the public domain due to the building's location, the height of the roof and the presence of other buildings, to the east, west and south. From ground level in the courtyard between Lincoln Hall and the EPA building, any views would be for College students, staff or visitors only and would be very acute. In short, the southern roof slope is not readily perceptible from any important viewpoints from within the Conservation Area so should not harm the heritage asset.
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- 5.26 Therefore, whilst the PV panels would result in some change within the Conservation Area it is considered that, due to their discrete location, they would not result in any harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area or the setting of any listed buildings. However, even if it were to be considered that the development resulted in some harm to heritage assets, this would be a very low degree of less than-substantial harm, as defined by the *NPPF*.
- 5.27 In accordance with the *NPPF* Paragraph 208, where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, in this case the Conservation Area, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
- 5.28 There are numerous public benefits associated with this proposal. It will provide a clean, affordable, renewable, reliable, sustainable and self-sufficient power supply for the EPA building serving 48 graduate study bedrooms, lecture theatre, porter's lodge and ancillary facilities. Not only would the EPA building be more sustainable, the proposal would also support the College's sustainability and degasification strategies, improve the energy efficiency of the building, assist with tackling climate change and reduce carbon emissions. These are all public benefits that weigh heavily in favour of the proposal and significantly outweigh any limited or low level of less-than substantial harm that may be caused by the proposal.
- 5.29 In light of this, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of design and heritage matters and would accord with Policies DH1 and DH3 of the *Oxford Local Plan 2036* and guidance in the *NPPF*. The development would preserve the character and appearance of the heritage assets, and so the proposal accords with Section 72(1) of the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*. See accompanying *Heritage Impact Assessment* produced by Donald Insall Associates for the full appraisal of this matter.

3) Access and highway safety

- 5.30 Policy M2 of the *Oxford Local Plan 2036* seeks to manage the access and highway safety impacts of proposed developments. This is to ensure *inter alia*: a) there is no unacceptable impact on highway safety; b) there is no severe residual cumulative impact on the road network; c) pedestrian and cycle movements are prioritised, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas; d) access to high quality public transport is facilitated, with layouts that maximise the catchment area for bus or other public transport services, and appropriate facilities that encourage public transport use; e) the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport are addressed.

- 5.31 The *NPPF* states that development which is not suitable for the roads that would serve it and which have a severe traffic impact will not be supported.
- 5.32 The site is accessed from Museum Road and this arrangement would not be altered as a result of the proposed development. There are parking restrictions immediately adjacent to the pedestrian entrance to Lincoln Hall, with on-street parking available opposite and in the locality. See Figure 9.



Figure 9 – Access via Museum Road

- 5.33 During the construction phase, materials could be stored elsewhere and be delivered to the site by smaller vehicles. This could be secured by the submission and approval of a Construction Management Plan as a condition on any planning permission for the development.
- 5.34 Therefore, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable in accessibility and highway safety terms and in accordance with Policy M2 of the *Local Plan* and Government guidance in the *NPPF*.

4) Effect on residential amenity

- 5.35 Policy RE7 of the *Oxford Local Plan 2036* states that planning permission will only be granted for development that ensures that standards of amenity are protected. This includes protecting the amenity of communities, occupiers and neighbouring properties and providing mitigation measures where necessary.

- 5.36 The proposed PV panels are situated some distance from any non-College owned residential properties and are screened by existing buildings. The panels would therefore not be readily visible outside the Lincoln Hall/EPA building complex so it is considered that the PV panels would not result in any significant loss of amenity to the occupiers of residential properties, from the visual amenity or reflection/glare perspectives.
- 5.37 The PV panels would be served by an inverter located within the existing sub-station building so would not generate any undue noise or disturbance for students, staff or visitors when in operation. As such, the proposal is considered acceptable in terms of neighbouring amenity and Policy RE7 of the Local Plan and associated guidance in the *NPPF*.

6.0 OVERALL PLANNING BALANCE & CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Planning applications are required to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate earlier. The *NPPF* states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and need to achieve the economic, social and environmental objectives in mutually supportive ways.
- 6.2 Firstly, the provision of clean renewable energy, which contributes to security of supply for a number of users of the EPA building at Lincoln College and which is consistent with national and local policies and initiatives must attract substantial positive weight in support of the proposal.
- 6.3 Secondly, the proposed PV system will assist the Council's City-wide initiatives in trying to tackle climate change and reduce carbon emissions. These are wider public benefits that would significantly outweigh any limited or less-than substantial harm caused by the proposal to the Conservation Area.
- 6.4 Thirdly, the investment in Lincoln Hall and sourcing of materials associated with the construction of the PV system and the operational phase of development would bring economic benefits of a moderate magnitude, which should attract some limited weight.
- 6.5 Fourthly, in social terms, the delivery of more affordable, renewable energy to a number of students at the College will bring some moderate social and economic benefits and support the upkeep of the buildings, which is beneficial and of some modest weight.
- 6.6 Set against these positive benefits, there will be some small change to the roofscape of Lincoln Hall and this part of the City's Central Conservation Area. However, both national and Council policies adopt a positive approach to such proposals indicating that development can be approved where any harm is outweighed by the benefits. This is a planning judgement. Here, through a combination of the site's discrete location, screening by existing buildings and extremely limited visibility within the public domain, any effect upon heritage assets and the area would be minimal and indiscernible. If there is judged to be any harm, this is very low and significantly outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal – clean, renewable energy, less reliance on fossil fuels, reduced carbon emissions and greater sustainability.
- 6.7 The proposal accords with the most relevant policies of the development plan – the *Oxford Local Plan 2036* - and also accords with the objectives of national policy and advice in the *NPPF* and numerous Government statements.

- 6.8 In conclusion, the proposal is considered to represent a sustainable and suitable form of development and therefore, in accordance with Section 38(6) of the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004*, Section 70(2) of the *Town and Country Planning Act, 1990* and Section 72(1) of the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*, we respectfully request that the Council grants planning permission for this application.