

# PHOTOVOLTAIC INSTALLATION AT DERBY HALL (THE MET)

BURY, GREATER MANCHESTER



HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

GARRY MILLER  
*Heritage Consultancy*

# PHOTOVOLTAIC INSTALLATION AT DERBY HALL (THE MET)

BURY, GREATER MANCHESTER

## HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

JANUARY 2022

**GARRY MILLER**

*Heritage Consultancy*

*Crosby House, 412 Prescott Road, Eccleston Hill, St Helens, Lancashire WA10 3BT*

*Telephone: 01744 739675*

*garrymillerhbc@gmail.com*

*© Garry Miller 2022*

## GARRY MILLER HERITAGE CONSULTANCY

Garry Miller is a heritage consultant, architectural historian and published author who has spent more than 35 years studying and working with buildings of town and countryside, in particular those of North West England. His career as a consultant began in the mid-1980s with the Preston-based Nigel Morgan Historic Building Consultancy, of which he became a partner in 1992 upon its rebranding as Datestone. In 1997 he was commissioned by the Heritage Trust for the North West, a buildings preservation trust based at Barrowford, Lancashire, to produce an in-depth regional study of vernacular houses in southwest Lancashire: the result, *Historic Houses in Lancashire: The Douglas Valley, 1300-1770* was published in 2002. The book was described as ‘scholarship as its best’ by *Country Life* (June 2003), and ‘well analysed and presented’ in *Transactions of the Ancient Monuments Society* (Vol 48, 2004); and was widely cited in the 2006 Buildings of England volume on Liverpool and Southwest Lancashire. Extensive research on the houses of Georgian and Regency Liverpool has also been undertaken, with a view to future publication. Following the success of his Douglas Valley book, Garry Miller established his own consultancy, producing analytical and interpretive reports on historic buildings, in particular the heritage assessments required to support planning applications affecting the historic environment. His area of operation encompasses the North West, Midlands, North Wales and parts of Cumbria and North and West Yorkshire. Several local authorities have cited his assessments as examples of best practice, and reports on more than 150 buildings or sites are produced annually.

### THIS REPORT

**Date of issue:** January 2022

**Status:** final version for planning submission

**Text:** Garry Miller

# CONTENTS

|                                        |    |
|----------------------------------------|----|
| 1: Executive Summary                   | 5  |
| 2: The Site                            | 6  |
| 3: The Proposal/Purpose of this Report | 7  |
| 4: The Listed Building                 | 9  |
| 5: The Conservation Area               | 12 |
| 6: Significance of the Heritage Assets | 15 |
| 7: Planning Policy Context             | 16 |
| 8: Impact of the Proposal              | 17 |

## 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The application building is The Derby Hall, Market Street, Bury, Greater Manchester. Built as a town hall/assembly rooms in 1850, it is Grade II listed and stands within Bury Town Centre Conservation Area. The building is now run as a performing arts venue by the Bury Metropolitan Arts Association, under the name The Met.

Proposals have been submitted to Bury Metropolitan Borough Council for installation of photovoltaic panels on a south-facing section of the roof of the listed building. The heritage issue arising is its impact upon the significance (heritage interest and value) of the listed building and its contribution to the conservation area. The scope and purpose of this report is to identify this significance and evaluate how it will be affected by the proposal.

As a Grade II listed building, the significance of The Derby Hall extends to the national context and derives essentially from the special architectural and historic interest that has warranted its designation. This can be concisely summarised as that of a substantial Neoclassical civic building designed for the 13<sup>th</sup> Earl of Derby by the notable architect Sydney Smirke as part of a larger composition, the remainder of which was demolished in the 1960s. In physical terms, this significance and special interest is embodied in the form, features and streetscene presence of the listed building, in particular its Market Street frontage, which showcases its principal interest and also its contribution to the conservation area.

The significance of the conservation area that forms its setting derives from its character and appearance as the civic and commercial core of the town centre. This significance is embodied in its largely 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings, many of high quality, and their relationship to each other amid the historic pattern of streets and open spaces. While the conservation area's significance extends primarily to the borough-wide context, it also contains many buildings which are listed as being of national importance.

It will be demonstrated in this report that the significance of the listed building and its role in the conservation area will not be adversely affected by the proposal owing to the invisibility of the installation in public views and by its minimal physical impact upon its historic fabric. It will continue to be read as a substantial and locally-definitive mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Neoclassical civic building. In addition, the proposal also carries the significant public benefit of decarbonising the listed building. For these reasons, the proposal is judged to be in accordance with guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework and the relevant heritage policies of the local development plan. The application should therefore be regarded as favourable and approved accordingly.

## 2: THE SITE

The proposal site is The Derby Hall, Market Street, Bury, Greater Manchester. Situated in the heart of the town centre and built as a town hall/assembly rooms in 1850, the building is now run as a performing arts venue by the Bury Metropolitan Arts Association under the name *The Met*.



*Map 1. The proposal site*

## 3: THE PROPOSAL/PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

### *3.1 The proposal*

Proposals have been submitted to Bury Metropolitan Borough Council for installation of photovoltaic panels on a south-facing section of the roof of the listed building.

### *3.2 Designation*

The Derby Hall is Grade II listed and stands within Bury Town Centre Conservation Area.

### *3.3 Heritage impact*

The heritage issue arising is its impact upon the significance (heritage interest and value) of the listed building and its contribution to the conservation area.

### *3.4 Scope and purpose of this report*

Paragraph 194 of Chapter 16 (*Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment*) of the National Planning Policy Framework (as revised July 2021) states local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of the heritage assets affected, including their setting. The scope and purpose of this report is to identify the significance of the listed building and the conservation area, and to assess how this will be affected by the proposal. In accordance with paragraph 194, it is considered the level of detail presented is proportionate to the significance of the heritage assets and no more than is necessary to understand the impact of the proposal. This report is to be read in conjunction with other documentation submitted in support of the application.

### *3.5 Report structure*

This is as follows:

1. A brief description of the listed building (Section 4) and of the conservation area (Section 5)
2. A summary of their heritage significance (Section 6)
3. A summary of the national guidance and local heritage policies against which the application will be assessed (Section 7)
4. Analysis within this policy context of the proposal's impact upon the significance of the listed building and of the conservation area (Section 8)

## 4: THE LISTED BUILDING

### 4.1 Historical context

The Derby Hall was built in 1850 as part of a prestigious civic development for the 13<sup>th</sup> Earl of Derby. Its original role was that of a town hall, containing assembly room, courthouse, police station and, in the basement, public baths. It was designed by architect Sydney Smirke (1797-1877) as part of a Neoclassical composition extending south from Market Place, with the Derby Hotel and Athenaeum attached to the north and south respectively. Both these buildings were demolished in the 1960s.



Map 2. The Derby Hall (Town Hall), Derby Hotel and Athenaeum as depicted by the OS edition of 1907-1908



1. Circa 1900 view showing the Derby Hall flanked by the now-vanished Athenaeum (on far right) and Derby Hotel



2. The Derby Hall as it appears today, looking south along Market Street

## 4.2 List description

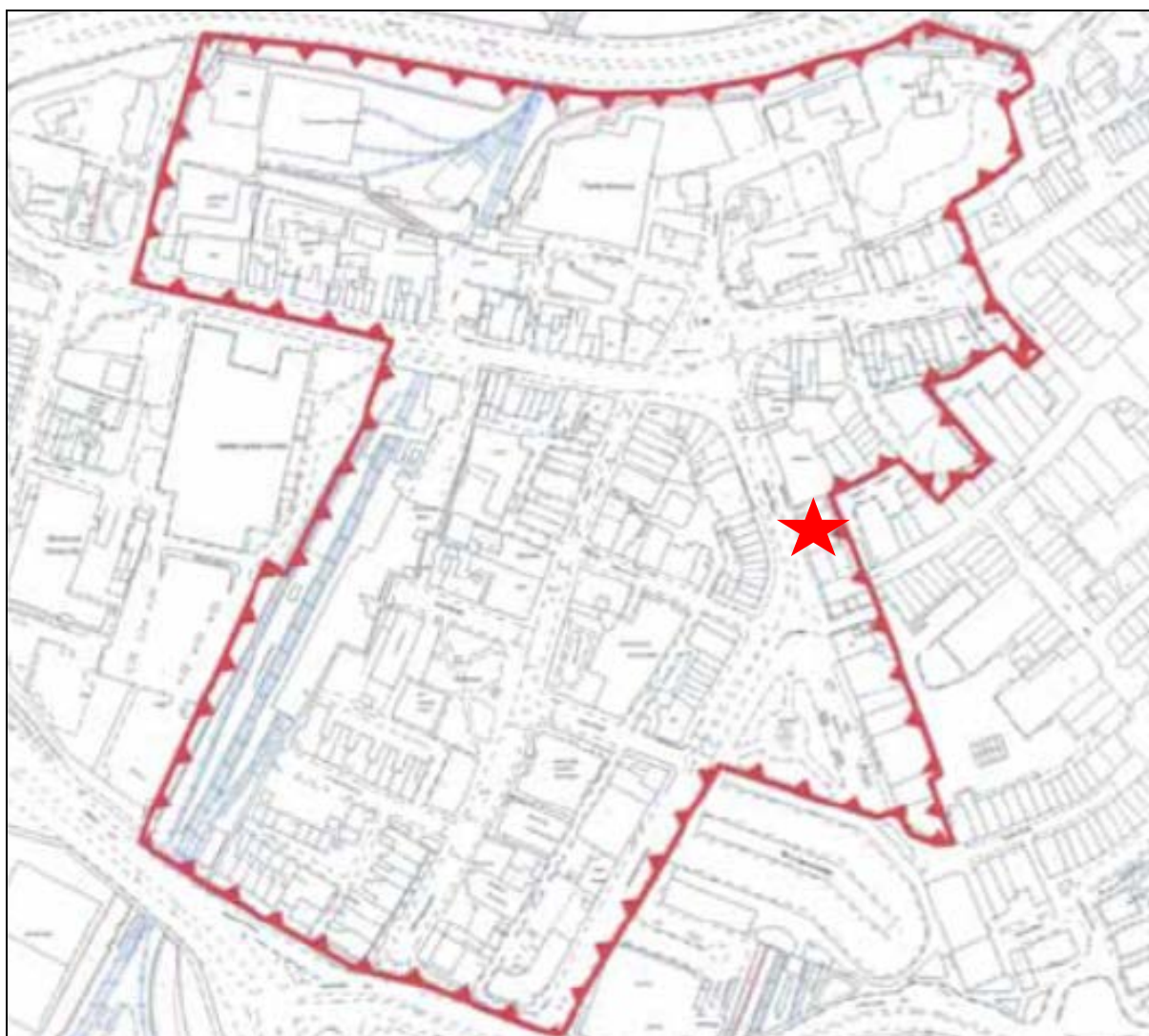
The National Heritage List for England description, compiled during the resurvey of the 1980s, reads:

*1850 by Sydney Smirke. In classical style, formerly comprising in one monumental composition (from left to right) the Derby Hotel, Derby Hall, (originally Town Hall) and the Athenaeum, of which the rest was demolished in mid C20. Ashlar with horizontal rustication on ground floor and crowning dentilled cornice and blocking course. Right-hand section has giant 3-bay Corinthian temple-front over tall ground floor podium; three arched windows on 1st floor, with three circular concave panels above; three arched doorways on ground floor. Left-hand section is 2-storeyed with advanced segmental-pedimented centrepiece of columns and pilasters enclosing doorway below and Venetian window above. Three arched windows on each side of this. Extra bay on far left, advanced with rectangular windows (including two additional ones in mezzanine).*

## 5: THE CONSERVATION AREA

### 5.1 Overview

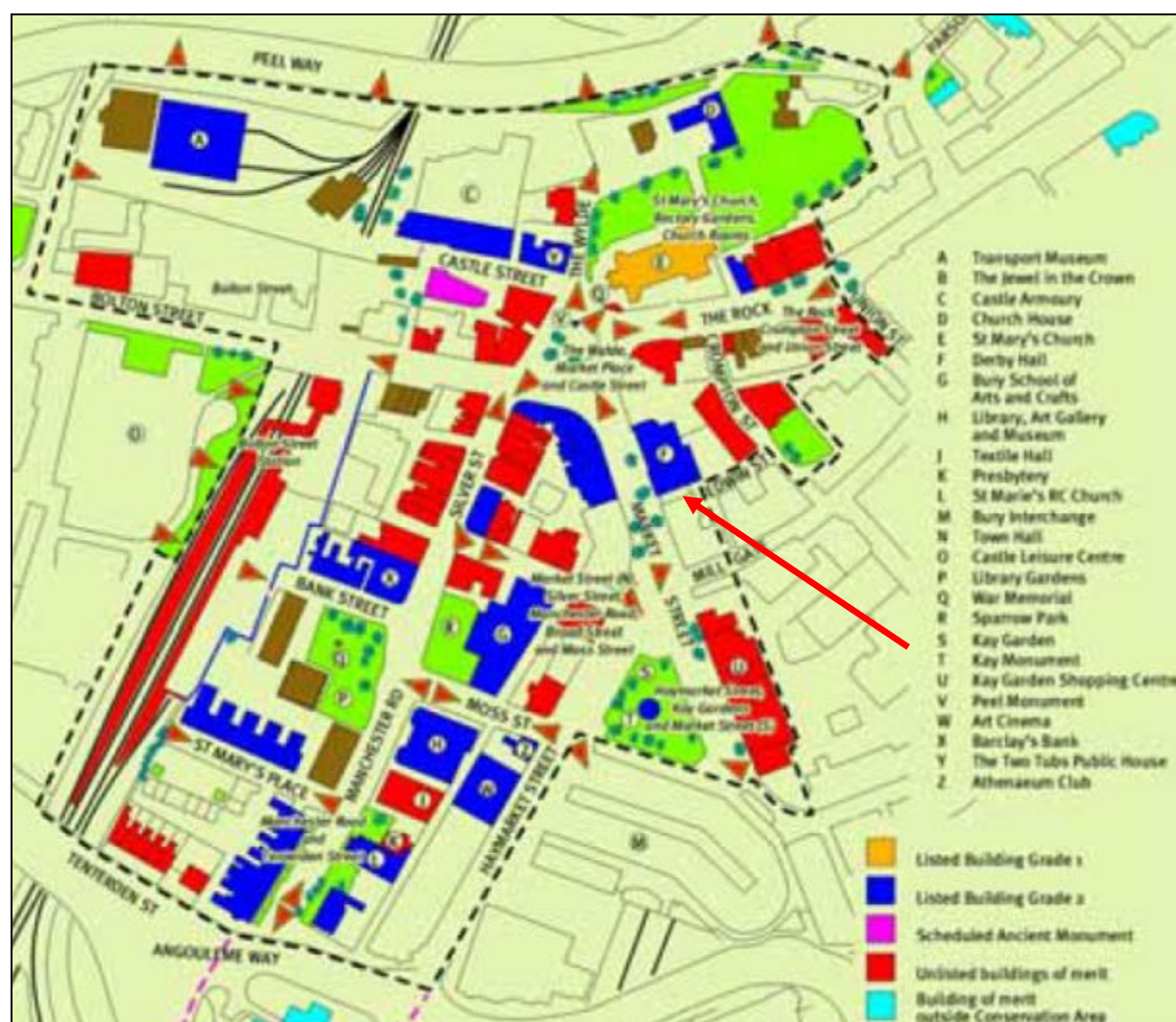
The conservation area encompasses the historic core of the town and is defined by a mix of largely 19<sup>th</sup> century commercial and civic buildings arranged around and linked by public open spaces. Its qualities are described in the character appraisal produced for Bury MBC in 2007. This identifies eight separate character areas, the application property standing within that defined by Market Street (north), Silver Street, Manchester Road North, Broad Street and Moss Street: an area of high quality civic and commercial buildings, developed after 1850 in the wake of The Derby Hall. The conservation area contains numerous listed buildings, those closest to the site including St Mary's Church (Grade I), numbers 2-10, 12-16 and 18-20 Market Street (each listed Grade II) and the Sir Robert Peel Statue in the Market Place (II).



*Map 3. Conservation Area boundaries, with the application building indicated*

## 5.2 Contribution of The Derby Hall

Both historically and architecturally, The Derby Hall is one of the definitive buildings of not just the immediate character area, but also the conservation area as a whole owing to its streetscene prominence and imposing appearance and its role as a catalyst for the high-quality mid-19<sup>th</sup> century civic and commercial development of the town centre. This contribution is principally embodied in its Neoclassical frontage as witnessed in public views along Market Street.



Map 2. The Derby Hall in the context of the conservation area's key buildings



*3 and 4. Views from the north (above) and south along Market Street, demonstrating the predominance of the listed building within the streetscene*



## 6: SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HERITAGE ASSETS

### 6.1 Rationale

Paragraph 195 of the National Planning Policy Framework states local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of a heritage asset, including its setting, and take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal in order to avoid or minimize conflict between the asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal. Significance is defined in the NPPF Glossary as:

*The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.*

### 6.2 The listed building

As a Grade II listed building, the significance of The Derby Hall extends to the national context and derives essentially from the special architectural and historic interest that has warranted its designation. This can be concisely summarised as that of a substantial Neoclassical civic building designed for the 13<sup>th</sup> Earl of Derby by the notable architect Sydney Smirke as part of a larger composition, the remainder of which was demolished in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. In physical terms, this significance and special interest is therefore embodied in the form, features and streetscene presence of the listed building, in particular its Market Street frontage, which showcases its principal interest and also its contribution to the conservation area.

### 6.3 The conservation area

The significance of the conservation area derives from its character and appearance as the civic and commercial core of the town centre. This significance is embodied in its largely 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings, many of high quality, and their relationship to each other amid the historic pattern of streets and open spaces. While the conservation area's significance extends primarily to the borough-wide context, it also contains many buildings which are listed as being of national importance.

## 7: PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

### 7.1 Statutory duty

Section 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires local planning authorities to give special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest. Regarding conservation areas, section 72 (1) states that local planning authorities must pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing their character.

### 7.2 Relevant policies

Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework provides the guidance on how the statutory duty is to be put into practice. Paragraph 197 states that in determining 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 vitality, and*
- *The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness*

Regarding designated heritage assets, paragraph 199 states that ‘*great weight*’ should be given to their conservation and the more important the asset, the greater that weight should be; and that significance can be lost through development within its setting.

Locally, the relevant heritage policies are those retained by Bury MBC from its Unitary Development Plan, adopted 1997, which remain in force until replaced by policies of the emerging Local Plan. Relevant to this application are:

- Policy EN2 (*Conservation and Listed Buildings*), which aims to preserve the borough's built heritage through the control of development, especially that affecting conservation areas, listed buildings and areas of local historical importance
- Policy EN2/1 (*Character of Conservation Areas*), whose purpose is to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of conservation areas
- Policy EN2/3 (*Listed Buildings*), which states that the council will actively safeguard the character and setting of listed buildings by not permitting works, alterations or changes of use which would have a detrimental effect on their historical or architectural character and features.

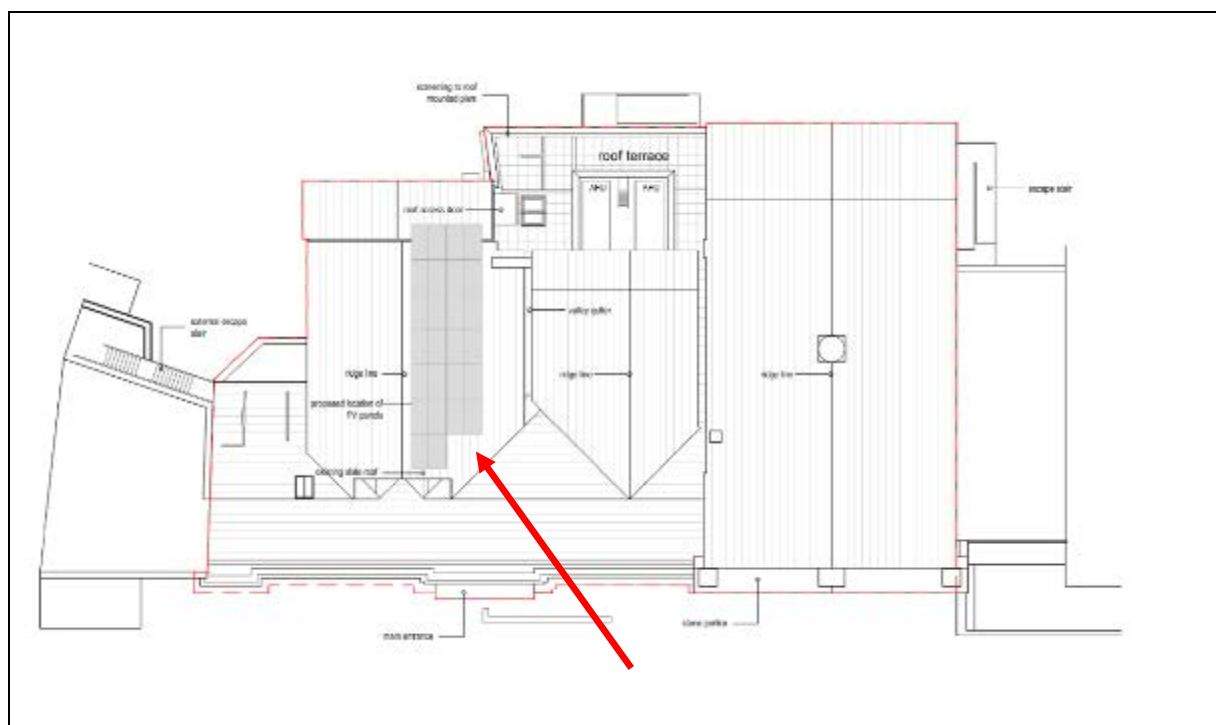
## 8: IMPACT OF THE PROPOSAL

### 8.1 Summary of the scheme

The purpose of the scheme is to decarbonise the listed building, and is being undertaken as part of a regional funding programme for this purpose. The PV installation will be located on a south-facing roof plane of a gabled rearward section of the roof. This extends backwards at right angles from the main north-south element of the roof over the left section of the listed building (see Plate 5, below).



### 5. Location of the proposed installation



*Figure 1. Location of the proposed installation. Halliday Meecham Architects*

## 8.2 Summary of the scheme

It has been demonstrated in this report that the significance of the listed building derives from its special architectural and historic interest as embodied in its original form and features and defining streetscene presence. This significance is embodied in the principal public views of its frontage to Market Street, which also establish its contribution to the conservation area. The proposed installation will not adversely affect this significance and contribution. Owing to its location behind the main front roof plane along with the height of the listed building, the installation will be hidden from sight in the street level views which capture its significance and historic character. The installation is therefore only likely to be seen from the upper floors of adjoining buildings, but these views are restricted as they are of a private and not public nature. In terms of the physical impact upon the fabric of the listed structure itself, this will be minimal: the panels will be affixed by ‘Solar Limpet’ hooks which are bespoke to PV installations and provide a weatherproof means of attachment without the need for removal or cutting of slates. The details of these, and of the panels themselves, are included within the submitted documentation and should be referred to as the principal source of information on these items.

## 8.3 Conclusion

**This significance of the listed building and its role in the conservation area will not be adversely affected by the proposal owing to the invisibility of the installation in public views and by the minimal physical impact upon its historic fabric. The**

**building will continue to be read as a substantial and locally-definitive mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Neoclassical civic building. In addition, the scheme also carries the significant public benefit of decarbonising the listed building. For these reasons, the proposal is judged to be in accordance with guidance in Chapter 16 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment) of the National Planning Policy Framework (as revised July 2021) and the relevant saved heritage policies of Bury MBC's Unitary Development Plan. The application should therefore be regarded as favourable and approved accordingly.**