

Building a Greener Future at 100 Barbirolli Square

In the heart of Manchester, 100 Barbirolli Square is redefining what it means to be a modern, sustainable workplace. Situated adjacent to Manchester Central Convention Complex, and less than a three-minute walk from St Peter's Square, one of the city's most prominent civic and cultural hubs, the building is uniquely positioned at the intersection of business, community, and heritage.

Originally built in 1997 as part of a major city-centre regeneration scheme, the building was acquired by its current owner, a pension fund, in 2017. Since then, substantial capital investment has been made to modernise the property. Replacing original engineering systems with environmentally friendly technology and delivering a comprehensive refurbishment of the interior to meet the needs of today's occupiers.

Barbirolli Square itself is named after Sir John Barbirolli, the celebrated conductor of the Hallé Orchestra, who played a transformative role in Manchester's cultural legacy. Today, that same spirit of leadership and innovation is being channelled into environmental and social responsibility at 100 Barbirolli Square.

Sustainability at 100 Barbirolli Square is not a tick-box exercise, it's a living ecosystem!

Through its Tenant Green Committee, engagement forums, and regular tenant meetings, the building team actively collaborates with occupiers to shape initiatives that matter. These include:

- Planting new trees and shrubs to improve biodiversity
- Installing bug hotels and bird boxes to support pollinators and local wildlife
- Introducing wildflower areas to enhance biodiversity in a dense urban environment

These efforts contribute to addressing biodiversity loss—an urgent issue, with the UK having lost nearly 50% of its biodiversity since the Industrial Revolution. Even small urban interventions can significantly increase local habitats and ecological resilience.

Behind the scenes, a major transformation is underway in how the building operates. Ongoing investment since 2017 has enabled a shift toward more efficient and sustainable systems, including:

- Continuous review of energy performance, sharing best practice across tenants
- Transition toward lower-carbon energy sources, including exploration of waste-derived fuels
- Use of renewable electricity through green energy providers
- Reduced reliance on traditional gas systems
- Upgrades to LED lighting, cutting energy use by up to 75%
- Targeted use of trace heating systems to prevent unnecessary energy consumption

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Globally, buildings account for nearly 40% of energy-related carbon emissions. By modernising its infrastructure, 100 Barbirolli Square is actively contributing to the UK's legally binding Net Zero by 2050 target.

Technology is playing a key role in improving both efficiency and occupier wellbeing.

Air quality sensors monitor CO₂ levels, particulates, and overall indoor air health. This data is used to dynamically adjust Air Handling Units (AHUs), improving ventilation while reducing unnecessary energy use.

Studies show that improved indoor air quality can increase productivity by up to 11% and reduce absenteeism—benefiting both businesses and employees.

Waste reduction remains a core priority, shaped by ongoing tenant feedback.

Key initiatives include:

- Conducting detailed waste audits
- Improving recycling streams and reducing contamination
- Encouraging circular economy practices among occupiers

With the UK generating over 200 million tonnes of waste annually, commercial buildings have a vital role to play. Data-led interventions at 100 Barbirolli Square are helping to reduce landfill contributions and improve recycling outcomes.

Sustainability is as much about people as it is about the planet.

The recent refurbishment, designed and delivered largely by Manchester-based development specialists, has transformed the building into a vibrant hub for business and community activity. It is now home to a diverse community of organisations, alongside the popular Society food hall and bar, which overlooks the Bridgewater Canal and has become a key destination within the city centre.

Tenant engagement goes beyond the workplace. A programme of social and community initiatives has been developed, including:

- Open days and engagement events for students
- Cultural and creative activities, including art exhibitions, getting local artisans and providing lessons for tenants to partake in such as flower arranging, wreath making, terrarium creating, soy candle making etc.
- Wellbeing programmes such as fitness programmes, nutrition talks, and relaxation programmes
- Community building with games, crafting, learning new skills by local vendors and networking events within the building
- Volunteering initiatives such as local litter-picking campaigns

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Alongside a calendar of events designed to bring occupiers together, these initiatives support local businesses, encourage return to the office, and foster a strong sense of belonging within the building.

Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles are embedded throughout the building's operations:

Environmental: Reducing emissions, enhancing biodiversity, improving energy efficiency

Social: Building community, supporting wellbeing, engaging tenants

Governance: Transparent decision-making and measurable sustainability goals

The UK has committed to reducing emissions by 78% by 2035 compared to 1990 levels. Achieving this requires action at every level, from national policy to individual buildings.

100 Barbirolli Square is more than just a workplace; it is a model for sustainable commercial real estate.

By combining innovative technology, ecological awareness, and meaningful community engagement, the building is helping Manchester move closer to its ambitious climate goals while creating a space where businesses and people can thrive.

This is not just about meeting targets - it's about setting new standards.