



Planning Department
Manchester City Council
Albert Square
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M2 5DB

To whom it may concern:

Resubmission of LPA ref no. 131338/AO/2021 – Retention of non illuminated poster signs to building at 11 Derby Street, Manchester, M8 8QE.

Please find enclosed an application for the Consent to display an advertisement. The application has been submitted via the Planning Portal and given the reference number PP-11236482.

SBA Solicitors has been located at the above commercial premises for almost two years. SBA Solicitors is accredited by the Law Society in Immigration and Asylum Law and provides a vital service to its respective clientele base.

For planning purposes, 'advertisement' is defined in section 336(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) as:

"any word, letter, model, sign, placard, board, notice, awning, blind, device or representation, whether illuminated or not, in the nature of, and employed wholly or partly for the purposes of, advertisement, announcement or direction, and (without prejudice to the previous provisions of this definition) includes any hoarding or similar structure used or designed, or adapted for use and anything else principally used, or designed or adapted principally for use, for the display of advertisements."

The Applicant's business comprises a legal service which primarily assists vulnerable members of society in navigating complex legal issues surrounding immigration law. The premises is located in Cheetham, a multi-ethnic community where just 28.6% of residents identify as 'White British'.

That said, there is a need for the Applicant's business to display advertisements which display the businesses' services in order to be able to assist the local population and inform clientele of the services present at the application site.

Consent was first sought (LPA ref no. 131338/AO/2021) for the installation of 7 x non illuminated poster signs to 11 Derby Street. A subsequent appeal was recently dismissed (Appeal ref no. APP/B4215/Z/21/3284278).

Following on from the Inspector's conclusions, the Applicant has since sought professional planning advice and seeks to work with the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to achieve a satisfactory outcome.

When deciding applications for advertisement consent, local authorities will have regard only to considerations of 'amenity' and 'public safety'. The Council did not refuse LPA ref no. 131338/AO/2021 in respect of public safety and therefore the main issue was the effect of the proposed advertisement on the amenity of the area.

The Planning Practice Guidance sets out that in practice, 'amenity' is usually understood to mean the effect on visual and aural amenity in the immediate neighbourhood of an advertisement, and the local characteristics of the neighbourhood should always be considered. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), issued 2021, sets out that the quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed.

The Inspector concluded that the "7 poster signs display information relating to the business in various colours, fonts and sizes, thus lacking a cohesive design. They are positioned at different heights, which also contributes to an incohesive appearance. Though the appellant has commented that all of the poster signs relate to the business, the number of signs is excessive for a building of this size and contributes to the existing advertisement clutter within the area. Cumulatively, the design, siting and number of poster signs cause harm to the amenity of the area. It is accepted that the poster signs do not obstruct space or light and are nonilluminated. However, these matters do not outweigh the harm that has been identified to the amenity of the area, with specific regard to visual amenity. There are examples of similar advertisements within the area and the appellant notes that a previous advertisement was in situ at the appeal site, but it is not clear whether these benefit from consent."

Having reviewed the Inspector's findings, the Applicant is keen to revisit the proposals and work with the LPA to find a workable solution. This application seeks consent for the retention of advertisements 1, 2 & 4 and the removal of the advertisements 3,5,6 and 7 (as per the accompanying image plan).

Given that the Inspector referred to the "cumulative" impact of the presence of seven separate signs of differing design and content, the reduction in the number of signs by 66% is considered to be a suitable compromise. It would enable the Applicant's business to maintain some degree of consistent marketing while also ensuring a negligible impact on the character and appearance of the local setting.

It is worth noting that the site is within a highly commercialised setting, not along a main road and not within a Conservation Area nor is it within proximity of a Listed Building. There are other commercial properties within the locality that feature similar signage. The presence of three adverts as opposed to seven is considered to be

acceptable. Moreover, the retained advertisements would be more consistent with a more acceptable style font and colour. In addition, the removal of four of the advertisements would ensure much of the building's façade is visible.

Policies SP1 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy seek to ensure that new development enhances or creates character, protects and enhances the built environment; and that the design, scale and appearance of the proposed development is appropriate to its context.

The presence of the retained signage would not conflict the objectives of local planning policy which seek to ensure good design and it is hoped the LPA is able to adopt a pragmatic approach that acknowledges the efforts made by the Applicant as well as the need for local businesses to be able to advertise externally.

I trust my client's proposals have been set out in enough detail and I look forward to discussing them with you over the coming weeks.

Yours faithfully

Nazia Shah

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