

Planning

Growth & Development

Delegated officer report for planning application

Application no.	142706/AOH/2025		
Date registered valid:	14 April 2025		
Proposal:	Two digital 75 inch LCD display screen, one on each side of the single black digital communications totem.		
Address:	Footpath Outside 15 Oldham Road, Manchester, M4 5EQ		
Ward(s):	Piccadilly		Ward
Applicant:	Simon Warner BT Group Plc		
Agent (if any):	Mr Martin Brown Telent		
Case officer:	Sam		Elliott
	Tel: 0161	219	2856
	Email: sam.elliott@manchester.gov.uk		
Recommendation:	Refuse		
Date of recommendation:	03/06/2025		

Application details

Type of application: Advertisement Hoardings Consent

Development type: Advertisements

Date of site visit: 24 April 2025

Standard consultations:

Printed: 24 April 2025 Expired: 16 May 2025

Neighbour notifications

Printed: 24 April 2025 Expired: 16 May 2025

Site notice

No site notice has been produced

Press advert

No press advert had been published

Departure from Development Plan: No

Environmental Statement: Not required

Description of site/building

Listed building: Not applicable

Conservation area: Not applicable

Tree Preservation Order:

Description of area

The proposed development site is at the footpath area outside 15 Oldham Road, located on the southwestern end of Oldham Road where it converges with Great Ancoats Street. Consequently, the site is located at a busy, complex intersection of one of Manchester's major radial routes (Oldham Road) and circulatory traffic routes around the City Centre (Great Ancoats Street/Swan Street). The streetscene includes an existing electronic billboard located between 15 Oldham Road and 2-4 Swan Street and a non-digital billboard further to the northeast.

The site is not sited within a conservation area, but is just outside the Smithfield, Ancoats and Stevenson Square Conservation Areas and views of the proposed development site are attainable at their peripheries. In addition, it is within the setting of two Grade II listed buildings at 2-4 Swan Street and 2 Oldham Road.

The proposed development site also sits at the northern edge of the Northern Quarter, which contains a variety of uses including bars, restaurants, cafes, offices, residential apartments, hotel uses, car parking and places of worship. Many of the uses within the Northern Quarter are independent.

Description of development

Advertisement Consent is sought for 2 no. LCD screen adverts associated with the digital kiosk application 142705/FO/2025 on the footpath outside 15 Oldham Road.

Each screen would measure 95cm wide by 167cm high and feature a tablet interface and digital HD screen. The proposed digital display screens would have a maximum night-time brightness of 600cd/m² and a maximum daytime brightness of 5000cd/m², displaying full colour static content at 10-second intervals.

The applicant's supporting statement acknowledges that the associated proposed kiosk forms part of a "strategic package" of similar devices. To this end, a number of applications for Smart Hubs and adverts have been received across the authority:

142693/FO/2025 & 142694/AOH/2025: Footpath Outside 527 Wilbraham Road, Manchester, M21 0UF.
142695/FO/2025 & 142696/AOH/2025: Footpath Outside 13 Grey Mare Lane, Manchester, M11 3DQ.
142697/FO/2025 & 142698/AOH/2025: Footpath Outside 720 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M20 2DW.
142699/FO/2025 & 142700/AOH/2025: Footpath Outside 293 Moston Lane, Manchester, M40 9WJ
142701/FO/2025 & 142702/AOH/2025: Footpath Outside 346 Palatine Road, Manchester, M22 4HD,

142703/FO/2025 & 142704/AOH/2025: Footpath Opposite 961 Oldham Road, Manchester, M40 2FF
142707/FO/2025 & 142708/AOH/2025: Footpath Outside 335 Hollinwood Avenue, Manchester, M40 0JA
142709/FO/2025 & 142710/AOH/2025: Footpath Outside 1046 Ashton New Road, Manchester, M11 4PE,
142711/FO/2025 & 142712/AOH/2025: Footpath Outside 919 Stockport Road, Manchester, M19 3PZ
142713/FO/2025 & 142714/AOH/2025: Footpath Outside 661 Altrincham Road, Manchester, M23 9AA
142715/FO/2025 & 142716/AOH/2025: Footpath Outside 347 Wilmslow Road, Manchester, M14 6SS,
142717/FO/2025 & 142718/AOH/2025: Footway Outside 187 Hollyhedge Road, Manchester, M22 8UE
142719/FO/2025 & 142720/AOH/2025: Footpath Outside Civic Centre, Simonsway, Manchester, M22 5HZ.

142776/FO/2025 & 142777/AOH/2025: Footpath Outside Sport City ASDA, Ashton New Road, Manchester, M11 4BD,

142778/FO/2025 & 142779/AOH/2025: Footpath Outside 64 Montmano Drive, Manchester, M20 2EB
142780/FO/2025 & 142781/AOH/2025: Footpath Outside 931 Rochdale Road, Manchester, M9 8AE,
142782/FO/2025 & 142783/AOH/2025: Footpath Outside 59 Brackley Avenue, Manchester, M15 4FS
142784/FO/2025 & 142785/AOH/2025: Footpath Outside 473 Kingsway, Manchester, M19 1NR,
142786/FO/2025 & 142787/AOH/2025: Footpath Outside 100 Brownley Road, Manchester, M22 8UD,

Consultations & Notification Responses

Publicity

The application was advertised by neighbour notification letters. No responses were received in response.

Highways Services advise that they do not support the proposed advert due to concerns with the location of the screens positioned immediately adjacent to a signalised junction with pedestrian crossing facilities, impacting line of sight for pedestrians and vehicles. Should there be an approval, recommended a condition relating to moving images, duration of adverts, transition between adverts, light sensor to control brightness, black screen defaulting and controls on luminance levels during non-daylight hours/inclement weather.

Environmental Health advise that the Maximum daytime brightness of 5000 cd/m² is acceptable as adverts will have an auto-adjusting mechanism to control this throughout the day dependent on weather.

The site falls into the E4 environmental zone (urban) and far displays not larger than 10m² the dusk-dawn restriction to 600 cd/m² is acceptable.

Given that luminance has the potential to exceed 4000 cd/m², an International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection assessment would be required in the case on an approval. Conditions concerning the above would be added to any approval.

Policy Context

Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007

The Local planning authority shall exercise its powers under these Regulations in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking into account—

- (a) the provisions of the development plan, so far as they are material; and
- (b) any other relevant factors.

(2) Without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (1)(b)—

(a) factors relevant to amenity include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural or similar interest;

(b) factors relevant to public safety include—

(i) the safety of persons using any highway, railway, waterway, dock, harbour or aerodrome (civil or military);

(ii) whether the display of the advertisement in question is likely to obscure, or hinder the ready interpretation of, any traffic sign, railway signal or aid to navigation by water or air;

(iii) whether the display of the advertisement in question is likely to hinder the operation of any device used for the purpose of security or surveillance or for measuring the speed of any vehicle.

(3) In taking account of factors relevant to amenity, the local planning authority may, if it thinks fit, disregard any advertisement that is being displayed.

(4) Unless it appears to the local planning authority to be required in the interests of amenity or public safety, an express consent for the display of advertisements shall not contain any limitation or restriction relating to the subject matter, content or design of what is to be displayed.

The following policies are considered relevant to this application:

The Adopted Core Strategy for the City of Manchester

- CC9 – Design and Heritage
- CC10 – A Place for Everyone
- DM1 – Development Management
- EN1 – Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas
- EN3 – Heritage
- SP1 – Spatial Principles
- T1 – Sustainable Transport

The Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester

- E3.3 – Environmental Improvement and Protection
- DC15 – Advertisements, Hoardings and Posters
- DC18 – Conservation Areas
- DC19 – Listed Buildings

Places for Everyone

- JP-P1 – Sustainable Places

- JP-P2 – Heritage

NPPF

- Section 12 (Achieving Well Designed Places)
- Section 16 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment)

Paragraph 141

The quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed. A separate consent process within the planning system controls the display of advertisements, which should be operated in a way which is simple, efficient and effective. Advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts.

Amenity

As per PfE policy JP-P1, proposals should facilitate visually stimulating and interesting environments. Pursuant to Core Strategy policies DM1 and SP1, development should also be well-designed and have regard to the surrounding area. Specifically concerning development at the street level, Core Strategy policies EN1 and T1 outline that development should contribute positively to the experience of all at street level and improve the pedestrian environment. With regards to advertisements, saved UDP policies DC15.1(a) and DC15.1(b) outline that the Council will take account of an advert's location and impact on visual amenity, assessing whether its contribution is positive. DC15.2(b) continues that an advert should relate properly to the site.

The proposal would see a digital HD screen installed into a freestanding, rectilinear in shape totem (being considered under a separate planning application 142705).

It is acknowledged that adverts are intended to attract attention, however digital advertisement displays have a greater brightness than traditional poster boards and are by design highly visible in the street scene. Given the adverts' luminance, they would not blend into the street scene and would feature prominently.

The sign would also be viewed in respect of the large advertisement hoarding already in situ in this location. This would cause advertisement clutter in a high prominent location which is also within the setting of a listed building.

The applicant has sited that there are nearby totems at 59 Great Ancoats Street and Spear Street. It is not considered that these totems are relevant to the consideration of this application. Each development should be considered on its own individual merits and in this particular case the prominence and highly visual location would together with the existing street clutter would result in inappropriately sited advertisement that would also add to advertisement clutter in this location.

The existing electronic billboard is considered to already constitute an unsightly and overly prominent feature within the street scene and when seen cumulatively, the proposed digital display boards would form a particularly glaring digital scene along Oldham Road. As such they are considered to feature overly prominently to the detriment of visual amenity.

Saved Policy DC15.1(j) of the Unitary Development Plan 1995 requires cumulative effects of advertisements to be considered, and it is considered that the further additions of two particularly prominent and obtrusive digital elements against a wider backdrop of the digital display board would constitute advertisement clutter, appearing incongruous and harmful to the visual amenity of the street scene. The proposed adverts would also be seen in the context of a non-digital billboard next to the Cable Street car park, advertisements within the Oldham Road bus stop, car parking signage, multiple signs to 15 Oldham Road, adverts on the opposite side of Oldham Road,

as well as that of the electronic billboard. The negative visual impact of a prominent illuminated advertisement, against a backdrop of an LED billboard, and with existing advertisement clutter within the setting, would create a compounding impression of increased advertisement clutter. As such, the proposal would be a negative contribution to the locality, fail to relate to its surroundings, contribute to a visually stimulating environment and be a detriment to the experience at the street level.

The proposed adverts' harm to visual amenity is also considered with respect to their location at a key gateway into the city centre at the terminus of a major radial route (Oldham Road). The City Council has a robust position on new development along the key arterial routes leading into the city centre, pursuant to the longstanding strategy to upgrade the appearance of arterial routes. This is reflected in saved policy E3.3 of the UDP (1995) which seeks to improve visual amenity on these roads and encourage high-quality new development. To that end, it is noted that there are recent public realm improvements via tree planting adjacent to the proposed development site, as well as there being wider improvements to Great Ancoats Street. As such, further advertisement clutter by virtue of a prominent and obtrusive digital element would undermine a longstanding aim of the City Council and be in contrary to Council's efforts to improve the street level experience through the provision of public realm enhancement along its arterial routes.

The proposed advertisement, and the resulting advertisement clutter in this location, would also detract from the setting of the Listed Buildings, particularly that of the adjacent Grade II-listed former Midland Bank at 2 and 4 Swan Street. While it is acknowledged that the LED screen on the corner of Spear Street can be viewed in the same context as the Midland Bank, the illuminated screens would be an obtrusive modern element seen directly in conjunction with the classically styled Midland Bank, being erected immediately adjacent to its distinctive semi-circular end.

It is considered that introduction of the prominent digital element against the existing backdrop of the large digital display board would be non-complimentary, inappropriate and incongruous in the setting of a listed building, having a detrimental compounding effect on their character and setting. The adverts are also considered to be similarly harmful by virtue of adding to the wider non-digital advertisement clutter in the area. As such, the proposed advertisements are considered to fail to relate properly to the site and be a negative and obtrusive contribution to an area of high amenity, therefore failing to meet the aims of saved UDP policies DC15.1(a) and (c), as well as DC15.2(a) and (c). Moreover, they would be contrary to saved policy DC19.1(d) of the UDP and CC9 of the Core Strategy, which state that the Council will seek to preserve and enhance the settings of listed buildings by appropriate control over the design of new development in their vicinity, as well as control over the use of adjacent land.

The proposed adverts therefore fail to comply with the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 where it relates to the general characteristics of the locality and historic interest, be contrary to the provisions of policies CC9, EN1 and EN3 of the Manchester Core Strategy (2012), policies DC15.1, DC15.2, DC18 and DC19 of the Unitary Development Plan for Manchester (1995), PfE policy JP-P2.

Public Safety

PfE policy JP-P1 requires that the city is easy to move around for those of all mobility levels, particularly by walking and cycling, with enjoyable routes free from obstacles and disorienting stimuli. Policy T1 of the Core Strategy also specifies that development will be supported where it improves pedestrian routes and the pedestrian environment.

Pursuant to this, it is noted that there are ongoing cycling infrastructure improvements further up Oldham Road to improve active travel along the route and, as noted previously, the City Council is undertaking significant efforts to improve the walking and wheeling experience on pavements

through decluttering footways and public realm throughout the City Centre. Core Strategy Policies DM1 and SP1 outline that proposals must have regard to road safety.

Regarding adverts specifically, the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 state that adverts must have regard for highway safety, where saved UDP policy DC15.2(d) similarly states that the Council will have regard for adverts injurious to public safety.

Planning Practice Guidance (Advertisements) (the PPG) does recognise that all advertisements are intended to attract attention. It clarifies that those proposed at points where drivers need to take more care are more likely to affect public safety. The PPG goes on to identify the main types of advertisement which may cause danger to road users. It includes those which, because of their size or siting, would obstruct or confuse a road-user's view, or reduce the clarity or effectiveness of a traffic sign or signal, or would be likely to distract road-users because of their unusual nature, or obstruct or impair sightlines at corners, bends or at a junction

With regards to the above, the proposed adverts would be positioned immediately adjacent to a signalised junction with pedestrian crossing facilities at a busy and complex section of Oldham Road. Immediately adjacent to the development site, the highway is two lanes wide. Vehicles approaching the crossing from Great Ancoats Street contend with the curve at the junction and vehicles joining Oldham Road from Swan Street manoeuvre around the peninsula-like section of footway around the former Midland Bank. Due to the siting of the advert on the southwest side of side of the crossing, it would be positioned between the crossing and oncoming traffic.

Highway Services do not support the application as there is a safety concern that the totem may obscure pedestrians at the crossing facility and impact sightlines for both pedestrians and vehicles. City Centre Growth & Infrastructure comments are also acknowledged that digital screens within pavements create obstacles to pedestrians, having a significant impact on the movement of people around the city and contradicting the city's aspiration to prioritise active travel for those walking, wheeling and cycling.

Given the safety concerns with the adverts' impact on the crossing over Oldham Road, the proposal is considered to be inappropriately sited and impact upon road safety, failing to comply with saved policy DC15.2(d) which states that adverts will not be permitted where by reason of their position, size or design would be injurious to public safety. The proposal thereby also fails to comply with Core Strategy policies DM1, SP1 and T1, as well as PfE policy JP-P1 by virtue of its impact on road safety at the crossing, as well as the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 where it relates to the highway safety.

Moreover, in view of the above the proposal is considered to further fail to meet accessibility requirements required by PfE policy JP-P1 and policies CC10, DM1, SP1 and T1 of the Manchester Core Strategy, which broadly outline the Council's aim to ensure the city is easy to move around for those of all mobility levels and that development will be supported if it has high standards of accessibility across spaces in the City Centre.

Lighting

Regarding the illuminance of the LED screens, the product specification document states that the intensity of the illumination of the two digital display screens shall not exceed 600 cd/m² between dusk and dawn. While the product would have a maximum daytime brightness of 5000cd/m², there would be an auto-adjusting mechanism depending on ambient light levels. Environmental Protection do not object to the proposed luminance levels on this basis.

Had the proposal been recommended for approval, a condition ensuring this restriction is attached to any approval would have been applied.

It is also recommended that a condition regarding malfunctions specifies that the display will include a mechanism to blank the screen with a black background in the event of a malfunction, rather than to freeze the image.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

In consideration of the above, the proposed adverts have been found to have an unacceptable impact on local visual amenity, heritage and highway safety. As such, the proposal has been found to be contrary to the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007, Core Strategy Policies CC9, CC10, DM1, EN1, SP1 and T1, saved UDP policies DC18, DC19 and E3.3, Places for Everyone Policies JP-P1 and JP-P2.

Other Legislative Requirements

Equality Act 2010

Section 149 (Public Sector Equality Duty) of the Equality Act 2010 requires due regard to the need to: Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act and; Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The Equality Duty does not impose a legal requirement to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment. Compliance with the Equality Duty involves consciously thinking about the aims of the Equality Duty as part of the process of decision-making.

Human Rights Act 1998 considerations

This application needs to be considered against the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998. Under Article 6, the applicants (and those third parties, including local residents, who have made representations) have a right to a fair hearing and to this end the local planning authority must give full consideration to their comments.

Protocol 1 Article 1, and Article 8 where appropriate, confer(s) a right of respect for a person's home, other land and business assets. In taking account of all material considerations, including Council policy as set out in the Core Strategy and saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan, the Director of Planning, Building Control & Licensing has concluded that some rights conferred by these articles on the applicant(s)/objector(s)/resident(s) and other occupiers and owners of nearby land that might be affected may be interfered with but that that interference is in accordance with the law and justified by being in the public interest and on the basis of the planning merits of the development proposal. She believes that any restriction on these rights posed by the recommendation given is proportionate to the wider benefits of and that such a decision falls within the margin of discretion afforded to the Council under the Town and Country Planning Acts.

Recommendation: Refuse

Article 35 Declaration

Reasons for recommendation to refuse

- 1) The proposed advertisement would by virtue of its siting, scale, design, appearance and means of illumination would be obtrusive, incongruous and form overly dominant feature located in a prominent location adjacent to radial entry routes into and throughout the City

Centre to the detriment of the street scene and pedestrian experience. The sign would also result in advertisement clutter due to existing signage and street furniture in this location together with having an unduly harmful impact on the setting and significance of the Grade II listed 2-4 Swan Street. The proposed advertisements would therefore be contrary to the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007; the Core Strategy for the City of Manchester, in particular policies DM1, EN1, EN3, SP1 and T1; the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester policies E3.3, DC19 and DC15; and Places for Everyone policy JP-P1 and the NPPF.

- 2) The proposed advertisements would by virtue of their siting immediately adjacent to a signalised junction with pedestrian crossing facilities on Oldham Road impact upon highway safety and therefore be contrary to Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007; the Core Strategy for the City of Manchester, in particular policies DM1, SP1 and T1; the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester saved policy DC15.2(d) (Advertisements, Hoardings and Posters); and Places for Everyone policy JP-P1 (Sustainable Development).

Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified

Highway Services
Environmental Health

79 Tib Street, Manchester, M4 1LS
Quality Engineering Design, 77 Tib Street, Manchester, M4 1LS
5 Swan Street, Manchester, M4 5JJ
Basement And Ground Floor, 7 - 9 Swan Street, Manchester, M4 5JJ
Flat 1, 4 Swan Street, Manchester, M4 5JN
Frog And Bucket, 102 Oldham Street, Manchester, M4 1LJ
Room 15, 5 Swan Street, Manchester, M4 5JJ
6 Swan Street, Manchester, M4 5JN
Second Floor, 7 - 9 Swan Street, Manchester, M4 5JJ
Third Floor, 7 - 9 Swan Street, Manchester, M4 5JJ
Crown And Kettle, 2 Oldham Road, Manchester, M4 5FE
Room 14, 5 Swan Street, Manchester, M4 5JJ
Room 13, 5 Swan Street, Manchester, M4 5JJ
Room 12, 5 Swan Street, Manchester, M4 5JJ
Room 11, 5 Swan Street, Manchester, M4 5JJ
Room 10, 5 Swan Street, Manchester, M4 5JJ
Room 9, 5 Swan Street, Manchester, M4 5JJ
Basement And Ground Floor, 2 Swan Street, Manchester, M4 5JN
Room 8, 5 Swan Street, Manchester, M4 5JJ
Room 7, 5 Swan Street, Manchester, M4 5JJ
Room 6, 5 Swan Street, Manchester, M4 5JJ
Room 5, 5 Swan Street, Manchester, M4 5JJ
Room 4, 5 Swan Street, Manchester, M4 5JJ
Room 3, 5 Swan Street, Manchester, M4 5JJ
Room 2, 5 Swan Street, Manchester, M4 5JJ
8 Swan Street, Manchester, M4 5JN
7 - 9 Swan Street, Manchester, M4 5JJ
The Quick Brown Fox, 1 - 3 Swan Street, Manchester, M4 5JJ
Room 1, 5 Swan Street, Manchester, M4 5JJ
First Floor, 7 - 9 Swan Street, Manchester, M4 5JJ
2 - 4 Swan Street, Manchester, M4 5JN
First Floor And Second Floor, 2 - 4 Swan Street, Manchester, M4 5JN
143 - 147 Oldham Street, Manchester, M4 1LN
4 Oldham Road, Manchester, M4 5FE

Appendix 2 – Planning constraints

Article 4 Direction - Removal Of PD Rights Change Of Use From Class C3 To Class C4
Article 4 Direction - City Centre PD Restriction - Class B1(c) To C3
Article 4 Direction - City Centre PD Restriction - Class B1(a) To C3
Coal Authority - Development Low Risk - Name: DEVELOPMENT_LOW_RISK_AREA
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Middle) -
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Middle) -
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (More) -
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (More) -

Area Team Boundary - Name: CENTRAL