

Planning

Growth & Development

Delegated officer report for planning application

Application no.	143679/AO/2025		
Date registered valid:	19 August 2025		
Proposal:	Installation of non-illuminated individual letter sign and 2 no. internally illuminated projecting signs.		
Address:	1 - 5 St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7EF		
Ward(s):	Deansgate		Ward
Applicant:	Mr Richard Gillis URBN UK Ltd		
Agent (if any):	Mr Richard Stooke apt Design Ltd		
Case officer:	Sam		Elliott
	Tel: 0161	219	2856
	Email: sam.elliott@manchester.gov.uk		
Recommendation:	Approve		
Date of recommendation:	24/09/2025		

Application details

Type of application: Advertisement Consent

Development type: Advertisements

Date of site visit: 14 August 2025

Standard consultations:

Printed: 21 August 2025 Expired: 12 September 2025

Neighbour notifications

Printed: 21 August 2025 Expired: 12 September 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

1-5 St Anns Square belongs to the Grade II listed Royal Exchange, a large rectangular former trading hall penetrated by east-west arcade at ground floor and enclosing a central atrium at first floor. The building's significance derives from its classical architectural style, featuring two attic storeys in a mansard roof, a Baroque turret and domes at corners, channelled rusticated piers, massive entablature and modillioned cornice and balustraded parapet.

The unit subject to this application is a ground floor commercial unit fronting St Ann's square, with some significance deriving from its sharing of an elevation with the internal arcade. The external facades of the ground floor shopfront are modern alterations with glazing to provide views into the units. There is a signage strategy across the Royal Exchange, with each unit featuring bronze individual lettering in the stone fascia, 1-2 no. projecting signs in a brass lightbox to house the unit's respective branding and internally mounted signs within the glazing.

Listed building: Grade II

Conservation area: St Anns Square Conservation Area 1970

Tree Preservation Order: Not applicable

Description of area

The site is positioned where Exchange Street joins St Anns Square. The route is a pedestrianised and predominantly commercial thoroughfare linking St Anns Square to Market Street. It also falls within the St Anne's Conservation Area and makes a positive contribution to the character of the area. Within its vicinity are the Grade II listed nos. 16, 18 and 20, 22 St Ann's Square, Mansfield Chambers, Boer War Memorial, and the Cobdens Statue, as well as the Grade II* listed no.25 St Ann Street.

Signage along Exchange Street and within St Ann's Square is common given the commercial nature of the street, though is varyingly compliant with the Council's Shopfront and Signage Design Guide. Units within the Royal Exchange building group feature non-illuminated individual lettering on the stone fascia panel as well as 1-2 no. blade sign frames to exhibit the occupant's signage, all of which are the same in size, siting and materiality.

Description of development

Advertisement Consent is sought for 1 no. fascia sign sited on the northwestern elevation facing St Anns Square. Consent is also sought for 2 no. replacement vinyl graphics to the existing blade signs, 1 no. to the fascia elevation and 1 no. to the arcade elevation.

The fascia sign would be comprised of non-illuminated individual lettering sited above the shopfront glazing on the stone fascia panel. The signage would a height of 300mm, a width of 4688mm and feature 13mm deep powder coated aluminium letters with an anodized bronze finish on matching 40mm standoffs, displaying the 'Anthropologie' branding.

The proposed graphic replacements to the existing blade signs would consist of fret cut vinyl lettering, coloured to match RGB 130 97 64.

This application is running in conjunction with 143676/LO/2025: Listed building consent for internal fitout works and installation of individual letter sign, internal lightbox sign and internally illuminated projecting sign.

Planning History

Consultations & Notification Responses

Notification:

Occupiers of neighbouring buildings were notified via notification letters. No representations were received in response to the application.

Highways Services:

No objection.

Environmental Health:

No objection.

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:

Places for Everyone

- JP-Strat2 – City Centre
- JP-P1 – Sustainable Places
- JP-P2 – Heritage

The Adopted Core Strategy for the City of Manchester

- SP1 – Spatial Principles
- CC9 – Design and Heritage
- EN1 – Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas
- EN3 – Heritage
- DM1 – Development Management

The Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester

- DC14 – Shop Fronts and Related Signs
- DC18 – Conservation Areas
- DC19 – Listed Buildings

NPPF

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

Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990

- Sections 66 & 72

Shopfront and Signage Design Guide

The Royal Exchange, Manchester Shopfront & Signage Design Strategy

Issues

Visual Amenity

The proposed fascia signage would be at fascia level and consists of individually mounted letters. The signage would be sensitively designed and well-integrated into the building's elevation, being of high-quality design and materiality, and appropriate in its proportions and position. As such, the fascia sign is considered to respect the architectural form of the building, nor to dominate its appearance nor appear overly prominent.

The proposed vinyl signage does not alter the bracket or frame of the signage, nor their location. The graphics would be minimalist design, featuring fret cut lettering.

The signage is therefore compliant with UDP Policy DC14.5 and in line with guidance contained within the Council's Shopfront and Signage Design Guide. Also given the above, the proposed signage adheres to the building's signage strategy and is consistent with signage across the building group. The fascia signage is similarly comprised of individual lettering with a bronze finish, and correlates in alignment, design and proportion. The proposed vinyl signage consists solely of replacement graphics to existing blade signs found across the Royal Exchange which form part of the building's signage strategy. In this regard, it is considered to be in keeping with the general character of the building and adjoining shopfronts, complying with saved UDP Policy DC14.1 and following guidance contained within the Council's Shopfront and Signage Design Guide.

In view of the above, the proposed signage is considered to be in keeping with the general characteristics of the locality as required by the Control of Advertisements Regulations 2007 and acceptable in terms of visual amenity. It is therefore compliant with Policies DM1, EN1, and SP1 of the Core Strategy, saved Policy DC14 of the Unitary Development Plan, Policies JP-Strat 2 and JP-P1 of PfE, as well as being in line with guidance contained within the Council's Shopfront and Signage Design Guide and complying with Section 12 of the NPPF.

Impact on Heritage Assets

The proposed signage materials would be of a quality appropriate to the status of the building and its overall design is considered to be sympathetic to its listed status. It moreover forms part of a cohesive design strategy across the building group, with any resulting harm being negligible. On this basis, the proposal is considered to have a neutral impact on the significance of the listed asset without having an adverse effect on its architectural and historic character, thereby complying with saved UDP Policy DC19c.

The design is also in-keeping with the surrounding area and not considered to negatively impact the setting of the St Anns Conservation Area. On this basis, the proposal is considered to comply with saved UDP Policy DC18.1a as it relates to the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas by virtue of (iv) the effect of signs and advertisements.

In view of the above, the proposed signage is considered to be in keeping with the Control of Advertisements Regulations 2007 as it relates to historic and architectural interest and to be acceptable in terms of its impact on heritage assets. As such it is compliant with Policies EN3 of the Core Strategy, saved Policies DC18 and DC19 of the Unitary Development Plan, and JP-P2 of PfE, as well as complying with Section 16 of the NPPF as it relates to the sustaining and enhancing of heritage assets.

Public Safety

The primary public safety concern is the illuminance of the signs. The luminance level stated in the application form is 120 cd/m², which is acceptable to Local Highways Authority and Environmental Health consultees. It is not considered that there would be a danger to public safety and it is recommended that a condition relating to the maximum illuminance is included in the approval.

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:

Approval

Condition(s) to be attached to decision for approval

1. Advert Mandatory

No advertisement is to be displayed without the permission of the owner of the site or any other person with an interest in the site entitled to grant permission.

No advertisement shall be sited or displayed so as to:

- (a) endanger persons using any highway, railway, waterway, dock, harbour or aerodrome (civil or military);
- (b) obscure, or hinder the ready interpretation of, any traffic sign, railway signal or aid to navigation by water or air; or
- (c) hinder the operation of any device used for the purpose of security or surveillance or for measuring the speed of any vehicle.

Any advertisement displayed, and any site used for the display of advertisements, shall be maintained in a condition that does not impair the visual amenity of the site.

Any structure or hoarding erected or used principally for the purpose of displaying advertisements shall be maintained in a condition that does not endanger the public.

Where an advertisement is required under these Regulations to be removed, the site shall be left in a condition that does not endanger the public or impair visual amenity.

2. Specified Plans and Documents

The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the location plan by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on 08/08/2025, the following drawings and documents also received 08/08/2025:

EX002

Design and Access Statement

the amended drawing received 26/08/2025:

PL300 REV A

As well as the amended drawings received 29/08/2025:

PL350 REV A

PL351 REV A

Reason - To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans. Pursuant to the requirements of the Control of Advertisements Regulations 2007, Policies DM1, EN1, EN3, and SP1 of the Core Strategy, saved Policies DC14, DC18 and DC19 of UDP, Policies JP-P1 and JP-P2 of PfE, as well as being in line with guidance contained within the Council's Shopfront and Signage Design Guide and complying with Sections 12 and 16 of the NPPF.

3. Luminance

The maximum luminance of the signage shall not exceed 300 cd/m2 in brightness at any time.

Reason - In the interests of visual and residential amenity pursuant to policies SP1, and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy and saved policy DC14.1 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester.

Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified

Highway Services
Environmental Health

15 Royal Exchange Arcade, Manchester, M2 7EA
16 - 18 Royal Exchange Arcade, Manchester, M2 7EA
11 Royal Exchange Arcade, Manchester, M2 7EA
Basement And Ground Floor, 7 - 9 Old Bank Street, Manchester, M2 7PE
Sub Basement, 1 - 5 St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7EF
20 Royal Exchange Arcade, Manchester, M2 7EA
9 Royal Exchange Arcade, Manchester, M2 7EA
5 Royal Exchange Arcade, Manchester, M2 7EA
7 Royal Exchange Arcade, Manchester, M2 7EA
7 - 9 Old Bank Street, Manchester, M2 7PE
31 Royal Exchange Arcade, Manchester, M2 7EA
12 Royal Exchange Arcade, Manchester, M2 7EA
10 Royal Exchange Arcade, Manchester, M2 7EA
8 Royal Exchange Arcade, Manchester, M2 7EA
6 Royal Exchange Arcade, Manchester, M2 7EA
4 Royal Exchange Arcade, Manchester, M2 7EA
3 Royal Exchange Arcade, Manchester, M2 7EA
12 - 14 Cross Street, Manchester, M2 7AE
14 Royal Exchange Arcade, Manchester, M2 7EA
16 Cross Street, Manchester, M2 7AE
13 Old Bank Street, Manchester, M2 7PE
5 Old Bank Street, Manchester, M2 7PE
Watches Of Switzerland, 9 - 11 St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7EF
Lululemon, 7 St Ann's Square, Manchester, M2 7EF
19 Royal Exchange Arcade, Manchester, M2 7EA
1 Royal Exchange Arcade, Manchester, M2 7EA

Appendix 2 – Planning constraints

Article 4 Direction - City Centre PD Restriction - Class B1(a) To C3
Article 4 Direction - Removal Of PD Rights Change Of Use From Class C3 To Class C4
Coal Authority - Development Low Risk - Name: DEVELOPMENT_LOW_RISK_AREA
Conservation Area - St Anns Square Conservation Area 1970
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Middle) -
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Middle) -
Area Team Boundary - Name: CENTRAL