MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

# Planning

## Growth & Development

## Delegated officer report for planning application

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| **Application no.** | 143211/LO/2025 |
| **Date registered valid:** | 16 July 2025 |
| **Proposal:** | Listed Building Consent for retention of 2no fascia signs and 1no menu board sign. |
| **Address:** | Basement, George House, 48 George Street, Manchester, M1 4HF |
| **Ward(s):** | Deansgate Ward |
| **Applicant:** | Kung Fu Noodle MCR Ltd |
| **Agent (if any):** | Mr Sabin Zannou LDM Group |
| **Case officer:** | Lea Joseph<br>Tel: 0161 227 3644<br>Email: lea.joseph@manchester.gov.uk |
| **Recommendation:** | **Refuse** |
| **Date of recommendation:** | **4 September 2025** |

**Application details**

**Type of application:** Listed Building Consent, Full Application Consent

**Development type:** Listed building alteration

**Date of site visit:** 28 July 2025

**Standard consultations:**
No consultations have been printed and sent.

**Neighbour notifications**
Printed: 22 July 2025 Expired: 12 August 2025

**Site notice**
Posted: 28 July 2025 Expired: 18 August 2025

**Press advert**
Published: 29 July 2025 Expired: 19 August 2025

**Departure from Development Plan:** No

**Environmental Statement:** Not required

**Description of site/building**

Bounded by Back George Street, Charlotte Street and Nicolas Street. The application site is located within No.44-48 George Street a former cotton merchants warehouse designed in 1857 by Edward Walters who also designed nearby no.38-42 Mosley Street (Grade II), no.39-41 George Street and No.17 George Street. The building currently includes various uses which are evident from the multitude of signs on the George Street elevation.

The building design takes inspiration from the Italian Palazzo style. The building has symmetry in its form and intricate ornamentation across its facades. The ground floor features three rusticated pilasters, glazing and a below-ground entrance. First floor windows are recessed with and decorative aedicules (pedimented frames) and architraves. Trabeation separates the first-floor sandstone ashlar from the redbrick of the upper storeys. The multi-storey building is occupied by various tenants including restaurants, a massage parlour and traditional Chinese medicine practitioners. The shopfront is located at the basement level and features a sandstone façade and three rusticated pilasters. The building's significance derives from its interpretation of the Italian Palazzo style. This can be identified through the architraves, pictured below framing the first-floor windows and entrance doors, the decorative pilasters at ground floor and it's symmetrical massing. Historical significance is lent to the building by its position in the oeuvre of Edward Walters, who designed a number of churches, warehouses and office buildings in Manchester between 1838 and 1865.

*48 George Street within the street scene. Officers photo.*

**Listed building:** Grade II

**Conservation area:** George Street Conservation Area 1985

**Tree Preservation Order:**

**Description of area**

The proposal is located within the Chinatown District of Manchester, located in the South of the City Centre the area's origins go back as far as 1786. Chinese and East Asian concentration in the neighbourhood began in the 1970s, with restaurants and supermarkets clustering in an effort to create a sense of place, that could attract Mancunians as a distinct neighbourhood and thereby benefit the Chinese businesses that settled in the area bounded by George, Nicholas, Faulkner, and Princess Streets; the events and features of the area, such as the lanterns, central Arch and Chinese New Year celebrations were influenced and encouraged by these early business owners. The area solidified in the 80s, with the expansion of Chinatown's offer to include ancillary business in support of the community, this is also when Chinese business owners and residents successfully lobbied to have translations of public street signs.

At present the area remains a cultural centre and attraction, with a unique cultural and commercial offer.

*Image of George Street sign. 1989. Manchester Archives*

**Description of development**

Retrospective permission is sought for the retention of no.3 illuminated shopfront signs. One block fascia sign which includes a ' xuanshan' or overhanging gable roof detail sited on the arched doorways and. A second fabric sign above the door made of illuminated fabric. Lastly, a menu board, located at the centre of the shopfront on a rusticated pilaster.

**Consultations & Notification Responses**

*Publicity* – Letters have also been sent out to local businesses and residents. No representations have been received.

**Policy**

The policies relevant to the consideration of these applications are:

***Manchester Core Strategy 2012-2027***
- EN1 – Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas (City Centre Character Area)
- EN3 – Heritage
- CC9 – Design and Heritage

***Saved Unitary Development Plan Policies***
- DC18 Conservation Areas
- DC19 Listed Buildings

***Places for Everyone, Joint Development Plan Document (Adopted 2024)***
- JP-P2 Heritage

*Other Material Considerations:*

***National Planning Policy Framework***
- Section 16 – Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

***Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990***

**Issues**

*Relationship to context, impact on the character of the listed building, character of the conservation area and setting of adjacent listed buildings*

Policy CC9 stipulates that development within the City Centre must, preserve or enhance' listed building and create a 'coherent' environment with their design. Policy EN1 specifies that new development should have a regard for the City Centre's heritage. Policy JP-P2 dictates the importance of the historic environment to 'sense of place' and character within Manchester. DC 18.1 outlines the importance of preserving and enhancing the character of Conservation Areas. DC19.1 requires that development must not have a 'detrimental' or 'adverse' impact on Listed Buildings. Policy DC14.5 requires that signs 'respect the architectural form of the buildings and shop frontages. Also, DC19.1 states that officers should not permit 'external alterations' which would have 'an adverse effect' on architectural or historic character.

*Image of no.48 George (2019).*

The quantum of signage permission is sought for is excessive for the elevation and appears as visual clutter. The existing menu board has a bulky frame, stands out on the façade and obstructs a rusticated pilaster. The illuminated fabric sign which is rectangular relates poorly to arch feature it is sited within.

The fascia signage obscures the decorative features of the ground floor façade, particularly the decorative detailing and arched form of the entrance and glazing thereby limiting the coherence of the building's architectural features. The large wooden box sign is considered to obtrusive and poorly integrated with an undue harm caused by its proportions and appearance. Sited on top of this box is an overhanging gabled roof, in the 'xuanshan' style. This detail not only adds to the visual clutter of the signage but negatively contrasts with the Italian Palazzo style fabrication of the shopfront. Together, these signs have an adverse impact on the building and cause undue harm, as they obscure many of the ground floor architectural details that reflect the Palazzo style that gives the building its architectural significance. Further, the siting across these features limits the design coherence and visual harmony between the first floor and the ground floor.

The National Planning Policy Framework Chapter 16 sets out a framework for evaluating heritage assets. The proposal would result in a high level of less than substantial harm to the significance of the listed building. As per paragraph 215 any potential harm proposed to an asset must be weighed against the 'public benefit' of a given proposal.

It is acknowledged that the signage would help support the occupation of part of the listed building for a commercial use. It is important that listed buildings are active and are occupied. The signage plays a role in terms of highlighting the business at the premises.

However, this is considered to be a small amount of public benefits and this could be realised in a less harmful way to the listed building than is the case with the signage that has been installed.

The quantity, appearance and siting of signage is unsympathetic to the architectural significance of the heritage asset as it obscures the decorative features that lend the building its significance and disrupts the rhythm of the design style. On this basis, the proposal is not considered to meet the statutory tests as required by Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

**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 polices 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:** Refusal

**Article 35 Declaration**

Officers have worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner based on seeking solutions to problems arising in relation to dealing with the planning application. Issues have arisen during the consideration of this application and the officer negotiated with the agent to reach a satisfactory resolution.

**Reasons for recommendation to refuse**

1) The 2no fascia signs and 1no menuboard sign due to their siting, scale, appearance and materiality form incongruous features to the listed building. The signage obscures architectural features to the building, forms clutter with other signage on the building and introduces a style and appearance of signage which is not in keeping nor responds positively to the character and appearance of the listed building. The signage results in an unduly harmful impact on the visual amenity and character of the listed building resulting in less than substantial harm. The required public benefits do not exist to outweigh the level of ham caused. This is contrary to policy JP-P2 of Places for Everyone, Policies SP1, EN1, EN3, CC9 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy (2912), Saved policy DC19 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester (1995), the National Planning Policy Framework and Shopfront and Signage Design Guide (2024).

**Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified**

Basement, 46 - 46A George Street, Manchester, M1 4HF
Third Floor, 46 - 46A George Street, Manchester, M1 4HF
Second Floor, 46 - 46A George Street, Manchester, M1 4HF
Unit 1, George House, 48 George Street, Manchester, M1 4HF
Unit 2, George House, 48 George Street, Manchester, M1 4HF
44 George Street, Manchester, M1 4HF
Basement And Ground Floor, 19 - 21 George Street, Manchester, M1 4HE
First Floor And Second Floor, 19 - 21 George Street, Manchester, M1 4HE
Amadeus House, 52 George Street, Manchester, M1 4ZZ
First Floor, 46 - 46A George Street, Manchester, M1 4HF
19 - 21 George Street, Manchester, M1 4HE
Third Floor, 19 - 21 George Street, Manchester, M1 4HE
Basement And Ground Floor, 17 George Street, Manchester, M1 4HE
Ground Floor Rear, 46 - 46A George Street, Manchester, M1 4HF
Second Floor, Amadeus House, 52 George Street, Manchester, M1 4HF
Fourth Floor, Amadeus House, 52 George Street, Manchester, M1 4HF
Ground Floor Front, 46 - 46A George Street, Manchester, M1 4HF
K2 KARAOKE NIGHTCLUB, Ground Floor And First Floor, Amadeus House, 52 George Street, Manchester, M1 4HF
Third Floor, Amadeus House, 52 George Street, Manchester, M1 4HF

**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 - George Street Conservation Area 1985
Area Team Boundary - Name: CENTRAL