

Planning**Growth & Development****Delegated officer report for planning application**

Application no. 143256/AO/2025

Date registered valid: 3 July 2025

Proposal: Installation of 1no. high level sign, 1no. fascia sign and 1no. projection sign

Address: Specsavers, Unit 9A, Manchester Fort Shopping Park, Cheetham Hill Road, Manchester, M8 8EP

Ward(s): Cheetham Ward

Applicant: Specsavers Optical Stores UK

Agent (if any): Fisch Planning Fisch Design Ltd

Case officer: Lea Joseph
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Recommendation: Approve

Date of recommendation: 22-08-25

Application details

Type of application: Advertisement Consent

Development type: Advertisements

Date of site visit: 21-07-25

Standard consultations:

Printed: 9 July 2025 Expired: 30 July 2025

Neighbour notifications

Printed: 9 July 2025 Expired: 30 July 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

Unit 9 is modern shop with elements of steel and cladding throughout.

This specific development is to be located on the South side of the retail park along the main path of shops.

Listed building: Not applicable

Conservation area: Not applicable

Tree Preservation Order: Not applicable

Description of area

Manchester Fort is a large out of centre shopping park located in the Cheetham Hill area. The shopping park is bounded by Cheetham Hill, the A6010, North St and Rayburn Way. The park consists of multiple commercial, and restaurant uses, with dozens of retailers using the site. As such the site is a major retail feature in the area, a destination for its multiple restaurants and a significant employer.

Residential uses (Class C3) and two secondary schools (Class F.1) are within 500m of the site, just beyond the retail park boundary.

Description of development

Advertisement consent is sought for the installation of no.3 internally illuminated signs, including a high-level fascia, standard fascia and projecting sign. The high-level fascia would consist of individually cut stainless steel letters on an aluminium tray. The natural fascia and projecting sign would host acrylic letters on an aluminium backing tray.

Consultations & Notification Responses

Publicity

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

Highway Services – No objections. Requested condition for luminance level.

Environmental Health – No objections. Requested condition for luminance level.

Policy

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 relevant to consideration of this application within the development

plan:

Manchester Core Strategy 2012 to 2027

- SP1 Spatial Principles
- DM1 Development Management

Saved Unitary Development Plan Policies

- DC14 Shop Fronts and Related Signs

Other Material Considerations:

Shopfront and Signage Design Guide (2024)

National Planning Policy Framework

- Chapter 12 Achieving well-designed places

Paragraph 141 states:

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.

Issues

As required by the Advertisement Regulations, matters of amenity and public safety require consideration

Visual Amenity

Manchester Fort retail park does not have a signage strategy, as such business possess signage of varying styles reflecting with their specific branding requirements.

The signage designs respond positively to the character of the building and the retail park and are therefore considered to be unobtrusive. The signs are commensurate in scale to that of the building. Thus, the appearance of the signage would meet the requirements outlined in policy DC14. Further the signage would effectively meet the Shopfront and Signage Design Guide in its utilisation of traditional materials.

There is a desire in the interests of visual amenity to achieve an incremental uplift of visual amenity in this location through use of improved materials in signage. The visibility of the signage outside of the park would be limited as No.9 is obscured by other commercial units. The proposal improves upon the previous signage which consisted of flex material on the high-level sign and a fascia with two dimensional letters at street-level.

The designs take precedence from other high-quality signage on the site including Marks and Spencer's, TK Maxx, H Samuels and JD. The proposal would therefore positively contribute to improving the visual amenity of the retail park in its appearance and design. The proposal would not harm the visual amenity of the site or surrounding area. The signage would thereby meet Saved Unitary Development Plan policy DC14, National Planning Policy Framework Chapter 12 and the Manchester City Council Shopfront and Signage Design Guide (2024).

Access

~~Policy DC14 requires that accessibility is considered in determining signage applications.~~

~~The site is considered to be a successful retail park, pedestrian and vehicle movement is constant during operating hours. That said, the proposed development is not considered cause any public safety concerns. No comments have been received from Highways regarding this.~~

~~The site currently has level access, with bollards to prevent obstruction of the footpath. Eight Blue Badge parking spaces sit in close proximity to the site.~~ **Lea this is not relevant and only relates to shopfronts**

Public safety

Illumination levels would be controlled by a condition with maximum permitted luminance at 300cd/m². Consequently, there are no public safety concerns associated with the application.

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: Approve

Condition(s) to be attached to decision for approval OR Reasons for recommendation to refuse

- 1) 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) The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following drawings and documents:

Drawing (Front Elevation): 2504-01 Rev. C (Received 8 August 2025)

Drawing: High Level Fascia Sign P.4 (Received 8 August 2025)

Drawing: Fascia P.3 (Received 8 August 2025)

Drawing: Projecting Sign P.5 (Received 8 August 2025)

Reason - To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans. Pursuant to policies SP1 and DM1 of the Core Strategy.

- 3) The signage shall be installed so as not to exceed 300cd/m² of illumination.

Reason – In the interest of amenity and to prevent glare and excessive illumination pursuant to policy DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy (2012).

Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified

Highway Services
Environmental Health

Trespass, Unit 9B, Manchester Fort Shopping Park, Cheetham Hill Road, Manchester, M8 8EP
Unit 11, Manchester Fort Shopping Park, Cheetham Hill Road, Manchester, M8 8EP
T.K.maxx, Unit 9 To 10, Manchester Fort Shopping Park, Cheetham Hill Road, Manchester, M8 8EP
NEW LOOK, Unit 8, Manchester Fort Shopping Park, Cheetham Hill Road, Manchester, M8 8EP
Unit 37, Manchester Fort Shopping Park, Cheetham Hill Road, Manchester, M8 8EP

Appendix 2 – Planning constraints

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
Historic Landfill Site 50m Buffer -
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -
Area Team Boundary - Name: CENTRAL