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Planning

Growth & Development

Delegated officer report for planning application

Application no.	142940/AO/2025
Date registered valid:	20 May 2025
Proposal:	Retention of wraproud internally illuminated fascia sign and 1no internally illuminated projecting sign.
Address:	93 Princess Street, Manchester, M1 4HT
Ward(s):	Deansgate Ward
Applicant:	Mr Chris Hu
Agent (if any):	Mr Sabin Zannou, LDM Group
Case officer:	Jack Naven Tel: 0161 219 2095 Email: jack.naven@manchester.gov.uk
Recommendation:	Refuse
Date of recommendation:	**02 July 2025**

Application Details

Type of application: Advertisement Consent

Development type: Advertisements

Date of site visit: 21 May 2025

Standard consultations:
Printed: 21 May 2025 Expired: 12 June 2025

Neighbour notifications
Printed: 21 May 2025 Expired: 12 June 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/Area

Listed building: Not applicable

Conservation area: George Street Conservation Area 1985

Tree Preservation Order: Not applicable

The building is located at 93 Princess Street, which is a modern building that has been designed to look historic and has historically influenced detailing. It is not listed, but it located within the George Street Conservation Area and makes a positive contribution to the street scene. The site address is joined to another with the same design and together they are named Regent House. The neighbouring unit of Regent House, currently occupied by Ohayo Tea, features individual letter signage.

The building is three storeys in height and this unit has frontages on to Princess Street and Faulkner Street.

Almost the full section of Princess Street between Portland Street and Mosley Street is fronted with Grade II buildings on both sides, along with the Grade II* Listed Art Gallery Athenaeum, and the Grade I Listed Manchester Art Gallery.

Directly across the site on Princess Street sits the Grade II listed No. 36 Princess Street, No. 94 Portland Street, and No. 75 Faulkner Street.

Diagonally adjacent to the site sits the Grade II listed 34 Princess Street.

On the other side of Faulkner Street, is the Grade II listed 87-91 Princess Street and the Grade II listed No. 56 Faulkner Street.

The entire stretch of Faulkner Street from Princess Street to Nicholas Street, features Grade II listed buildings on the opposite side of the street to the site in question.

Other uses in the immediate area include hotels, office buildings, residential buildings, shops, bars and restaurants. The property is also on the outskirts of China Town.

Along this section of Princess Street, primary signage is noted to be made up of individual letter signage, as opposed to block fascia signage.

Description of Development

The proposal seeks the retention of a wraproud internally illuminated fascia sign and 1no internally illuminated projecting sign.

Consultations & Notification Responses

Publicity - Neighbour notification letters were sent to surrounding properties. At the time of writing this report, no representations have been received because of this publicity.

Environmental Health - Advised that the luminance levels exceed 600cd/m2 were not acceptable.

Highway Services - Advised that the luminance levels exceed 600cd/m2 were not acceptable.

Policy

Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007

(1) A 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.

Places for Everyone Plan - Joint Development Plan Document, for nine of the 10 boroughs which make up Greater Manchester adopted on 21st of March 2024:
- Policy JP-P1 - Sustainable Places
- Policy JP-Strat2 - City Centre
- Policy JP-P2 - Heritage

The Manchester Core Strategy - Development Plan Document 2012-2027 ("the Core Strategy") was adopted by the City Council on the 11th of July 2012:
- Policy SP1 - Spatial Principles
- Policy EN1 - Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas
- Policy EN3 - Heritage
- Policy DM1 - Development Management
- Policy CC9 - Design and Heritage

The **Unitary Development Plan for Manchester** - For the reasons outlined below the following saved UDP Policies are of relevance to this application:
- Policy DC14 - Shop Fronts and Related Signs
- Policy DC18 - Conservation Areas
- Policy DC19 - Listed Buildings

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Chapter 6 - Building a strong, competitive economy
- Chapter 7 - Ensuring the vitality of town centres
- Chapter 12 - Achieving well-designed places
- Chapter 16 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Shopfront and Signage Design Guide

The shopfronts and signage SPD sets out the detailed guidance for shopfront alterations and the display of signage in Manchester.

The SPD states that new signage should:
- be limited to one fascia signage or internal hanging signage per elevation;
- be located below the first-floor cills, unless there is historic evidence of signage above;
- have a maximum depth of 30mm;
- not be in the form of internally illuminated lightbox signage;
- not conceal, obscure or damage any elements or detailing of a shopfront that positively contribute to its appearance, historic interest and appreciation.

Other Legislation

Sections 16, 66, and 72 of the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990 require that special consideration is given to the preservation of the significant fabric and setting of listed buildings and conservation areas.

Issues

The main issues for consideration relate to the principle of the proposal, as well as, in accordance with the advertisement regulations, the acceptability of the proposal in terms of its impact upon visual amenity and upon public safety. In judging this, the provisions of the development plan and any other relevant factors, so far as they are material, must be taken into account.

Principle of the Proposal

The principle of the proposal is considered to be acceptable in this case. Fascia level signs and projecting signs are considered to be appropriate to advertise a premise and to provide wayfinding.

Visual Amenity

This section of Princess Street primarily features individual letter signage as the primary form of signage. This can most notably be seen on the neighbouring unit at 95a Princess Street, which forms a part of the same building, Regent House, and is a much more successful example at implementing signage on this building whilst respecting the architecture of the building.

This character of the buildings along this section of Princess Street either feature buildings entirely made of stone, with stone at ground level and red brick at upper levels, or entirely red brick buildings.



Princess Street elevation – 95a Princess Street

The fascia signs in place obstruct the red brick façade, creating an awkward division between the ground floor and upper floors that clearly is not within the design intent of the building, and resulting in an awkward and obtrusive feature that significantly sticks out on the building. In particular, the fascia signs cover up a brickwork pattern directly above the windows, that can clearly be seen on the windows of the neighbouring unit.

Compared to the rest of this section of Princess Street, which features signage that is subtle and fits within the architectural language of the buildings in question, the fascia signage installed on the building stands out in a negative manner in comparison to other buildings on this section of Princess Street.



Princess Street and Faulkner Street elevations

As a result, the fascia signage significantly detracts from the appearance of the building and does not make a positive contribution to the visual amenity of the area. It also fails to preserve or enhance the conservation area and the Grade II listed buildings that the development is considered within the setting of.



Faulkner Street elevation



Princess Street elevation – fascia and projecting sign

The projecting sign is 50mm in depth. As outlined in the Shopfront and Signage Design Guide (2024), any projecting signage should also be of a maximum depth of 30mm and due to its location within a conservation area, be generally non-illuminated or externally illuminated.

The signage is 50mm in width and in the form of an internally illuminated signage. In this regard, it is considered to be overtly bulky and constitute an unsympathetic new addition to the building which would cause harm to the visual amenity of the street scene and would fail to enhance or preserve the conservation area and the Grade II listed buildings that the development is considered within the setting of.



Princess Street elevation – 95a Princess Street

In comparison, the neighbouring unit at 95a Princess Street, which forms a part of the same building, Regent House, features a slender 30mm depth projecting sign that is externally illuminated and therefore compliant with the relevant policies and guidance.

In addition to this, the building has seen an increase in both the amount and the footprint taken up by advertisements on the building, many of which are unauthorised. This has led to significant advertisement clutter on the building, which has detracted from the architecture and appearance of this building, sited within a conservation area, considered within the setting of listed building.

EN1 (Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas) states that developers will be expected to consider the City's heritage, including its listed buildings, conservation areas, archaeological remains and historic street pattern.

CC9 (Design and Heritage) states that development in Manchester City Centre should preserve or enhance the heritage assets that have been identified, including listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled ancient monuments.

SP1 (Spatial Principle) states that developments in all parts of the city should create well designed places which enhance or create character and protect and enhance the built environment.

EN3 (Heritage) states that the City Centre has 14 conservation areas and numerous listed buildings. These are essential ingredients to the City's sense of place, providing aesthetic quality and strong references to the City's past, which will always be a central part of Manchester's character. Development which fails to respond to the opportunities that this context affords should not be supported.

DM1 (Development Management) states that new development should have regard to more specific issues for which more detailed guidance may be given within supplementary planning documents. In this case, the relevant SPD would be the Shopfront and Signage Design Guide.

DC14 (Shops and Related Signs) states that signs should respect the architectural form of buildings and shop frontages and that on listed buildings and on buildings within Conservation Areas, signs consisting of individually mounted letters will be preferred to box fascia signs.

JP-P2 (Heritage) aims to proactively manage and work with partners to positively conserve, sustain and enhance its historic environment and heritage assets and their settings, and states that development proposals affecting a designated heritage asset (or an archaeological site of national importance) and a conservation area to conserve those elements which contribute to its significance including those identified in any conservation area appraisal as making a positive contribution to the area.

The description of **George Street Conservation Area** clearly states that “signs should be designed and located so as not to compete with the architectural details of buildings.”

The Shopfront and Signage Design Guide states that new signage should:

- be limited to one fascia signage or internal hanging signage per elevation;
- have a maximum depth of 30mm;
- not be in the form of internally illuminated lightbox signage;
- not conceal, obscure or damage any elements or detailing of a shopfront that positively contribute to its appearance, historic interest and appreciation.

Due to the manner of the bulky wraproud fascia sign, which forms an incongruous feature on the building and significantly detracts from the architecture of the building, and the bulky projecting sign, all of which fails to preserve or enhance the character of the George Street Conservation Area and therefore detracts from the historical setting and significance of this conservation area, as well as detracting from the Grade II listed buildings that the development is considered within the setting of, the signage cannot be supported on visual amenity grounds.

Public Safety

The luminance levels of the signage are between 1000-1300 cd/m2, which exceeds the acceptable range to not cause any distraction to passing pedestrians or road users, or to cause a disturbance to any nearby residents or commercial occupiers.

If the proposal were acceptable on visual amenity grounds, a condition could have been added to ensure that the proposed luminance levels are controlled and complied with, which would be 600 cd/m2.

All signage complies with headroom and carriageway clearance requirements.

A projection over licence would be required for the projecting sign due to the projection over the adopted highway.

Overall, there are no public safety concerns with the proposed signage.

Conclusion

The works carried out have caused a harm to the visual amenity of the surrounding street scene and conservation area, within the setting of listed buildings, and is therefore refused in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007, policies SP1, CC9, EN1, EN3 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy (2012), saved policies DC14.1, DC18.1, and DC19.1 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester

(1995), Places for Everyone Plan Policy JP-P2, the National Planning Policy Framework, and Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

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: Refuse

Reason for recommendation to refuse

1) The signage, by virtue of its siting, design, appearance, and by contributing to an increase of advertisement clutter on the building, fails to respond positively to the style, character, architectural language, and quality of the existing building. The design and appearance also fail to preserve or enhance the character of the George Street Conservation Area and therefore detracts from the historical setting and significance of this conservation area, as well as detracting from the Grade II listed buildings that the development is considered within the setting of. The signage has an unduly harmful impact on the visual amenity and the character of the local area and would be contrary to the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007, policies SP1, CC9, EN1, EN3, and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy (2012), saved policies DC14, DC18 and DC19 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester (1995), Places for Everyone Policy JP-P2, the National Planning Policy Framework, and the Shopfront and Signage Design Guide.

Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified

Highway Services
Environmental Health

Fourth Floor, Canton House, 34 Princess Street, Manchester, M1 4JY
63A Faulkner Street, Manchester, M1 4FF
Third Floor, 82A Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4QX
Flat At, 86 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4GX
Ground Floor, 82A Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4QX
Flat At, 80 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4QX
Unit 4, 85 - 87 Princess Street, Manchester, M1 4HT
Unit 3, 85 - 87 Princess Street, Manchester, M1 4HT
First Floor, 93A Princess Street, Manchester, M1 4HT
Basement Store, 85 - 87 Princess Street, Manchester, M1 4HT
52 - 54 Faulkner Street, Manchester, M1 4FH
63 Faulkner Street, Manchester, M1 4FF
Flat Above, 88 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4GX
Ground Floor Unit 1, 85 - 87 Princess Street, Manchester, M1 4HT
Unit 2, 85 - 87 Princess Street, Manchester, M1 4HT
Unit 6, 85 - 87 Princess Street, Manchester, M1 4HT
Unit 5, 85 - 87 Princess Street, Manchester, M1 4HT
Flat At, The Old Monkey, 90 - 92 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4GX
XiongQi Hot Pot, 56B Faulkner Street, Manchester, M1 4FH
85 - 87 Princess Street, Manchester, M1 4HT
Second Floor, 93A Princess Street, Manchester, M1 4HT
The Old Monkey, 90 - 92 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4GX
80 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4QX
88 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4GX
82A Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4QX
93A Princess Street, Manchester, M1 4HT
Second Floor, 95A Princess Street, Manchester, M1 4HT
First Floor, 95A Princess Street, Manchester, M1 4HT
Ground Floor, 95 Princess Street, Manchester, M1 4HT
95A Princess Street, Manchester, M1 4HT
95 Princess Street, Manchester, M1 4HT
91 Princess Street, Manchester, M1 4HT
86 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4GX
89 Princess Street, Manchester, M1 4HT
Canton House, 34 Princess Street, Manchester, M1 4JY
82 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4QX
84A Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4GX
84 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4GX
Spice City, 56 Faulkner Street, Manchester, M1 4FH
52A Faulkner Street, Manchester, M1 4HF
China City, 56A Faulkner Street, Manchester, M1 4FH

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