

Planning

Growth & Development

Delegated officer report for planning application

Application no. 142354/AO/2025

Date registered valid: 1 April 2025

Proposal: Installation of 2no. internally illuminated individual letter signs and 2no. projecting signs.

Address: 8 First Street, Manchester, M15 4RP

Ward(s): Deansgate Ward

Applicant: Mr Wei Cheng Lin, Blue Sakura Ltd

Agent (if any): Ms Joanne Ooi, Hamond Projects

Case officer: Jack Naven
Tel: 0161 219 2095
Email: jack.naven@manchester.gov.uk

Recommendation: Withdrawn

Date of recommendation: **27 May 2025**

Application Details

Type of application: Advertisement Consent

Development type: Advertisements

Date of site visit: 11 April 2025

Standard consultations:

Printed: 3 April 2025 Expired: 26 April 2025

Neighbour notifications

Printed: 3 April 2025 Expired: 26 April 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: Not applicable

Tree Preservation Order: Not applicable

The premises is a ground floor commercial unit of a modern 7 storey office building. The unit is bordered by First Street to the east and River Street to the south.

The site is located within the First Street Development Framework Area, which is an area that has undergone a significant amount of regeneration over the past 15 years and still features a significant level of ongoing development.

Description of Development

The proposal seeks advertisement consent for the installation of 2no. internally illuminated individual letter signs and 2no. projecting signs.

Originally, consent was sought for various LED soft strip lights that would be featured across both elevations of the unit. As these are located behind the glazing, they do not require advertisement consent and have therefore been removed accordingly from the proposal.

Related Applications

108963/FO/2015/C1 - Erection of a 7 storey office building (Use Class B1) including ground floor retail units (use Class A1 (Shop) or A3 (Restaurant and Cafe) or A4 (Drinking Establishment) Uses, public realm and associated works to include brown roofs above 7th floor level.

Approved July 2015.

Consultations & Notification Responses

Highway Services – Are satisfied with the luminance of the proposed signage, that the signage does not require a projection over licence, and that the signs comply with headroom and carriageway clearance requirements.

Environmental Health - Had no concerns regarding the luminance of the signage proposed. They did have concerns about the luminance of the LED soft strip, which was originally referenced in the application submission but not form part of this consent. The agent of the application has been informed of Environmental Health's concerns over the luminance of the LED soft strip.

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.

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.

The Adopted Core Strategy for the City of Manchester (2012)

Adopted on 11th July 2012 and the Key Development Plan Document in the Local Development Framework. It states that all new developments should follow the 'Development Principles' and accord with the design guidance set out in the Supplementary Planning Documents.

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. Issues include: the appropriate siting and appearance of development, the impact upon the surrounding area, the effects on amenity, accessibility, community safety and crime prevention, health, the adequacy of internal accommodation and amenity space and refuse storage/collection.

SP1 (Spatial Principle) states the key spatial principles which will guide the strategic development of Manchester together with core development principles. It is stated that developments in all parts of the city should create well designed places which enhance or create character, make a positive contribution to the health, safety, and well-being of residents, consider the needs of all members of the community, and protect and enhance the built environment. Further, development should seek to improve access to jobs, services and open space and provide good access to sustainable transport provision.

CC9 (Design and Heritage) states that design of new buildings will need to be of the highest standard in terms of appearance and function. The standards and guidance explained in other LDF policies should be the basis for the approach to design, with particular attention to be given to the City Centre context and character.

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.

The Council will support high density and mixed-use development in the City Centre, but developers must recognise the specific design challenges that must be overcome to ensure complementarity of function and form. New development must support the range of uses the Council expects in the City Centre and contribute to a coherent and integrated physical environment.

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.

The Unitary Development Plan (UDP) for the City of Manchester (1995)

DC14.1 (Shops and Related Signs) states that in determining applications relating to these premises for shop fronts, security grilles, advertisement signs, canopies and awnings, the Council will seek to ensure that proposals are in keeping with the character of the building and adjoining buildings, of adjoining shopfronts, where appropriate, and of the area within which the premises are located.

DC14.5 (Shops and Related Signs) states that the Advertisement Regulations require that applications for shop signs be considered only in the interests of amenity and public safety. In determining such applications, the Council will adopt the following policies. The policies relevant to this application are:

- a) signs should not normally be positioned other than at fascia level.
- b) signs should respect the architectural form of buildings and shop frontages.
- c) where no obvious fascia level exists, signs above shopfronts should be in keeping with the scale of the frontage of the building and in particular should not fill the gap between ground floor shop windows and first floor windows.

d) projecting signs, or any other type of sign which projects significantly beyond the shopfront, should line up with the associated fascia board. Where this is not the case, such proposals will not be permitted.

e) The Council will normally permit only one projecting box sign for each shop unit. On listed buildings and on buildings within Conservation Areas, signs consisting of individually mounted letters will be preferred to box fascia signs.

f) fixed canopies mounted above fascia level or which obscure the fascia or shopfront will not normally be permitted, unless within a structural opening;

g) long canopies which ignore the architectural form of frontages will not normally be permitted.

Places for Everyone (2024)

The Places for Everyone Plan is a Joint Development Plan Document, providing a strategic plan and policies, for nine of the 10 boroughs which make up Greater Manchester.

The following policies are considered relevant to this application:

JP-Strat2 (City Centre) states that the role of the City Centre as the most significant economic location in the country outside London will be strengthened considerably. The City Centre will continue to provide the primary focus for business, retail, leisure, culture and tourism activity in Greater Manchester, but the increasingly important residential role of the City Centre will be expanded. It will be a priority for investment in development and infrastructure. This will include addressing current network capacity issues in the City Centre which will enable the future expansion of the rapid transit public transport network across Greater Manchester.

Improvements in the public realm, walking and cycling facilities, and green infrastructure will help to enhance the local character and environmental quality of the City Centre so that it can rival city centres across the globe, enabling it to compete effectively at the international level for investment, businesses, skilled workers, residents and tourists. A broad range of commercial accommodation will be delivered, helping the City Centre to capture growth across key economic sectors. The new functions within the City Centre will be delivered in a way that complement, rather than displace the area's non-residential functions and will seek to protect and enhance the city centre's historic environment and assets.

Shopfront and Signage Design Guide (2024)

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 eaves, 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.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024)

It is a fundamental requirement of the NPPF that planning proposals contribute to the achievement of "sustainable development".

Section 12 (Achieving Well Designed Places) advises that the government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable

development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.

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

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.

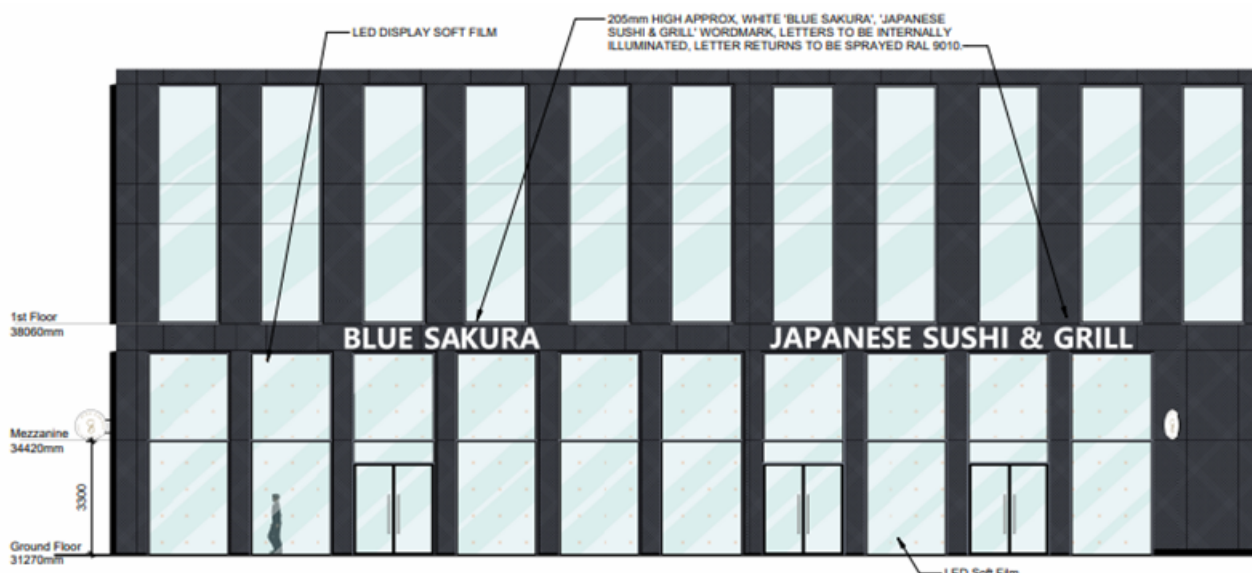
The Principle of the Proposal

The principle of the proposal is considered to be acceptable in this case. Fascia and projecting signs are considered to be appropriate forms of advertisement in order to provide wayfinding to, and to advertise, a commercial premises.

Visual Amenity

It should be noted that there is no signage strategy condition attached to this development.

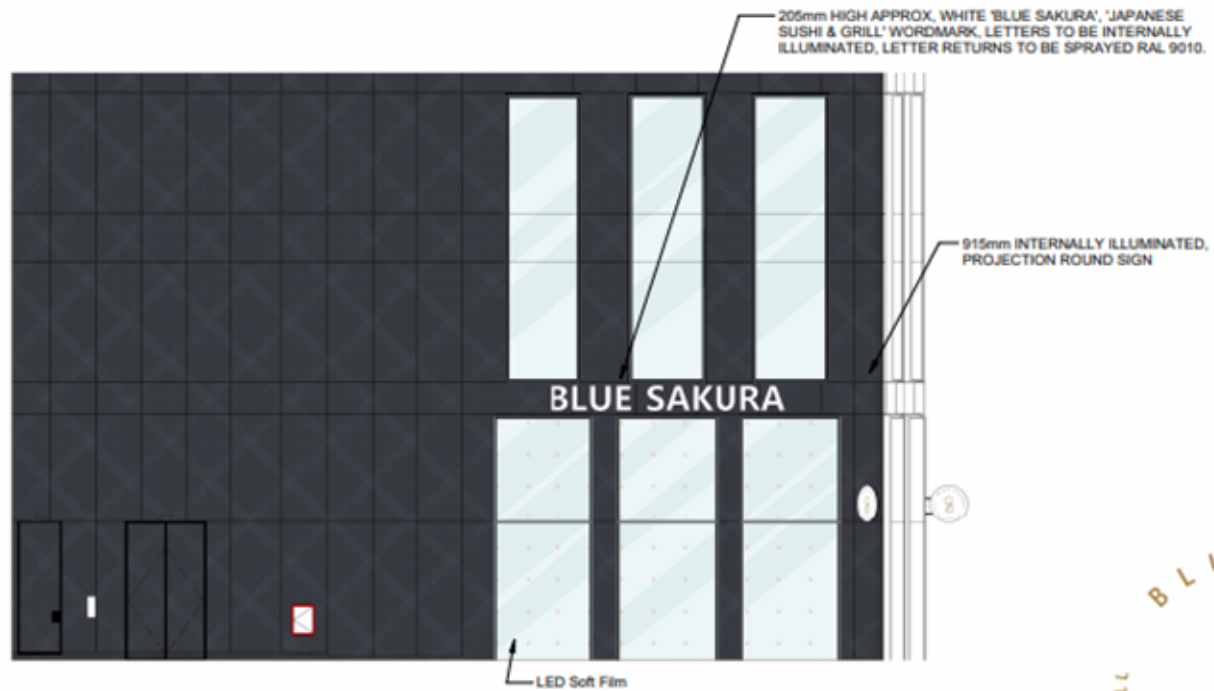
The three individual letter signs are located at fascia level, which is compliant with part a of UDP policy DC14.5 (Shops and Related Signs).



03

PROPOSED FRONT ELEVATION

1 : 100



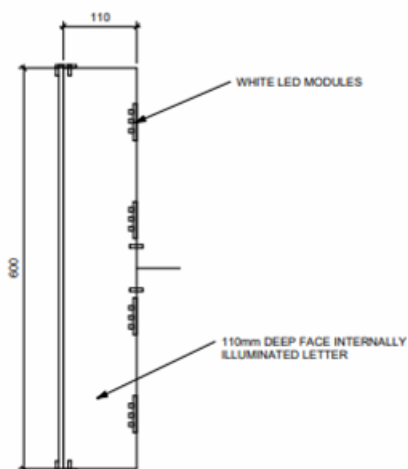
04 PROPOSED SIDE ELEVATION

1 : 100



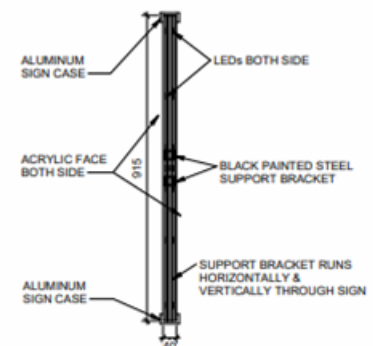
The projecting signs line up with these individual letter signs at fascia level, which is compliant with part d of UDP policy DC14.5 (Shops and Related Signs).

Having one projecting sign per elevation complies with the Shopfront and Signage Design Guide, which states that signage should “be limited to one fascia signage or internal hanging signage per elevation”. In this case, although there are two individual letter signs on the First Street elevation, they are situated on a very long elevation and the subtle design of the signage means that on balance, two individual letter signs can be allowed on this elevation.



05 BLUE SAKURA LETTERS

1 : 5



06 PROJECTING SIGN DETAIL

1 : 10

The projecting signs are 40mm thick, which is slightly larger than the 30mm outlined in the adopted Shopfront and Signage Design Guide but can be considered acceptable as they are only marginally thicker.

The other dimensions of the projecting signs are not too large or cumbersome. The individual letter signage allows for the architecture of the building to be clearly read, does not detract from the overall building or surrounding street scene, and is generally considered to be of a sophisticated design.

In these ways, it does not conceal, obscure or damage any elements or detailing of a shopfront that positively contribute to its appearance, in line with the Shopfront and Signage Design Guide and it respects the architectural form of buildings and shop frontages, as per the requirements of part b of UDP policy DC14.5 (Shops and Related Signs).

Taking all these aspects into consideration, the proposal can therefore be supported on visual amenity grounds.

Public Safety

The luminance levels of the signage are less than 600cd/m² and are therefore within an 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.

A condition has been added to ensure that the proposed luminance levels are controlled and complied with.

All signage complies with headroom and carriageway clearance requirements.

A projection over licence is not required as no signs project over the adopted highway.

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

Conclusion

Given the above, the proposal is considered to be consistent with the Core Strategy for the City of Manchester, in particular DM1 (Development Management) and SP1 (Spatial Principles), the saved policies contained within the Unitary Development Plan for Manchester, in particular DC14.1 and DC14.5 (Shop fronts and Related Signs), and the National Planning Policy Framework, in particular Section 12 (Achieving Well Designed Places)

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

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 received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on 10 March 2025:

- Location Plan

And received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on 01 April 2025:

- Existing and Proposed Elevations A107

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 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 policies DC14.1 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester.

Informative

The applicant is required to discuss and agree any requirements for licensing, hoarding /scaffolding, and skips with MCC's Highways Licensing Team via Email to: highwaylicences@manchester.gov.uk

The applicant is required to discuss and agree any requirements for temporary traffic and pedestrian management with MCC's Event and Traffic Management Team via Email to highwaynetworkmanagement@manchester.gov.uk

Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified

Highway Services
Environmental Health

Pure Gym, 8 First Street, Manchester, M15 4RP
Third Floor, 1 Tony Wilson Place, Manchester, M15 4FN
Second Floor, 1 Tony Wilson Place, Manchester, M15 4FN
First Floor, 1 Tony Wilson Place, Manchester, M15 4FN
Ground Floor, 1 Tony Wilson Place, Manchester, M15 4FN
Fourth Fifth And Sixth Floors, 1 Tony Wilson Place, Manchester, M15 4FN
Ribeye Steakhouse, 3 Isabella Banks Street, Manchester, M15 4RL
Odeon, 8 First Street, Manchester, M15 4RP
10 First Street, Manchester, M15 4GU
6 First Street, Manchester, M15 4GU
12 First Street, Manchester, M15 4GU
4 First Street, Manchester, M15 4GU
3 Tony Wilson Place, Manchester, M15 4FN
Jacobs, 5 First Street, Manchester, M15 4GU
1 Tony Wilson Place, Manchester, M15 4FN

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
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Middle) -
Area Team Boundary - Name: CENTRAL