

Planning

Growth & Development

Delegated officer report for planning application

Application no. 141893/AO/2025
Date registered valid: 20 January 2025
Proposal: Installation of 1no. internally and externally illuminated fascia sign.
Address: 130 Market Street, Manchester, M60 1AY
Ward(s): Deansgate Ward

Applicant: Ms Diana Woon
Agent (if any): Mr Jin Tan
Case officer: Max Gibson
Tel: 0161 219 6359
Email: maximillian.gibson@manchester.gov.uk

Recommendation: Refuse
Date of recommendation:

Application details

Type of application: Advertisement Consent

Development type: Advertisements

Date of site visit:

Standard consultations:

Printed: 22 January 2025 Expired: 12 February 2025

Neighbour notifications

Printed: 22 January 2025 Expired: 12 February 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

The site relates to the ground floor unit to the corner of Market Street and Piccadilly. The unit previously housed an e-cigarette shop and was formerly a branch of bank Santander. Neighbouring uses are a Greggs bakery and a bubble tea shop. The unit is located adjacent to a Metrolink tram line.

Listed building: Not applicable

Conservation area: Not applicable

Tree Preservation Order: Not applicable

Description of area

The area relates to the congruence of Market Street, a major retail thoroughfare, and Piccadilly Gardens, the focal area of public realm in Manchester's City Centre. The character of the area is predominantly retail, food and entertainment uses, with some residential and hotel to the upper floors of buildings. The area is very busy with pedestrian foot traffic and is well serviced by bus and tram services. This particular portion of the City Centre is not covered by a conservation area, but there are a number of listed buildings in the vicinity including the Grade II-listed 1-3 Piccadilly and former Debenhams building at 109-125 Market Street.

Description of development

Installation of 1no. internally and externally illuminated fascia sign above main entrance of unit. The fascia panel comprises a curved timber panel covered in render and painted beige. The sign itself is individual, internally illuminated lettering stating 'Pop Mart'. There is also strip lighting top and bottom of the fascia panel to further illuminate the signage

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.

Highways Services - illuminance level acceptable, signage complies with headroom requirements, compliant with MCC recommendations.

Environmental Health - condition restricting illumination requested; information submitted is in accordance with the requirements of this condition.

Issues

The main policies that relate to this application are DM1 (Development Management), SP1 (Spatial Principles), CC9 (Design and Heritage) and EN3 (Heritage) of the Manchester Core Strategy (2012), saved policies DC14 (Shop Fronts and Related Signs), DC15 (Advertisements, Hoardings and Posters), DC18 (Conservation Areas) and DC19 (Listed Buildings) of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester (1995) and the guidance contained within the Shopfront and Signage Design Guide (2024).

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

Issues

The Advertisement Regulations require that applications for shop signs be considered only in the interests of amenity and public safety. An assessment of the proposals under these criteria is outlined below.

Visual amenity

The signage proposed for continued display comprises 1 no. internally and externally illuminated fascia sign. The sign itself comprises internally illuminated individual letters, mounted to a beige rendered and painted timber fascia with strip lighting installed at the top and bottom.

Whilst the building does not sit within a conservation area, it does fall within the setting of the Stevenson Square Conservation Area, whose boundary is directly across Market Street, together with the setting of numerous listed buildings in the vicinity. The building itself is also considered a non-designated heritage asset and has ornate stonework across its elevations.

Thus, only development of high-quality design which preserves and enhances the character and appearance of designated heritage assets, their settings and the wider historic environment shall be supported, pursuant to policies EN3 of the Manchester Core Strategy (2012) and DC19 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester (1995), together with paragraph 216 of the NPPF.

The use of individual, internally illuminated lettering as has been installed is considered acceptable in principle, as per the guidance included within Shopfront and Signage Design Guide (2024) and saved policy DC15.2 of the Unitary Development Plan for Manchester (1995).

However, Paragraph 214 of the NPPF states 'The quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed'. It is considered that the signage proposed for continued display has not been well designed. The signage has been installed with two methods of illumination, internal and external. Whilst the illuminance level is within the levels required by Environmental Health, the internal, face illumination coupled with top and bottom LED strip lighting makes the signage strident and overly prominent in the street scene.

The timber fascia has been treated with a textured beige paint, which poorly mimics the appearance of the stone elevations of the building in which the unit sits. It is considered that the fascia panel is still recognisably timber by virtue of the sharp edges to the mouldings, top and bottom, together with the visible joints between the timber panels that have been joined together to manage the curve of the fascia (see image below). The colour stands out against the real stonework directly above and to the side of the panel.



The result is a low-quality, cheap appearance which detracts from the considerable aesthetic quality of the stonework of the non-designated heritage asset. The LED strip lighting has also been installed poorly, with the structure of the strip lighting at the top of the fascia clearly visible, together with the bottom strip when viewed from a distance (see below). This further exacerbates the impression that the fascia that has been installed is of inferior quality and poorly constructed.



Public safety

MCC Highways and Environmental Health assessed the application and considered that by virtue of the low illuminance level and adherence to headroom requirements, the proposed signage is unlikely to be injurious to public safety. Therefore, it is considered that there are no public safety concerns that would warrant a refusal.

Conclusion

The design of the fascia is considered to be poor, by virtue of the excessive illumination and cheap materiality. The illumination ensures that the signage is overly obtrusive within the street scene, whilst the use of a painted timber fascia panel as a form of ersatz stonework does not provide a cohesive visual match with the surrounding real stone – it is clearly a beige-painted timber panel. Given the above, the application cannot be supported.

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: Refuse

Reasons for recommendation to refuse

1) The signage, by virtue of its design, materiality and appearance, fails to respond positively to the style, character, architectural language, and quality of the non-designated heritage asset. The design and appearance also considered fails to preserve or enhance the setting of the Upper King Street (Extension) Conservation Area and therefore detracts from the historical setting and significance of this conservation area. The signage would have 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 and DC18 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester (1995), Places for Everyone Policy JP-P2, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified

Highway Services
Environmental Health

Royal Buildings, Mosley Street, Manchester, M2 3AB
130 - 132 Market Street, Manchester, M60 1AY
Royal Buildings, 2 Mosley Street, Manchester, M2 3AN
First Floor Suite 3, Royal Buildings, 2 Mosley Street, Manchester, M2 3AN
124 - 126 Market Street, Manchester, M1 1WA
First Floor, Royal Buildings, 2 Mosley Street, Manchester, M2 3AB
Second Floor, Royal Buildings, 2 Mosley Street, Manchester, M2 3AN
Third Floor, Royal Buildings, 2 Mosley Street, Manchester, M2 3AN
128 Market Street, Manchester, M1 1WA
Fourth Floor, Royal Buildings, 2 Mosley Street, Manchester, M2 3AN
First Floor Commissionaires Room, Royal Buildings, Mosley Street, Manchester, M2 3AB

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
Area Team Boundary - Name: CENTRAL