

Planning

Growth & Development

Delegated officer report for planning application

Application no. 139858/AO/2024

Date registered valid: 7 May 2024

Proposal: Retention of 2no. internally illuminated individual letter signs, 2no. new internally illuminated projection signs, and 2no. internally illuminated new menu cases.

Address: The New St Johns Building, New Quay Street, Manchester, M3 3BE

Ward(s): Deansgate Ward

Applicant: Navarac Ltd

Agent (if any): Megan Optimum signs Ltd

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

Recommendation: Approved and Refused

Date of recommendation: 29 November 2024

Application Details

Type of application: Advertisement Consent

Development type: Advertisements

Date of site visit: 15 May 2024

Standard consultations:

Printed: 10 May 2024 Expired: 1 June 2024

Neighbour notifications

Printed: 10 May 2024 Expired: 1 June 2024

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 site comprises a commercial unit of the Manchester Goods Yard building, which is an 11-storey office development which recently completed in August 2022. The building is one of many buildings within the surrounding area collectively referred to as 'Enterprise City' which is inspirational new district of the city, with exceptional workspaces, inspiring cultural spaces, and bespoke city centre living. These buildings include a mixture of co-living, office space, hotel and film / TV studios. Enterprise City, and the site are situated within the St. John's Strategic Regeneration Framework and Castlefield Conservation Area.

The site is located to the south of the Spinningfields commercial district of Manchester City Centre; an exemplar of City Centre economic regeneration. Castlefield is predominantly to the south of the site, an established residential district, set within the City's legacy of industrial infrastructure and buildings, and infused with leisure, retail and heritage attractions. The St John Street district lies to the east of the site, a mixed-use district characterised by Georgian buildings used as residences and space for professional businesses including legal, accountancy and medical professions. Immediately beyond the St John Street district is the south Deansgate area, which comprises retail facilities, leisure attractions and the City Centre's conference facilities. To the west of the site is the Grade II Listed Victoria and Albert Hotel and the River Irwell beyond, with hotels and office uses located on the other side of the river.

Description of Description

The proposal seeks consent for the retention of 2no. internally illuminated individual letter signs, 2no. new internally illuminated projection signs, and 2no. internally illuminated new menu cases.

Related Applications

121511/FO/2018 - Erection of two buildings comprising: 11 storey mixed use building (including ground and mezzanine) comprising workspace (Use Class B1), with retail uses at ground and mezzanine levels (Use Class A1/A2/A3/A4 and / or D2) and rooftop amenity spaces known as Manchester Goods Yard; and, a further 10 storey mixed use building (including ground) comprising workspace (Use Class B1), with retail uses at ground level (Use Class A1/A2/A3/A4 and / or D2) known as No.1 Grape Street, above two levels of basement parking for 391 cars and cycle storage, together with new public realm, landscaping, provision of external seating areas, access and other associated works.

Approved December 2018.

131318/JO/2021 - Variation of Condition 2 attached to 121511/FO/2018, as amended, to reflect enclosing the terrace at level 9 and include additional and revised areas at ground and mezzanine floors with associated ground floor access changes on approved plans.

Approved August 2021.

139384/FO/2024 - Reconfiguration of ground floor retail space together with elevational alterations including retractable windows and other associated works.

Approved April 2024.

Consultations & Notification Responses

Highway Services - Confirmed that the signs comply with headroom and carriageway clearance requirements, that they will not project over the adopted highway and will therefore not require a projection over licence, and that the luminance levels are within a limit acceptable to Highways. Requested that an information be added concerning any requirements for licensing, hoarding / scaffolding, skips and any associated temporary traffic management arrangements.

Environmental Health - Requested that a condition be added to control luminance levels.

Publicity - Neighbour notification letters were sent to surrounding properties. 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

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) refers to 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 minimise emissions, ensure the efficient use of natural resources, reuse previously developed land wherever possible, improve access to jobs, services and open space and provide good access to sustainable transport provision.

CC9 (Design and Heritage) advises 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) advises that developers will be expected to consider the City's heritage, including its listed buildings, conservation areas, archaeological remains and historic street pattern.

EN3 (Heritage) advises that new developments must be designed so as to support the Council in preserving or, where possible, enhancing the historic environment.

Paragraph 8.53 of the supporting text 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.

The Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester

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 box 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.

DC18.1 (Conservation Areas) states that the Council will seek to preserve and enhance the character of its designated conservation areas by carefully considering issues including the effect of signs and advertisements.

Places for Everyone

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.

Policy 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. Opportunities will be pursued to aid the promotion, enjoyment, understanding and interpretation of heritage assets, as a means of maximising wider public benefits and reinforcing Greater Manchester's distinct identity and sense of place. The policy requires 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. Harm to such elements will only be permitted where this is clearly justified and outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023)

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 of section 12 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.

There is no signage strategy attached to Manchester Goods Yard.

Principle

The principle of the works are considered to be acceptable in this case. Signage is considered appropriate in order to advertise a commercial premises such as this and to provide wayfinding to said premises.

Visual Amenity

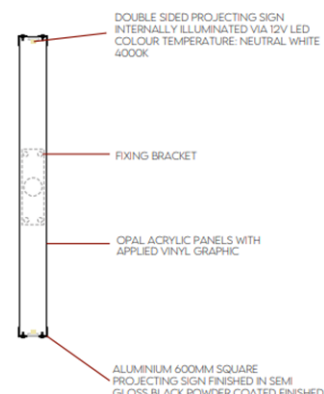
At 600mm by 600mm, with a depth of 50mm, the proposed projecting signs are considered to be too bulky in design.

The projecting signs are sited in line with the fascia level signage, in accordance with part d) of UDP policy DC14.5.

The projecting signs were originally proposed to be thicker. The depth was reduced following discussions with the Local Planning Authority (LPA). The applicant has been advised that this depth is the minimum they can be reduced to in order to achieve the internal luminance, however, the City Council believes that the signs are still too bulky and should be made slender, to 30mm or 40mm thickness/depth.

ITEM B - Projection Sign

Qty: x2
Dims: 600mm x 600mm
1:10 scale @ A3



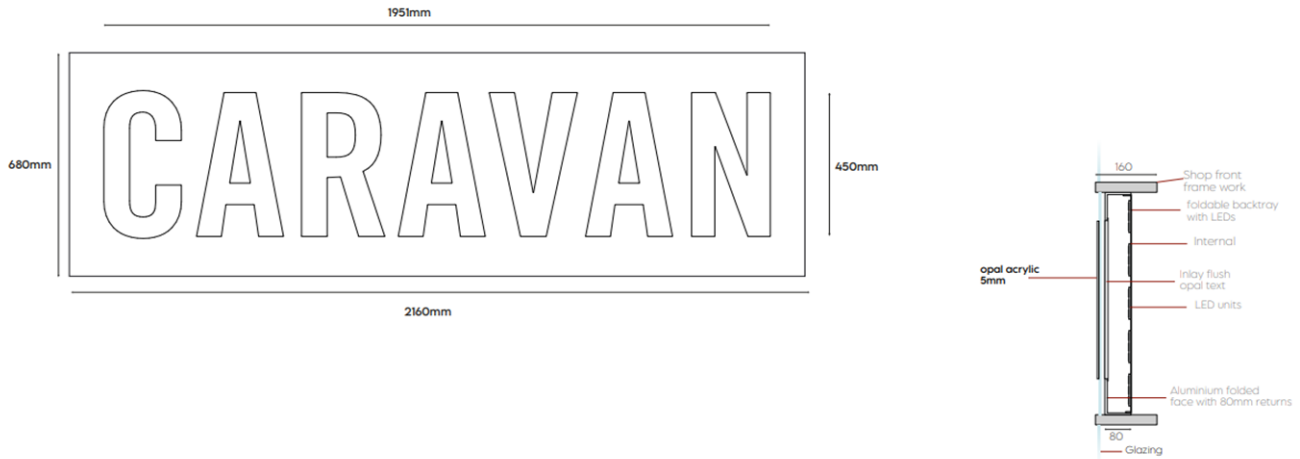
Proposed Projecting Signage

Fascia signage with a full block black backing was originally proposed on the exterior. These proposals were revised to be individual letter signage on the exterior of the glazing following discussions with the LPA, who advised the applicant that such fascia signage would not respect the clear glazing architecture of the ground floor of Manchester Goods Yard, as they would have obscured the glazing, and would have intruded upon and broken up the visual cohesiveness across the whole of the ground floor of Manchester Good Yard.

The fascia level signs are situated at fascia level, in accordance with part a) of UDP policy DC14.5.

The space that the individual letter signage will take up will be 1951mm x 450mm. Within the context of the elevations of the building, this signage is not considered to be overly dominant in size and overall is considered to be subtle and not obstructive or incongruous to the appearance and architectural form of the building.

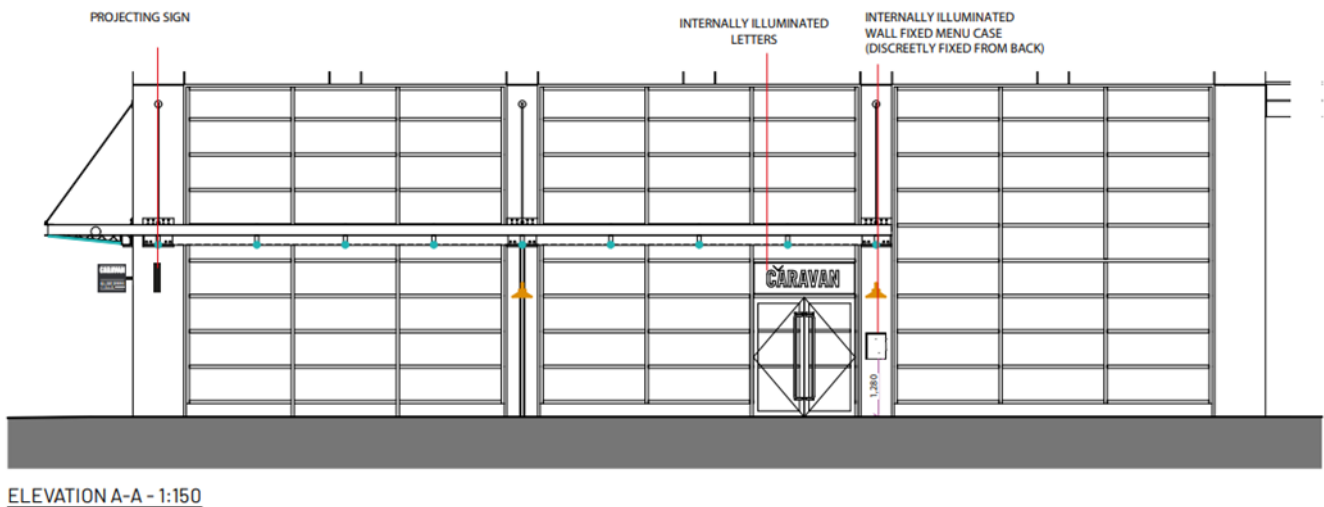
It is considered that these individual letters signs respect the architectural form of the building and the shop front, in accordance with part b) of UDP policy DC14.5.



Proposed Individual Letter Signage

There are three entrances to the unit, one on Studio Way, and two on South Street.

Studio Way is the shorter elevation of this particular commercial unit. As proposed, individual letter sign sits above the entrance, with a menu sign sited next to the entrance. The projecting sign has been sited slightly further along this short elevation, in order to reduce a potential clutter of signage in one particular location. The siting of this projecting sign also provides better wayfinding and advertising to pedestrians coming from multiple directions.

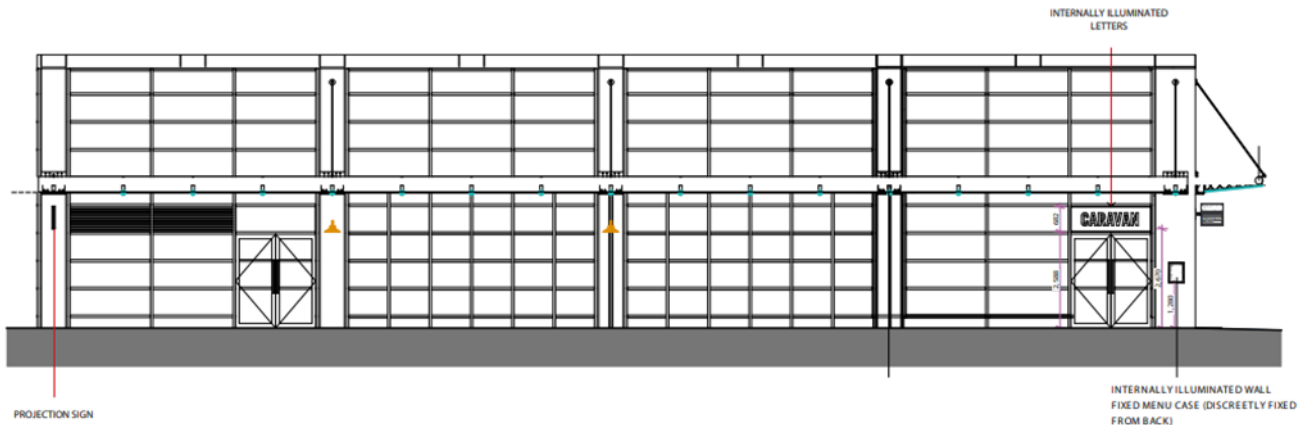


Proposed Studio Way Elevation

Pedestrians will approach this elevation from the Quay Street side of Studio Way, and from down the stairs that connect to Lower Byrom Street. The siting of this projecting sign provides adequate wayfinding to those coming from both directions, and also helps to provide wayfinding to one of the entrances on Studio Way. The entrance is question, is right on the corner of South Street and Studio Way.

Individual letter signage will sit above the South Street entrance that sits on the corner of Studio Way, and a menu sign will sit right next to the entrance. The projecting sign on this elevation will be sited further down the elevation, close to the other entrance on this elevation.

This will help to reduce the clutter of signage all in one location, will provide wayfinding for those approaching the unit from Aviva Studios/The Factory, and will site pedestrians to this entrance.



Proposed South Street Elevation

Part e) of UDP policy DC14.5 states that “The Council will normally permit only one projecting box sign for each shop unit.” Given the size of this unit, and the long elevation of South Street, the LPA considers it appropriate to have two projecting signs on this unit, one on each elevation, as long as they are sited in a manner that does not result in a clutter of signage.

Originally, the proposal included three projecting signs, but one of these was removed from the proposal following discussions with the LPA, due to concerns about signage clutter.

The menu signs are not considered to respect the architectural form of the building and shop frontage, in accordance with part b) of UDP policy DC14.5. The menu signs are considered to form an incongruous feature on the exterior of the building that creates unnecessary advertisement clutter and causes visual harm to the host building itself, to the surrounding street scene, and it is considered that it fails to enhance or preserve the surrounding conservation area.

The City Council does accept that locating the menu signs behind the glazing is not simple in this location due to the tinted glazing. However, an appropriate other solution such as freestanding menu signs that could be located outside could have been implemented instead of a permanent feature that creates clutter and causes visual harm to the visual amenity of the architecturally high quality building.

Public Safety

There are no public safety concerns with the proposed signage. The luminance levels are within an acceptable range to not cause any distraction to passing pedestrians or road users, or to cause a disturbance to any nearby 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.

Conclusion

Given the above, the 2no. individual letter signs are considered to be consistent with National Planning Policy Framework, in particular Section 12 (Achieving Well Designed Places) and Section 16 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment, the Core Strategy for the City of Manchester, in particular DM1 (Development Management) and SP1 (Spatial Principles), and

the Saved Policies contained within the Unitary Development Plan for Manchester, in particular DC14 (Shop fronts and Related Signs).

However, the 2no. projecting signs, by virtue of their bulky design, and the 2no. menu signs, by virtue of creating an incongruous feature and unnecessary advertisement clutter on the building, would adversely impact on the visual amenity of the building and the character and appearance of the local area, and would in particular not preserve or enhance the surrounding historic environment.

On this basis, the projecting signs and menu signs are therefore refused.

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: Approved and Refused

Reasons for Refusal

Refuse the installation of the following:

- 2no. new internally illuminated projection signs
- 2no. internally illuminated new menu cases.

Projecting signs - The projecting signs, by virtue of their bulky design, are considered unacceptable resulting in an unduly harmful impact to the visual amenity and the character of the building and to the surrounding street scene, whilst also failing to preserve or enhance the surrounding conservation area. The projecting signs are therefore contrary to the provisions of

the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 together with policies SP1, CC9, EN1, EN3, and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy (2012), saved policy DC14 and DC18 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester (1995), Places for Everyone Policy JP-P2, and the NPPF.

Menu Boards - The menu boards, by virtue of their siting upon the external facade of the building, would create incongruous features that would relate poorly to the style, character, architectural language, and quality of the building, as well as to the surrounding street scene, in addition to creating unnecessary advertisement clutter on the building, and would overall fail to preserve or enhance the surrounding conservation area. Overall, the signage would have an unduly harmful impact on visual amenity and the character of the local area and would be contrary to policies SP1, CC9, EN1, EN3, and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy (2012), saved policy DC14 and DC18 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester (1995), Places for Everyone Policy JP-P2, the NPPF and the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007.

Condition(s) to be attached to decision for approval

Approve the installation of the following:

- 2no. internally illuminated individual letter signs

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 Manchester City Council as the Local Planning Authority on 07 May 2024:

- Location Plan

Received by Manchester City Council as the Local Planning Authority on 28 June 2024:

- Proposed Signage Details V8

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, and saved policies DC14 and DC18.1.

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, EN3 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy and saved policies DC14.1, DC18.1, DC19.1 and E3.3 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester.

Informatives

1) Any requirements for licensing, hoarding / scaffolding, skips and any associated temporary traffic management arrangements, will need discussion and agreement with the council's Highway Network Management teams via Email -highwaylicences@manchester.gov.uk and highwaynetworkmanagement@manchester.gov.uk

Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified

Highway Services
Environmental Health

3 Hardman Boulevard, Manchester, M3 3AQ
38 Young Street, Manchester, M3 3FT
Ground Floor And First Floor, 38 Young Street, Manchester, M3 3FT
36 Young Street, Manchester, M3 3FT

Appendix 2 – Planning constraints

Article 4 Direction - Removal Of PD Rights Change Of Use From Class C3 To Class C4
Article 4 Direction - City Centre PD Restriction - Class B1(a) To C3
Aircraft Safeguarding Zone - Aircraft Safeguarding Zone - All Exceeding 90M
Coal Authority - Development Low Risk - Name: DEVELOPMENT_LOW_RISK_AREA
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -
Area Team Boundary - Name: CENTRAL