

Planning

Growth & Development

Delegated officer report for planning application

Application no. 140257/AO/2024

Date registered valid: 19 June 2024

Proposal: Installation of 1no. halo internally illuminated canopy sign, 2no. internally illuminated double sided projection sign, and 1no. plaque sign.

Address: Pearl Assurance House, 23 Princess Street, Manchester, M2 4ER

Ward(s): Deansgate Ward

Applicant: Mr Chris O'Connor Malmaison Ltd

Agent (if any): Mr Rick Hyde 360 Signs

Case officer: Danielle Cooper
Tel: 0161 234 1658
Email: danielle.cooper@manchester.gov.uk

Recommendation: Approved and Refused

Date of recommendation: 07/08/2024

Application details

Type of application: Advertisement Consent

Development type: Advertisements

Date of site visit: 2nd July 2024

Standard consultations:

Printed: 25 June 2024 Expired: 16 July 2024

Neighbour notifications

No neighbour notifications have been printed and sent.

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

Listed building: Not applicable

Conservation area: Albert Square Conservation Area 1972

Tree Preservation Order: Not applicable

Description of site/area

This six storey building is bounded by Princess Street, Bow Lane, Clarence Street and the Grade II Listed 31 Princess Street. It is in the Albert Square Conservation Area.

It was constructed as an office with shops at the ground floor between 1952 and 1956 and designed by local architects Beaumont & Sons for the Pearl Assurance Company. It has Portland Stone cladding to the Princess Street, Clarence Street and part Bow Lane elevations. It is not listed but is a non-designated heritage asset and makes a positive contribution to the conservation area. There is a narrow strip of land to the rear on Bow Lane that has been used for car parking. Bow Lane is a narrow street that is used to service some properties.

The building is opposite the Grade I Listed Manchester Town Hall (1), which is one of Manchester's most significant civic landmarks. Other listed buildings within the immediate area are 31 Princess Street (3) , 10 Kennedy Street (4) 6 to 8 Clarence Street and 1 Clarence Street known as the Northern Assurance Building (2) all Grade II Listed and the Grade II* Listed 14 Kennedy Street (5) known as the Old Law Library.

Other listed buildings within the setting include 61 Cross Street and 1 Albert Square both Grade II Listed.

The building fronts Albert Square which contains the Grade I Listed Albert Memorial and the Grade II Listed Jubilee Fountain and Bright, Heywood, Gladstone and Fraser statues.

Surrounding uses include shops, offices, hotels, bars, restaurants, financial and professional services, cafe, library, art gallery and the Town Hall Complex.

Description of development

The application seeks advertisement consent for the installation of 1no. halo internally illuminated canopy sign.

The proposed fascia sign (sign 1) would be located above the existing canopy facing Clarence Street. The circular sign would be comprised of an acrylic logo (SORA) with 75mm returns. The faces and front 50mm returns will be finished in opaque black, leaving the rear 25mm return exposed to halo illuminate warm white.

The fascia will be mounted on a 73mm diameter, 10mm thick clear acrylic rear panel which is fixed to a powder coated Matt RAL 1013 Oyster White support frame.

The sign will not be able to exceed a luminance level of 300cd/m².

The application also seeks planning consent for 2 internally illuminated projecting signs (900mmx400mm) which face onto Princess Street (sign 2 & 3)

Planning history

134869/JO/2022 - Variation of conditions 2 (Approved Drawings and Documents) of application referenced 129141/JO/2021 and 128929/NMC/2020 to allow amendments to the appearance of the development – Approved 04.01.2023

134541/AO/2022 - Installation of various internally illuminated fascia signs and menu case and flag, pole and canopy sign – Approved 23.09.2022

129141/JO/2021 - Variation of conditions 2 (Approved Drawings and Documents) and 8 (Local Labour) of application referenced 123522/FO/2019 to allow amendments to the design of the development and the agreement of a new Local Labour Plan – Approved 2021

128929/NMC/2020 - Non-Material Amendments to application referenced 123522/FO/2019 comprising an increase in the extent of demolition to the rear of the building on Bow Lane and an associated increase in new brickwork, an increase in the number of mullions to windows of the new rooftop extension and to shopfront windows at ground floor level, an increase in number of transoms to glazing of the top floor of the Princess Street elevation of the rooftop extension – Approved 2021

126388/AOH/2020 - Erection of an illuminated open weave banner mesh advertisement measuring 27 metres long x 13.2 metres high mounted to temporary

scaffolding including flood lighting for a temporary period of 14 months whilst the external works of the redevelopment of the host building are completed – Approved 2021

123522/FO/2019 - Alterations to Pearl Assurance House associated with its conversion to a proposed hotel in conjunction with proposals which also include a 7 storey extension to the rear of the site and a 2 storey extension to the roof (to replace existing 6th floor) to create a hotel (Use Class C1) with 70 bedrooms, rooftop bar (Class A4), a rooftop plant enclosure and ancillary accommodation (basement and ground floor) together with access and servicing proposal, external alterations and associated works – Approved 2019

Consultations & Notification Responses

Highway Services - have noted that a Projection over License will be required. It is accepted that the location of the signs is not considered likely to generate any significant impact in terms of highway safety.

Environmental Health - have recommended a condition relating to control glare and overspill onto nearby properties.

Metrolink – No objection. Advised the applicant to ensure the proposal will not interfere with the Metrolink.

Publicity – None received.

Policy

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 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 CC9 – Design and Heritage
- Policy EN1 – Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas
- Policy EN3 – Heritage
- Policy DM1 – Development Management

The Unitary Development Plan for Manchester – For the reasons outlined below the following saved UDP Policies are of relevance to this application:

- Policy DC15 – Advertisements, Hoardings and Posters
- Policy DC18 – Conservation Areas
- Policy DC19 – Listed Buildings

Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- Chapter 12 – Achieving well-designed places
- Chapter 16 – Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

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.

Policy JP-P1 (Sustainable Places) aims to become one of the most liveable city regions in the world, consisting of a series of beautiful, healthy and varied places, each having the following key attributes that all development, wherever appropriate, should be distinctive, with a clear identity, visually stimulating, socially inclusive, resilient, adaptable, durable, resource efficient, safe, supported by critical infrastructure, functional and convenient, incorporating accessibility, legible easy to move around, well connected, comfortable and inviting, incorporating high quality and well managed

green infrastructure and public realm, well served by local shops, services and amenities.

Policy JP-S1 (Sustainable Development) aims to help tackle climate change, development should aim to maximise its economic, social and environmental benefits simultaneously, minimise its adverse impacts, utilise sustainable construction techniques and actively seek opportunities to secure net gains across each of the different objectives. Preference will be given to using previously-developed (brownfield) land and vacant buildings to meet development needs. In bringing forward previously developed sites for development, particular attention will be paid to tackling land contamination and stability issues, ensuring that appropriate mitigation and remediation is implemented to enable sites to be brought back into use effectively.

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.

Issues

Impact on Visual amenity

Hanging signs (sign 2 & 3)

The proposed projecting signs due to their siting, design and bulky nature are considered to have an unacceptable impact upon the character and appearance of the existing building and the heritage significance of the surrounding listed buildings and conservation area. The two projecting signs which face Princess Street do not relate to the entrance of the business (SORA) and are considered to introduce visual advertisement clutter to this elevation. As such, these two signs will not be supported.

As such, the two projecting signs form bulky and incongruous features to the building, resulting in an unduly harmful impact on the character and visual amenity of the building and surrounding area. In particular, the two signs fail to preserve or enhance the setting of the Albert Square Conservation Area, and adjacent Listed Buildings. The projecting signs are therefore contrary to the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 together with policies SP1, EN1, EN3, CC9, 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) and the NPPF.

Canopy sign (sign 1)

The proposed canopy sign is considered to be visually acceptable as it will match the design of the existing Malmaison canopy sign adjacent, have an appropriate and high-quality appearance, as well as be in keeping with the features of the existing building. The proposal will also not result in advertisement clutter to the building and is considered to be a relatively small change to the external appearance of the host building.

The high levelled sign is considered appropriate for this building as they relate to the use of the building.

The proposed halo illumination of the sign will also match that of the existing canopy Malmaison sign and as such raises no visual concern.

In view of the above, it is considered that the proposed canopy sign would not cause harm to the character and appearance of the building or the surrounding conservation area and are therefore in accordance with Core Strategy Policies SP1, CC9, EN1 and EN3, Saved Unitary Development Plan Policies DC15 and DC19, National Planning Practice Guidance and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Impact on residential amenity

Environmental health have recommended a condition to limit the luminance level of the sign to 300cd/m² in order to control the glare and overspill onto nearby properties (this will be conditioned). Given the modest size of the signs along with a luminance level of 300cd/m², the proposal is considered acceptable in terms of residential amenity. The proposal therefore accords with Core Strategy Policy DM1 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Impact on highway safety

The highway officer has noted that a Projection over License will be required for the projecting signs which face onto Princess Street. These signs are not supported and as such these comments are not necessary to implement. The applicant should be made aware that the existing canopy where the new sign is proposed facing Clarence Street should ensure an appropriate Projection over License is secured.

The applicant should also be aware that any requirements for licensing, hoarding / scaffolding, skips and any associated temporary traffic management arrangements, including Section 50, will need discussion and agreement with the council's Highway Network Management teams via Email -highwaylicences@manchester.gov.uk highwaynetworkmanagement@manchester.gov.uk. The applicant is also advised of the details of working safely near Metrolink which can be found on the Metrolink Website at; <https://www.tfgm.com/public-transport/tram/workingsafely>. This document provides contact details for the Metrolink Operator in order that the proposed method of erection can be discussed and relevant permits obtained.

The proposed signage also ensures sufficient headroom and carriageway clearance. As such, the location of the proposal raises no concern to highway safety and accords with Core Strategy Policy DM1 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Conclusion

In light of the above, the proposed SORA canopy sign is considered to be acceptable in respect of both design and highway safety and is thus in accordance with Manchester Core Strategy Policies SP1, CC9, EN1, EN3 and DM1, Unitary Development Plan Policies DC15 and DC19, Places for Everyone Plan Policy JP-P2, Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance. Approval is granted for this element of the proposal.

However, the proposed projecting signs by virtue of their siting, design and appearance are considered to form in congruous and bulky features that will result in advertisement clutter, having a harmful impact on the character and appearance of the host building, adjacent listed buildings and conservation area.

On this basis, the proposed projecting signs cannot be supported, and advertisement consent is not granted.

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

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

Refuse the installation of the following:

- SIGNS 2 & 3 - 2no. internally illuminated projecting signs

1) The two projecting signs, by virtue of their siting, size, and appearance, form bulky and incongruous features to the building, whilst also introducing visual advertisement clutter to this elevation. The result is an unduly harmful impact on the character and visual amenity of the building and surrounding area. In particular, the two signs fail to preserve or enhance the setting of the Albert Square Conservation Area, and adjacent Listed Buildings. The projecting signs are therefore contrary to the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 together with policies SP1, EN1, EN3, CC9, 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) and the NPPF.

Approve the installation of the following:

- SIGN 1 - SORA canopy sign.

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:

Location Plan (Received 11/06/2024)

External Sora Sign / Projection Signs REV B (Received 02/08/2024)

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) Lighting from illuminated signage shall be designed and installed so as to control glare and overspill onto nearby properties.
The signage will need to be selected and installed to ensure they do not exceed 300cd/m2

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) Please be advised that the existing canopy where the new fascia sign is proposed should ensure an appropriate Projection over License is secured. This can be obtained from

https://www.manchester.gov.uk/directory_record/451898/projecting_over_the_highway#:~:text=Summary,also%20need%20to%20be%20licensed.

2) 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

3) Please be advised of the details of working safely near Metrolink which can be found on the Metrolink Website at; <https://www.tfgm.com/public-transport/tram/workingsafely>. This document provides contact details for the Metrolink Operator in order that the proposed method of erection can be discussed and relevant permits obtained

Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified

Highway Services
Environmental Health
Metrolink

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
Coal Authority - Development Low Risk - Name: DEVELOPMENT_LOW_RISK_AREA
Conservation Area - Albert Square Conservation Area 1972
Area Team Boundary - Name: CENTRAL