

Our Ref: 2022-016
Your Ref: PP-12825705

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By email only

Dear Sir/Madam,

Proposed development for signage at The Northern Lawn Tennis and Squash Club, Palatine Road, Manchester, M20 3YA.

We write on behalf of our client, Northern Lawn Tennis And Squash Club, with an application for signage to the entrance of The Northern Lawn Tennis and Squash Club. The proposed description of development is as follows:

'Installation of one freestanding internally illuminated sign with halo illuminated letters.'

This application has been submitted on the planning portal via ref. PP-12825705. To accompany this application, the following information has been submitted alongside this supporting covering letter.

- Application Forms
- Existing Elevational Plans
- Fascia Signage Plans
- Signage Specification
- Heritage Statement (within this Covering Letter)

The Site and Surrounding Areas

The application relates to the Northern Lawn Tennis and Squash Club located to the south of the junction of Palatine Road and Lapwing Lane with access available via Palatine Road through a set of double metal gates which lead onto a driveway to the club house and its associated grounds. The site is bounded to the northeast by the Metrolink tramline, whilst its southeast, southwest, and northwest boundaries predominantly share borders with a range of residential properties. To the northwest, on the opposite side of Palatine Road, is a former public house car park; now a cleared site earmarked for residential development.

The application site is situated on the northern outskirts of the Blackburn Park Conservation Area, which was first designated in 1979. This area originally consisted of open fields which surrounded a single large, detached property, Parkfield House, owned by Charles Blackburn. Over time, Blackburn sold limited portions of land, with plots large enough to accommodate three to four houses only, thus explaining the varied forms of development currently extant in the park. Blackburn Park is principally an area of large family houses with spacious gardens, arranged along tree-lined roads.

Most of the houses within the Conservation Area remain largely in their original form, with earlier properties generally being larger than later ones. Some houses were built in later years, mainly

on sites made vacant by demolition, and these for the most part have been in-keeping with the character of the Conservation Area.

Proposed Development

The signage would consist of an aluminium composite sheet finished in blue with inlaid Perspex text and icons, finished in gold leaf, with LED halo illumination with static illuminance levels of 200c/m2. The base of the sign would be sited 0.6m above ground level, with the sign itself measuring to 1.95m in height, 4.18m in width, and 0.15m in depth. The sign would be fixed to posts measuring to 0.1m by 0.1m, which would be set behind the existing brick boundary treatment.

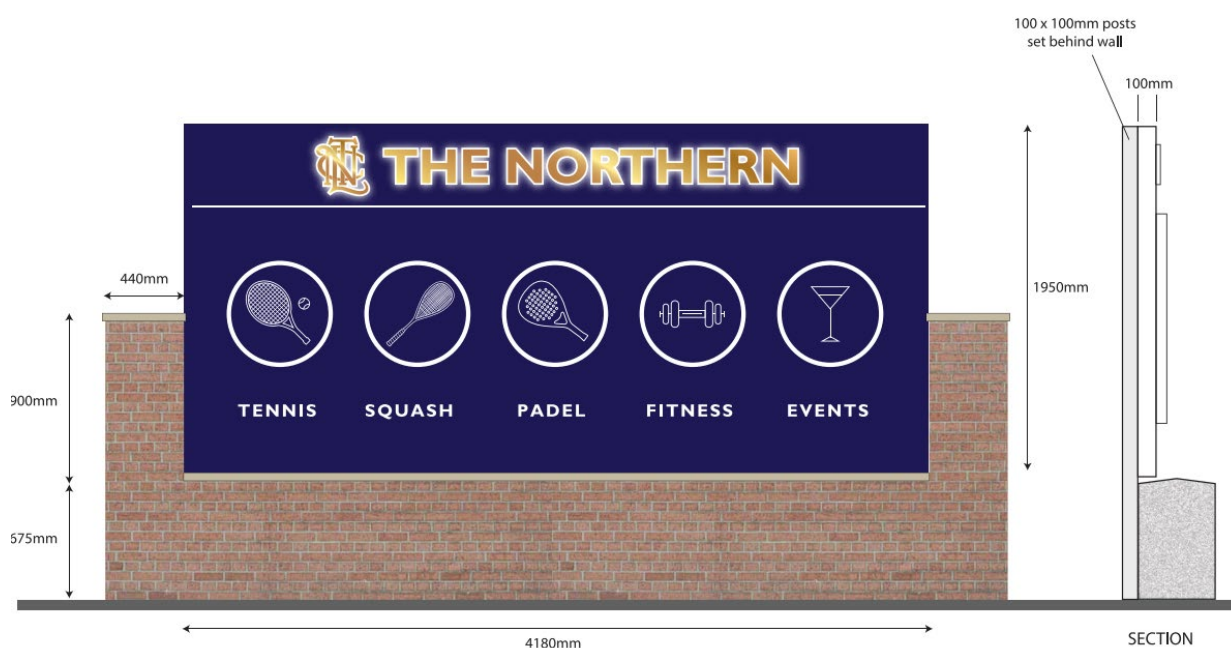


Figure 1: Proposed Signage

Planning Policy

The following policies are considered relevant in the consideration of this application.

Unitary Development Plan (UDP) – The UDP has been superseded by the Core Strategy Development Plan, but certain policies are still considered of relevance:

- Policy DC15 – Advertisements, hoardings, and posters
- Policy DC18 – Conservation Areas

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 DM1 – Development Management
- Policy SP1 – Spatial Principles
- Policy EN3 – Heritage
- Policy EN1 – Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2023)

- Chapter 7 – Ensuring the Vitality of Town Centres

- Chapter 12 – Achieving Well-Designed Places
- Chapter 16 – Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

Planning History and Assessment

This application is a resubmission of a previous application ref. 136800/AO/2023 for the 'Installation of one freestanding internally illuminated sign with halo illuminated letters' which was refused in December 2023.

The proposed application detailed here does not seek to amend the application but review the application and determination against the reasons for refusal and the perceived impacts upon the heritage and the identified conservation area. The following assessment here within this covering letter should be duly noted and considered.

It must be noted that the response to the previous application, consultees comments was limited with no objections made or no response, particularly noting the Blackburn Park Conservation Society's lack of response:

- Residents – no comments or objections received.
- Highways Services made the following comments in response to the application:
 - o The proposed sign is not located on the adopted highway network.
 - o The proposed sign extends to a maximum projection of 0.05m over an area of private land and therefore does not project over the adopted highway. As such, a Projection over License will not be required.
 - o The proposed luminance of the sign is noted as 200 cd/m² which is considered to be in line with the 600cd/m² maximum stated by the Lighting Engineers with Institute of Lighting Professionals.
 - o The proposed signage complies with headroom clearance and carriageway clearance requirements.
- West Didsbury Residents' Association – no comments or objections received.
- Blackburn Park Conservation Society – no comments or objections received. It should be duly noted that the

The reason for refusal under this application was on the following grounds:

1) The proposal, by reason of its internally illuminated components, removal of the site's existing boundary treatment, and siting in a prominent position, adjacent to the public highway, in a conservation area, would detract from the designated heritage asset, causing unnecessary visual harm and detriment to the special architectural and historic interest of the Blackburn Park Conservation Area.

As such, the proposal is contrary to policies DM1, SP1 and EN3 of the Manchester Core Strategy, saved Unitary Development Plan policies DC15 and DC18 and chapters 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

When assessing heritage impacts, the level of harm perceived by the Council needs to be clearly articulating whether they consider the proposals to cause substantial harm, less than substantial

harm or negligible harm. With reference to paragraph 202 of the NPPF, any harm which is considered less than substantial, should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

It is unclear through the refusal of the previous application what level of harm is attributed to the proposal and such it is difficult to establish the level of justification or relevance against the public benefit.

In considering this new application, it is necessary to review the reason for refusal and formulate a view on the conclusions made, which is set out in the following paragraphs. As detail above however, clarity needs to be sought against the perceived level of harm the Council consider the replacement advertisement would bring.

Internally illuminated components / Unnecessary visual harm and detriment to the special architectural and historic interest of the Blackburn Park Conservation Area.

The application site is situated to the northern end of the Blackburn Park Conservation Area (designated in 1979), which comprises the area bounded by Barlow Moor Road to the south, Palatine Road to west, Lapwing Lane to the north and Wilmslow Road to the east. The area which derives from its historical association with Charles Blackburn and is predominantly residential in character, containing buildings of various architectural styles and eras, sited arranged along tree-lined roads.

Given the status of the area, it is necessary to determine whether the impact of the proposed development would affect the significance of the Conservation Area to an unacceptable degree, when considering relevant planning legislation, policy, and guidance.

There is no Conservation Area Appraisal nor a local list. The proposal sites are not in the vicinity of any listed buildings. Regarding the buildings in the immediate vicinity of the proposal site, the houses on the west side of Elm Road date from between 1907 and the mid-1920s, although 33 Elm Road is post war; they also do not form part of the early stage of development of Blackburn Park; some have been rebuilt and most, if not all, appear to have been significantly extended. The proposals will therefore not impact any identified positive contributors.

The desire to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the character of conservation areas is outlined within Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which refers to the need for Local Planning Authorities to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of designated areas. This point is supported by policies EN3 and DC18.1 of the Core Strategy, along with Section 16 of the NPPF, which underline the need for due consideration to be given to the impact of new developments on heritage assets.

As the heritage asset being assessed is the Conservation Area, therefore the magnitude of impact is assessed by considering the changes to the Conservation Area as a whole. It is assessed that one halo-lit logo sign at the Northern Lawn Tennis Club would have a negligible magnitude of change on the Conservation Area which is an asset of medium value. This would constitute a neutral or slight impact, which can be either beneficial or adverse. Overall, this assessment determines that the proposals would have a neutral impact on the Conservation Area.

With reference to paragraph 202 of the NPPF, any harm which is considered less than substantial, should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. In this case, public benefits are derived from social and environmental improvements offered by assisting the club to continue to remain relevant and to assist in its modernisation as a key sporting facility, beneficial to the health and well-being of the local community. The removal of the existing poor quality signage and replacement with a high quality sign, in which the overall design and appearance of the

signage was considered to be acceptable in isolation under the previous application, should be deemed a wider public benefit.

On this basis, the proposed development is considered to accord with saved policy DC18.1 of the UDP, policies EN3, DM1 and SP1 of the Manchester Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Removal of the sites existing boundary treatment

This point for refusal is at odds with the recently approved application ref. 136442/FO/2023 for the alteration of a section of front boundary wall, to remove railings and adjustments to existing wall piers. This was associated with the left side of the entrance and removed the existing railings and saw a hedgerow set behind.

The conclusions formed through this application noted that whilst boundary walls form a key element of the conservation area make-up, these traditionally comprise brick or stone walls with copings associated with traditional villa buildings dating back to the Victorian era. The boundary wall impacted as part of that application was considered a relatively modern addition dating back to the mid 1990's and is unremarkable in its design.

It is not a feature that defines the conservation area and is of limited architectural merit. The following images show the boundary treatment in 2020 and more recently in 2023 following the implementation of the above referenced application. The proposed works would not affect the current wall alignment and would still serve to enclose the club, to provide a more contemporary entrance in the club.



Figure 2: Boundary Treatment in 2020

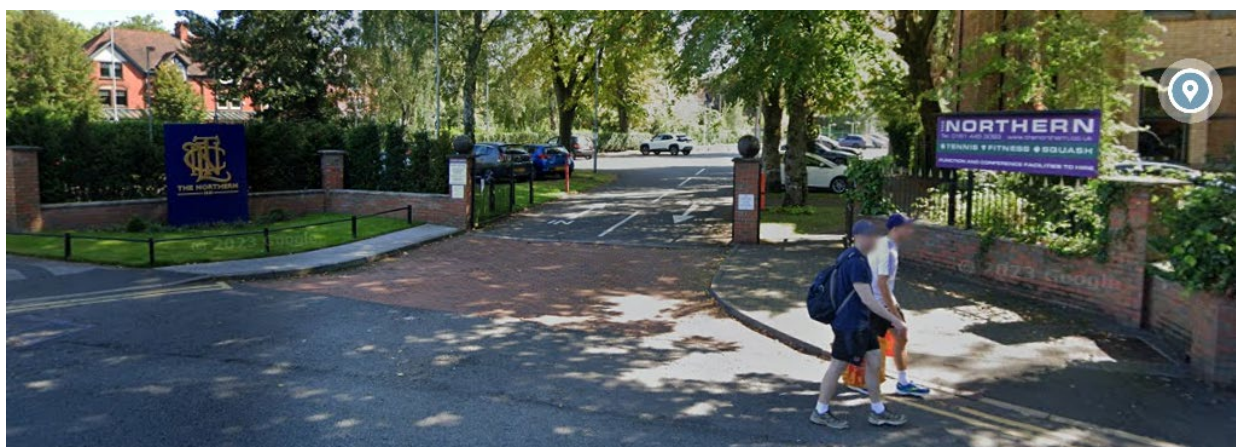


Figure 3: Boundary Treatment in 2023

Highways and Public Safety

The proposed signage would be sited a reasonable distance away from the public highway and footpath, within the grounds of the Northern Lawn Tennis Club. It would have static illuminance levels of 200 cd/m², which accords with Highways' guidance. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal will not harm public safety in and around the site.

Summary and Closing

This application has been submitted on the Planning Portal under ref. PP-12825705 and the application fee of has been paid online. I trust you have all you require to validate this application and allocate it to an officer, if you need anything further, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Victoria Coleman', written in a cursive style.

Victoria Coleman

Senior Planner

On Behalf of NJL Consulting