

REF: R00758/DB/MR/AP

Planning Department
Ground Floor
Town Hall Extension
Mount Street Entrance
Albert Square
Manchester
M2 5DB

28 September 2023

Dear Sir/Madam,

**APPLICATION FOR ADVERTISEMENT CONSENT TO INSTALL 2 NO. BUILT-UP LETTER SIGNS INTERNALLY SUSPENDED AND INTERNALLY ILLUMINATED AND 2 NO. PROJECTING SIGNS EXTERNALLY ILLUMINATED
PRINCESS STREET / WHITWORTH STREET, MANCHESTER, M1 3PE**

I write on behalf of the Applicant, Tesco Stores Ltd (Tesco), to submit an application for advertisement consent to install 2 no. built-up letter signs internally suspended and internally illuminated and 2 no. projecting signs externally illuminated.

Background to Applications

The site consists of a vacant retail unit located to the ground floor of a newly constructed 11 storey building, accommodating residential uses above. The predominant land use in the surrounding area is comprised largely of hospitality, commercial and residential uses, with various commercial and business outlets, hotels and residential blocks in close proximity to the site. These include, Whitworth Locke Civic Quarter Hotel, New Union Hotel, Peru Perdu restaurant and Star Chef Chinese restaurant. The site is part of the wider Manchester New Square flat complex approved under LPA ref. 114585/FO/2016. The site is located within the Whitworth Conservation Area but is not listed. There are various listed buildings in the neighbouring area, including Regency House, Lancaster House and Central House, all Grade II listed. The following available planning history is of relevance:

LPA ref. 114585/FO/2016 – Planning permission was granted on 9th March 2017 for “*Erection of three residential buildings (Building 1 comprising 15 storeys plus plant space, Building 2 comprising 11 storeys plus plant space and Building 3 comprising 14 storeys plus plant space) to provide 351 residential units (Use Class C3) 117 x 1 bed, 218 x 2 bed and 16 x 3 bed) al with ground floor commercial uses (Class A1 (Shop), A3 (Restaurant and Cafe) and D1 (Non Residential Institution Use- Art Gallery) and new public space with related access, servicing, landscaping and associated works with parking for 254 vehicles, 224 cycles within 4 levels of existing basement car park.*”

Planning permission was approved in 2017 for a mixed-use development with commercial space on the ground floor. Tesco can occupy the site without the need for planning permission and this application seeks the advertisement consent required to facilitate this occupation only.

This application is a re-submission of a previous advertisement consent application that was submitted on 15th December 2022 (LPA ref. 135753/AO/2022). This application incorporates the comments received from Jack Naven, planning officer at Manchester City Council, on the 9th February 2023. The following suggestions were given in order for officer's to support the application:

- Only one main fascia sign per elevation;
- Use of individual built-up letters suspended behind the glass of the shopfront only, and removal of the box fascias; and
- Projecting signs to be a maximum of 30 millimetres in width.

The proposals have been updated in order to align with these suggestions.

Proposed Works

Express advertisement consent is sought for install 2 no. new built-up letter signs internally suspended and internally illuminated and 2 no. projecting signs externally illuminated.

Upon the west elevation fronting Princess Street, 1 no. built-up letters sign internally suspended and illuminated and located centrally above the building entrance. The lettering will be aligned in height and placed within the existing proportions of the window glazing. Upon the south elevation fronting Whitworth Street, 1 no. built-up letters sign internally suspended and illuminated and located above the window glazing, approximately midway across frontage. The 2 no. projecting signs will be located on the west and south elevations, aligned in height with each other and the built-up letter signs coloured red, white and blue to read 'TESCO express'.

Additional information on the proposals is available on the proposed plans prepared by Tesco Feasibility Architecture (Drawings No.s 01_NEWS_01B, 03_NEWS_03C, 02_NEWS_02F, 02_NEWS_02E, 03_NEWS_03D, 02_NEWS_02G.)

Planning Policy Context

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case, the development plan includes Manchester's Core Strategy 2012 – 2027 (2012). Material considerations include the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (July 2021) and relevant supplementary planning documents, such as the Guide to Development in Manchester SPD (2007) and Extant Unitary Development Policies (UDP) (1995).

The following sections have been prepared to ensure that the development is not detrimental to the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area in accordance with policies EN1 (Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas), EN3 (Heritage), CC9 (Design and Heritage), SP1 (Spatial Principles) and DM1 (Development Management) of the Adopted Core Strategy for the City of Manchester, and saved policies DC14 (Shop Fronts and Related Signs), DC18.1 (Conservation Areas) and DC19.1 (Listed Buildings) of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester.

Core Strategy 2012 – 2027 (2012)

Policy EN1 of the Core Strategy 2012 – 2027 (2012) outlines general design principles for development proposals to adhere to. The policy requires development *“to follow the seven principles of urban design, as identified in national planning guidance ... Opportunities for good design to enhance the overall image of the City should be fully realised.”* Proposals must address *“the design principles, reinforces and enhances the local character of that part of the City and supports the achievement of the Core Strategy Strategic Objectives.”*

Policy EN3 considers the impact of development on heritage and the historic environment stating that *“New developments must be designed so as to support the Council in preserving or, where possible, enhancing the historic environment, the character, setting and accessibility of areas and buildings of acknowledged importance, including scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings, registered parks and gardens, conservation areas and archaeological remains.”*

Policy DM1 of the Core Strategy 2012 – 2027 (2012) sets out further general design guidance, stipulating that that all development should have regard to siting, layout, scale, form and materials. Development should be acceptable with respect to design, appearance and impact on existing character. The impact on amenity, including light and noise should be acceptable. Relevant to the proposals outlined in this covering letter, the policy states that:

“All development should have regard to the following specific issues for which more detailed guidance may be given within a supplementary planning document:-

- *Appropriate siting, layout, scale, form, massing, materials and detail.*
- *Impact on the surrounding areas in terms of the design, scale and appearance of the proposed development. Development should have regard to the character of the surrounding area.*
- *Effects on amenity, including privacy, light, noise, vibration, air quality, odours, litter, vermin, birds, road safety and traffic generation. This could also include proposals which would be sensitive to existing environmental conditions, such as noise.*
- *Accessibility: buildings and neighbourhoods fully accessible to disabled people, access to new development by sustainable transport modes.*
- *Design for health.”*

Policy CC2 of the Core Strategy 2012 – 2027 (2012) states that *“Proposals for new development will be assessed against relevant design policies in the Manchester LDF and in particular must respect existing built heritage and public realm. Proposals should also be developed in line with Policy CC8 (Change and Renewal) to ensure that development delivers the most attractive and usable shopping environment.”*

Policy CC8 states that *“Developments which make significant contributions to the City Centre’s role in terms of employment and retail growth or which improve the accessibility and legibility of the Centre will be supported, subject to the proposal’s impact on key aspects of the City’s heritage and character.”*

Policy CC9 states that *“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 ... New development must support the range of uses the Council expects in the City Centre and contribute to a coherent and integrated physical environment.”*

Extant Unitary Development Plan Policies

More specifically, a number of the Extant Unitary Development Policies provide increasingly detailed and relevant guidance on shopfront proposals. Policy DC14.1 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.”*

Extant Unitary Development Policy DC18.1 covers development proposals within conservation areas, stating that:

- a. *“The Council will seek to preserve and enhance the character of its designated conservation areas by carefully considering the following issues:*
 - i) *the relationship of new structures to neighbouring buildings and spaces;*
 - ii) *the effect of major changes to the appearance of existing buildings;*
 - iii) *the desirability of retaining existing features, such as boundary walls, gardens, trees, (including street trees);*
 - iv) *the effect of signs and advertisements;*
 - v) *any further guidance on specific areas which has been approved by the Council.*
- b. *The Council will not normally grant outline planning permission for development within Conservation Areas.*
- c. *Consent to demolish a building in a conservation area will be granted only where it can be shown that it is wholly beyond repair, incapable of reasonably beneficial use, or where its removal or replacement would benefit the appearance of character of the area.*
- d. *Where demolition is to be followed by redevelopment, demolition will be permitted only where there are approved detailed plans for that redevelopment and where the Council has been furnished with evidence that the development will be undertaken.*
- e. *Development proposals adjacent to Conservation Areas will be granted only where it can be shown that they will not harm the appearance or character of the area. This will include the protection of views into and out of Conservation Areas.”*

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

The NPPF is an additional material consideration. It is underpinned by a presumption in favour of sustainable development and in terms of that presumption, Paragraph 11 states that for decision taking this means *‘approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay...’*

Paragraph 81 goes on to advise that *‘planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth.’*

Planning Justification

Design and Heritage Considerations

The application seeks consent to display a number of advertisements in relation to the building's proposed use as a Tesco Express. The available planning history evidences that commercial uses were approved to the ground floor units of the Manchester New Square major residential development. On this basis, the display of signage is to be expected and is thus clearly acceptable in principle.

Firstly, it is notable that the site is located within a predominantly business and commercial location, benefiting from a retail character and thus the display of advertisements and signage is commonplace nearby. Furthermore, as noted in the planning history, the site already has approval as a commercial unit thus the principle of adverts in this location is already acceptable.

In line with Extant Unitary Development Policy DC14.1, the proposed signage is located and positioned appropriately in relation to the scale and proportions of the shopfront and has been designed and coloured suitably so that the signage does not detract from the local street character and surrounding area. The 2 no. built up letter signs fit precisely within the existing glazing proportions and are located at a safe and appropriate height. Thus, no alterations are to be made to the existing shopfront or glazing to accommodate the proposed advertisements. The 2 no. projecting signs will be sited to dedicated areas at the west ends of the west and south elevations. Overall, the number of proposed signs has been kept to a minimum. Therefore, the proposed signage will not result in a visual cluttering of the surrounding area and will maintain the character of both Princess Street and Whitworth Street.

The signage will display colours and lettering to reflect the branding of the intended occupier, Tesco Express. The lettering is sized appropriately and centrally placed, not running of the edges of the projecting signs. The advertisements will be formed of high-quality materials and well-maintained.

The proposed illumination to the acrylic lettering on the projecting sign will not create disturbances such as light glare or impact the amenity of nearby residents, including those living directly above the retail unit. The site is located within a well-lit commercial area and thus subtle internal illumination to the acrylic lettering is appropriate and highly acceptable. Furthermore, internal illumination has been granted previously for other advertisement applications in the Whitworth Conservation Area, including:

- LPA ref. 132072/AO/2021 at St James Buildings 79 Oxford Street Manchester M1 6FQ
- LPA ref. 123231/AO/2019 at 44 Canal Street Manchester M1 3WD
- LPA ref. 123264/AO/2019 at Fourth Floor 117 - 119 Portland Street Manchester M1 6FB
- LPA ref. 123436/AO/2019 at 8 Fairfield Street Manchester M1 3GF
- LPA ref. 121446/AO/2018 at 74 Princess Street Manchester M1 6JD
- LPA ref. 118758/AO/2018 at Regency House 36 Whitworth Street Manchester M1 3NR

Illumination is limited to the shop's name and lettering only, illuminating text reading 'Tesco Express'. Lastly, the site is of a modern architectural design and is not listed. Thus, internal illumination to the lettering of the proposed signage is considered acceptable.

Amenity and Public Safety

Paragraph 136 of the NPPF addresses advertisements, affirming the requirement for LPA's to determine applications for advertisement consent simply in the '*interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts*'. Amenity and public safety are therefore a recognised key consideration in the context of all advertisement proposals.

The paragraphs above detail the design considerations and thus it is not considered that there will be any impact on visual amenity. In addition to this, it should be noted that the illumination proposed is of a low level and thus it is not considered that the proposal will have any effect on light pollution or highway safety.

Additionally, the proposed signage is suitably raised above ground level in order to not be visually intrusive to passers-by, employees or visitors to the site. This will ensure that the signage remains unobtrusive and neither pedestrian, public, nor highways safety is compromised.

Summary and Conclusion

The advertisement consent proposal is considered acceptable in design, heritage, and amenity terms and in line with the Manchester Core Strategy 2012 – 2027 (2012) and the NPPF. These proposals form a revision of those previously submitted and incorporate advice received from planning officers.

It is therefore concluded that there are no policy grounds for objection to the application proposal and we respectfully request that the application is granted.

Contents of application

The following supporting documents have been submitted via the Planning Portal in support of the application:

- The relevant planning application fee;
- The completed application form;
- This covering letter;
- Site Location Plan (Drawing No. 01_NEWS_01B);
- Existing and proposed drawings prepared by Tesco Feasibility Architecture;
 - Existing Elevation 1 (Drawing No. 03_NEWS_03C);
 - Existing Plan (Drawing No. 02_NEWS_02F);
 - Existing Site Plan (Drawing No. 02_NEWS_02E);
 - Proposed Elevations (Drawing No. 03_NEWS_03D); and
 - Proposed Plan (Drawing No. 02_NEWS_02G).

I trust that you have all the information you require to validate this application. If, in the interim, you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact either Matthew Roe (matthew.roe@rokplanning.co.uk) or myself at this office. I look forward to your formal acknowledgement of the application.

Yours faithfully,

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