

6th June 2023

Manchester City Council
Planning
PO Box 532
Town Hall
Manchester
M60 2LA

Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007

Land at 176-182 Oldham Road, Manchester, M4 6BQ

Update of advertisement site to display a D-poster advertising display

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please find enclosed an application for advertisement consent to upgrade a long established illuminated advertising display to a modern digital format.

This proposal is part of an industry wide drive to rationalise, modernise and upgrade advertising infrastructure to meet modern requirements. The overall strategy is to improve the quality of sites whilst supporting multiple advertising campaigns and promoting digital infrastructure which can be adapted to wide range of uses.

The Applicant

The applicant, Wildstone Group, is an outdoor media infrastructure provider that owns and manages the land and equipment required for advertising. Their advertising assets are then rented to operators, who sell the advertising space to local and national companies for various advertising campaigns.

Outdoor Advertising is now widely recognised by lenders as a property class, allowing it to attract new investment and innovation. As an outdoor media infrastructure provider, Wildstone has invested in the development of hardware in the form of the “D-poster” panel, which is a high-quality ultra-thin display that offers a high level of control over brightness and reduced energy consumption. The control mechanisms in place enable D-posters to mimic traditional format displays during the day and ensure that illumination is muted to suitable levels at night to complement the ambient conditions.

Wildstone will always have a long-term investment in their sites regardless of who the tenant is, and will manage their assets to ensure that sites are well maintained and the displays are operating in line with planning conditions. Any problems arising from the sites can therefore be dealt with by a single controlling party.

As the largest owner of advertising assets in the Country, and landlord to all of the major operators, Wildstone are now also in a strong position to push best practice. Through partnership with the media operators and screen maintenance and monitoring contractors, new systems of control have already been established to help manage the operation of the displays.

Content is controlled remotely in real time from a Network Operation Centre (NOC) and sites are monitored remotely 24/7 to facilitate responsive maintenance. Engineers are located nationwide to be able to respond within 24 hours to any issues that cannot be dealt with remotely. Diagnostics software can report any small technical faults (e.g. a broken panel) so that a kill switch can turn the content to black until the engineer can reach the site.

The Proposal

The proposal seeks to replace a longstanding illuminated display on land at 176-182 Oldham Road which benefits from deemed consent under Class 13 of the Advertising Regulations, having been in situ for the preceding 10 years. The proposed D-poster will continue to appear as a freestanding display which presents static two-dimensional advertisements, albeit on sequential rotation rather than by a scrolling motion.

The proposed D-poster has reduced dimensions in comparison to the existing display, measuring 6m in width, 3m in height, 0.061m in depth, and 2.15m above ground level. The proposed display technology is also lightweight, durable, efficient, and can be easily erected with minimal engineering. The quality of the image produced will mimic that of traditional format displays (**Appendix 1**).

The proposed display will meet modern requirements and will be capable of displaying 6 advertising campaigns at a time, sequencing every ten seconds (i.e. six adverts per minute). The ability to carry multiple adverts will cater for the demand in this area and reduce the pressure for new locations.

The scheme seeks the standard temporary five year express to ensure that the future development potential of this site is not undermined.

Conditions

All advertisements are subject to the five standard conditions set out in the Regulations. The vast majority of digital advertisement consents now also operate within an established set of parameters that include controls over the level of luminance and the proposed speed and rate of change between adverts. These “industry standard” conditions have evolved over time in order to address common concerns relating to amenity and public safety.

Wildstone and the industry body “Outsmart” have been working to establish best practice for the control of displays both at night and during the day. The D-Poster displays operate with a system of threshold controls, timers and light sensors to ensure that the luminance never exceeds the Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP) guideline figures, with lower thresholds set on more sensitive sites.

The (ILP) have now introduced a set of model conditions which can be applied to advertisement consents going forwards. The model conditions are set out within Appendix 1 of Technical Note 5 “The Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements including Digital Displays PLG 05 23” (BIADD) and have been used as the basis for the proposed conditions set out in **Appendix 2** of this statement. The applicant has specified that illumination is limited to 100cd/m² at night, a 67% reduction below recommended levels, and that a curfew is implemented from 23:00hrs to 06:00hrs. The strict control over the proposed D-posters operation will ensure that it respects appearance of the street scene and does not impact upon the preservation or enhancement of the CA. Examples of sensitively illuminated D-posters are included below (**Figures 1-4**) As can be seen, daylight illumination is also carefully controlled so as not to appear overly bright and to respect the surrounding area.



Figures 1-4: Land at Willenhall Road, Wolverhampton, WV1 2HY. Land at Victoria Road, Fenton, Stoke on Trent, ST4 2HS. Gable at 469 – 473 Oldham Road, Rochdale, OL16 4TD. Gable at 42-44 Glasshouse Street, Nottingham, NG1 3LW.

The Site

The proposal site is located on land at 176-182 Oldham Road (A62) within a mixed character area that comprises commercial, local business, highway infrastructure, and residential land use. The site and immediate area is commercially orientated and backed by a large five storey mixed use building. In terms of the site and surrounding areas land use and appearance, the proposed replacement D-poster display would be entirely suitable development.

To the north of the site, beyond the dual carriageway, lie largescale commercial / industrial units and buildings including the Royal Mail sorting office. To the north east, aligning the Oldham Road lie further commercial / industrial built form, including a second hand car sales business and associated forecourt. A similar digital display lies at the junction between the Oldham Road, Butler Street, and Livesey street, on Council land. To the south west, also aligning the Oldham Road the commercial and industrial buildings continue, interspersed with locally oriented shops and business. Immediately adjacent to the south west lies a newly constructed mixed use five storey building which comprises ground floor commercial units with flats above (**Figures 5-6**). The building is of modern construction and reflects the modernisation of the street scene and mixed use / character of the wider environment. An imposing blank grey brick gable wall faces the site with no windows present. Residents are enclosed within the building with windows and doors setback from the building's façade facing Oldham Road.



Figure 5: Application site and surrounding area. The site is subservient to the surrounding built form and lies within a mixed use environment. The proposal, which would mimic the appearance of the existing unit, would not appear out of character with the existing street scene, or detract from the amenity of the surrounding area.



Figure 6: The massing of the newly constructed mixed use building (commercial with residential) is evident, dominating the skyline and immediate area. The replacement D-poster would appear subservient and have no material impact upon the appearance of the street scene.

The site hosts an existing 48-sheet advertising display which benefits from Class 13 deemed consent, having been in position for the preceding 10 years. The display sits in an offset and setback position from the Oldham Road and faces highway users travelling north east towards Failsworth. The site lies within an area where large format roadside advertising is common place, with both traditional and digital format displays at multiple locations aligning the Oldham Road, see **Figure 7** below.

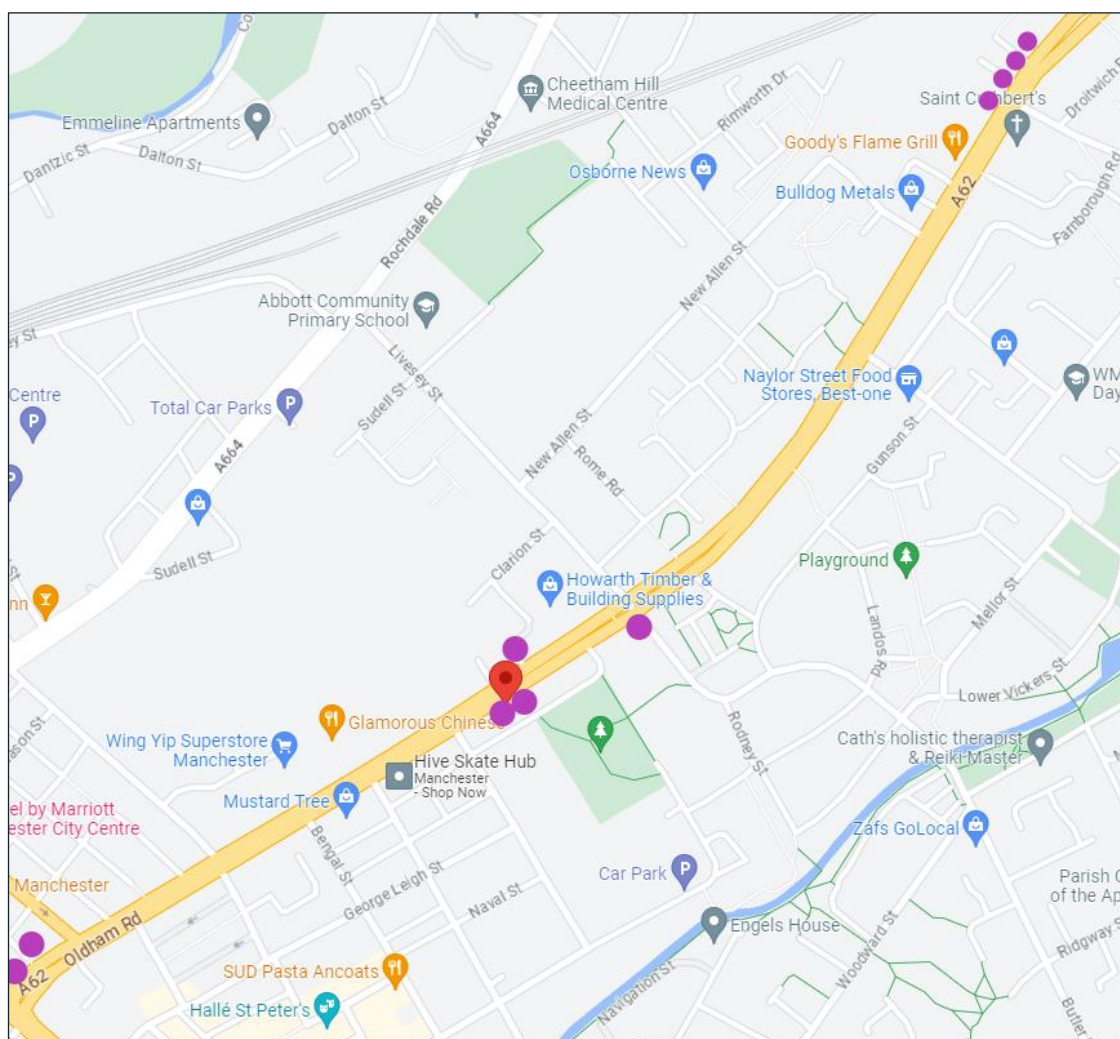


Figure 7: Map to show existing large format advertising displays including digital units aligning the Oldham Road. The site is identified by the red location marker. The purple dots represent existing advertisements.

Ancoats Conservation Area

The site is located on the boundary of the Ancoats Conservation Area (CA) (see **Figure 8** below), however, it does not interact with, and cannot be seen from a position of the built form which the CA seeks to preserve. The principle buildings within the CA are the large cotton spinning mills located adjacent to the Rochdale Canal and the nearby housing (of red brick construction). The Council's CA guidance identifies that much of the area's character derives from the size, mass, and construction of the older buildings (mills, associated housing and roads). Generally, these are built in red brick between two and six storeys high with pitched slate roofs with windows vertically proportioned and simply divided.

The application site's position on the edge of the CA is fortunate, there are no nearby Listed buildings in this part of the CA. The CA at this location is characterised by commercial / mixed use development fronting Oldham Road which does not possess the heritage significance as other area of the CA, or the key areas such as the Cotton Mills adjacent to the Rochdale Canal which the CA seeks to preserve and enhance. It is further noted the Oldham Road buildings are in poor condition and there is no consistent building line, style or massing.

Owing to its location, orientation, size, and massing, the proposed D-poster would not interact with the built form or the character features of the CA. Its positioning on the north eastern boundary ensures there would be a neutral impact upon the CA and would not prevent its preservation or enhancement. This is further discussed within amenity section of the letter below.

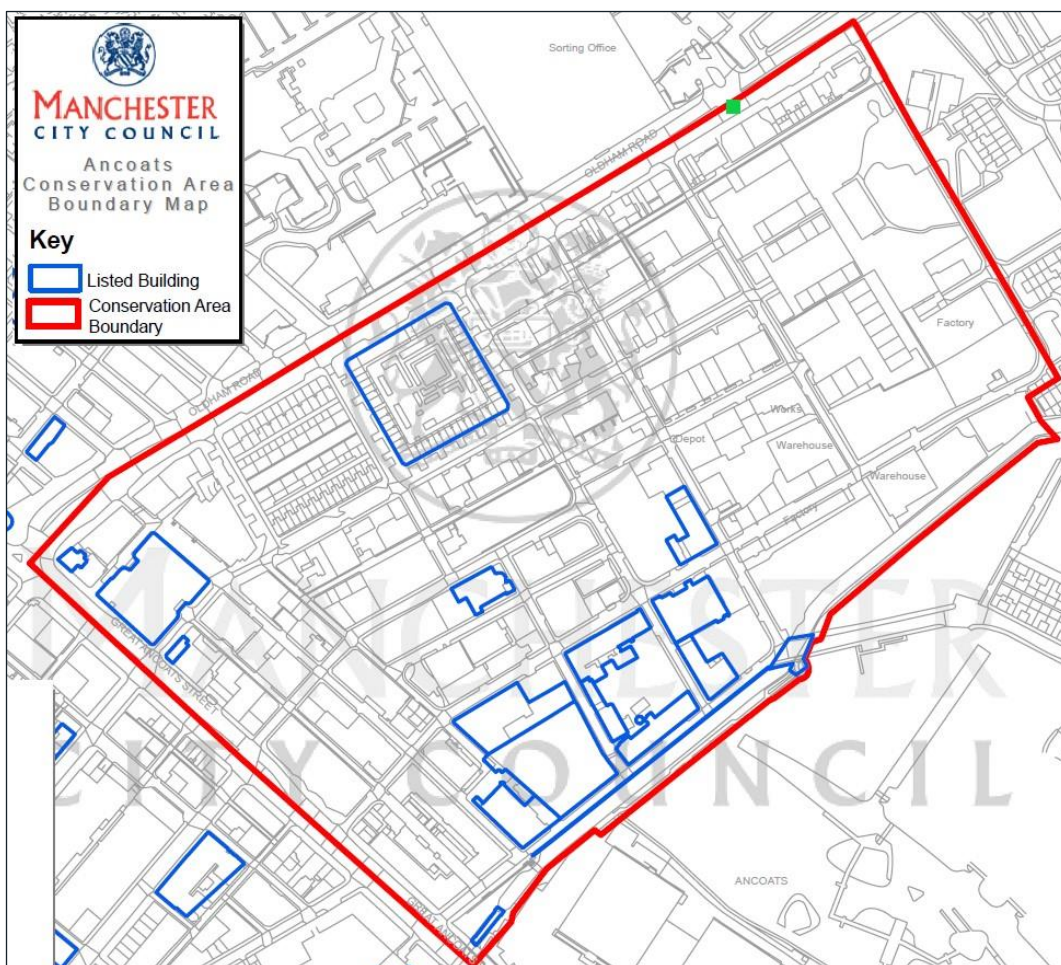


Figure 8: Ancoats Conservation Area. Site located at the green square on the north east boundary.

The proposal is supported by National policy and guidance for roadside advertisements which advocates locating advert displays in commercial and / or industrial areas adjacent to main highways.

The site lies within a Regional Centre (EC3) and is opposite an Economic Development Area (HC10 c). There are no Listed buildings, Scheduled Monuments, or Registered Parks and Gardens within the site's proximity.

Planning Policy

The legislative framework for the control of advertisements is contained within The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (the “Regulations”). Regulation 3 states that advertising should be controlled in the interest of amenity and public safety, taking into account the provisions of the development plan, in so far as they are material, in addition to any other relevant factors.

The National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF) sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. In accordance with Paragraph 136 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking into account cumulative impacts. As described in the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) the regime is a “lighter touch” than the system for obtaining planning permission for development. The NPPG also clarifies that a local plan does not have to contain advertisement policies and that if such policies are considered necessary to protect the unique character of a particular area, these should be evidence-based.

Planning Considerations

The near like for like replacement of the existing illuminated panel in terms of its size, scale, elevation and location, in combination with the proposal's strict control of illumination levels, will ensure the change in the visual impact of the site on the surroundings is positive. The impact of the proposal has been considered in amenity and public safety terms as follows:

Amenity

The proposal would not be detrimental in either an immediate or wider sense. It is not attached or adjacent to a Listed building, Scheduled Ancient Monument, or Registered Park and Garden.

The site lies on the north western boundary of the Ancoats Conservation Area (CA) which seeks to preserve industrial buildings to the south and south east of the site. As previously identified, the area to be protected is a rigid grid iron layout of streets and buildings which includes large cotton mills adjacent to the Rochdale Canal, housing for workers of the cotton mills and associated industries / practices, and warehousing, all being of red brick construction. These streets and buildings lie significantly beyond the site's influence and cannot be seen on approach to, or at the site location.

It is clear when examining the mapping for the CA boundary (**Figure 8** above) that it only follows the entire path of Oldham Road as a matter of simplicity and ease, and by default includes the site and other unrelated built form to the CA as a matter of course, rather than any relation to the conservation value of the built form. These buildings on the outskirts of the CA at the site location do not relate to the large cotton mills, the housing for workers of the mills, or the streets and buildings designed to accommodate the operation of the mills and supporting industry. They do not share the same construction (pitched slate roof, vertical styled windows, of 2-6 storeys) and instead, reflect the modern commercial / industrial units and those buildings on the opposite side of Oldham Road. It is therefore considered that whilst the site lies on the boundary of the CA, its development would have no impact upon the features the CA wishes to enhance or preserve.

The site faces away from the CA and is viewed separately, within the context of the Oldham Road street scene which is characterised by commercial and mixed use built form and highway infrastructure. The proposed D-poster, positioned on the boundary of the CA, would have a neutral impact and would not prevent its preservation or enhancement. The recent construction of the mixed use five storey building immediately adjacent to the site demonstrates that development of a much larger size, scale, and prominence within this

immediate location is acceptable, thus it can clearly be seen that a far smaller and less prominent proposal which cannot be seen from within the core area of the CA, and does not interact with the industrial buildings of the CA, would also be acceptable.

In terms of the proposal's impact upon the character and appearance of the street scene and surrounding area, it is considered that a D-poster would be entirely acceptable at the site location. The character of the site is mixed with commercial and industrial built form and existing advertising present without issue. The proposed D-poster would therefore successfully integrate and would not appear as an isolated, standalone, or incongruent feature. The newly constructed five storey mixed use building adjacent to the site ensures that the proposal would neither appear overly prominent or domineering.

Furthermore, the strict control over the proposal's operation (in accordance with the ILPs BIAD), its mimicry of traditional format advertising, and its significantly reduced (67%) illumination at night (100cd/m²) ensures that it would remain respectful of its surroundings at all times. This is further demonstrated by means of a recent appeal decision on an advertising site in Manchester, PINs confirmed that *"the quality of the static illuminated image which would be produced by the appeal proposal would adequately mimic a traditional externally illuminated poster board so as not to present as an alien feature"* (Appeal Ref: APP/B4215/Z/22/3303626: Land to the north of Thompson Street, M4 4BW). This is supported by **Appendix 1** which compares a D-poster display to a traditional format display. With appropriate controls in place, the digital advertisements fairly represent the traditional format advert and do not appear overly prominent or dominant by comparison. Moreover, the adaptive nature of D-poster displays and the limitations placed on maximum illumination levels, will reduce a D-poster's visibility in bright daylight conditions when compared to poster and vinyl based images.

It is also considered that the granting of express consent for a far more prominent digital display c. 140m north east of the site on Oldham Road at a site owned by the Council (**Figure 9-10** below), further evidences that digital displays are an accepted feature of the street scene, and contribute to its amenity improvement.



Figure 9: Aerial overview of proposed D-poster and digital display located on Council land.
Red Line: D-poster proposal. Blue Line: Digital display operating on Council land.



Figure 10: Digital advertising display granted express consent on Council land. Note how it appears far more prominent in its positioning and visibility when compared to the proposed D-poster.

There are no residential properties with views of the site, the mixed use building adjacent to the site has no windows within the gable wall facing the site. The windows and rooms facing the Oldham Road are enclosed within the building, set back from façade and have no view of the site. Thus, the site would not impact upon residential amenity.

The application site was subject to a previous application for a digital advertising display which was dismissed at appeal on 15 April 2018 under reference APP/B4215/Z/18/3195390. The extant proposal for a D-poster display is materially different to the previously dismissed digital display as is the environment in which the proposal would be experienced. As detailed below, the D-poster is of reduced elevation, size, bulk, and depth. Its construction and appearance is more refined, using high quality materials and a minimalistic, low key design. By comparison it would appear as a subservient feature of the street scene and would successfully integrate within the wider environs. It is considered that the reasons for dismissing the previous proposal are no longer relevant, and cannot be held as a material consideration when determining the extant proposal. Nevertheless, the applicant for completeness addresses the concerns raised by the Inspector below.

Table 1. The 'Reasons' for the Planning Inspectors dismissal of appeal APP/B4215/Z/18/3195390 and the applicant's response / comments. Appeal decision at **Appendix 3**.

Reason Paragraph 5
As the site lies within a conservation area, I am required to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing its character or appearance. From my observations, it is clear that the significance of the ACA lies in its commercial and industrial history and the influence this has had on the urban form, particularly its architecture and street pattern.
Applicant Response
As described above, whilst the site lies on the outer boundary of the conservation area it has no impact upon the wider preservation or enhancement of the industrial built form it seeks to protect. These features lie beyond the site's influence and adjacent to the Rochdale Canal (cotton mills, worker housing, supporting buildings and roads). The industrial buildings cannot be seen from the site of the proposal, nor can the proposal

be seen from the industrial buildings. The proposal would have no impact upon the significance of the industrial built form. The architecture and street pattern would be unaffected. It should be noted that the proposed D-poster will have a positive impact upon street scene within the CA. A bulky outdated backlit advertisement will be replaced with a low key digital format display which due to strict controls over illumination and operation, will be relatively muted in appearance. The D-posters curfew between 23:00 and 06:00 further ensures it positively contributes to the CA's appearance and is a significant improvement over the existing backlit display which operates throughout the night period. The proposal would therefore in effect, preserve and enhance this section of the CA.
Reason Paragraph 7
There would clearly be some similarities between what is currently in place and what is proposed. The advertising panel would be the same size. However, it would be a digital display, which would alter both its appearance and prominence in the street scene. There would also be a substantial brick panel underneath the display, which would also have an artificial brick surround. This would result in the advertisement being both wider and taller than at present. The depth of the advertisement would also increase.
Applicant Response
The proposed D-poster display is materially different to the prior proposal. It measures 6m x 3m to match the existing unit and the depth of the display unit is reduced to less than 0.1m. The outer framework surrounding the digital screen is slimmer and powder coated black or in neutral tones. There would be no 'brick panel' underneath the proposed D-poster, removing any sense of an 'artificial look'. The D-poster through design, calibration, monitoring and strict control over illumination levels would mimic the appearance of traditional poster advertisements, thus it would not appear overly prominent and would preserve and enhance the appearance of this part of the CA.
Reason Paragraph 7 Continued
The proposal would appear bulkier and have a more solid construction than the existing display. Coupled with the change to the nature of the display, the structure supporting the advertisement would result in a more prominent, bold and visually dominant feature in the street scene than what is currently in place. Thus there is a clear material difference between the proposal and existing advertisement.
Applicant Response Continued
The proposed D-poster by contrast would be significantly less bulky than the existing display, its construction would be low key and minimalistic as evidenced with drawing PA 04. The D-poster would be less dominant than the existing unit and introduce a smart commercial feature which respects the surrounding street scene; it would not appear over dominant or bold. It would contribute to the preservation and enhancement of the CA at the site location.
Reason Paragraph 8
When considering the sensitive nature of this location within the ACA, the bright, strident and overtly modern appearance of the display would not complement the more traditional style of buildings further along the road or the character of the conservation area in general.
Applicant Response
As previously identified, the site is not located within sensitive location in regards to the ACA. None of the industrial features or buildings protected by the ACA interact with the site at any point. The recent grant of

consent for the five storey mixed use building adjacent to the site demonstrates that modern development within this location is appropriate and unlikely to negatively impact the ACA. Furthermore, the proposed D-poster is a low key, minimalist, slimline feature that will integrate with the street scene of the surrounding area. Traditional style buildings further along the road would be unaffected by the proposal. The positive change to the site would enable the preservation and enhancement of the CA at this location.
Reason Paragraph 8 Continued
The appellant has argued that this part of the ACA differs to the core area closer to the city. However, the nature of nearby buildings within the ACA still reflects the more traditional commercial and industrial character. Rather than complementing the materials of nearby buildings, the use of brick panelling would only serve to make the advertisement more overt and emphasise the unsympathetic nature of the proposal to its immediate surroundings.
Applicant Response Continued
It is considered the above points are no longer valid as the character and appearance of buildings in proximity to the site has significantly changed. The proposal would be sighted in a location which does not relate to the 'traditional industrial character' of the CA's core built form (cotton mills, worker housing, redbrick industrial buildings, associated roads). The proposal would have no impact upon the CA's traditional industrial character. As previously stated, the materials are minimalist and low key and would not detract from the street scene or the CA. In fact, the improvement to the display of advertising at the site should have a positive impact upon the street scene and this section of the CA.
Reason Paragraph 9
Although there are car sales taking place on the land to rear of the site, this is a low profile and low intensity use. Visually, the advertisement would still take up a prominent location in a gap between buildings. This would only serve to increase the prominence and impact of the advertisement, particularly when approaching from the west. The incongruity of its overall appearance within the ACA would be particularly striking.
Applicant Response
The proposal would appear less prominent than the existing display, it would be reduced in elevation, depth, bulk, and overall size. Its positioning does not detract from the street scene and is long established; an accepted and expected feature as highway users pass the site location. The proposed display would continue to screen unsightly business signage and elevated shipping containers. In this regard, the proposal positively contributes to the amenity of the site and street scene. Furthermore, and in light of the recently constructed 5 storey mixed use building adjacent to the site, the proposed D-poster would appear as a subservient feature of the street scene, and would not have a material impact upon the preservation or enhancement of the ACA.
Reasons Paragraph 10
Irrespective of its commercial and main road nature, the site still lies in a sensitive location and what is proposed would fail to complement the character of the area.
Applicant Response
As demonstrated, the site does not lie in a sensitive location and the proposal would be an entirely appropriate within the mixed character environment that surrounds the site. The improvement to the site's appearance would positively contribute to the street and this section of the CA enabling its preservation and enhancement.

Public Safety

When assessing public safety, the key considerations are whether the location is appropriate (i.e. undemanding on the driver) and whether the level of illumination and the sequential change between advertisements is controlled to prevent distraction from the driving task. As the principle of an advertisement is already established at this location, the Council need only consider whether the proposed controls are sufficient to ensure that there is no additional distraction which would cause an unacceptable impact on highway safety. Should the Council's Highways department identify any reasons why the location might be challenging to drivers, the applicant would be open to discussing alternative controls. However, it should be noted that the proposed conditions are now well established as best practice and as such any change would be unusual and would need to be evidence based and specific to the location.

The proposal site is located adjacent to an uncomplicated section of the Oldham Road. On approach to, and at the site location the highway consists of two lanes which travel north east and two lanes which travel south west. Both sets of lanes are separated by a central reservation except for a small break which allows traffic to enter and exit the adjacent Royal Mail sorting depot. There are no traffic signals, pedestrian crossings, islands or complex junctions in proximity of the site, which is only viewed as traffic travels north east towards Failsworth.

The Oldham Road is relatively easy to navigate being straight, level, slowing moving, well illuminated, and with good forward visibility. The cognitive demand placed on road users as they approach the site is low, and there are no highway features which would require extra care to be taken. As such, drivers would be entirely capable of assimilating advertisements without endangering highway or public safety.

Furthermore, according to crashmap.co.uk there has been only one incident in proximity of the site over the past 5 years, indicating that this section of Oldham road is safe stretch of highway.

Conclusion

The proposal to update the advertising site to a D-poster digital display would not detract from the amenity or public safety of the site and surrounding area.

The applicant has demonstrated that the proposal would preserve the Ancoats Conservation Area, nor would it hinder any efforts to enhance the conservation area or redevelop the application site in the future. The proposed D-poster is located within a mixed character area where supporting commercial built form is evident. It is sighted such that it would have no impact upon the core industrial buildings, streets, and character that the conservation area seeks to protect (cotton mills, associated roads, worker housing supportive industrial redbrick buildings aligning the Rochdale canal) As highlighted within the Council's Ancoats conservation area guidance.

Furthermore, the site is dominated by the presence of a recently constructed five storey mixed use building which also dominates the immediate area. It is clear that the proposed D-poster would be subservient in its size, scale, appearance, prominence / dominance and would have no material impact upon the character of street scene or immediate area. The massing of the mixed use building further ensures that the proposed D-poster would have a neutral impact upon the Ancoats Conservation Area.

In terms of the street scene and amenity of the wider area, the proposed D-poster's slimline nature, reduced bulk, size, and elevation improve upon the existing display and prior proposal for a digital display at the site. Moreover, its simple, low key, minimalist design in conjunction with the strict control of illumination that allows

it to mimic the appearance of traditional content, provides assurance that it would appear complementary and a feature which exemplifies good design practice within a commercial location.

In terms of public safety, the adjacent Oldham Road is uncomplex and allows drivers ample opportunity to assimilate advertisements without losing sight of the road or traffic conditions ahead. Coupled with the strict controls over illumination and the presentation of advertisements (sequential update of images), highway users would be entirely capable of viewing content without endangering highway or public safety.

For these reasons and the positive benefits set out, it is respectfully considered that the application should be granted express consent.

Application Submission

In order to complete the application, please find attached the following documentation:

- Completed application forms
- Letter Statement (this letter);
 - Appendix 1: Digital & Paper Paste Comparison
 - Appendix 2: Recommended Planning Conditions
 - Appendix 3: Appeal Decision 3195390 – Digital Display Dismissed
- Architectural drawings including;
 - 3040_PA 01_Site Location Plan
 - 3040_PA 02_Existing Site Plan
 - 3040_PA 03_Proposed Site Plan
 - 3040_PA 04_Existing and Proposed Elevations

Additionally, we will arrange payment to the Council to cover the cost of the Advertisement Consent application.

I trust that the above is clear and we look forward to receiving notification that the application has been registered in due course. Should you have any queries in relation to any of the attached information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

Richard Page
Planner
Email: richard.page@wildstone.co.uk