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Date: 21/02/2023

Planning
Manchester City Council
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Dear Sir/Madam

PROPOSED INSTALLATION OF SIGNAGE AT 201 DEANS_GATE, MANCHESTER, M3 3NW

We enclose an application on behalf of our Client, Red Engine, for advertisement consent for the above proposed signage scheme, along with the requisite fee for £132.00.

Site and surroundings

No. 201 forms part of a modern complex of commercial units, within Deansgate, Manchester. The site lies on the junction of Deansgate with Jackson's Row. The site was previously operated as a retail premises, which traded as Evans Cycles, falling within Class E of the planning use classes order. The applicant intends to operate another Class E use of the premises. This requires the necessary rebranding of the premises with the proposed signage.

The application site entrance is located at street level, with the set-back section of the main frontage of the building facing Deansgate.

The application site is located in a mixed-use, commercial urban area, which include entertainment, hospitality and leisure uses. A range of very contemporary styles and sizes of buildings occupy the area, with the application site itself being of modern design and appearance.

The application premises are not listed but the site is located within the designated Deansgate Conservation Area.

Proposals

We are seeking permission for four new ground level signs to the building, as follows: 2 x internally-illuminated 'blade' projecting signs, one on the Deansgate elevation and one on the Jackson's Row elevation; one internally-illuminated over door sign over the main entrance doors and one internally illuminated neon sign adjacent to the main entrance doors. The proposed signage is detailed within the accompanying application drawings.

Assessment

The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (hereafter 'the regulations') require the Local Planning Authority to only consider two issues with regard to advertisements; namely the interests of amenity and public safety. This is also replicated within para 132

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of the NPPF (2019) which states that “Advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts.”

In considering the impact on amenity, the effect of the adverts on the appearance of the immediate neighbourhood, where residents or passers-by will be aware of the advertisement, must be taken into account. Given its positioning on Deansgate and Jackson’s Row, the signage will be clearly visible to pedestrians and other users of these routes. However, the proposed signage has been designed to sit within the rhythm of the existing, set-back, main Deansgate façade, as well as the Jackson’s Row elevation, and is in keeping with the existing commercial character of the wider host building and the local area in general. The signage proposals are thought to be visibly compatible with the contemporary appearance of the building’s frontages along these streets.

The proposals are considered to be supported by the requirements of the 2021 National Planning Policy Framework. The 2021 Framework reiterates the presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11) which requires development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan to be approved without delay. Where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless in conflict with the 2021 Framework. The 2021 Framework also requires LPAs to approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way and to work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible (all paragraph 38).

The 2021 Framework requires planning policies and decisions to help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development (paragraph 81).

The 2021 Framework requires planning policies and decisions to promote social interaction and opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other (paragraph 92). The 2021 Framework adds that in order to provide the social and recreational facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should plan positively for the provision and use of shared spaces and meeting places, such as public houses (paragraph 93).

The 2021 Framework states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development (paragraph 126). Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments function well and add to the overall quality of the area; are visually attractive; are sympathetic to local character and history, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change; and create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places (all paragraph 130). Specifically, with regard to advertisements, the 2021 Framework states that the control of advertisements 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 (all paragraph 136).

It is also considered that the signage proposals do not conflict with any relevant adopted local planning policy for this site.

The proposed signage scheme will be essentially ephemeral in nature and will not result in any significant or material impacts upon the character and appearance of the host building and it is considered to be appropriate in nature and scale.

Illumination of the proposed signage scheme is considered to be both reasonable and justified for the premises, given the trading hours and the nature of the applicant’s business, which will include evening and night-time trade.

The relevant considerations for determining proposals for advertisement consent comprise visual amenity and public safety only. Visual amenity is not only related to the aesthetics of the specific signage but must relate to visual considerations of the surrounding area, including any detriment caused by loss of investment to commercial buildings and their external appearance. The 2021 Framework is clear that the control of advertisements 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.

The signage proposal is an essential part of the applicant's strategy to attract custom to ensure the economic viability of this commercial property. The signage is necessary in order to help attract custom for the new venture and facilitate the continuing economic health of the beneficial use of these premises for its appropriate town centre use. The proposed signage scheme would help to facilitate the appropriate new use of these premises for a use which will continue to add to and enhance the vitality and pedestrian footfall within the local street scene.

The use of the application premises is also an important commercial facility, providing a highly accessible, commercial venue.

The proposed lighting will be discrete, and the size of the lettering is in proportion to the detailing elsewhere on the building, ensuring that there would be no harm in this regard. The materials and colours will also be compatible with the character of the host building and the wider street. With this in mind, the signage is not considered to look out of place and will not result in any harm to the character of the area.

In considering public safety, the impact of the signs on the safe use and operation of any form of traffic or transport, including the safety of pedestrians, must be taken into account. The behaviour of drivers of vehicles who would see the advertisement must be considered and regard made, to the possible confusion with traffic or other signals. The Institution of Lighting Engineers Technical Report Number 5: Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements (2001) provides guidance for maximum luminance and suggests that in city centre locations, with high levels of night time activity, illuminated areas up to 10m² should have a maximum luminance level of 600 cd/m². The adverts will be c250 cd/m² and therefore the brightness would not distract road users.

The advertisements would not cause harm to the safety of pedestrians. There are also no highway signs which the proposal may interfere with and the proposal is not considered to have an adverse impact on the safety and operation of the adjoining public thoroughfare.

For all of the reasons rehearsed above, the application proposals are not considered to result in any genuine, material implications to the visual amenity of the local area, the appearance of the host building or the character and appearance of the local street scene.

It is therefore considered that these signage proposals are actively supported by the 2021 National Planning Policy Framework and do not conflict with the general aims and aspirations of adopted local planning policy context.

In conclusion, it is considered that the proposed signage would not result in harm to visual amenity or public safety. These signage proposals will help ensure the continued economic use of this site and its continued function as an appropriate commercial use, which adds to the vitality and viability of the local area in general without compromising the visual amenities of the wider area.

In the above circumstances, it is hoped that officers can support these signage proposals.

If you need any clarification of the proposals or require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

201 Deansgate, Manchester, M3 3NW

Yours faithfully,

Bidwells LLP

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