

Planning

Growth & Development

Delegated officer report for planning application

Application no. 133737/AOH/2022

Date registered valid: 10 May 2022

Proposal: Installation of 48 sheet digital LED billboard to replace existing sign

Address: Hollinwood Avenue Adjacent To Moston Station, Manchester, M40 0JB

Ward(s): Charlestown Ward

Applicant: Network Rail, C/o Agent

Agent (if any): Mr Sam Beresford, Tetra Tech Quay West, Media City, Trafford Wharf Road, Manchester, M17 1HH

Case officer: Janine Renshaw-Livesey
Tel: 0161 234 4555
Email: janine.renshaw-livesey@manchester.gov.uk

Recommendation: Refuse

Date of recommendation: 5 July 2022

Application details

Type of application: Advertisement Hoardings Consent

Development type: Advertisements

Standard consultations:

Printed: 20 May 2022 Expired: 10 June 2022

Neighbour notifications

Printed: 20 May 2022 Expired: 10 June 2022

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: No

Tree Preservation Order: No

Description of site/building

The proposal site is located on the north side of Hollinwood Avenue which runs from west to east and currently supports 2no. static 48 panel billboards that positioned back-to-back, both are externally illuminated. The site surroundings are a mix of both commercial and residential in character. The closest residential properties are flats above a terrace of commercial units which front onto Hollinwood Avenue which are located directly to the east of the site's eastern facing billboard whilst to the west of the site the existing billboard faces the railway bridge and embankment and residential properties situated on Hollinwood Avenue and Bradshaw Fold Road.

The Proposal

The proposal seeks to replace static west facing poster display at Hollinwood Avenue with an internally illuminated sequential image display with multiple static advertisements on rotation.

The existing east facing billboard would be removed as part of the proposal. The screen dimensions for the new proposed digital sign are to be 6500mm width x 3500mm height. The screen would be installed at a suitable height above ground level.

The applicant confirmed that operation of the signage would be controlled by the following condition:

- o Maximum level of night time illuminance to be set to 300cd/m2;

- o Static images to be displayed only (no moving or flashing images);
- o Changes between adverts to take place instantly with no sequencing, fading, swiping or merging of images; and
- o Advertisements to change no more frequently than once every ten seconds.

Consultations & Notification Responses

Local businesses/adjoining occupiers - No comments received.

Highways Services - Make the following comments:

The proposed digital LED billboard is not located on and will not project over the adopted highway network. As such, a Projection over License will not be required.

The location of the digital LED billboard is not considered to generate any adverse impact for vehicles travelling along Hollinwood Avenue.

The proposed luminance of the sign is noted as 3000cd/m². This level of luminance exceeds the MCC recommended maximum of 600cd/m², therefore we do not accept the proposed luminance.

Given that the digital LED billboard will be located on private land, permissions will be required from the landowner.

Detail is sought on proposed installation arrangements from a highways perspective. The applicant is advised that any requirements for temporary traffic management arrangements will need discussion and agreement with the council's Highways Applications and Network Resilience teams via Contact Manchester (Tel. 0161 234 5004).

It is recommended that the following planning condition should be applied:-

Condition

(a) No individual advertisements displayed on the LED panel shall contain moving images, animation, video or full motion images or any images that resemble road signs, traffic lights or traffic signs.

(b) No individual advertisements shall be displayed for duration of less than 10 seconds.

(c) Controls shall be in place to ensure smooth uninterrupted transition of images displayed on the panel.

(d) The display panel shall be fitted with a light sensor, designed to adjust the brightness to changes in ambient light levels.

(e) A mechanism shall be in place so that if the installation breaks down, it defaults to a black screen to avoid any flashing error messages or pixilation.

(f) The maximum luminance level of the advertisements displayed on the panel shall not exceed 300 cd/m² during non-daylight hours / inclement weather.

Or for signs less than 10m²

(f) The maximum luminance level of the advertisements displayed on the panel should not exceed 600 cd/m² during non-daylight/ inclement weather.

Environmental health- objected to the proposal due to the location of the proposed illuminated digital screens will lead to unacceptable impact on the amenity of nearby residents due to light overspill and glare especially during the hours of darkness. More specifically, our concerns are that due to the size of the screen and the nature of the vivid illumination which is typical of the digital screen format, the proposals will introduce a new light source which will have a detrimental effect on the living quality and amenity of nearby receptors at all times of day but in particular during the hours of darkness.

The proposed location is not suitable for digitally illuminated screens of this size and type due to the proximity of residential properties. The light overspill and glare, along with the increase in bright digital style lighting from the display will be clearly noticeable to the occupiers of the residential properties, especially later in the evening and night time hours. The proposals seek to introduce a new vivid light source to the location which is significantly different to the type of non illuminated poster display that is already present which the application is proposing to replace. This type of bright, vivid illumination even with the limits proposed and at its lowest setting will still be noticeable to the occupiers of the properties facing the display and it will negatively impact on their amenity

Network Rail - Have no comments

Issues

Policy

National Planning Policy Framework - This Framework came into effect on 27th March 2012 and was amended and updated in July 2021. It sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It defines the government's requirements for the planning system 'only to the extent that it is relevant, proportionate and necessary to do so'. It provides a mechanism through 'which local people and their accountable councils can produce their own distinctive local and neighbourhood plans, which reflect the needs and priorities of their communities'.

The Framework re-iterates that planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The statutory status of the development plan remains as the starting point for decision making. However, paragraph 11 states that 'at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development' and, in 'decision-taking', this means that development proposals should accord with the development plan should be approved without delay unless: any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole or specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.

National Policy Framework has been related to the proposed development, with particular emphasis given to the following:

Core planning principles - Within the overarching roles that the planning system ought to play, a set of core land-use planning principles should underpin both plan making and decision-taking with the following specific policies being particularly relevant to the proposed development:

Chapter 12 Achieving well-designed places

Chapter 12 'Achieving Well Designed Places' states that 'the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this (paragraph 126).

Paragraph 136 states that the quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed. A separate consent process within the planning system controls the display of advertisements, which 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.

In this case, it is not considered that the development would positively contribute to the streetscene and would harmfully affect the visual amenity of the area. It is considered that the nature of LED signage would materially and harmfully change the relationship of the advertisement hoarding to the streetscene. The incorporation of changing images within the display would also give the signage far greater prominence and would be a visually obtrusive addition to the location. It is therefore considered that the proposal would not accord with the NPPF.

Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 - States that:

- (1) 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 above requirements have been taken into account in the assessment of the advertisement consent application. Whilst it is considered that the application cannot be refused on the basis of public safety, the proposal, in the view of the LPA, fails to accord with its development plan as it is unacceptable in terms of visual impact and excessive prominence within the street.

The Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2012 -2027 ("the Core Strategy") was adopted by the City Council on 11th July 2012. It is the key document in Manchester's Local Development Framework. The Core Strategy replaces significant elements of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) as the document that sets out the long term strategic planning policies for Manchester's future development.

A number of UDP policies have been saved until replaced by further development plan documents to accompany the Core Strategy. Planning applications in Manchester must be decided in accordance with the Core Strategy, saved UDP policies and other Local Development Documents.

Policy SP1 identifies the City Council's Core Development Principles and states that development in all parts of the City should:-

Make a positive contribution to neighbourhoods of choice including:-

- Creating well designed places that enhance or create character
- Making a positive contribution to the health, safety and wellbeing of residents
- Considering the needs of all members of the community regardless of age, gender, disability, sexuality, religion, culture, ethnicity or income.
- Protect and enhance the built and natural environment

Minimise emissions, ensure efficient use of natural resources and reuse previously developed land wherever possible.

Improve access to jobs, services, education and open space by being located to reduce the need to travel and provide good access to sustainable transport provision.

In this case, it is considered that the proposal would be harmful to the visual amenities of the area and the character of the built environment. The proposed advertisement signage would impact upon the immediate streetscene and would be visible from an adjacent busy main road. The resulting impact is considered to be harmful and contrary to policy SP1.

Policy EN1 relates to Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas. It states that all development in Manchester will be expected to follow the seven principles of urban design, as identified in national planning guidance and have regard to the strategic character area in which the development is located. Opportunities for good design to enhance the overall image of the City should be fully realised, particularly on major radial and orbital road and rail routes.

The design of the proposed advertisement signage is typical for this form of advertisement. However, as stated, the nature of LED signage, including the incorporation of changing images would materially and harmfully change the relationship of the advertisement display to the streetscene. It is therefore considered that the proposed advertising structure would fail to positively contribute to urban design in the locality and the quality of the streetscene and would thereby be contrary to policy EN1

Policy DM 1 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 and 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.
- Community safety and crime prevention.
- Design for health.
- Adequacy of internal accommodation and external amenity space.
- Refuse storage and collection.
- Vehicular access and car parking.
- Effects relating to biodiversity, landscape, archaeological or built heritage.
- Green Infrastructure including open space, both public and private.
- Flood risk and drainage.

- Existing or proposed hazardous installation.

In this case, the prominence of the proposed advertisement would adversely affect the character and composition of the streetscene. It is also considered that the signage and its operation would be harmful to the visual amenity of pedestrians and drivers travelling along the adjoining main route.

Unitary Development Plan - saved policies

The site is unallocated within the Manchester City Councils Unitary Development Plan Development Plan (adopted 1995).

Saved Policy E3.3 (Environmental Improvement and Protection) is relevant as the application site is situated on a main radial route. Policy E3.3 confirms the council will upgrade the appearance of the city's major radial and orbital roads and rail routes. It is not considered that proposal would contribute positively to the streetscene along on the adjacent section of Hyde Road (a radial route to and from the city centre), as it would lead to the introduction of highly prominent and obtrusive advertising hoarding that would not contribute positively to the character of the streetscene.

The general policy for advertisement hoardings is saved UDP policy DC15.

DC15.1 The Advertisement Regulations require that applications for advertisements be considered only in the interests of amenity and public safety. In determining such applications, for free standing hoardings and wall mounted posters the council will take account of the following matters in assessing these interests:

- a) the general location of the proposed development and the effect on visual amenity
- b) the scope for posters and hoardings to make a positive contribution to the locality
- c) the design of the structures, and the relationship with any premises on which they are located
- d) the effect of the proposal on permanent redevelopment of the land
- e) public safety resulting from the positioning of the design of the display
- f) the ease with which the structure is capable of being satisfactorily maintained
- g) the use of hoardings to screen vacant sites or buildings during development, or where development is known to be imminent
- h) the use of hoardings as part of a scheme to prevent access by unauthorised users onto land pending development
- i) the use of hoardings to disguise or improve the appearance of unsightly features, operations or activities
- j) the number of advertisements in the locality and their cumulative effect on visual amenity

DC15.2 In assessing the interests of amenity and safety the council will take account of the following criteria:

- a) developments of this kind should not harm the character of architectural features of a building, nor interfere with its proper use
- b) they should be in scale with the locality and relate properly to the site on which they stand
- c) they should be unobtrusive and should not intrude into residential neighbourhoods and areas of high amenity value
- d) a proposal which would be injurious to public safety or adversely effect the flow of traffic, by reason of its position, size or design will not be permitted

DC15.3 Where having regard to the preceding policies, the council considers the proposed development to be acceptable in principle, conditions may be imposed in order to protect safety and amenity.

For the reasons previously outlined, the proposals would fail to be positively related to the surrounding context. As stated, the prominence of proposed advertisement display and incorporation of changing images would materially affect the character of the streetscene. On this basis it is considered that the proposal would be contrary to saved policy DC15 of the UDP.

Issues

Principle

Whilst there are no record of advertisement consent for an illuminated 48 sheet advertisement display, the submitted supporting statement indicates that the site has supported a static advertisement in this location for over 10 years. The proposed development, however, would involve the replacement of a static illuminated existing advertisement display, with a digital sign in a same location, and consideration must be given to the impact due to the replacement of static images, with changing displays.

Whilst an externally illuminated advertisement has been in place in a similar the location on the site for some time, the proposal would be distinctly different in terms of the digital features. It is considered that the intermittent changing of the illuminated display would significantly attract attention to the advertisement display, accentuating its visual prominence. This would result in a prominent, incongruous form of advertising which would appear as a harmful and dominating feature in the street scene.

The principle of the proposed advertisement display is considered to be unacceptable.

Design and Impact on the street scene

The proposed signage would be viewed contextually with the bridge structure and embankment associated with the rail line to the front of the proposed signage, and the open character along Hollinwood Avenue and the bridge, where the display would be viewed would appear to be an over-dominant and obtrusive feature within the street scene, overwhelming to pedestrians and presenting a poor visual relationship to the building behind due to its elevated position results in shrouding a large area of the gable and facades of the properties that lie behind.

As such the proposed display to the north of Hollinwood Avenue would thereby be related to an internally illuminated sign with changing images, which would be highly prominent in the street scene, on a main route, and be highly visible for a distance to traffic travelling east, due to the open nature of the adjacent site. Whilst the height and display of the replacement signage would replace the existing static externally illuminated 48 sheet advertisement, it is considered that the nature of the display involving digital and changeable images would give rise to a significant change in visual terms, thereby adversely affect the character of the street scene.

Residential amenity - The only residential properties in the immediate vicinity of the site, are 380 Hollinwood Avenue and the properties that back onto site 2 and 4 Bradshaw Fold Road on the opposite site of the bridge. Environmental Health raised concerns regarding the detrimental visual impact for the occupiers of these properties due to the means of illuminated and sequential images. However, given the distance away the properties are from the application site. It is considered that the intermittent nature and the illumination would not give rise to cause excessive disamenity to residents.

Public Safety - As the principle of an advertisement display has already been established at this location, consideration has been given in regard as to whether there is any additional distraction arising from the proposed digital sign which would cause an unacceptable impact on highway safety.

Highway Services have confirmed that the siting of the proposed signage is acceptable, in highway and operational terms, subject to controls in regard to the level of luminance proposed; controls regarding moving images, animation, video or full motion images or any images that resemble road signs, traffic lights or traffic signs; controls relating to the duration of each individual advertisement display, together with measures to ensure smooth uninterrupted transition of images displayed on the panel; the use of light sensors; and a mechanism in place so that if the installation breaks down, it defaults to a black screen to avoid any flashing error messages or pixilation.

However, it is not considered that these operational arrangements, and controls in regard to luminance, would overcome concerns regarding the harmful impact of the proposed signage on visual amenity.

Conclusion - The proposed advertising display would by virtue of its location, design, appearance and level of luminance, have a detrimental impact on visual amenity thereby constituting unduly obtrusive, incongruous and over dominant feature within the streetscene. The proposal would therefore have an unacceptable and detrimental impact on the amenity and character of the area contrary to government guidance contained in chapter 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework, the Core Strategy for the City of Manchester in particular policies EN1 (Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas), DM1 (Development Management) and SP1 (Spatial Principles) and saved policies E3.3 (Environmental Improvement and Protection), DC15.1 and DC15.2 (Advertisements, Hoardings and Posters).

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: Refuse

Article 35 Declaration

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

1) The proposed internally illuminated sequential LED display would further emphasise the presence of advertising material on this site. By virtue of its size, character and siting, the changeable content of the sign would be an over-dominant and obtrusive feature within the street scene, overwhelming to pedestrians and presenting a poor visual relationship to the building behind. The proposal would therefore have an unacceptable and detrimental impact on the amenity of the area and be contrary to government guidance contained in chapter 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework, the Core Strategy for the City of Manchester in particular policies EN1 (Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas), DM1 (Development Management) and SP1 (Spatial Principles) and saved policies E3.3 (Environmental Improvement and Protection), DC15.1 and DC15.2 (Advertisements, Hoardings and Posters) of the Unitary Development Plan.

Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified

Highway Services
Environmental Health
Network Rail

339 Hollinwood Avenue, Manchester, M40 0JA
337 Hollinwood Avenue, Manchester, M40 0JA
335 Hollinwood Avenue, Manchester, M40 0JA
354 Hollinwood Avenue, Manchester, M40 0JA
356 Hollinwood Avenue, Manchester, M40 0JA
358 Hollinwood Avenue, Manchester, M40 0JA
360 Hollinwood Avenue, Manchester, M40 0JA
362 Hollinwood Avenue, Manchester, M40 0JA

Appendix 2 – Planning constraints

Article 4 Direction - Removal Of PD Rights Change Of Use From Class C3 To Class C4
Aircraft Safeguarding Zone - Aircraft Safeguarding - Not Affected
Coal Authority - Development Low Risk - Name: DEVELOPMENT_LOW_RISK_AREA
Coal Authority - Surface Coal Resources - Name: Coal bearing strata at surface
Area Team Boundary - Name: NORTH