

Planning

Growth & Development

Delegated officer report for planning application

Application no. 145097/AOH/2026

Date registered valid: 3 February 2026

Proposal: Installation of 2no. digital 75-inch LCD display screens in association with replacement Street Hub unit.

Address: Outside No. 20 Fountain Street, Manchester, M2 3AW

Ward(s): Deansgate Ward

Applicant: Mr Verity Cheyne BT Telecommunications PLC

Agent (if any): Tom Hayes

Case officer: Lea Joseph
Tel: 0161 227 3644
Email: lea.joseph@manchester.gov.uk

Recommendation: **Refuse**

Date of recommendation: **26 March 2026**

Application details

Type of application: Advertisement Hoardings Consent

Development type: Advertisements

Date of site visit: 13 February 2026

Standard consultations:

Printed: 10 February 2026 Expired: 3 March 2026

Neighbour notifications

Printed: 10 February 2026 Expired: 3 March 2026

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 and area

Listed building: Not applicable

Conservation area: Multiple

Tree Preservation Order:

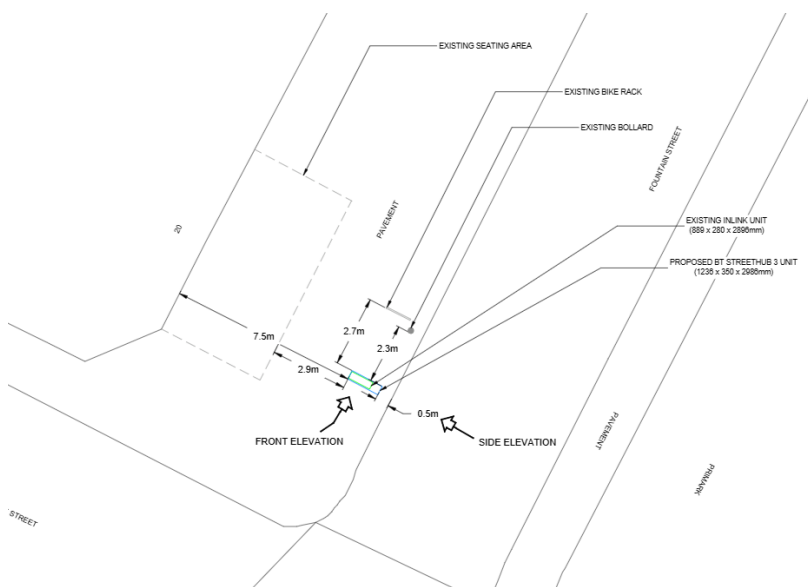
The application pertains to an area of pavement outside of no.20 Fountain Street. The application site lies between Marble Street and Market Street.

The site lies between the Central Business District and the Retail Core of Manchester, two sensitive areas with high levels of footfall. The application site is bordered by Phoenix Street and Marble Street. The site is within the Upper King Street Conservation Area. Though not within the setting of the application site, the area includes the Grade II Listed Rylands Building at no. 109-127 Market Street, the Grade II* Estate Exchange at 46 Fountain Street, and the Grade II* former Westminster Bank building on York Street. There is a strong mix of historic uses, and new office buildings that form the Central Business District. Market Street intersects with Fountain Street, and constitutes the core of Manchester's Retail Area, seeing high levels of footfall. The non-designated former Lewis's Buildings is adjacent to the site.



Description of development

Advertisement consent is sought for the replacement of 2no. digital 75-inch LCD display screens as part of the erection of a new Street Hub 3 Unit.



Planning History

118436/AOH/2017 | Installation of 2 no. digital LED display screens to associated InLink (related planning application ref no 118435). (Approved June 2018)

145096/FO/2026 | Installation of replacement Street Hub unit. (Refused in conjunction with this application).

Relevant nearby planning history:

126251/FO/2020 | Use of part of pavement in front of building on Fountain Street as external seating area in association with drinking establishment within ground floor of building, together with installation of retractable awning. Seating area to be demarcated by removable planters with associated perspex screens. (Approved December 2020)

Consultations & Notification Responses

Environmental Health – No objections. If approved, conditions should be attached to control lighting and display on the unit's screen, a Noise Management Plan should be submitted, and a maintenance plan would also be required for review.

Highway Services – No formal objection. Highways noted the MCC goal of removing barriers on footpaths, improving accessibility and pedestrian safety and encouraging active travel. The service expressed concerns about the proposed advertisement totem's increased footprint negatively impacting the accessibility, legibility and inclusivity of walking routes. This area accommodates high levels of pedestrian movement and there is other street furniture in the vicinity, since the pedestrianisation of the adjacent Market Street, Fountain Street has experienced an increase in footfall. During Christmas Markets the street can be used as 'spill out' for vendors, the proposed hoarding would harm the accessibility of the footpath during these congested periods. The proposed unit would not contribute to the rationalisation of street clutter but would instead exacerbate issues associated with street clutter.

Policy

Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007

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.

Manchester Core Strategy (2012-2027)

DM1 Development Management

SP1 Spatial Principles

EN1 Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas

EN3 Heritage

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan

JP-P1 Sustainable Places

JP-P2 Heritage

Saved Unitary Development Plan Policies

DC15 Advertisements, Hoardings and Posters

DC18 Conservation Areas

DC22 Footpath Protection

Other Material Considerations:

National Planning Policy Framework

Chapter 12 Achieving well-designed places

Chapter 16 Conserving the historic environment

Paragraph 141 states:

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.

Draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2025)

The government has published a consultation National Planning Policy Framework which is intended to improve housebuilding rates through a clearer, more predictable and faster policy basis for decision and plan making.

Whilst this is a draft NPPF for consultation it is considered that the development proposals are in accordance with the general thrust of policy contained within it. As set out in the printed report no adverse impacts have been identified through consideration of the application proposals that would outweigh a positive decision in this instance.

Issues

Visual Amenity

Policy DM1 requires consideration of siting, scale materials, form, and details in all development proposals. The policy also requires consideration of development on the surrounding area, requiring that development have 'regard to the character of the surrounding area'.

Policy SP1 requires that development 'enhance or create character' and make a positive contribution to the 'health, safety and wellbeing of residents'. The change in the proposed unit's appearance is not considered to reflect the character of the area, nor to enhance it. The proposed Street Hub Unit would be out of place in the existing area. Directly adjacent to the application site is No.18-20 Fountain Street, a brown concrete building with a green wall. The brutalist form, and natural appearance lent by the planting on the facade would contrast with the dark black plinth structure proposed on the site.



Image 1: No.18-20 Fountain Street

The larger advertisement screen which would increase in width from 0.64m x 1.14m to 0.95m x 1.67m would stand out in the street scene where very little advertising is present.

The existing grey InLink unit, has a smaller appearance and a subtle colouration. The proposed has a larger advertisement, screen and a starker appearance, it would stand out in the walking environment and would fail to cohere with the existing area character. The proposed height would lead to an imposing appearance when travelling in either direction along Fountain Street. This is further exemplified by two nearby historic buildings.

Chapter 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework requires that when assessing design quality Local Planning Authorities consider 'will function well and add to the overall quality of the area', 'are visually attractive' and 'are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting'. Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework includes local assets (non-designated heritage assets) in its guidance and states encourage the sustainment and enhancement of the significance of heritage assets and the importance of development's to positively contribute to local character and distinctiveness.

The Primark Building, formerly Lewis's, which is parallel to the application site was constructed in 1877 with an extension completed in 1885. The building was designed by Horton and Bridgeford, who designed building throughout the North East including the Grade II Listed Woolton Baths in Liverpool. This non-designated heritage asset brings value to the area, it's scale and massing dominates the intersections of Market Street, Mosley Street and Fountain Street. The first, second and third floors are clad in stone; at ground floor the façade is finished in black marble. The structure was designed in a Baroque style, at Fountain Street various Baroque details can be observed including ornamentation across the façade, a meander (*meandros*) pattern between the ground and first floors, decorative aedicules above first floor windows, decorative pilasters at fourth floor level and trabeation between the third and fourth storey.



Image 2: Primark building, 1960 (Manchester Archives); Image 3: Application site in foreground and non-designated heritage asset in background. Image 4: Former Lewis's building from Fountain Street. (Present day)

At 16 Fountain Street, The Shakespeare public house is located near to the site. One of Manchester's oldest public houses, the structure originally built in 1656 in Chester, in 1928 the

building was disassembled and rebuilt on Fountain Street. The pub has a distinct Tudor appearance, with a 15th century timber frame, and wooden decoration at the upper storeys. At ground floor decorative pilasters and ornamentation are present on the primary building façade. Adjacent to this is a white stone building in the Italian palazzo style.



Image 5: Shakespeare's Public House, 1961(Manchester Archives) Image 6: Shakespeare's Public House, present day. Image 7: No.14 Fountain Street

Modern buildings within the street scene include 11 Fountain Street, composed of white cladding, and the red brick of 35 Fountain Street, which is covered with scaffolding at the present.

These contextual details illustrate the historic and modern materiality of the site, and the appearance and details that provide character within this street scape. The proposed totem was designed to be implemented across the UK, rather than in this specific locality. It's increased width and large black structure would fail to respond positively to the existing context thereby harming the visual amenity of the wider area. The proposed totem does not reflect the character of the area, nor does it positively respond to the sense of place established by the historic environment. For these reasons the development would fail to adhere to the requirements of policies SP1, DM1, EN1, JP-P1 and JP-P2.

The development would be sited within the Upper King Street Conservation Area, the historic character and materials of the area include stone, and timber. The increased scale of the unit would be detrimental to the appearance of the two sensitive historic buildings in close proximity, the modern dark, powder coated, bulky appearance of the proposed hoarding does not enhance or preserve the existing character of the area, and it's appearance would appear overly dominant amongst the historic buildings detailed above. The development is therefore considered to be contrary to policies DC18, JP-P2, and EN3.

Public Safety

Environmental Health services have confirmed that the potential amenity or safety impacts of the unit could be effectively managed with conditions. Highway services have not raised any significant concerns with the totem's impact on pedestrian accessibility, and they have not provided any comments in relation to the increase of the digital display. Highway Services have recommended a condition could be secured that would see the luminance level of the advertisement limited to 600cd/m² during hours of darkness and inclement weather. Additionally, there would be other conditions that would control the intervals between advertisements, as well as prohibit moving advertisements, the proposed development would not pose any risk to public safety.

Conclusion

In appearance, the larger, darker modern totem proposed would conflict with the existing visual character of the site, the hoarding would be overly dominant in it's scale to the detriment of the visual amenity of the area thereby conflicting with the provisions of Core Strategy policies SP1, DM1, and EN3, Places for Everyone policies JP-P1 and JP-P2, and Saved Unitary Development Plan policies DC15 and DC18.

Other Legislative Requirements Equality Act 2010

Section 149 (Public Sector Equality Duty) of the Equality Act 2010 requires due regard to the need to: Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act and; Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The Equality Duty does not impose a

legal requirement to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment. Compliance with the Equality Duty involves consciously thinking about the aims of the Equality Duty as part of the process of decision-making.

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

Reasons for recommendation to refuse

1. The proposed digital advertising display, by virtue of its siting, scale, appearance, and consistent rotation of static advertisement images, would form an overly dominant and visually obtrusive feature within the street scene and within the setting of the nearby non-designated heritage assets. The advertisement would also contribute to advertisement clutter in a sensitive location in the city centre, as well as undermine current efforts to de-clutter the City Centre environment. The proposal would therefore result in an unduly harmful impact on the visual amenity of the area and the character of the Upper King Street Conservation Area. The advertisement is therefore contrary to the provisions of Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007, policies JP-P1 and JP-P2 of Places for Everyone Plan, policies SP1, EN3 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy (2012), saved policies DC15.1, DC15.2, DC19 and DC22 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester (1995), sections 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework, and the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified

Environmental Health
Highway Services

BETFRED, 18 Fountain Street, Manchester, M2 2AA
35 Fountain Street, Manchester, M2 2AN
36 Fountain Street, Manchester, M2 2BE
106 - 122 Market Street, Manchester, M1 1WA

Appendix 2 – Planning constraints

Article 4 Direction - City Centre PD Restriction - Class B1(a) To C3
Article 4 Direction - Removal Of PD Rights Change Of Use From Class C3 To Class C4
Aircraft Safeguarding Zone - Aircraft Safeguarding Zone - All Exceeding 90M
Coal Authority - Development Low Risk - Name: DEVELOPMENT_LOW_RISK_AREA
Conservation Area - Multiple
Area Team Boundary - Name: CENTRAL