

Planning

Growth & Development

Delegated officer report for planning application

Application no. 145186/AO/2026

Date registered valid: 16 February 2026

Proposal: Amendments to 2no. existing digital advertisement boards.

Address: Manchester Central Convention Complex, Windmill Street,
Manchester, M2 3GX

Ward(s): Deansgate Ward

Applicant: Mr Duncan Leavitt Manchester Central Convention Complex

Agent (if any): Taylor Design Architects Ltd

Case officer: Emily Booth
Tel: 0161 234 4193
Email: emily.booth@manchester.gov.uk

Recommendation: Approve

Date of recommendation: 10 April 2026

Application details

Type of application: Advertisement Consent

Development type: Advertisements

Date of site visit: 3 March 2026

Standard consultations:

Printed: 19 February 2026 Expired: 12 March 2026

Neighbour notifications

Printed: 19 February 2026 Expired: 12 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/building

Listed building: Grade II*

Conservation area: Not applicable

Tree Preservation Order: Not applicable

Description of building

It is an impressive example of Victorian transport architecture, designed in 1875-80 by Sir John Fowler for the Midland Railway Company. The former railway terminal station is rectangular on plan and has a substantial footprint. The elevations are faced with red brick and contain regular rows of windows with bays of divided by brick buttresses. The elevations are partially obscured by modern extensions, however much of the Lower Mosley Street elevation and the network of cast iron lattice grids of the front and rear elevations remain exposed. The convex roof structure spans 64 metres and is segmentally vaulted, giving the building a horizontal appearance. Arches are linked by lattice purlins carrying intermediate ribs. Internally, the building retains its large open vaulted space which, despite its conversion to an exhibition space, has maintained its character and grand form.

The building was historically and physically linked to the Grade II* Listed Midland Hotel, which provided accommodation for passengers arriving at the station. The site is not within a conservation area but is adjacent to the St Peters Square and Deansgate Conservation Areas. Manchester City Council is a majority shareholder in the complex.

The proposal relates to the two existing digital screens located on the forecourt.

Description of area

The current Manchester Central Complex consists of three main buildings: Manchester Central, the former Central Station (Grade II* Listed); the Manchester International Convention Centre (MICC); and the Seminar Centre and a large, landscaped forecourt. There is also a surface car park and service yard to the rear of the building. The Manchester Central site is bounded by Watson Street/ the Great Northern Tower residential building, Windmill Street, Great Bridgewater Street and Lower Mosley Street. Surrounding the site are the Bridgewater Hall and the Grade II* Listed Great Northern Warehouse, Radisson Edwardian Hotel and Midland Hotel. The complex is raised approximately 10m above street level at some points and is separated from Lower Mosley Street by the Metrolink viaduct.

Description of development

Advertisement consent is sought to update the digital screens within the existing totems located on the forecourt.

Consultations & Notification Responses

Highway Services - Recommended a condition to limit the use of the screens.

Environmental Health - Recommended a condition to limit the use of the screens.

Greater Manchester Police - No comments.

Transport For Greater Manchester - Confirmed that they have no objections.

Publicity - Letters were sent to surrounding occupiers - No responses were received.

Issues

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.

Places for Everyone Plan - Joint Development Plan Document, for nine of the 10 boroughs which make up Greater Manchester adopted on 21st of March 2024:

- Policy JP-P1 - Sustainable Places
- Policy JP-Strat2 - City Centre
- Policy JP-P2 - Heritage

The Manchester Core Strategy - Development Plan Document 2012-2027 ("the Core Strategy") was adopted by the City Council on the 11th of July 2012:

- Policy SP1 - Spatial Principles
- Policy EN1 - Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas
- Policy EN3 - Heritage
- Policy DM1 - Development Management

The Unitary Development Plan for Manchester - For the reasons outlined below the following saved UDP Policies are of relevance to this application:

- Policy DC14 - Shop Fronts and Related Signs
- Policy DC18 - Conservation Areas

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- Chapter 6 - Building a strong, competitive economy
- Chapter 7 - Ensuring the vitality of town centres
- Chapter 12 - Achieving well-designed places
- Chapter 16 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Draft National Planning Policy Framework - 16th December 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.

Shopfront Design Guide (2024)

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Issues

Amenity

The building that these totems are sited is a highly significant building. It is one of only around 5.8% of listed buildings that are Grade II* Listed. In this context the existing totems look out of place and are detrimental to the significance of the building and its forecourt. However, the existing totems are already in place and provide benefits for the existing use. This is by only

advertising events at this conference centre and the related sponsors and providing event information.

There will remain the provision for no moving images thereby minimising the potential impact on the setting of the Listed Building. The new screen would not operate much differently to the current screen. The retention of these with an amended screen would require less works to the forecourt.

There would be no changes to the appearance of the totems, but this application would allow the introduction of up-to-date technology. The impact on this application and the Grade II* Listed Midland Hotel would therefore be minimal and is acceptable.

Public safety

The illumination and use of the digital screens would be restricted by condition to ensure that they do not affect public safety

Conclusion

For the reasons explained above the screens proposed are acceptable and comply with all above referenced policies.

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:

Article 35 Declaration

Condition(s) to be attached to decision for approval

1) No advertisement is to be displayed without the permission of the owner of the site or any other person with an interest in the site entitled to grant permission.

No advertisement shall be sited or displayed so as to:

- (a) endanger persons using any highway, railway, waterway, dock, harbour or aerodrome (civil or military);
- (b) obscure, or hinder the ready interpretation of, any traffic sign, railway signal or aid to navigation by water or air; or
- (c) hinder the operation of any device used for the purpose of security or surveillance or for measuring the speed of any vehicle.

Any advertisement displayed, and any site used for the display of advertisements, shall be maintained in a condition that does not impair the visual amenity of the site.

Any structure or hoarding erected or used principally for the purpose of displaying advertisements shall be maintained in a condition that does not endanger the public.

Where an advertisement is required under these Regulations to be removed, the site shall be left in a condition that does not endanger the public or impair visual amenity.

2) The development hereby approved shall have been carried out in accordance with the following drawings and documents:

The location plan referenced 6688 001 received by the City Council as local planning authority on 10 April 2026

The following drawings referenced:

6688 310-1
6688 310-2
6688-110

received by the City Council as local planning authority on 10 April 2026

Reason - To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans. Pursuant to policies DM1, EN1, EN3, CC9 and SP1 and saved policies E3.3, DC14.1 and 14.5, DC18.1 and DC19.1 of the Unitary Development Plan.

3) The digital advertising screens hereby approved shall be displayed only in accordance with the following:

- (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.

Reason - In the interests of pedestrian and highway safety, pursuant to saved policy DC15 of the Unitary Development Plan and policy DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy Development Plan Document.

Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified

Highway Services
Environmental Health
Greater Manchester Police
Transport For Greater Manchester

Second Floor, 24 Mount Street, Manchester, M2 3NX
Seventh Floor, 24 Mount Street, Manchester, M2 3NX
Sixth Floor, 24 Mount Street, Manchester, M2 3NX
Fifth Floor, 24 Mount Street, Manchester, M2 3NX
Fourth Floor, 24 Mount Street, Manchester, M2 3NX
Third Floor, 24 Mount Street, Manchester, M2 3NX
First Floor, 24 Mount Street, Manchester, M2 3NX
Ground Floor, 24 Mount Street, Manchester, M2 3NX
Midland Hotel, Peter Street, Manchester, M60 2DS
22 Mount Street, Manchester, M2 3NX
24 Mount Street, Manchester, M2 3NX

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
Coal Authority - Development Low Risk - Name: DEVELOPMENT_LOW_RISK_AREA
Area Team Boundary - Name: CENTRAL