

Our Ref: 25038/SH/CVN
Your Ref: PP-14498968
Email: sharper@firstplan.co.uk

Broadwall House 020 3096 7000
21 Broadwall info@firstplan.co.uk
London SE1 9PL firstplan.co.uk

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Manchester City Council
Planning
PO Box 532
Manchester
M60 2LA

Dear Sir/Madam,

PLANNING AND ADVERTISEMENT CONSENT APPLICATION – UNIT DD, 1 CROSS STREET, MANCHESTER M2 1HX

We have been instructed by our client, Hotel Chocolat, to submit the enclosed planning and advertisement consent application at Unit DD, 1 Cross Street, Manchester M2 1HX. The application seeks to retrospectively apply for the exterior alterations of the premises. Additionally, it proposes the display of 1no. hand painted mural sign to the lefthand side of the shopfront.

In accordance with national and local validation requirements, the following documents have been submitted with the application:

- Completed Planning and Advertisement Consent Application Forms;
- Completed Community Infrastructure Levy Form 1;
- Planning and Heritage Statement (included within this letter) prepared by Firstplan;
- Design and Access Statement (included within this letter) prepared by Firstplan;
- Biodiversity Net Gain Statement (included within this letter);
- Site Location Plan (drawing ref. 008 A);
- Existing and Proposed Elevations (drawing refs. 001 A & 017) ; and,
- Proposed Shopfront Elevation (drawing ref. 020).

The application has been submitted online via the Planning Portal (ref: PP-14498968) and the requisite fee of £466, including the £85 admin fee, has been paid online.

Site Description

The application site comprises a ground floor retail unit located on Cross Street within the Arndale Shopping Centre. The previous occupant was Halifax bank (Class E use) before Hotel Chocolat's occupation of the site.

The building itself is a multi-story structure with a traditional façade that is consistent with the architectural style of the surrounding area. The site has a prominent street frontage onto Cross Street. The immediate surroundings are characterised by a mix of retail, commercial and leisure uses.

Recent works in the immediate area include the two neighbouring units either side of the application site, with a Joe & the Juice restaurant receiving approval to start their works in 2024 and Hop Vietnamese restaurant opening in 2024 too.

The site and its immediate surroundings are shown at **Figure 1** below.

Figure 1. Aerial view of site



Sandwiched between these two new restaurant units, the retail & café operations of Hotel Chocolat provide a complimentary use, consistent with the established Class E use of the premises. Their occupation has helped to further activate the ground floor frontage along this important thoroughfare in Manchester.

Planning History

Advertisement consent for the “*installation of 1no. internally illuminated sign, 1no. internally illuminated fascia sign and 1no. internally illuminated projecting sign*” was granted on 11th June 2025 under Planning Permission Ref. 142254/AO/2025. The advertisements shown on the Proposed and Elevation Plans (drawing ref. 001 A & 017) are therefore approved, and this application seeks only to apply retrospectively for the external alterations carried out in association with the installation of 1no. mural sign, as detailed below.

Application ref. 142253/FO/2025 for the “*retention of external alterations to shopfront*” was refused on 4th September 2025. This application seeks to retrospectively apply for the works proposed under this application, as contained within the associated drawings.

Application Proposals

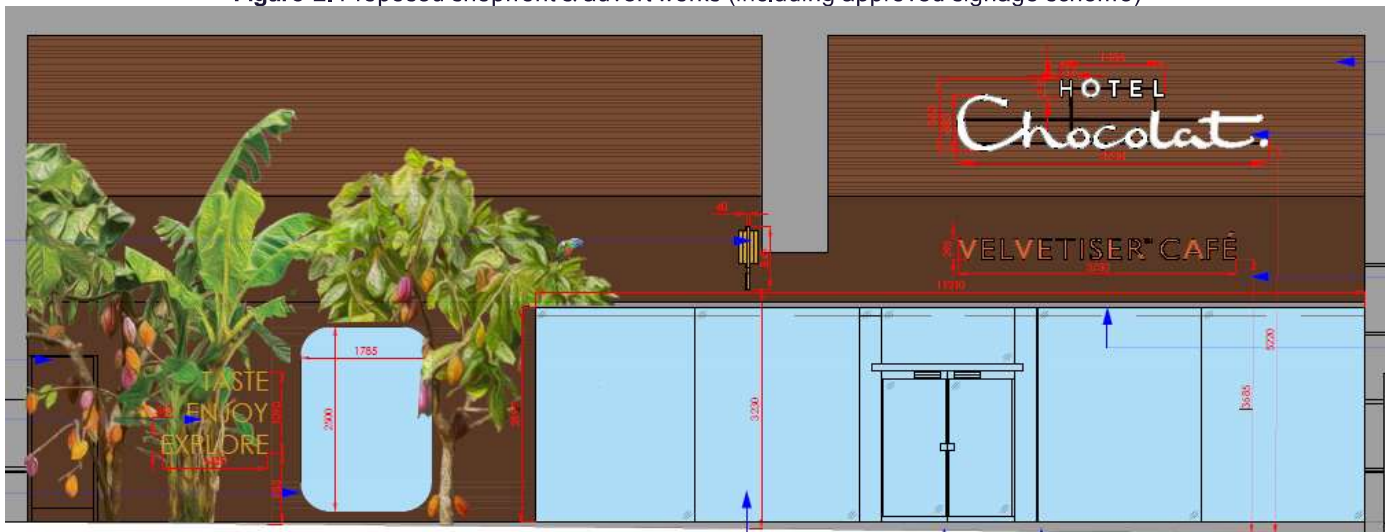
The following external alterations are proposed to allow Hotel Chocolat’s occupation. Alterations to the main façade include new double entrance doors with manifestations to be placed across the entire glazing of the unit. A new window glazing profile consisting of aged copper faces and soffits is to be installed on the lefthand side of the shopfront, with 3mm thick window cladding in plaster finish to be installed on the outside of the glazing. The existing ventilation grille will also be resprayed to ensure a more visually cohesive retail unit, with the fascia panel over the shopfront to be refinished and repainted.

Advertisements

- 1no. Hand Painted Mural Sign
 - 5.585mm (h) x 8.007mm (w)
 - Non-illuminated
 - Hand painted

The proposed mural is shown at **Figure 2** below on the left-hand side. The other advertisements shown have already been **approved under Planning Permission ref. 142254/AO/2025** or do not require permission as they benefit from deemed consent.

Figure 2. Proposed shopfront & advert works (including approved signage scheme)



Together, the planning and advert proposals seek to refresh the currently vacant unit to provide a high quality, contemporary exterior.

Relevant Planning Policy

The statutory Development Plan in Manchester comprises the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan 2022 to 2039 (2024), Manchester Core Strategy and Proposals Map (2012), and Extant Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (1995, saved 2012). Material considerations relevant to the application include the National Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024) and Local Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance such as the Guide to Development in Manchester SPD (2007) and Shopfront and Signage Design Guide (2024). These have been considered in the formation of the proposals.

The Manchester Core Strategy and Proposals Map (2012) designates this site as located within the City Centre, the City Centre Primary Shopping Centre, and the Regional Centre.

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

The NPPF provides the overarching planning policy guidance for development across England. It states:

“The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, including the provision of homes, commercial development, and supporting infrastructure in a sustainable manner. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

Paragraph 85 states that planning decisions should help to 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 131 outlines that good design is one of the fundamental factors in ensuring sustainable development and contributes to creating:

“Better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.”

Furthermore, **Paragraph 135** sets out that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development. Similarly, development should create places that maintain a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

Regarding advertisements, **Paragraph 141** states that signage should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, accounting for the cumulative impacts.

Manchester Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2012)

Regarding development within the Regional Centre, **Policy SP1 'Spatial Principles'** states that this area will be a focus for economic and commercial development, and retail, leisure and cultural activity. Furthermore, development is expected to create well-designed places that enhance or create character and protect and enhance the built and natural environment.

Policy EC3 'The Regional Centre' sets out how development within the Regional Centre that generates commercial development is encouraged.

Policy DM1 'Development Management' states that all development should have regard for appropriate siting, layout, scale, form, massing, materials and detail and be sensitive to the appearance and character of the surrounding area

Extant Unitary Development Plan

The Core Strategy replaced the UDP, but some policies remain and are relevant to this proposal.

When determining applications relating to shopfronts and signage, **Policy DC14.1 'Shopfronts and Related Signs'** states that proposals should ensure minimal impact to the host building and its surroundings.

Policy DC15.2 'Advertisements, Hoardings and Posters' sets out how the display of signage should not harm the character of the host building nor its surroundings and how all signage should be sited, scaled and located appropriately to ensure an unobtrusive scheme that does not negatively impact neighbouring properties.

Shopfront and Signage Design Guide (2024)

This Supplementary Planning Document provides guidance on the principles and standards of shopfront and signage design throughout Manchester. Signage is expected to integrate within the setting of its host building and the wider streetscene to ensure an uncluttered façade that promotes positive change within the wider context of the City.

Planning and Heritage Considerations

Heritage Statement

Per the requirements set out in National Planning Policy Framework regarding heritage assets, Paragraph 207 states the following:

"In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance."

The application site is not designated as, nor does it adjoin any, locally or statutorily listed building. There are several Listed Buildings within the surrounding area of the application site, including the Royal Exchange Grade II Listed

Building, and the Alliance House Grade II Listed Building. Furthermore, the site is not located within a conservation area, however it is located within close proximity to the Upper King Street and St Anns Square Conservation Areas.

Given the highly commercial and retail-oriented setting of the Arndale Shopping Centre, it is deemed that the application proposals will have no bearing on the nearby heritage assets. Proposals relate to the replacement of shopfront and signage on an existing established commercial unit, which currently sits vacant and unused. Incoming operations at this ground floor unit will not only visually uplift the exterior, but further activate the streetscape, ultimately contributing positively towards the commercial heritage of this area.

Planning Statement

Planning permission and advertisement consent is sought for minor external alterations, as well as display of associated signage, to support Hotel Chocolat's occupation. The considerations relevant to the proposals, are therefore the principle and design of the completed works and proposed advertisement mural, as well as any implication on surrounding amenity.

The application site comprises a flagship Hotel Chocolat store located on Cross Street, within the Arndale Shopping Centre. The shopfront, prior to the applicant's occupation, was in a semi-dilapidated state and was unsightly in the street scene. Together, the proposed and implemented works to the shopfront and signage will revitalise the units and its' visual presence in the streetscene.

The package of external works (completed) has enhanced the exterior of the unit, with new double entrance doors matching the new window glazing profile of the façade. The glazing arrangement is consistent with neighbouring units, realigned to the front of the unit avoiding the angled recess currently present, which is out of character with other units in the vicinity. Further, specific design features for Hotel Chocolat including portal windows, planting and curved window details will give the unit a refreshed and high-quality appearance.

Further manifestation details and a removable vinyl decorative lettering to be applied internally will also be placed onto the glazing to assist the visually impaired. Other proposed works already carried out, include the respraying of the existing ventilation grille across the façade, with the fascia panel and other exposed elements also refinished and repainted in a coordinated colour range will tie together all elements of the shopfront creating a cohesive façade. Noting the adjacent permissions for other restaurant operators' works the alterations proposed will undoubtedly complement the building and streetscene, in accordance with the identified policies.

The proposed signage that is the subject of this application is limited to the decorative mural to the left-hand side of the shopfront. This is proposed for the expanse of rendered timber in this location (which conceals the service corridor behind) to add interest and activity to this part of the unit.

The proposals are submitted following discussions with Jennifer Atkinson and James Bridgman, in which key points were clarified and addressed, as below:

1. The far-left hand side of the shopfront is not within Hotel Chocolat's unit – it could therefore not be glazed and needs to be finished externally as has been proposed. It is part of the Arndale centre. Furthermore, there is a dividing column and wall between this section and the left-hand end of the HC unit as evident on the submitted plans.



2. The section to which glazing has been added – the position of the old ATM’s – has a significant structural column to the right-hand side, adjacent to the remainder of the full height glazing section. This cannot be moved. See plan. The extent of glazing that has been added more or less fills that remaining void, allowing for a frame to be built to accommodate the new glazing.
3. This part of the shopfront is set forward of the remainder of the glazed section of the shopfront to the right, it is a distinct separate element, not integrated in anyway and should, and indeed, must, therefore, continue to be treated in a different, unique way
4. The shopfront facing material is constructed from marine grade ply, painted. Marine grade ply is an exterior facing ply, suitable to be used in shopfront/external construction. It is common across all types of shopfronts, in all locations, for all operators we work with. This isn’t a shopfront with timber mouldings or decorative profiles, it is large, flat surfaces reflective of its age and original construction. The material used is perfect for this type of installation. The timber is painted in the two layered textured paint finish to create the finish you see on site.



With regard to amenity, the shopfront alterations carried out and the proposed signage will complement the surrounding area. It is therefore considered the design, scale and siting of the proposed signage (and indeed the completed external alterations) would not appear disproportionately large or incongruent, ultimately keeping with the general character of the immediate surroundings of the unit. Thus, it is considered no adverse visual or safety impacts will result from the proposals, in accordance with the relevant policies set out in the NPPF, Manchester Core Strategy, Unitary Development Plan and Shopfront and Signage Design Guide.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

There is no (0sqm) existing habitat or biodiversity value at the site, it is an enclosed restaurant and will continue to be used as such. It is, therefore, exempt from BNG calculations and, as such, BNG requires no further consideration.

Design and Access Statement**Use**

The application proposals do not seek to change the use of the site.

Amount and Scale

The scale of the building will remain unchanged, with the works fully subservient. The signage and works completed to the shopfront will be keeping with the massing of the site.

Appearance

The proposed signage will be an enhancement to the existing unit, seeking to complement the wider shopfront works already complete. The external alterations to the façade are modest, seeking to make the necessary visual and operational changes to align with the Hotel Chocolat branding.

Layout

The general layout arrangements will remain unchanged.

Landscaping

There is no existing nor proposed landscaping at the site.

Access

The access to the unit remains unchanged, with the replacement doors only seeking to update the entranceway of the unit.

Conclusions

Overall, the application proposals seek to transform the unit through a series of necessary external alterations, and the display of advertisements, to facilitate Hotel Chocolat's ongoing successful occupation. Given the evolving commercial context of the area, it is considered that the package of external alterations (completed) and proposed signage scheme should be considered appropriate and would not have a negative impact on any nearby heritage assets.

I therefore trust that the information enclosed is sufficient to allow the applications to be validated and subsequently allows planning permission and advertisement consent to be granted. Should you require any further information in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,



SAM HARPER
Director