MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

Planning

Growth & Development

Delegated officer report for planning application

Application no.	142503/LO/2025
Date registered valid:	25 November 2025
Proposal:	Listed Building Consent for retention of 1no. internal digital screen.
Address:	Tesco Express, Unit A St James Buildings, 61 - 73 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EQ
Ward(s):	Piccadilly Ward
Applicant:	Mr Ben Train, Tesco PLC
Agent (if any):	
Case officer:	Jack Naven Tel: 0161 219 2095 Email: jack.naven@manchester.gov.uk
Recommendation:	Refuse
Date of recommendation:	**14 January 2026**

Application Details

Type of application: Listed Building Consent

Development type: Listed building alteration

Date of site visit: 8 December 2025

Standard consultations:
No consultations have been printed and sent.

Neighbour notifications
Printed: 3 December 2025 Expired: 24 December 2025

Site notice
Posted: 8 December 2025 Expired: 31 December 2025

Press advert
Published: 9 December 2025 Expired: 2 January 2026

Departure from Development Plan: No

Environmental Statement: Not required

Description of Site/Area

Listed building: Grade II

Conservation area: Whitworth Street Conservation Area 1985

Tree Preservation Order: Not applicable

The application relates to a commercial unit in the Grade II Listed St James Buildings, which is a substantial eight storey building that was built in 1912 in the Edwardian Baroque style and designed by Charles Clegg and Son of Manchester and Fryer and Penman of Glasgow.

It was designed as the headquarters of the Calico Printers Association Ltd. which was formed in 1899 and was a textile printing and merchant company. St James Buildings is bounded by Oxford Street, The Rochdale Canal, the Grade II Listed Portland Buildings and the grounds of Linley House.

The commercial unit faces out on to the Oxford Road elevation.

Oxford Street is a highly trafficked route from South Manchester into the City Centre and is a particularly busy bus route and experiences extremely high footfall. The building is currently used as a mixed-use building that predominantly houses offices, but also houses educational uses and has shops, bars, restaurants and cafes at the ground floor.

The surrounding area contains a large number of listed buildings include the Grade II* Listed Churchgate House, the Grade II Listed Palace Theatre and the Grade II Listed Portland Buildings. The site is also within the Whitworth Street Conservation Area.

Surrounding uses include The Place Theatre, Oxford Road Train Station, residential accommodation, multi-storey car parking, offices, restaurants, hotels, cafes and shops.

Description of Development

The proposal seeks Listed Building Consent for retention of 1no. internal digital screen.

Consultations & Notification Responses

Publicity - Neighbour notification letters were sent to surrounding properties. A site notice and local press advert were also produced. At the time of writing this report, no representations have been received due to this publicity.

Policy

The **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-Strat2 - City Centre
- Policy JP-P1 - Sustainable Places
- 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 CC9 - Design and Heritage
- Policy EN1 - Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas
- Policy EN3 - Heritage
- Policy SP1 - Spatial Principles
- Policy DM1 - Development Management

Saved Unitary Development Plan for Manchester - The following saved UDP Policies are of relevance to this application:

- Policy DC19 - Listed Buildings

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- Chapter 12 - Achieving well-designed places
- Chapter 16 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (LBCA Act) states that in considering whether to grant Listed Building Consent for any works the Local Planning Authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Section 66 of the LBCA Act requires the local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings. This requires more than a simple balancing exercise and considerable importance and weight should be given to the desirability of preserving the setting.

Section 72 of the LBCA Act requires the local planning authority to have pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

Issues

In determining whether the proposed works are acceptable, the main issue to consider is the impact these proposed works will have on the historic character and fabric of the listed building itself and to establish whether the public benefits, including heritage benefits, of the proposal will outweigh any harm to the significance of the heritage asset.

Heritage Assessment

Assessment of Significance

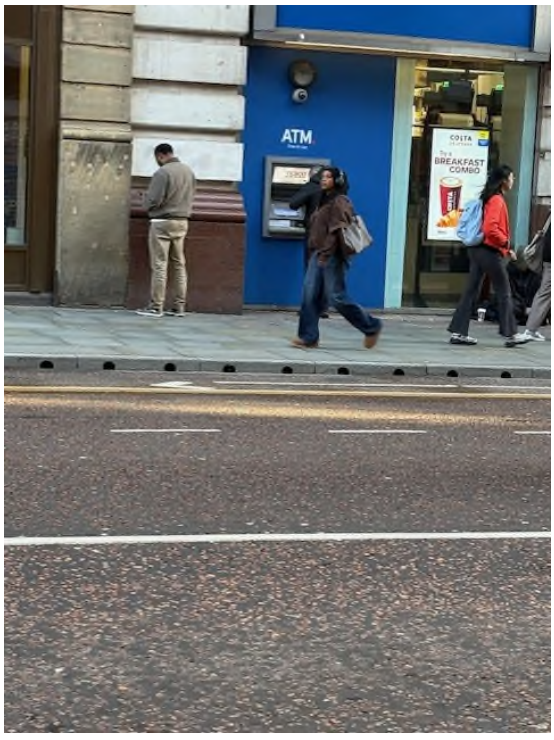
As St. James' Building is a large and encompassing building that is divided up into many units, the focus of the assessment of significance shall be on the specific section of the building that is directly affected by the proposed works.

The unit in questions sits in between two round headed archways. The design of these archways are replicated all the way down the Oxford Road elevation of the building in a Neo-Baroque style.

The section of the building is situated at one end of St James Building and protrudes forward in comparison to most of the building, which is replicated at the centre and other end of the building.

Impact on Heritage Asset

It is considered that the introduction of a digital screen in this space, constitutes an incongruous addition to this elevation of St James Building, detracting from the surrounding archway architecture, which notably contributes to the significance of the Grade II listed building. It stands out as a very modern addition that is at odds with the surrounding architecture.



Elevation with screen in place

The advertisement screen also interrupts views into the building as this element of glazing is now obscured.

The fully glazed approach to the arches of this building at ground level is consistent across the Oxford Road elevation of this building. Although the applicant has only applied for the advertisement screen on this application, it has been noted that in addition to the advertisement screen, glazing on the left side of this archway has been replaced by solid cladding. The combination of this in conjunction with the advertisement screen detracts significantly from the fully glazed approach of these archways at ground level across the whole Oxford Road elevation of the building.



Elevation prior to alterations

The fixing of the screen is into a modern floor and modern suspended ceiling.

Nonethless, for the reasons outlined above, it is considered that a low level of less than substantial harm has been caused as a result of the works carried out.

Public Benefits

In accordance with Paragraph 215 of the NPPF, for proposals where there has been less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the less than substantial should be weighed against the wider public benefits of the proposal, with the public benefits outweighing any less than substantial harm caused.

The applicant has not identified any public benefits in the submission for the digital screen, and the Local Planning Authority cannot identify any public benefits associated with the digital screen, only private benefits.

Tesco have occupied the space for over 15 years. Whilst the continued occupation of a space is considered to be a public benefit, the space has successfully been occupied for this length of time without such a digital advertisement screen being necessary.

Conclusion

The works have caused a low amount of less than substantial harm to the listed building, with insufficient public benefits identified to outweigh this harm, and the application is therefore refused in accordance with Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework, SP1, CC9, EN1, EN3 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy (2012), saved policy DC19.1 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester (1995), Places for Everyone Plan Policy JP-P2, and Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

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 polices 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

Officers have worked with the applicant/agent in a positive and proactive manner in determining this application by assessing the proposal against relevant planning policies and all material considerations, identifying matters of concern with the proposal and discussing those with the applicant/agent. The issues identified, particularly relating to the view of the Local Planning Authority that there is no public benefit that outweighs the less than substantial harm caused, are considered to be so fundamental that approval has not been possible in this case.

Reason(s) for recommendation to refuse

1) The digital screen has resulted in the introduction of an incongruous, obtrusive feature within this elevation of the Grade II listed building. This has interrupted views into the listed building and disrupted the visual harmony and cohesiveness of the fully glazed openings within the archways at ground level across the Oxford Road elevation of the building, detracting from the overall appearance and historic appreciation of this elevation of the listed building. This has resulted in less than substantial harm to the listed building and there are no public benefits identified which outweigh this harm. The development is therefore contrary to Government Guidance contained in Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework, policies EN1, EN3, SP1, CC9, and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy (2012), DC19.1 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester (1995), Places for Everyone Plan policy JP-P2, and Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified

PIZZAEXPRESS, Unit B, St James Buildings, 61 - 73 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EQ
Bundobust, 61 - 73 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EQ
Eighth Floor, St James Buildings, 61 - 73 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6FQ
Fifth Floor, St James Buildings, 61 - 73 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EQ
44 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 5EJ
46 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 5EJ
48 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 5EJ
50 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 5EJ
Seventh Floor, St James Buildings, 61 - 73 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EQ
Sixth Floor, St James Buildings, 61 - 73 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EQ
Suite 9, 67 - 73 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EQ
Basement, 67 - 73 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EQ
61 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EQ
Ground Floor, 61 - 73 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EQ
Third Floor, 61 - 73 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EQ
Fourth Floor, 61 - 73 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EQ
St James Buildings, 61 - 73 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EQ
Basement, St James Building, 61 - 65 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EQ
67 - 73 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EQ
61 - 65 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EQ

Appendix 2 – Planning constraints

Article 4 Direction - Removal Of PD Rights Change Of Use From Class C3 To Class C4
Article 4 Direction - City Centre PD Restriction - Class B1(a) To C3
Coal Authority - Development Low Risk - Name: DEVELOPMENT_LOW_RISK_AREA
Conservation Area - Whitworth Street Conservation Area 1985
Area Team Boundary - Name: CENTRAL