Planning

Growth & Development

Delegated officer report for planning application

Application no.	144442/AO/2025
Date registered valid:	4 November 2025
Proposal:	External alteration for installation of 1no. fascia sign and window vinyls.
Address:	320 - 322 Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9NG
Ward(s):	Ardwick Ward
Applicant:	Mr Cody Hodkinson University of Manchester Students' Union
Agent (if any):	
Case officer:	Sam Elliott Tel: 0161 219 2856 Email: sam.elliott@manchester.gov.uk
Recommendation:	Refuse
Date of recommendation:	19/12/2025

Application details

Type of application: Advertisement Consent

Development type: Advertisements

Date of site visit: 17 December 2025

Standard consultations:
Printed: 14 November 2025 Expired: 5 December 2025

Neighbour notifications
Printed: 14 November 2025 Expired: 5 December 2025

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

The application relates to a ground floor end unit at 320 - 322 Oxford Road.





The building is approximately 115m in length, 5 storeys, comprised of red brick with maroon pvc cladding to the elevations, and with a long sloping slate roof. Ground floor units feature various frames in black and grey, with signage comprised of bulky fascia trays of varying dimensions and siting on the elevation.





Listed building: Not applicable

Conservation area: Not applicable

Tree Preservation Order: Not applicable

Description of Area

The application site is located along Oxford Road between the University of Manchester Campus and the MRI estate, in close proximity to the Whitworth and Whitworth Park.

It is also opposite the Grade II listed Royal Eye Hospital. The significance of the building partly derives from its architectural features, constructed of red brick with matching terracotta dressings, red tiled roofs, bay design and ornament detailing including fluted friezes with sunflowers. Further down Oxford Road is also the Grade II listed Royal Infirmary, which together with the Royal Eye Hospital forms an impressive frontage to the northeastern side of Oxford Road. It is in an Edwardian Baroque style and features blood-red brick with liberal dressings of white limestone; limestone columns, cornicing and ornamental masonry detailing.





From some vantages, it is seen together with the Grade II* listed Student Health Centre. Its significance partly derives from its architectural features, with scored white stucco on brick, symmetric design, wide round-headed central doorway with keystone, set-in tripartite doorcase with panelled divided doors, and cornicing.

Description of Development

Advertisement Consent is sought for 1 no. vinyl graphic above the unit's entrance and 2no. vinyl to the windows.

Little information has been provided for the proposed advertisement, with no drawings submitted as part of the application. As per the application form, the sign would be a tray sign with vinyl wrap above the entrance. It would have a length of 0.6m and a width of 4m, exhibiting text in cream with additional shapes in various colours. The 2no. vinyl were observed as in place on a site visit 17/12/2025.





Consultations & Notification Responses

Notification:
Occupiers of neighbouring buildings were notified via notification letters. No representations were received in response to the application.

Highways:
No objection:

- Projection over license not required
- Sufficient headroom clearance.

Policy Context

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.

The following policies are considered relevant to this application:

Places for Everyone

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

The Adopted Core Strategy for the City of Manchester

- SP1 – Spatial Principles
- CC9 – Design and Heritage
- EN1 – Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas
- EN3 – Heritage
- DM1 – Development Management

The Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester

- DC14 – Shop Fronts and Related Signs
- DC19 – Listed Buildings

NPPF

- Section 12 (Achieving Well Designed Places)
- Section 16 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment)

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.

Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990

- Section 66

Shopfront and Signage Design Guide

Issues

Amongst other things and in general terms, PfE Policies JP-Strat2 and JP-P1, as well as Core Strategy Policies SP1, EN1, and DM1 require that development has good design, improves the

appearance and character of the area, is visually stimulating, and creates interesting environments, taking account of matters including siting, layout, form, massing, materials and detail.

With specific regard to advertisements, Saved Unitary Development Plan Policies DC14.1 and DC14.5 further require that signage is in keeping with the character of the building and of the area in which it is located, are sited at fascia level and respect the architectural form of the building.

PfE Policy JP-P2, Core Strategy policies CC9, EN1 and EN3, saved UDP policy DC19, Section 66(1) of the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990 and guidance contained in sections 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework outline the desirability of protecting the general setting of Listed Buildings.

The Control of Advertisements Regulations also require an accounting of the general characteristics of the locality, including of historic interest.

As per the application form, the sign would be a tray sign with vinyl wrap above the entrance. With a length of 0.6m and a width of 4m it would sit above the door, extending above the black painted brick and be wider than the entrance and windows. 2no. vinyl would obscure the entirety of the unit's respective glazing panels.



The vinyl would not be of a high quality of materiality and not in accordance with the Council's Shopfront and Signage Design Guide, which specifies that "the use of plastics, acrylic, vinyl and similar finishes will be resisted across the City".

It is also considered that dimensions of the sign would integrate poorly with the elevation, failing to relate to existing architectural features and sitting well above fascia level. In addition, the low-quality vinyl materiality would further detract from the building's appearance, lacking definition and weathering poorly.

Moreover, this sign would be seen in context of other commercial units within the building, which variously feature bulky sign trays, of varying dimensions and siting on the elevation. The addition of a further low-quality vinyl element would further detract from the building's appearance, compounding the cluttered appearance of a commercial frontage lacking any cohesive design.









The sign, which contributes to a further erosion of the building quality and clutter associated with its commercial frontages, would be seen opposite the impressive frontage formed by the Grade II listed Royal Eye Hospital and the Grade II listed Royal Infirmary. The vinyl, lacking in definition and being of low-quality materiality, would starkly contrast with the impressive ornamental detailing of the frontage opposite which comprises their significant historic fabric. The proposal is considered to particularly harm the setting of the Grade II listed Royal Eye Hospital sited directly opposite through the further erosion of the applicant building's appearance, addition of further poorly integrated clutter and lack of a sufficient design quality.





In view of the above, the proposed signage by virtue of its design, scale, siting, materiality and form is considered to be a low quality, poorly integrated form of signage. The signage would therefore detract from the appearance of the building and the street scene, adding clutter to the street scene. The proposal therefore fails to constitute good design and is not well-integrated into the setting, harming the setting of the listed Grade II Royal Eye Hospital. It would therefore be contrary to PfE Policies JP-Strat2, JP-P1 and JP-P2 of PfE; Policies SP1, CC9, EN1, EN3 DM1

of the Core Strategy; saved UDP Policy DC14; and The Control of Advertisements Regulations 2007; as well as failing to be being in line with guidance contained within Sections 12 and 16 of the NPPF and the Council's Shopfront and Signage Design Guide.

Public Safety

The primary public safety concern is the illuminance of the signs. The application form states that the vinyl sign would not be illuminated, and it is not considered that there would be any public safety concern. Highways have reviewed the application form and similarly have no concerns, with headroom clearance heights met and no Projection Over License required.

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

Reasons for recommendation to refuse

Visual Amenity

The 1no. vinyl fascia sign and 2no. window vinyl would, by virtue of their siting, scale, design, materiality and appearance, detract from the appearance of the building and form a low-quality form of signage to the detriment of visual amenity. The proposal would also result in an unduly harmful impact on the setting of the Grade II listed Royal Eye Hospital through the further erosion of the application building's commercial frontage.

The proposed advertisements would therefore be contrary to the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007; Section 66 of the Listed Building and Conservation Areas Act 1990; Places for Everyone Policies JP-Strat2, JP-P1 and JP-P2; Core Strategy Policies SP1, CC9, EN1, EN3, and DM1; saved UDP Policies DC14 and DC19; Sections 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy; as well as guidance contained within the Council's Shopfront and Signage Design Guide.

Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified

Highway Services

Bus Shelters Junction Nelson Street, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9ZZ
Diagnostic Suite, City Labs Old Building, Nelson Street, Ardwick, Manchester, M13 9NQ
Flat 1 Grove House, Whitworth Park Student Housing, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9NG
Flat Above, The Oxford, 421 - 423 Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9WG
Citylabs Old Building, Nelson Street, Ardwick, Manchester, M13 9NQ
Grove House, Whitworth Park Student Housing, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9NG
Turing Tap, 421 - 423 Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9WG
324 - 326 Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9NG

Appendix 2 – Planning constraints

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
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -
Area Team Boundary - Name: CENTRAL