

Planning

Growth & Development

Delegated officer report for planning application

Application no. 143265/LO/2025

Date registered valid: 20 June 2025

Proposal: Listed Building Consent for the installation of new internal and external signage.

Address: 127-133 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4PY

Ward(s): Piccadilly Ward

Applicant: Bruntwood Estates, Beta Portfolio Limited

Agent (if any): Mr John Cooper, Deloitte LLP

Case officer: Jack Naven
Tel: 0161 219 2095
Email: jack.naven@manchester.gov.uk

Recommendation: Approve

Date of recommendation: **05 November 2025**

Application Details

Type of application: Listed Building Consent

Development type: Listed building alteration

Date of site visit: 1 July 2025

Standard consultations:

Printed: 1 July 2025 Expired: 22 July 2025

Neighbour notifications

Printed: 1 July 2025 Expired: 22 July 2025

Site notice

Posted: 1 July 2025 Expired: 22 July 2025

Press advert

Published: 8 July 2025 Expired: 29 July 2025

Departure from Development Plan: No

Environmental Statement: Not required

Description of Site/Area

Listed building: Not applicable

Conservation area: Whitworth Street Conservation Area 1985

Tree Preservation Order: Not applicable

The Site forms part of a cluster of Grade II Listed buildings along Portland Street and Oxford Street in Manchester City Centre which are all owned and managed by Bruntwood as one overall complex that is being re-branded 'Threadworks':

- 113-119 Portland Street (Listed Entry Number: 1246957);
- 127-133 Portland Street (Listed Entry Number: 1246958); and,
- Oxford Place (61 Oxford Street) (Listed Entry Number: 1246286)

The Site is located in Piccadilly Ward, within Manchester City Centre, and is also located within the Whitworth Street Conservation Area.

The surrounding area is uniquely Mancunian in character. Its physical form being established by the wealth of fine Victorian and Edwardian buildings erected between 1850 and 1920. They reflect the historical importance of the textile industry in the city, when Manchester had become the largest textile centre in the world. These textile warehouse buildings were built with characteristic architectural features which form the feel of this conservation area.

Description of Site/Area

The proposal seeks Listed Building Consent the installation of new internal and external signage.

The Applicant has, at various times in the past, implemented a variety of signage types to serve wayfinding purposes and to highlight respective occupiers and building names within the Thread Works Cluster, which are inconsistent in styles and formats and do not form a coherent approach.

Leveraging on the granting of Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent for the refurbishment of 117-119 Portland Street (Refs: 139763/FO/2024 and 139764/LO/2024) in June 2024 which forms part of the Site, the Applicant intends to position the Cluster as an innovation hub, right at the gateway to Manchester's Knowledge Quarter.

This presents an opportunity to bring all the buildings within the Cluster together by introducing a coherent signage proposal which is well designed and of high-quality design and allows for the removal of redundant signages across the Cluster.

This Application is submitted in tandem and should be read in conjunction with the overarching Advertisement Consent Application (143270/AOH/2025) covering all buildings within the Cluster, including the Site, which discusses the proposed signages from advertisement consent perspective.

Related Applications

139763/FO/2024 - External alterations comprising alternations to loading bay, main entrance on Portland Street, and refurbishment and inclusion of external louvres associated with the mechanical and electrical system associated with refurbishment of existing offices, change of use of part of the lower ground floor to a gym (Use Class E(d)) and installation of a substation and plant within rear at 117-119 Portland Street.

Approved June 2024.

139764/LO/2024 - Listed Building Consent for internal and external works associated with refurbishment of existing offices including alternations to loading bay, main entrance on Portland Street, and refurbishment and inclusion of external louvres associated with the mechanical and electrical system and works associated with upgrades to means of escape at 117-119 Portland Street

Approved June 2024.

143013/LO/2025 - Listed Building Consent for the fit out of the ground floor and basement and external signage at Basement And Ground Floor, 131-133 Portland Street.

Approved August 2025.

143168/AO/2025 - Installation of 1no non-illuminated fascia sign at at Basement And Ground Floor, 131-133 Portland Street.

Approved August 2025.

143264/LO/2025 - Listed Building Consent for the installation of new internal and external signage at 113-119 Portland Street, M1 6DW.

To be approved in tandem with this application.

143266/LO/2025 - Listed Building Consent for the installation of new internal and external signage at 61 Oxford Street, M1 4PY.

To be approved in tandem with this application.

143270/AOH/2025 - Installation of 17 external signs.

To be approved in tandem with this application.

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 CC10 - A Place for Everyone
- 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 DC18 - Conservation Areas
- 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

Principle of the Development

The proposals seek to rationalise existing signage with a coherent appearance across three listed buildings. The rationalisation of signage and removal of clutter can be supported in principle.

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.

Impact on Heritage

Assessment of significance

The decorative red brick facades with stone ornamentation, arched windows and rich detailing across all three buildings, in conjuncture with the strong horizontal architectural emphasis are considered to have high significance that contribution to the overall significance of the historic asset.

Impact on heritage asset

A number of proposed projected signs will replace existing signs, utilising existing fixings and mortar joints to minimise the impact on the historic fabric.

In places where new signage is proposed, they have been sited to be in discrete locations to minimise the impact of fixings to the historic fabric of the buildings.

Through discussion during the course of the applications, to avoid proliferation of holes, the City Council requested that screw fittings on projecting signs be reduced to two screw fixings per projecting sign and not three as originally proposed, especially where new signs require new penetrations. The applicant complied with this request as submitted a drawing showing that only two screw fixings would be used per projecting sign.

The decluttering of the elevations from the varied projecting signs and banner signs to a visually consistent theme would have an overall visual benefit to the Listed Buildings and to the Whitworth Street Conservation Area and is supported. The design of the signs and 'Threadworks' identity resonates with the heritage of the area and would be sympathetic to the industrial architecture.

For the Façade manifestation, including safety manifestations (Refs: IN-ST4 and IN-ST5) and the tenant / retailer branded manifestations (Ref: IN-ST6A and INST6B and EX-ST8), all vinyl will be applied internally to glazing and all vinyl-obstructed area on each glazing will not exceed 15% of that particular glazing.

For the internally hung number sign (IN-ST3 - except 127 Portland St), there is a decorative cornice at the ceiling level and so an alternative fixing solution has had to be submitted for this, which is shown clearly in the drawing 'Proposed Sign IN-ST3 - 127 Portland Street. The fixing of this sign in this method will reduce the amount of harm caused to the heritage asset.

For the other numbering signs (IN-ST3 - except 127 Portland St), as referenced on the submitted Signage Strategy, they will either be fixed onto modern bulkhead / existing sub-structure.

The Thread Works map sign (EX-ST2B) (P.53 of the submitted Signage Strategy) would be affixed onto the modern rendered block-end wall between 125 Portland St and 127 Portland St.

The signage at the commercial unit occupied by Giorgios that was originally submitted is not considered to be acceptable, as the current signage, and the signage originally proposed in this application, as shown on page 65 of the 'Thread Works External Wayfinding Design Heritage Statement, Revision 05, Issued 18.06.2025' document received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on 20 June 2025, are considered to detract from the heritage asset. Discussions have been ongoing to remediate this signage, a final solution has not been fully agreed at present, and some full and final details are required for this unit.

The document 'Thread Works External Wayfinding Design Heritage Statement - Giorgio Signage Update' and this shows a clear willingness from the applicant to find a solution to remediate the signage. This approach would involve the removal of one menu sign, which would reduce clutter, as well as the removal of the three bulky fascia signs on the unit. These three fascia signs would be replaced by individual letter signage on rails. This approach in general is supported as it would reduce advertisement clutter and enhance the heritage asset by better revealing its architecture. The revealed stonework currently behind the fascia signs would be painted. It will also match the successful approach to main entrance sign seen on the corner unit currently occupied by Blank Street Coffee.

The document 'Thread Works External Wayfinding Design Heritage Statement - Giorgio Signage Update', includes two alternative proposals in the description, concerning the potential to internally illuminate the case, and instead of having two vinyl logo signs on the internal façade of the windows, to have internally illuminated signage. To clarify, these alternative options have not been agreed, discussions are ongoing on these elements, and they shall be determined via the appropriate condition.

Whilst full and final details still need to be agreed, via condition, the general approach outlined for the Giorgios unit, would be considered acceptable from a visual amenity and impact upon heritage aspect.

A condition has been added to ensure that full and final details of any signage at the commercial unit currently occupied by Giorgio are agreed before any signage is installed at this unit.

There will be a low level of less than substantial harm caused as a result of these works.

Public benefits

Although there will be a low level of less than substantial harm to the special interest and the historic character of the Grade II listed building, this will be outweighed by the public benefit of creating a more consistent identity for the building owners, which in turn help the long-term conservation of the heritage assets.

Conclusion

In view of the above, this application is considered acceptable, as the works are considered to cause a low level of less than substantial harm to the special interest and the historic character of the Grade II listed building which would be outweighed by the public benefits outlined above.

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: Approve

Article 35 Declaration

Officers have worked with the applicant/agent in a positive and proactive manner based on seeking solutions to problems arising in relation to dealing with the application. In this case, this has included discussions at a pre-application stage and during the course of the determination process. An extension of time has been agreed on the case in order to fully resolve some outstanding issues that could not be resolved within the original determination period.

Condition(s) to be attached to decision for approval

1) The development must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this permission.

Reason - Required to be imposed pursuant to Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

2) The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the following drawings and documents received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on 20 June 2025:

- Site location plan
- Thread Works External Wayfinding Design Heritage Statement, Revision 05, Issued 18.06.2025

- Repair Methodology

With the following drawings and documents received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on 25 September 2025:

- Proposed External Projecting Sign Details

With the following drawings and documents received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on 08 October 2025:

- Proposed Sign IN-ST3 - 127 Portland Street

And with the following drawings and documents received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on 24 October 2025:

- Thread Works External Wayfinding Design Heritage Statement - Giorgio Signage Update

Reason - To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans. Pursuant to policies SP1 and DM1 of the Core Strategy and saved policies DC18 and DC19.

3) Notwithstanding the details as set out in condition 2 above, before any signage is installed at the commercial unit currently occupied by Giorgio, apart from the projecting sign, as shown on page 65 of 'Thread Works External Wayfinding Design Heritage Statement, Revision 05, Issued 18.06.2025', received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on 20 June 2025 and 'Thread Works External Wayfinding Design Heritage Statement - Giorgio Signage Update' received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on 24 October 2025, full and final details of any signage to be installed at this unit, including any fixing details, shall be submitted in writing to and be approved in writing by the City Council as the Local Planning Authority.

The approved details shall then be implemented as a part of the development.

For the avoidance of doubt, the projecting sign proposed to be located on this unit is deemed acceptable and works can go ahead on this element on this particular commercial unit.

Reason - In the interests of visual amenity and because the proposed works affect buildings which are included in the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest and careful attention to building work is required to protect the character and appearance of this building and to ensure consistency in accordance with policy and EN3 of the Core Strategy and saved policy DC19.1 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester.

4) The projecting signs, marked as EX-ST1A and EX-ST1B on 'Thread Works External Wayfinding Design Heritage Statement, Revision 05, Issued 18.06.2025', received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on 20 June 2025, shall be fixed in accordance with the details approved in 'Proposed External Projecting Sign Details', received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on 25 September 2025.

The internally-hung building number entrance sign located behind the glazing at 127 Portland Street, marked as IN-ST3 on 'Thread Works External Wayfinding Design Heritage Statement, Revision 05, Issued 18.06.2025', received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on 20 June 2025, shall be fixed in accordance with the details approved in 'Proposed Sign IN-ST3 - 127 Portland Street', received by the City Council as Local Planning Authority on 08 October 2025.

Reason - In the interests of visual amenity and because the proposed works affect buildings which are included in the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest and careful attention to building work is required to protect the character and appearance of this building and to ensure consistency in accordance with policy and EN3 of the Core Strategy and saved policy DC19.1 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester.

5) Prior to the commencement of any DOFF cleaning to the external elevation or to the application of any Remmers Restoration Mortar to fill any holes or defects in the external elevation, the full and final details of these works, including the methodology of the works and a sample of the Remmers Restoration Mortar, shall be submitted to and be approved in writing by the City Council as the Local Planning Authority.

The approved details shall then be implemented as a part of the development.

Reason - In the interests of visual amenity and because the proposed works affect buildings which are included in the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest and careful attention to building work is required to protect the character and appearance of this building and to ensure consistency in accordance with policy and EN3 of the Core Strategy and saved policy DC19.1 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester.

Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified

Heritage & Urban Design

Buildings Suite 1D To 1E And 2F04, Portland Buildings, 127 - 129 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4PZ

Buildings Suite 1A To 1C, Portland Buildings, 127 - 129 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4PZ

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

Basement Suite Ba And Ground Suite Ga, Portland Buildings, 127 - 129 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4PZ

Buildings Suites 2C And 2D And 2E, Portland Buildings, 127 - 129 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4PZ

Buildings Suite 3D, Portland Buildings, 127 - 129 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4PZ

Buildings Suite 3F, Portland Buildings, 127 - 129 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4PZ

Buildings Suites 2A 2B And 3B2, Portland Buildings, 127 - 129 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4PZ

Buildings Suite 3b1, Portland Buildings, 127 - 129 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4PZ

Buildings Suite 1da, Portland Buildings, 127 - 129 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4PZ

Buildings Suite 3E, Portland Buildings, 127 - 129 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4PZ

Buildings Suite 3C, Portland Buildings, 127 - 129 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4PZ

Buildings Suite 3A, Portland Buildings, 127 - 129 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4PZ

44 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 5EJ

46 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 5EJ

Column 11 Opposite Portland Hotel, Portland Street, Manchester, M1 3ZZ

Seventh Floor, St James Buildings, 61 - 73 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EQ

Sixth Floor, St James Buildings, 61 - 73 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EQ

131 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4PY

Ground Floor And Basement Elemental, 47 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EQ
47 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EQ
Manchester Travel Inn Metro, 112 - 114 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4WB
61 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 6EQ
116 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4RL
Unit 3A, 116 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4RL
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
Portland Buildings, 127 - 129 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4PZ
Basement And Ground Floor, 131 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4PY
133 Portland Street, Manchester, M1 4PY
William Hill, 40 - 42 Oxford Street, Manchester, M1 5EJ

Appendix 2 – Planning constraints

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