MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

Planning

Growth & Development

Delegated officer report for planning application

Application no.	145396/AO/2026
Date registered valid:	11 March 2026
Proposal:	Installation of 3no. stacked internally illuminated signs and 2no. internally illuminated menu sign.
Address:	Treehouse Hotel, Blackfriars Street, Manchester, M3 2EQ
Ward(s):	Deansgate Ward
Applicant:	Mr Mark Cocks Starwood Capital Group
Agent (if any):	Mr Ivan Carless Ascot Signs
Case officer:	Lea Joseph Tel: 0161 227 3644 Email: lea.joseph@manchester.gov.uk
Recommendation:	**Approve**
Date of recommendation:	**1 May 2026**

Application details

Type of application: Advertisement Consent

Development type: Advertisements

Date of site visit: 9 April 2026

Standard consultations:
Printed: 17 March 2026 Expired: 9 April 2026

Neighbour notifications
Printed: 17 March 2026 Expired: 9 April 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: Not applicable

Conservation area: Not applicable

Tree Preservation Order: Not applicable

The application site is a 13-storey hotel building. Originally erected in the 1960s the building contained office uses for two decades. Since a change of use in 1985 the building has operated as a hotel under various tenants. The building has a modernist appearance, adopting the brutalist style. The building constructed almost entire of concrete, with a vertical emphasis and ribbon windows across all thirteen stories. Following a recent rebranding of the hotel as the Treehouse Hotel, at the ground floor entrance, a treehouse feature creates a distinct appearance, with timber wall cladding and vegetation, including a living wall. The hotel includes 203 bedrooms.

The building is bounded by Blackfriars Street, Deansgate and the River Irwell. The building is not in a conservation area and there are no listed buildings adjacent to the entrance area which is the subject of this application.

Description of area

Blackfriars Street runs between Manchester and Salford. The area has a busy pedestrian and automobile environment which is busiest along Deansgate. A significant number of cafes bars, restaurants and hotel uses are present in the area. In addition to the commercial environment of the Primary Retail, which includes King Street, New Cathedral Street, and Exchange Square. The historic environment also contributes to the area’s distinctiveness, with Parsonage Gardens

and St. Anne's Square and the Listed Blackfriars Bridge (Grade II), and the Haywards Building (Grade II) which are within walking distance of the site.

Description of development

Advertisement consent is sought for the installation of 3no. internally illuminated vertically stacked signs and 1no. internally illuminated menu sign. The 3no. signs would consist of acrylic faces with aluminium returns. These identifying signs would be suspended on aluminium beams fixed into the wood panelled roof and the ground.

Each sign would have a total depth of 30mm, and a height of 760mm. The total height of the structure would be approximately 3.3m. The proposed menu sign would consist of A3 cards inserted into a lockable box, with a glazed front, an oak shelf, and downlighting. The 2no. menu boxes would be screw fixed to an external wall with each box measuring 400mm by 550m.



Proposed signage position and elevation drawing.

Consultations & Notification Responses

Publicity

Letters have been sent to surrounding businesses and neighbours, no representations have been received.

Highway Services – No objections. No expected impact on users of highway, all signage is within redline boundary of the site.

Environmental Health – No objections. Proposed luminance level should not exceed 300cd/m2.

Policy

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 relevant to consideration of this application within the development plan:

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (2024-2039)

JP-Strat2 City Centre
JP-P1 Sustainable Places

Manchester Core Strategy (2012-2027)
SP1 Spatial Principles
DM1 Development Management
CC1 Primary Economic Development Focus: City Centre and Fringe
C10 Leisure and the Evening Economy

Saved Unitary Development Plan Policies
DC14 Shopfronts and Related Signs

Other Material Considerations:

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

Paragraph 144 states:

The quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed. A separate consent process within the planning system controls the display of advertisements, which should be operated in a way which is simple, efficient and effective. Advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts.

Shopfront and Signage Design Guide (2024)

Issues

Principle of Development

Policies JP-Strat2, CC1 and C10 highlight the importance of economic growth within the City Centre region, which is enabled by a diverse, exciting range of businesses and organisation attracting residents and visitors.

The proposed signage would denote three separate class E uses with eating and drinking provision within the site, 'Pip, 'Sister Moon' and The Nest'. Two of these uses are new to the development site, and would complete the recent hotel rebrand. As such the promotion of these uses and the resulting custom would be a positive outcome for the City Centre, and would effectively support the existing strategies detailed in Core Strategy policies CC1 and C10 and Places for Everyone Policy JP-Strat2.

Visual Amenity





Policy DM1 states that materials, siting, details and appearance form a consideration in all development proposals. Chapter 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework requires that when assessing design quality, Local Planning Authorities consider 'will function well and add to the overall quality of the area', 'are visually attractive' and 'are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting'. The Shopfront and Signage Design Guide states that signage should relate well to a site's 'overall composition, character, scale and architectural features'.

The proposed signs would be sited within a recess and overhung by the building's roof. The aluminium features (i.e., menu box, signage returns and rods) would be sprayed in RAL 7015 in order to match the existing window frames and entrances thereby minimising the adverts obtrusiveness. The scale of the signage is considered to be in keeping with the scale of the host building; the signs would be visually recessive in the context of the overall frontage and would not appear overly obtrusive in the street scene. The thin profile of the stacked signage and gaps between sign would allow views into the glazing without harming or obscuring the site's architectural details.

Given these details, the proposed advertisements are considered to be acceptable in scale, siting and appearance, pursuant to policies DM1, SP1, the Shopfront and Signage Design Guide, and policy DC14.

The proposed 2no. menu boxes are considered to be acceptable in their restrained scale, the use of an oak material takes precedence from the existing frontage. Thereby meeting the materials guidance set out in the Shopfront and Signage Design Guide.



The total quantum of signage, though not acceptable across all City Centre development frontages, is considered typical for a hotel, in which ground floor or roof top food and/or drink uses attract patrons outside of the hotel's hotel clients.

Public Safety

Proposed illumination would be controlled by condition so as not to exceed 300cd/m^2.
With the condition, there are no public safety concerns associated with the proposal.

Conclusion

In totality, the proposed scheme of signage is considered to be carefully designed, the siting, scale and appearance effectively preserve the character and appearance of the wider application site, while minimising the dominance and obtrusiveness of the advertisements. This bespoke design approach, effectively meets the requirements set out in

Places for Everyone policies JP-Strat2 and JP-P1, Core Strategy policies DM, SP1, CC1 and C10, saved Unitary Development Plan Policy DC14, the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 200, the Shopfront and Signage Design Guide and Chapter 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

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:

Article 35 Declaration

Condition(s) to be attached to decision for approval OR Reasons for recommendation to refuse

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 be carried out in accordance with the following drawings and documents, received by Manchester City Council as the Local Planning Authority on :

Drawing: 13145-TRE-RES-10001 Rev. P04
Drawing: 13145-TRE-RES-10003 Rev. P04
Drawing: 13145-TRE-RES-10005 Rev. P04
Drawing: 13145-TRE-RES-10006 Rev. P04
Drawing: 13145-TRE-RES-10007 Rev. P04
Drawing: 13145-TRE-RES-10008 Rev. P04

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 policy DC14.

3) The maximum luminance of the signage shall not exceed 300 cd/m2 in brightness at any time.

Reason - In the interests of visual and residential amenity pursuant to policies SP1, and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy and saved policy DC14.1 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester.

Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified

Highway Services
Environmental Health

The Pollen Club, Blackfriars Street, Manchester, M3 2EQ
Pot Kettle Black, Blackfriars Street, Manchester, M3 2EQ
Rear Lower Ground Floor, Maybrook House, 40 Blackfriars Street, Manchester, M3 2EG
Fifth Floor, Maybrook House, 40 Blackfriars Street, Manchester, M3 2EG
Fourth Floor, Maybrook House, 40 Blackfriars Street, Manchester, M3 2EG
Lower Ground Floor, Maybrook House, 40 Blackfriars Street, Manchester, M3 2EG
Third Floor, Maybrook House, 40 Blackfriars Street, Manchester, M3 2EG
Ground Floor And First Floor, 50 - 52 Deansgate, Manchester, M3 2FE
48 Deansgate, Manchester, M3 2FE
Maybrook House, 40 Blackfriars Street, Manchester, M3 2EG
TESCO Express, 50 - 52 Deansgate, Manchester, M3 2FE

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
Flood Zones Type 2 (low to medium risk) -
Flood Zones Type 3 (high risk) -
Area Team Boundary - Name: CENTRAL