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5 June 2026

The Information, Delivery & Support Team

Planning

Manchester City Council

PO Box 532

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By email: planning@manchester.gov.uk

Dear Sir or Madam,

Application No. 145639/FO/2026 — Full Planning Permission: Erection of Canopy on Front Elevation, Ground Floor, 7 Princess Street, Manchester M2 4DF

I write in response to your letter dated 4 June 2026 advising that the above application is invalid on the ground that, as the awning constitutes an advertisement, advertisement consent rather than planning permission is required.

With respect, I do not agree with this analysis, and I set out my reasons below. I ask the Council to reconsider its position and to proceed to validate and register the application.

1. The awning does not constitute an advertisement

The definition of 'advertisement' in section 336(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 includes the word 'awning', but only where it is 'in the nature of, and employed wholly or partly for the purposes of, advertisement, announcement or direction.' That qualifying phrase is the operative one. The proposed awning is a plain retractable fabric canopy. It carries no text, lettering, logo, branding or other content of any kind. It is employed entirely for the functional purposes of solar shading and weather protection for diners using the licensed pavement area. It is not employed, wholly or partly, for the purposes of advertisement, announcement or direction.

The listing of 'awning' and 'blind' in the statutory definition is plainly directed at awnings and blinds that carry advertising content — the restaurant name, a logo, a slogan — not at plain functional awnings devoid of any such content. A plain canvas awning is no more an advertisement than a plain painted shopfront is a sign. The Council's suggestion that the proposal requires advertisement consent, rather than planning permission, is not made out on the facts of this application.

2. Even if the awning were an advertisement, planning permission would still be required

The Council's letter implies that advertisement consent is an alternative to planning permission — that one replaces the other. This is not correct as a matter of law. The proposition that planning permission is not needed in addition to advertisement consent relates only to the display of the advertisement itself. It does not extend to the physical installation of a permanent or semi-permanent structure fixed to a building.

The installation of a substantial retractable awning mechanism — with its fixing rails, arms, motor housing and associated ironmongery — bolted to the stonework of a prominent listed building on Albert Square is plainly a building operation within the meaning of section 55(1) of the TCPA 1990. It constitutes works of a kind ordinarily undertaken by a person carrying on business as a builder. It materially and visibly affects the external appearance of the building. It therefore constitutes development for which planning permission is required, entirely separately from any question of advertisement control.

This analysis is confirmed by established practice. It is commonplace for awnings on commercial buildings to be the subject of full planning permission applications, particularly in conservation areas and on listed buildings. The immediately adjacent listed building at Piccolino Caffè Grande has itself been the subject of separate grants of planning permission and listed building consent for its awnings — not advertisement consent. The present application follows precisely that approach.

3. Listed building consent has been separately validated

I note that the companion listed building consent application (145640/LO/2026) has been validated and acknowledged by the Council by letter also dated 4 June 2026. The Council has therefore implicitly confirmed that listed building consent is required for this proposal — which is consistent with my analysis above. The planning permission application covers a distinct and complementary consent regime relating to the physical development of the building and its impact on the character of the Albert Square Conservation Area. Both consents are required; neither substitutes for the other.

4. Advertisement consent — a separate, future question

If at a later stage it is proposed that the awning should carry any advertising content — the restaurant name, a logo, or other branding — a separate application for advertisement consent can be made at that point, under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007. That is an entirely distinct question which does not arise from the present application and does not affect the validity of the planning permission application now before the Council.

5. Request

For the reasons set out above, the proposal is not an advertisement within the statutory definition. Even if it were, advertisement consent would not replace the requirement for planning permission in respect of the physical installation. The planning permission application is properly made and I respectfully ask the Council to validate and register it without further delay. The target date for determination of the companion LBC application is 29 July 2026 and it would be desirable for both applications to be determined together.

I am happy to discuss this further with the case officer if that would be helpful. Please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

James G Scott

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On behalf of Mr Arman Vardazaryan / The Armenian Experience