MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

Planning

Delegated Officer Report

Summary of application details

Application reference:	PLA-2026-000580
Application type:	Consent to display an advertisement
Proposal:	Installation of 1no. internally illuminated logo sign.
Site address:	Unit E2A City Tower Piccadilly Plaza Manchester M1 4AJ
Ward(s):	Deansgate
Date application valid:	03 June 2026
Applicant name:	Master Bun
Agent (if any):	Murshed Ahmed
Case officer:	Emily Booth
Recommendation:	Refuse
Date of recommendation:	27 July 2026

Description of site, building and/or area

This application relates to Unit E2a within City Towers, Piccadilly Plaza, fronting onto Parker Street and the Piccadilly interchange. It is adjacent the entrance to the ground floor arcade and central to the elevation. It is a modern clear glazed shopfront with smooth concrete above it.

City Tower is a commercial building within Manchester City Centre, located within the Regional Centre and Primary Shopping Area. It was design by architects Covell Matthews and Partners in 1959 and constructed in 1965. It constitutes a podium with three different towers with the central tower (City Tower) being by far the largest at 30 storeys. It is used as offices, an educational establishment and a hotel. There are various commercial uses at the ground floor. In recent years improvements including frameless glazed shopfronts and internal signage have been made.

The surrounding area is predominantly mixed commercial in character.

Unit E2a is not within a conservation area, nor within the setting of any listed buildings as it is in a central location of the building elevation.

Description of development

Advertisement consent is sought for the installation of 1no. white internally illuminated logo to be sited on the concrete above the approved individual letter signage.

Relevant planning history

An application referenced 145246/AO/2026 was approved in May 2026 and allowed the installation of 1no. internally illuminated individual letter sign.

An application referenced 120734/AO/2018 was approved in 2018 and included the Installation of 1no. illuminated, individual letter fascia sign consisting of individual letters fixed directly to the existing building fabric, and the display of the premises name and logo on demarcation barriers around the external seating area to the front of the premises.

An application referenced 121582/AO/2018 was approved in 2018 for the installation of externally mounted stainless steel individual letters to external face of glazed shopfront.

Consultation, notification and publicity responses

Consultations

Environmental Health - Advised that the illumination levels should be restricted by condition.

Highways – No objection.

Notifications and publicity

Letters were sent to surrounding occupiers

Relevant policies

Local 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-P1 - Sustainable Places

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 SP1 - Spatial Principles

Policy EN1 - Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas

Policy DM1 - Development Management

The Unitary Development Plan

Saved Policy DC14 – Shop Fronts and Related Signs

National 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.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024):

Chapter 12 - Achieving well-designed and beautiful places Illustrates how well-designed places that are beautiful, enduring, and successful can be achieved in practice. It forms part of the Government's collection of planning practice guidance and should be read alongside the separate planning practice guidance on design process and tools.

Draft National Planning Policy Framework - 16th December 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.

Shopfront Design Guide (2024)

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Assessment

Principle of Development

The logo sign is overlarge and is located above the fascia level at the building and would be in addition to approved individual letter signage at fascia level. Given this, the sign is not acceptable in principle. The applicant was advised to remove this from the proposals as part of negotiations during the assessment of Advertisement Consent referenced 145246/AO/2026 and agreed at that point to do so, but has submitted this application against our previous advice, which only incudes the logo that they were previously advised was unacceptable.

Visual Amenity

Policy JP-P1 of Places for Everyone states that development should respect and acknowledge the character and identity of the locality in terms of design, siting, size, scale and materials used. It is considered that the bulky addition to existing signage and would be contrary to this policy.

Policy EN1 of the Core Strategy for the City of Manchester advises that opportunities for good design to enhance the overall image of the City should be fully realised, particularly on major radial and orbital road and rail routes. The proposal faces the Piccadilly Gardens bus and Metrolink interchange meaning that it is in a highly visible area. It is contrary to this policy as it it creates an overlarge signage area and is a poor design.

Policy DM1 of the Core Strategy for the City of Manchester advises that all development should be appropriately sited, scaled, formed, massed, and detailed with appropriate layout and materials and should have regard to the character of the surrounding area. The proposal, for the reasons outlined below has not considered how the sign affects its surroundings.

Saved Policy DC14 of the UDP for the City of Manchester states that:

DC14.1 In determining applications relating to these premises for shop fronts, security grilles, advertisement signs, canopies and awnings, the Council will seek to ensure that proposals are in keeping with the character of the building and adjoining buildings, of adjoining shopfronts, where

appropriate, and of the area within which the premises are located.

DC14.5 The Advertisement Regulations require that applications for shop signs be considered only in the interests of amenity and public safety. In determining such applications, the Council will adopt the following policies:

A. In the interests of amenity,

a. signs should not normally be positioned other than at fascia level;

b. signs should respect the architectural form of buildings and shop frontages;

c. where no obvious fascia level exists, signs above shopfronts should be in keeping with the scale of the frontage of the building and in particular should not fill the gap between ground floor shop windows and first floor windows;

Paragraph 141 of Section 12 of the NPPF states that 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. The proposed sign would poorly sited and designed and is therefore contrary to Section 12 of the NPPF.

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The signs are considered to be particularly obtrusive 'box signs' which are signs that have a negative effect on the character of most buildings due to their bulky and low-quality appearance which is not in keeping with the proportions of features of the buildings that they are attached to.

The proposed advertisement would add to the external individual letters that have already been approved (145246/AO/2026). It would be overlarge at 860mm (h) x 690mm width approximately in addition to the size of the individual letters. It would be located above the letters at a height above the natural fascia level and above the level of all of the other signage at the ground floor commercial units within the City Tower development.

There are old shopfronts with framing and external signs, but a high number of the shopfronts are now fully glazed modern shopfronts, and all of the fully glazed shopfronts have internal fascia signage. The siting of an additional large sign on the fabric above the shopfront and the approved signage of this unit would be far more external signage than the other modern units have and would be highly obtrusive.

The approved external individual letter sign was only approved due to past approvals for external individual letters and due to the shopfront being squat in height compared to the other existing shopfronts at the development.

The applicant was advised of alternative options including a sign of the same size behind the glazing or a much smaller logo sign at the same level as the individual letter sign but didn't agree to either of these changes. An internal illuminated logo sign would still be highly visible and they have a fully glazed shopfront that they could display logo signage behind making the proposed external logo sign not 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.

Conclusion

The logo sign hereby proposed would not respect the architectural form of building, being large compared to the features of the other modern shopfronts and not being in keeping with the adjacent features and would not be in keeping with the scale of the frontage of the building and would for these reasons be contrary to the above policies.

Recommendation: **Refuse**

Reasons for refusal

1) The proposed advertisement by virtue of its location, design, appearance and proportions would fail to respond positively to the building and local environment. It would form a poorly designed, obtrusive, and incongruous feature on the building which would have an unduly harmful impact on the visual amenity, character and setting of the building within which it is located and the street scene of Parker Street and would reduce the impact of the improvements made to the building. The proposal is contrary to Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007, policies SP1, CC9, EN3 and DM1 of the Manchester Core Strategy (2012), saved policies DC14.1, DC14.5 and DC18.1 of the Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester (1995) and the NPPF.