

HERITAGE & CONSERVATION CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Heritage, Conservation & Design Team Officer	Catherine Fenghour
Date	11 July 2025
Application Reference	25/00433/ADV
Address	15 Fleece Street, Rochdale, OL16 1LY
Proposal	Internally illuminated fascia sign (retrospective)

Heritage Assets Impacted

Designated Heritage Assets	☒	- Rochdale Town Centre Conservation Area
Non-Designated Heritage Assets	☒	- 17 Fleece Street

Summary

The oversized proportions of the sign are a concern.

Assessment

The application site is a mid-terrace, two-storey building located on Fleece Street, within the Town Centre Conservation Area. The building has a shopfront and is currently occupied by 'Sofiah Bakes'. It appears to have been used for various purposes over the years, including as a cafe and as a nail and beauty salon. Adjacent to the site is 17 Fleece Street. This is an example of a former warehouse, with workshop behind and has been identified as a non-designated heritage asset for its architectural and historic interest. The condition of some of the building along this part of Fleece Street is poor. Unsympathetic shopfronts and alterations have harmed the significance of this part of the Conservation Area.

The application is made retrospectively for advertisement consent for an illuminated fascia sign. The only matters which can be considered are amenity and public safety. The impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area is relevant as it relates to visual amenity.

Within conservation areas, section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act applies. This places a duty on local authorities to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. The provisions of NPPF chapter 16 apply.

Additionally, NPPF paragraph 141 states that ‘the quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed.

The sign extends along the full width of the fascia sign. It is fabricated of aluminium with projecting lettering, illuminated by LEDs. The sign exceeds the dimensions of the fascia and as a result projects slightly below the top of the pilasters. The top of the central pilaster is obscured by the sign. The result is a disproportionate sign which is overly large for the fascia, obscures key architectural features and sits awkwardly on the building.

The 2021 google Streetview extract shows the extent of the fascia prior to the installation of the existing and previous signage:



This visual harm is somewhat mitigated by the recessive colour, the individually applied lettering and the limited use of lighting. However, these factors do not wholly overcome the visual harm resulting from its proportions.

While previous signage can be a material consideration, in this case, advertisement consent does not appear to have been sought. Similarly, there are other examples of unsympathetic signs in the area, however, many of these do not appear to be authorised.

The sign as installed presents a missed opportunity to preserve or enhance this part of the Conservation Area, particularly noting the shopfront and signage enhancements located at the corner of South Parade and Yorkshire Street, which have recently been completed. Locating

signage on the existing fascias and not over the pilasters, could have resulted in a scheme which sat far more comfortably on the host building. Similarly, it would have been preferable for the sign to be placed on a timber fascia board with individually applied and illuminated lettering.

Re-consultation

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