

DELEGATED DECISION CHECKLIST AND REPORT

APPLICATION NO.	CASE OFFICER	DATE
24/01092/ADV	Hamish Rigg	07/01/2025

Address: Arien Refrigeration Services, John Street, Rochdale, OL16 2HP

Proposal: Erection of D-Poster Advertisement.

PUBLICITY	Weekly list expired?	Y	Site notice expired?	n/a
	Neighbour letters expired?	n/a	Press Notice expired?	n/a

DELEGATION	Significant departure from local plan?	N	Contrary to national policy?	N
	Applicant a Council Member or officer?	N	Contrary to previous decision?	N
	Major with 10 or more objections and recommending approval?	N	Called in or Planning Panel objection?	N

COMMENTS	Planning Panel comments received?	N
	Neighbour comments received?	N

EIA	Screening opinion completed and saved to Onbase?	n/a
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CONDITIONS	Pre-commencement conditions proposed?	n/a
	Pre-commencement conditions agreed (or notification period expired)?	n/a

RECOMMENDATION	Refuse
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CHECKED AND SIGNED OFF BY: RK

DATE: 08/01/2025

SITE

The application relates to 'Arien Appliances' on John Street, Rochdale; a two-storey commercial building with a large forecourt adjacent to the pavement. The site falls within Rochdale Town Centre (Policy G/S/1 of the UDP), thus the surrounding area is urban in character, comprising a variety of building types and uses within a dense urban grain. It also lies within Town Head Conservation Area, and within the setting of the Ukrainian Catholic Church (Grade II), 170-174 Yorkshire Street (Grade II), and Townhead Offices (Grade II).

The application site is located at the northern end of John Street near the junction with St Mary's Gate (A58) and Whitworth Road. Known as Townhead Junction, this is a critical crossroads in the borough's transport network and accommodates a high volume of traffic.

'Arien Appliances' faces west towards the public highway, with the forecourt in between. To the north, the site is bound by Robert Street and 9 John Street, a multi-storey building dating back to the 19th Century. To the south, the site is bound by Crook Street and a derelict vacant site.

PROPOSAL

Permission is sought for the installation of a digital advertising hoarding in the south-west corner of the site, adjacent to the pavement on John Street. The digital screen would face oncoming traffic heading southwards, away from St Mary's Gate (A58). The 'D poster' would be mounted to metal pillars 2m above ground level and would measure 6m (width) by 3m (height). It would comprise black composite panels with a 48-sheet digital display, and would display a rotation of advertisements.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Sub-Regional

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE)

The Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan was adopted and became part of the statutory development plan for each of the 9 authorities covered by the plan on 21st March 2024. The following policies are relevant:

JP-P1	Sustainable places
JP-P2	Heritage

Local

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS):

SO3 – Improving design, image and quality of place

P2 – Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage
P3 – Improving design of new development
DM1 – General Development Requirements

Unitary Development Plan (UDP):

G/D/1 – Defined Urban Area

RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

None

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Highways 17/12/2024 – Objection

This is a new advertisement adjacent to the highway a short distance from a location where there was a serious road incident involving a child.

The advertisement is by its very design intended to draw the attention away from drivers as they navigate the highway.

This application represents an added distraction to drivers at a location where previously no distraction existed directly adjacent to a directional road sign and leading to multiple busy junctions.

This is the wrong location for advertisement hoardings and represents a risk to road safety.

We object to this proposal.

REPRESENTATIONS

In line with the Council's Publicity Code for Applications, no direct publicity was undertaken and no representations have been received.

ANALYSIS

In assessing applications for advertisement consent, paragraph 136 of the NPPF establishes that advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts.

The quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed. As such, with all applications for advertisements an assessment should be made as to the impacts on visual amenity and to accord with policy P3 of the Core Strategy; signs should be compatible with the surrounding area and protect the character and appearance of the street scene. In addition, Policy DM1 sets out the Council's general development requirements and establishes that proposals should not adversely impact on highway safety.

Amenity and heritage: SO3, P2, P3, DM1, JP-P1, JP-P2, NPPF

The site falls within Rochdale Town Head Conservation Area, approximately 70m east of the Townhead Offices (Grade II) and approximately 100m south of the Ukrainian Catholic Church on Yorkshire Street (Grade II). Therefore, the following heritage policies are relevant. Paragraph 205 of the NPPF states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Paragraph 208 states that 'where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use. PpE Policy JP-P2 seeks to positively conserve, sustain and enhance our historic environment and heritage assets and their settings. Lastly, Rochdale Core Strategy policy P2 seeks to protect the borough's heritage. This includes through conserving enhancing and promoting key heritage assets, which include listed buildings.

Despite the proposed D-poster's proximity to the above listed buildings, and its location within Townhead Conservation, its impact on the significance of any heritage assets would be minimal. This is primarily because the digital screen would be viewed when facing away from both the Ukrainian Catholic Church and the Townhead Offices, and therefore would not detract from views of these listed buildings.

Whilst drivers travelling northwards along John Street would see the D poster from the back, such views would be seen as incidental within the setting of the listed building and far enough away so as not to have a neutral impact on to their significance.

Notwithstanding the neutral impact on local heritage assets, the proposed D poster would have an unacceptable impact on the general visual amenity of the area. Currently the topography of John Street, heading southwards, allows for medium and long range views of landscape with few examples of advertising hoardings within the vicinity. The cover letter submitted under this proposal attempts to justify the proposed D poster by highlighting the area's commercial character and referencing a similar hoarding approved under application 22/00919/ADV.

Whilst there is a mixed character to the area, other advertisements are modest in appearance and associated with nearby commercial enterprises. By comparison, the proposed D poster would be a much larger and more obtrusive feature within the townscape and would detract from the area's visual amenity.

The approved hoarding under application 22/00919/ADV is situated in Middleton, approximately 7 miles away from the site; the flat topography which surrounds the site of this advertisement and enclosure provided by existing built form and landscaping against which the poster would be viewed would limit the extent to which the two can be compared and limited weight is attached to this matter.

Overall, the proposed D poster would constitute an unattractive and incongruous feature upon within the townscape, which would detract from medium and long range views, and harm the visual amenity of the area. The proposal is therefore unacceptable and contrary to Policy JP-P1 of The Places for Everyone Joint Development plan; and

Policies P3 and DM1 of the Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy; and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Safety:

Policy DM1 sets out the Council's general development requirements and establishes that proposals should not adversely impact on highway safety. Whilst it is accepted that the purpose of an advertisement is to attract attention, it is important to consider whether such adverts would have the potential to have an adverse impact on road safety.

The proposed D poster is located approximately 100m south of the junction with St Mary's Gate, and approximately 50m north of a set of traffic lights at the junction with New Baillie Street, which forms the only access to the multi-storey car park serving the Riverside retail development. As such, it would be located along a critical stretch of road where road users require full attention and very little distraction. The Council's Highways Service were therefore consulted, and have objected to the proposed 'D-poster' on the basis that it would present a risk to road safety.

The officer concluded that the position and nature of the proposed display was intended to draw the attention of passing drivers by providing non-essential information. The distraction caused by the 'D-poster' would negatively impact on both reaction times and distances, making it a hazard to road safety. The officer cited a traffic incident at this location, involving the death of a child, which highlights inherent safety issues along this stretch of road which would only be exacerbated by the installation of this advertisement.

As such, the proposal would be contrary to Policies P3 and T2 of the Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

RECOMMENDATION

Refuse:

1. The proposed digital advertisement would be an unsympathetic and distracting feature, which would dominate the streetscape and detract from the character and appearance of the open landscape. As such, the proposal would harm the area's visual amenity, contrary to Policy JP-P1 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development plan and Policies P3 and DM1 of the Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.
2. The proposed digital advertisement display presents a distracting feature to road users and a risk to highways safety at a critical location near to Rochdale town centre which has a poor road safety history. The proposals would increase the risk to road users and pedestrians and therefore be contrary to Policies T2 and DM1 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, Policy JP-C8 of the adopted Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Notes for Applicant:

INFORMATIVE:

For the avoidance of doubt, this decision notice relates to the following drawings:-

- Proposed site plans: 22982/PA/01-03
- Proposed elevation: 22982/PA/04
- Cover letter: Carter Jonas LLP (29/10/2024)
- Heritage Statement: Carter Jonas (November 2024)