

DELEGATED DECISION CHECKLIST AND REPORT

APPLICATION NO.	CASE OFFICER	DATE
24/00511/ADV	Hamish Rigg	28/08/2024

Address: 131 Yorkshire Street, Rochdale, OL16 5LE

Proposal: Replacement of advertising hoarding with a digital advertising screen (D-Poster)

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
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CONDITIONS	Pre-commencement conditions proposed?	N
	Pre-commencement conditions agreed (or notification period expired)?	N

RECOMMENDATION	Refuse
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CHECKED AND SIGNED OFF BY: RK

DATE: 02/09/2024

SITE

The application relates to 131 Yorkshire Street, a large semi-detached retail unit in Rochdale Town Centre. It sits on the corner of two major roads- John Street to the east and St Mary's Gate (A58) to the north- both of which are heavily trafficked. No. 131 faces south onto Yorkshire Street, a key shopping street in the town centre, and is adjoined by 129 Yorkshire Street to the west.

The surrounding area is typically urban, consisting of shops, commercial warehouse units, various housing types, public amenities, and busy roads. There is an array of street furniture and advertising hoardings within the vicinity of the site. The site falls within Rochdale Town Head Conservation Area, and on the opposite side of John Street to a Grade II listed Ukrainian Catholic Church (approx. 25m).

On the northern elevation, overlooking St Mary's Gate, is a large advertising hoarding which is the subject of the application.

PROPOSAL

Permission is sought to replace the existing advertising hoarding with an LED illuminated 'D poster'. It would display up to 6 static adverts which rotate up to every 10 seconds. The proposal panel has the same dimensions as a standard 48-sheet hoarding, measuring 6m (w) x 3m (h) x 0.065m (d) and positioned 1.57m above ground.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

National Guidance

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

On site:

08/A5730 – Non-illuminated fascia sign – **Granted STC**

08/A5688 – 3 externally illuminated fascia signs – **part granted and part refused**

The following applications are not on site but have been referenced in this report and/or the supporting planning statement.

24/00137/ADV: 112-114 Yorkshire Street, Rochdale, OL16 1XN for the replacement of various internally illuminated fascia signs and 1no. projecting sign including ATM signage- **approved** 12/04/2024

22/00442/ADV - Pavement opposite Santander, 63-65 Yorkshire Street, Rochdale, OL16 1BZ for 2no. digital 75" LCD display screens, one on each side of the Street Hub unit- **approved** 08/07/2022

20/01216ADV: Grassland adjacent to St Mary's Gate, opposite Cheetham Street, Rochdale, OL12 for the replacement of two existing free-standing signs with two internally illuminated 48-sheet digital advertising displays- **approved** 11/12/2020.

19/00759/ADV – car park on Whitehall Street 2no. 48-sheet digital advertising display- **refused** 06/08/2019

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Conservation officer 23/08/2024 – Objection for the following reasons:

- The application includes a very basic heritage statement which fails to reference any specific heritage assets inc. the Grade II Ukrainian Catholic Church, and therefore does not fully consider affected assets and their significance.
- The illumination of the sign would make it far more prominent within the setting of the grade II listed Ukrainian Catholic Church than the existing hoarding, drawing attention away from this important landmark building, and detracting from the Conservation Area.
- The proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the nearby heritage assets. This harm is not justified and does not appear to provide any public benefit.

Highways officer 30/07/2024 – no objections – however the following comments are relevant:

- The highways department maintains the position that advertising adjacent to a busy junction the highway could constitute a distraction to drivers.
- Given recent planning history we do not believe we could sustain an objection to this proposal or limit the cycle of advertisements. We therefore reluctantly raise no objection 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 141 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

Given the site falls within Rochdale Town Head Conservation Area, and 25m west of a grade II listed Ukrainian Catholic Church, 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. PfE 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. This policy also looks to prioritise the conservation of heritage assets at risk from decay, and in particular designated heritage assets.

The proposed 'D-poster' would replace an existing advertising hoarding on the northern elevation of 131 Yorkshire Street, and would be almost identical in its position and scale, measuring 6m X 3m at 1.57m above ground level. The existing and proposed signage is considered to be within the immediate setting of the Ukrainian Catholic Church, and is a prominent feature in views of the church when looking westwards along St Mary's Gate/Yorkshire Street, and southwards along Whitworth Road/John Street.

The existing signage is not an attractive feature and does not compliment the Ukrainian Catholic Church. However, as it is not illuminated, its impact on the Church is considered less harmful than the proposed digital hoarding. Illuminated images on the proposed digital display would be significantly more distracting and would detract from the architectural and historical importance of a listed building. This would result in less than substantial harm towards the church.

The application includes a heritage statement which attempts to justify the harm inflicted on local heritage. However, the statement is brief and makes no reference to the grade II Catholic Church or any other specific sites. As such, the application does not clearly assess the impact on the Church and therefore does not provide clear justification for the harm caused by the digital display.

The heritage statement attempts to justify the development by suggesting that the digital display would “complement the commercial character of the area.” Furthermore, the supporting planning statement lists three approved advertisement applications within the area. Whilst the area is commercial in character and there are numerous advertising hoardings, there are no examples of digital advertisements within the immediate setting of the church. As such, the supporting report relies upon examples of approved applications which are less relevant to this application. 24/00137/ADV and 22/00442/ADV refer to an internally illuminated fascia sign and a 75” LCD display on Yorkshire Street, both of which are seen within the context of a shopping street which contains an array of advertisements, including digitally illuminated signage. 20/01216/ADV refers to a 48-sheets digital display, similar to the proposed. However, being approx. 250m from the Ukrainian Catholic Church, it is not viewed within its immediate setting, and therefore its impact, compared to the proposed display, is less significant.

It is noted that the most proximate schemes for digital advertisements relate to 19/00759/ADV, for a 48-sheet digital display in the car park on Whitehall Street, approx. 80m from the Church, which was refused on the basis that it would cause “less than substantial harm” towards the Ukrainian Catholic Church and a subsequent application (ref. 19/01093/ADV) for a similar proposal which was refused and dismissed by the inspectorate (ref. APP/P4225/Z/20/3255566) as it was considered that the digital advertisement would “harm the visual amenity of the area including the setting of the Grade II listed Church and would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area”. Having regard to this decision, given the proximity of the application scheme and the extent that it features in key views of the listed Church and Conservation area, it is considered that the scheme would give rise to a similar degree of visual harm.

Taking into account the above and relevant appeal decisions, the proposed digital advertisement would give rise to visual harm within the Town Head Conservation Area and the setting of the Grade II Listed Ukrainian Catholic Church through the installation of an unsympathetic and distracting feature which would dominate the streetscape. This harm is not justified or mitigated within the proposal. As such, the proposal would be contrary to the Policy JP-P1 and JP-P2 of The Places for Everyone Joint Development plan; Policies P2 and P3 of the Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Public safety: P3, T2 and NPPF

Policy P3 and Policy T2 of the Core Strategy requires all development proposals, to adhere to high standards of design and principles relating to highway safety.

The Council's Highways Service has been consulted, and whilst maintaining that positioning advertising close to busy junctions is a distraction to drivers and a potential hazard, they raised no objections based on recent planning history within the area which has approved applications for 48-sheet digital displays along St Mary's Gate (A58).

As such, the proposal accords with policies P3, T2 and the NPPF.

RECOMMENDATION

Refuse:

1. The proposed digital advertisement would see the installation of an unsympathetic and distracting feature which would dominate the streetscape and detract from the character and appearance of the Town Head Conservation Area and the setting of the Grade II listed Ukrainian Catholic Church. This harm is not justified or mitigated within the proposal, nor outweighed by public benefit. As such, the proposal would harm amenity, contrary to: the NPPF; Policy JP-P1 and JP-P2 of The Places for Everyone Joint Development plan; Policies P2 and P3 of the Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy.

Notes for Applicant:

This report relates to the following plans:

- Site Location plan: 5778/ PA/01
- Existing and proposed elevations: 5778/PA/04
- Proposed site plan: 5778/PA/03