

Officer Report

Case Reference: PL/2026/0356
Location: Gable of 147 YORKSHIRE STREET, ROCHDALE, OL16 2LU
Proposal: Internally illuminated 48 sheet digital advertisement hoarding
Recommendation: Refuse
Officer: Bob Melling

SITE

The application site is the rendered western gable end of 147 Yorkshire Street. While historically there was a paper-and-paste billboard in the vicinity, this has not been in situ since c.2020. The small existing sign on the elevation appears to be recently installed and does not appear to benefit from consent. The gable is visible primarily on the approaches from the west along St Marys Gate and Yorkshire Street (A58). The A58 is a key arterial route on the edge of the town centre, and the application site is located close to a major junction, known locally as the Townhead Junction that is served by traffic lights. Between the Townhead Junction and the application site, the A58 reduces to one lane and there is a pedestrian crossing c.42m from the application site.

Within the vicinity of the site, there are several Listed Buildings located within the Town Head Conservation Area. This Conservation Area is focussed on Yorkshire Street, a historic road of shops and businesses which runs eastwards out of the town centre. The area was developed in the mid-to-late Georgian period, as an expansion to the medieval town.

The closest Listed Buildings to the site are 190 to 194 Yorkshire Street, c.45m from the application site. This terrace of three storey properties dates from c.1800. The properties are built in red brick with stone slate roofs. The windows to the ground and first floors have flat segmental arches with keystones. This group of terraces are an important part of the Georgian street scene and are of special architectural and historic interest, reflected in their listing at Grade II.

The Ukrainian Catholic Church lies within the Conservation Area. Formerly known as the Church of St James it was built in 1821, towards the end of the Georgian period. It is a landmark structure at the junction of Yorkshire Street and John Street. Its architectural style is plain gothic and has a simple restrained appearance. It is listed at Grade II for its special architectural and historic interest.

Opposite the Church is 170 to 174 Yorkshire Street. Originally built as a townhouse in 1793, it was extended c.1830. Sash windows survive throughout, and the central section has a stone plinth with a Roman Doric open pedimented doorcase with fanlight and six panel door. It is amongst the best-preserved Georgian townhouses in Rochdale.

The above buildings contribute to the completeness of the Georgian street scene in this area.

PROPOSAL

Permission is sought for the installation of a 48 sheet digital advertising board on the western elevation of 147 Yorkshire Street. The display would be mounted to the wall 4.85m above ground level, and would measure 6m (width) by 3m (height).

HISTORY

N/A

RECOMMENDATION: REFUSE for the following reasons -

RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND POLICY

Legislation

Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) 2007

Section 3(1) - *“A local planning authority shall exercise powers under these Regulations in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking into account: The provisions of the development plan, so far as they are material; and any other relevant factors.”*

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Section 66(1) - *“In considering whether to grant planning permission [...] for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority [...] shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.”*

Section 72(1) - this section directs local planning authorities to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character of conservation areas.

National

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Sub-Regional

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan (PfE) 2024:

JP-P1: Sustainable places

JP-P2: Heritage

Local

Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy (CS) 2016:

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

Saved Policies of the Rochdale Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 2006:

G/D/1: Defined Urban Area

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Conservation 10/06/2026 - Objection:

The proposal is for the installation of an internally illuminated advert on the gable end of 147 Yorkshire Street, facing out towards the Town Head Conservation Area. As noted above, there is no large sign near the gable at present. The existing smaller commercial sign appears to be unauthorised. The gable end has a neutral impact on the setting of the listed buildings and conservation area.

The proposed advert would be 6m wide by 3m high and would be 4.85m above ground level. It would be internally illuminated with the adverts changing on a regular rotation.

A heritage statement has not been submitted as part of the application.

Given its size and illumination, the sign would be a prominent feature on the approach from the west. It would be readily visible in views from and within the conservation area and the setting of the listed buildings, in particular the Ukrainian Church and 188 to 194 Yorkshire Street. It would draw attention away from these listed buildings, particularly the terrace along Yorkshire Street, which is closest to the site.

The proposed sign would be an intrusive and prominent feature in the streetscene, which would detract from the setting of the listed buildings and the Town Head Conservation Area. It would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage assets, Town Head Conservation Area and 188 to 194 Yorkshire Street.

The proposal would neither preserve nor enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and would fail to preserve the setting of the listed building, contrary to sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

The proposal would not preserve the amenity of the area.

Highways 12/05/2026 – Objection:

The application site is on the edge of Rochdale Town Centre area a short distance from the Townhead junction which is extremely busy.

Advertisements by their nature and design are distracting. Advertisements must not be sighted at a location where drivers need to full concentrate such as the busy Townhead junction.

We are happy the advertisement is sufficiently far enough from the junction not to be problematic we do however have concerns about the proximity of the pedestrian crossing which comes is situated at the very location this advertisement comes into view.

We cannot with confidence confirm this is a safe location for the installation of an advertisement and as such we cannot support this application.

Highways 05/06/2026 – Response to applicant’s highway safety assessment:

I can confirm we sustain our objection to this inappropriate and dangerous proposal.

REPRESENTATIONS

N/A

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 Adopted Rochdale 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.

Effect of the proposal upon the visual amenities of the area with regard to the historic environment

Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the decision-taker to give ‘Special Attention’ to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of Conservation Areas. Section 66 of the Same Act requires the decision-taker to give ‘Special Regard’ to any Listed Buildings as well as any contribution development within the setting of such a building may have upon its significance. These requirements are reflected in the NPPF, which states that ‘Great Weight’ should be given to the heritage assets’ conservation and also illustrates the positive contribution that heritage assets can make to the creation of sustainable and economically viable communities.

Paragraph 200 of the NPPF requires applicants to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by a proposal, including any contribution made by their setting. The application is not supported by a heritage statement, and the submitted covering letter does not sufficiently address the impact of the proposal on any of the designated heritage assets.

The end elevation of the application building where the proposed advertisement would be placed is currently exposed and entirely rendered. The end elevation is largely empty except for a small commercial advertisement sign which appears to have been recently attached to the

elevation without the consent of the Local Planning Authority. Notwithstanding, it is considered that the largely blank gable end has a neutral impact on the setting of the Listed Buildings and the Town Head Conservation Area (CA).

The site is within the immediate setting of the CA and the following Grade II Listed Buildings: 190 to 194 Yorkshire Street, 170 to 174 Yorkshire Street and the Ukrainian Catholic Church of St Mary. The buildings are identifiable within the same vista, and the application site is visible from a principal approach to the Listed Buildings along Yorkshire Street as one moves in a northeasterly direction away from the town centre. As such, the end elevation of the site marks a noticeable element within the setting of several designated heritage assets.

The proposal would introduce a large-scale digital screen located upon a high plinth. Even though it would be located upon a fairly blank end elevation, the proposed advertisement would still be seen as a competing influence in views from and within the CA and in views of the Listed Buildings, in particular the Ukrainian Church and 190 to 194 Yorkshire Street, the former being the principal focal point in the area. It would draw attention away from these heritage assets and it would dilute their appearance and dominance by introducing a highly visible, illuminated feature that would introduce further clutter into the street scene.

As such, it is considered that the proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the character and appearance of the CA and the setting of Listed Buildings. The public benefits as advanced by the applicant are largely generic to digital advertising infrastructure and are not specific to the application site. Therefore, it is not considered that the identified benefits would represent the clear and convincing justification required to outweigh the serious harm that has been identified above.

As a result, the proposal would fail to protect the visual amenities of the area and would conflict with Policies 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 guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework.

Effect of the proposal upon public safety

Policy DM1 of the Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy 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 proposals would have the potential to have an adverse impact on road safety.

The Council's Highways Service was consulted on the application and objected to the proposed advertisement display based on its proximity to the traffic light controlled pedestrian crossing, as both the proposed advertisement display and the pedestrian crossing would come into view for drivers at the same time.

It is considered that the presence of the proposed sign upon such a prominent end elevation would cause greater distraction and would lead to greater cognitive demand mainly due to the added visual stimuli and the traffic light controlled crossing which the driver would need to determine at the same time.

As such it is considered that the addition of a large scale, digital advertisement would run the real and tangible risk of harm to other road users, especially those pedestrians who are using

the controlled pedestrian crossing who's safety may be at greater risk as traffic approaches from the busy Townhead Junction.

As such, the proposal would be contrary to Policies DM1 and T2 of the Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Recommendation: Refuse

Refusal(s) (2)

- 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, the Grade II Listed 170 to 174 Yorkshire Street and Grade II Listed 190 to 194 Yorkshire Street. This harm is not justified or mitigated within the proposal, nor outweighed by public benefit. As such, the proposal would harm amenity, contrary to Policies 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.
- 2 The proposed digital advertisement, by reason of its prominent siting, scale, illumination and dynamic content, in close proximity to a traffic light controlled pedestrian crossing near to a busy junction, would introduce a significant and competing source of visual distraction to drivers. The advertisement and the pedestrian crossing would come into view simultaneously, increasing cognitive demand on drivers at a critical point in the highway network. As a result, the proposal would give rise to a real and unacceptable risk to highway safety, particularly for pedestrians using the controlled crossing. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies DM1 and T2 of the Adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework.

For the avoidance of doubt, this Decision Notice relates to the following drawings and documents:-

- 1
 - Site Location Plan. Dwg no. 27230 – PA – 01
 - Existing Site Plan. Dwg no. 27230 – PA – 02
 - Proposed Site Plan. Dwg no. 27230 – PA – 03
 - Existing and Proposed Elevations. Dwg no. 27230 – PA – 04
 - Highway Safety Report – Signal Controlled Crossings by SLR Consulting Limite
 - Highway Safety Assessment dated 3 June 2026 by SLR Consulting Limited
 - Covering letter dated 10 April 2026 by Alder King Planning Consultants
 - Appendix 1 – D-Poster Example
 - Appendix 2 – Lighting Conditions
 - Appendix 3 – Model Conditions
 - Appendix 4 – Gable End Examples