

17 June 2026

Rochdale MBC
Economy and Environment
Planning Service
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Sent via the Planning Portal

Dear Sir / Madam

Proposed Signage Zone
Units G34 – G46 | Middleton Shopping Centre
Planning Portal Ref: PP-15014099

Please find enclosed for your consideration an application on behalf of Middleton SC Limited ('the Applicant') for planning permission for the creation of proposed signage zones to the bus station car park elevation serving Units G34-G46 at Middleton Shopping Centre, Middleton, M24 4EL.

The following is submitted in support of the application:

- this covering letter and planning / heritage statement;
- the requisite application form and certificates;
- Site Location Plan - Drawing Ref: BC-MSC-BSCP-D03-002;
- Block Plan - Drawing Ref: BC-MSC-BSCP-D03-001;
- Bus Station Car Park Elevations: Existing and Proposed - Drawing Ref: BC-MSC-BSCP-B03-001; and
- Bus Station Car Park Elevations: Proposed CGI - Drawing Ref: BC-MSC-BSCP-B03-002.

The application site forms part of Middleton Shopping Centre, positioned adjacent to Middleton Bus Station and the multi-storey car park. The relevant frontage is located on the south-eastern side of the Shopping Centre and forms part of a prominent gateway elevation visible from the bus station, Middleton Way and Manchester New Road.

The proposal comprises the creation of two signage zones to the existing bus station car park elevation. The principal signage zone extends along the elevation above the Units G34-G46 frontage and measures approximately 52.5 sqm. A smaller return signage zone, measuring approximately 12.5 sqm, is also proposed. The zones would comprise powder-coated aluminium panels finished in grey to match the existing elevation. The works are intended to provide a coordinated, robust and visually consistent zone for future tenant signage.

For the avoidance of doubt, detailed advertisement content does not form part of this planning application, and any necessary advertisement consent will be sought separately.

The application should be viewed in the context of the wider programme of investment and enhancement works at Middleton Shopping Centre. Planning permission was granted on 4 July 2025 under Ref: 23/00300/FUL for the introduction of 8 no. short-stay parking bays and 2 no. disabled parking bays to the south of the Shopping Centre. In addition, works to the wider shopfronts and associated improvements to this part of the Shopping Centre are intended to be carried out in accordance with the permission granted on 5 July 2023 under Ref: 23/00301/FUL. A further application for works to facilitate occupation by a new tenant at Unit G39-41 was also approved under Ref: 25/01062/FUL.

Together, these works form part of a coordinated strategy to enhance the appearance, function and commercial attractiveness of this part of the Shopping Centre. The proposed signage zones will complement the approved and proposed shopfront improvements by providing a consistent framework for tenant signage, reducing visual clutter and improving legibility along a key public-facing frontage.

Planning Assessment

The proposal is modest in scale and relates to an existing commercial frontage within Middleton Town Centre. The works would sit within the established built form of the Shopping Centre and would not project materially beyond the existing elevation.

The use of a grey powder-coated aluminium finish to match the existing elevation would ensure that the works read as an integrated element of the host building rather than an unrelated addition.

The submitted illustrative CGI demonstrates that the proposal would deliver a cleaner and more coherent frontage when viewed from the bus station environment. The scheme will provide a defined fascia / signage zone and assist in creating a consistent approach to future tenant signage across this part of the Shopping Centre. This will help to improve the visual quality and legibility of the frontage, particularly given its relationship with the bus station and surrounding public realm.

The proposal would not give rise to any adverse amenity, highway safety or operational impacts. The works are confined to the existing building elevation and would not affect pedestrian or vehicular circulation, servicing arrangements, parking provision or the operation of the bus station and surrounding highway network.

Heritage Assessment

Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

The application site forms part of Middleton Shopping Centre, a modern commercial building located within Middleton Town Centre. The proposed works relate specifically to the bus station car park elevation serving Units G34-G46. This elevation is positioned to the south-eastern side of the Shopping Centre and addresses the adjoining bus station and car park environment.

The site is located outside the Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area. While the wider town centre contains heritage assets and areas of historic interest, the immediate application frontage is experienced in the context of the modern Shopping Centre, bus station, car parking areas and associated highway infrastructure. The proposed works are limited in scale, would be affixed to an existing commercial frontage and would not involve any alteration to historic fabric.

The proposal would preserve the setting, character and appearance of nearby heritage assets. The use of a grey powder-coated aluminium finish to match the existing elevation would ensure the works are visually integrated with the host building. The signage zones would provide a more consistent and ordered approach to future signage, reducing the potential for ad hoc visual clutter on this prominent commercial frontage.

Given the nature, scale and location of the works, the proposal would not result in harm to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area, its setting, or the significance of any designated heritage asset. The proposal therefore satisfies the statutory duty under Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and accords with relevant local and national policy objectives relating to the conservation of the historic environment.

Planning Policy Compliance

The proposal accords with the relevant policies of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy, including Policy E1, which seeks to establish thriving town, district and local centres, and Policy P3, which seeks to improve the design of new development. The works would support the continued enhancement and commercial vitality of Middleton Town Centre by improving the appearance and legibility of a prominent frontage and assisting with the occupation and activation of existing retail units.

The proposal also aligns with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework, particularly Section 7, which supports the role and vitality of town centres, Section 12, which seeks to achieve well-designed and attractive places, and Section 16, which seeks to conserve and enhance the historic environment.

The proposed signage zones will provide a coordinated and high-quality framework for future tenant signage and will contribute positively to the ongoing regeneration and visual improvement of Middleton Shopping Centre. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable in planning terms and should be supported.

I look forward to receiving confirmation of the application's registration and the contact details of the assigned case officer. I trust that the submitted information will enable a positive determination in due course. Should you have any queries, please contact me using the details at the top of this letter.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H. Arnell', with a long, sweeping diagonal stroke extending from the bottom right of the signature.

Heather Arnell
Williams Gallagher