

1. Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of an application for advertisement consent at Frank Ratcliffe Roofing, 2 Pitt Street, Radcliffe, Manchester, M26 3TF. The application seeks consent for the replacement of the existing signage with a single freestanding static LED display located within the curtilage of the site.

The statement describes the site and its context, sets out the details of the proposed development, and assesses the proposal against the relevant national and local planning policy framework. Particular regard is given to the statutory considerations for advertisements, namely, visual amenity and public safety. The assessment is informed by adopted policy, best practice guidance and recent relevant planning decisions within the Borough.

2. Site Location and Context

The application site comprises Frank Ratcliffe Roofing, located at 2 Pitt Street, Radcliffe, Manchester, M26 3TF, within the administrative area of Bury Metropolitan Borough Council. The site occupies a corner plot at the junction of Pitt Street and Bolton Road, resulting in a high level of visibility from the surrounding highway network.

The site is in established commercial use as a builders' yard and roofing supply centre, with open external storage of materials and associated operational activity taking place within the site boundary. The site is enclosed by metal palisade fencing, which defines the edge of the site along both street frontages. A number of existing signs and banners are currently displayed on the internal face of the fencing and within the yard, addressing both Pitt Street and Bolton Road.

Vehicular access to the site is taken from Higher Dean Street, with servicing, deliveries and customer activity contained entirely within the curtilage of the site. No access is taken from Bolton Road. The site frontage is directly adjacent to the public highway, with footways, carriageways and street lighting present along both Pitt Street and Bolton Road.

The surrounding area is characterised by a mixed-use context. Bolton Road accommodates residential properties in relatively close proximity to the site, interspersed with commercial and service uses along this arterial route. Pitt Street is characterised predominantly by light industrial, storage and service-related uses, reflecting its more utilitarian character. The junction of Pitt Street and Bolton Road functions as a transition point between these differing land uses.

The site is not located within a conservation area and is not subject to any heritage designations. The character of the immediate surroundings is defined by the presence of commercial activity, highway infrastructure and existing signage, with the site forming a visually active element within the local streetscape.

3. Planning History

The site has a long-established lawful commercial use as a builders' yard and roofing supply business. This use has historically been accompanied by signage and advertising associated with the operation of the business. The presence of commercial signage at the

site is therefore well established and forms part of the existing character and appearance of the site and its immediate surroundings.

There are no known previous planning or advertisement consent applications recorded for the site.

4. Proposal

The proposal seeks advertisement consent for the replacement of the existing signage with a freestanding static LED display located within the site boundary, set behind the existing perimeter fencing.

As shown on the submitted existing and proposed drawings, the new display would replace the existing signage currently positioned along the site frontage, resulting in a more consolidated and visually coherent form of advertisement.

The proposed LED screen would measure 3.84 metres by 1.92 metres and would be mounted on slim steel posts, finished in a dark, recessive colour to minimise visual impact. The display would present two-dimensional static images only for the lifetime of the development. It would contain no moving images, animation, video, strobe lighting effects, full motion imagery, or any imagery resembling road signs, traffic lights or traffic signals. Messaging would be contained within a single screen image and would not spread across multiple displays.

The LED screen would not change content more frequently than once every 10 seconds, with changes occurring instantaneously. Sequencing of messages relating to the same product would be prohibited. The interval between successive displays would be 0.1 seconds or less. The illumination of the display would not at any time be intermittent.

The LED display would be fitted with an automatic brightness control system, regulated by ambient light sensors, to ensure that luminance levels comply with the recommendations set out in the Institute of Lighting Professionals publication *"The Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements"* (PLG05, 2015), or any document amending or superseding that guidance. During twilight and nighttime hours, the luminance of the display would not exceed 300 cd/m².

A default safety mechanism would be incorporated so that, in the event of any malfunction or system failure, the display would automatically freeze or default to a black screen. This would prevent the appearance of flashing error messages, pixelation or unintended visual effects.

The proposed sign would operate without sound and would remain entirely within the curtilage of the site, with no projection over the public footway or highway. Its positioning would avoid interference with existing street furniture, traffic signage or highway sightlines at the junction of Pitt Street and Bolton Road.

Overall, the proposal seeks to rationalise and modernise the site's existing signage in a controlled and responsible manner that reflects the established commercial use of the site and its prominent corner location, while ensuring that the display operates safely, discreetly and in accordance with best practice guidance for illuminated advertisements.

5. Compliance with National and Local Planning Policy

This chapter assesses the proposal against the relevant national and local planning policy framework, with specific regard to advertisement control, amenity and public safety. The assessment draws on adopted policy, national guidance and recent delegated decisions within the Borough, which demonstrate a consistent approach to the consideration of digital advertisement displays in comparable contexts.

The following policies and guidance are relevant:

National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)

Unitary Development Plan (Part 2, Chapter 6 Environment):

EN1/2 – Townscape and Built Design
EN1/7 - Throughroutes and Gateways
EN1/9 - Advertisements

Unitary Development Plan (Part 2, Chapter 10 Highways and Transportation):

HT2/1 - The Strategic Route Network
HT6/1 - Pedestrian and Cyclist Movement
HT6/2 - Pedestrian/Vehicular Conflict

The key issues for consideration are:

- i Principle of Development
- ii Neighbouring amenity
- iii Public safety

National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)

The National Planning Policy Framework confirms that advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts. It also emphasises that control should be proportionate, efficient and focused on whether a proposal would result in clear harm to its surroundings.

The proposal comprises the replacement of existing commercial signage within an established commercial site. The principle of advertisement display is therefore accepted in national policy terms, subject to appropriate safeguards relating to design, illumination and highway safety. As demonstrated below, the proposal accords with these objectives.

Principle of Development

The proposal would replace existing signage of comparable scale and siting and would not result in an increase in the overall quantum of advertising on the site.

The principle of the proposed advertisement is supported by UDP Policy EN1/9, which allows advertisements where they do not harm amenity or public safety. The site is in established commercial use and already displays multiple signs and banners associated with that use. The proposal would rationalise and consolidate existing signage into a single,

controlled display, rather than introducing advertising into an otherwise sensitive or residential-only location.

Recent delegated approvals within Bury Borough confirm that internally illuminated digital advertisements are acceptable in commercial and mixed-use locations when appropriately designed and controlled. In particular, the approval at Elf Service Station, Turks Road, Radcliffe accepted a freestanding digital display within a commercially active forecourt, subject to strict controls on content, illumination and sequencing.

Similarly, the approval at 219 Bury Old Road, Prestwich accepted an illuminated digital LED screen on a prominent junction fronting a strategic route, where highway and amenity impacts were satisfactorily addressed.

In this context, the principle of a freestanding static LED display within the curtilage of an existing builders' yard is fully consistent with both national guidance and established local decision-making.

Neighbouring Amenity

UDP Policy EN1/2 seeks to ensure that development does not have an unacceptable adverse effect on townscape character, having regard to scale, design, materials, lighting and relationship to surrounding uses. Policy EN1/7 requires a high standard of design along through routes and gateways, while Policy EN1/9 specifically addresses advertisements in relation to amenity.

The site occupies a visually prominent corner location at the junction of Pitt Street and Bolton Road, within an area characterised by commercial activity, boundary treatments, highway infrastructure and existing signage. The proposed display is proportionate in scale to the site, and is the same size and broadly the same visual position as the existing non-illuminated signage shown on the approved drawings, set behind existing palisade fencing and finished in a dark, recessive colour to minimise visual prominence. Its freestanding form avoids clutter on boundary treatments and allows for a clear and legible presentation.

The display would show static images only, with no animation, moving content or intermittent illumination. Automatic brightness controls would ensure compliance with the Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance, with luminance limited to a maximum of 300 cd/m² during twilight and night-time hours. These controls directly reflect conditions commonly imposed in recent delegated approvals and are accepted by the Council as an effective means of protecting visual and residential amenity.

Although residential properties are present along Bolton Road, the proposal would not result in unacceptable harm to residential amenity. The static nature of the display, controlled luminance levels and absence of sound or animation ensure that the advertisement would not be intrusive, overbearing or visually dominant when viewed from neighbouring properties. As such, the proposal accords with UDP Policies EN1/2, EN1/7 and EN1/9.

Public Safety

UDP Policy EN1/9 and national guidance require careful consideration of whether advertisements could distract drivers or compromise highway safety, particularly in locations close to junctions. Policies HT2/1, HT6/1 and HT6/2 seek to protect the safe operation of the strategic route network and minimise conflict between vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists.

The proposed display would be located entirely within the site boundary, with no projection over the highway or footway. It would not obscure sightlines, interfere with traffic signage or resemble road signs, signals or traffic control equipment. The display would present static imagery only, with instantaneous changes at intervals of no more than once every 10 seconds, avoiding distraction to drivers.

Delegated decisions within the Borough demonstrate that digital displays can be acceptable on or near strategic routes and junctions where such safeguards are in place and where the display is read in the context of an established commercial environment. In this case, the proposal incorporates equivalent or more stringent controls, including a fail-safe mechanism to default to a frozen or black screen in the event of malfunction.

The proposal would therefore not prejudice pedestrian or highway safety and is consistent with UDP Policies HT2/1, HT6/1, HT6/2 and EN1/9.

6. Precedents

In assessing the proposal, it is relevant to consider recent planning decisions within the Borough that relate to internally illuminated digital and LED advertisement displays. These decisions demonstrate how the Council has consistently applied national and local policy tests relating to amenity and public safety in comparable contexts.

219 Bury Old Road, Prestwich M25 1JF - Applications 65620 and 65621 (Decided 2020)

Applications 65620 and 65621 related to the installation of internally illuminated digital LED screens at 219 Bury Old Road, a prominent corner property located on a strategic route and at a signalised junction. The site is within a mixed-use area, with commercial uses on the ground floor and residential accommodation above.

In determining these applications, the Council accepted that digital LED signage can be appropriate in principle within mixed-use and commercial locations, provided that impacts on visual amenity and highway safety are satisfactorily addressed. The proposals were considered acceptable due to their controlled design, appropriate scale relative to the host building, and the imposition of conditions restricting luminance, sequencing and operational behaviour.

These decisions demonstrate that the presence of nearby residential properties and a sensitive highway context does not preclude digital signage, where appropriate safeguards are in place and where the signage is read as part of an established commercial streetscape.

Elf Service Station, Turks Road, Radcliffe M26 3NW - Application 71038/ADV (Approved 2024)

Application 71038/ADV sought advertisement consent for a freestanding internally illuminated digital display within the forecourt of a petrol filling station located at a prominent junction in Radcliffe. The site occupies a visually open and highly trafficked location, with residential properties in relatively close proximity.

The Council approved the proposal subject to conditions controlling luminance levels, content change intervals, sequencing and fail-safe operation. In reaching its decision, the Council concluded that the digital display was acceptable in the context of an established commercial use and would not result in harm to visual amenity or public safety. Particular weight was given to the static nature of the imagery, the absence of animation or sound, and the use of automatic brightness controls.

This decision is directly relevant to the current proposal, as it confirms that freestanding digital displays can be acceptable within commercial sites in Radcliffe when designed and operated in accordance with best practice guidance and policy requirements.

Taken together, these precedents demonstrate a consistent decision-making approach by the Council. Digital and LED advertisement displays have been found acceptable where they are located within commercial or mixed-use contexts, are proportionate in scale, and are subject to robust controls to protect amenity and highway safety.

The current proposal aligns closely with these approved schemes. It involves the replacement and rationalisation of existing signage within an established commercial site, incorporates stringent controls on luminance and content, and avoids any encroachment into the public highway or interference with sightlines. As such, the proposal is consistent with recent and relevant planning decisions within the Borough and should be afforded similar weight in its determination.

7. Conclusion

This Statement has demonstrated that the proposed freestanding static LED display is acceptable in principle and complies with the relevant provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework and the saved policies of the Bury Unitary Development Plan.

The proposal would replace existing signage of comparable scale and siting within an established commercial site and would not result in an increase in the overall quantum of advertising. The development would rationalise and consolidate the current signage arrangement, resulting in a more coherent and visually ordered frontage that reflects the commercial character of the site and its prominent corner location.

The design, scale and positioning of the display are appropriate to the surrounding townscape and would not give rise to harm to visual or residential amenity. The static nature of the imagery, strict controls on content changes, automatic brightness regulation and absence of sound ensure that the display would operate discreetly and in accordance with recognised best practice for illuminated advertisements.

The proposal would not prejudice public or highway safety. The display would be located entirely within the site boundary, would not interfere with sightlines or traffic signage, and would incorporate robust operational safeguards, including a fail-safe mechanism in the event of malfunction.

Relevant recent planning decisions within the Borough demonstrate that digital and LED advertisement displays are acceptable in comparable commercial and mixed-use contexts where appropriate controls are in place. The current proposal aligns closely with these precedents.

For these reasons, the proposal is considered to comply with national and local planning policy and should be granted advertisement consent.