

Our ref: J040958
Your ref:PP-08795170

Planning Department
Manchester City Council
Town Hall Extension
Mount Street Entrance
Ground Floor
Albert Square
Manchester
M60 2LA

11 June 2020

Dear Sir/Madam,

Site: 544-546 Hyde Road, Manchester, M18 7AA
Conversion of poster advertisement display to D-poster

Following the refusal of application reference: 124683/AOH/2019 on 24 October 2019 GL Hearn have been instructed to submit a revised application for advertisement consent to upgrade a poster and paste billboard. This resubmission forms part of Clear Channel's network upgrade to a modern digital poster format which would allow posters to be changed from a central location without the need to visit each site individually.

The previous application was refused on visual amenity grounds however we do not think the Council gave due consideration to the application.

Since the refusal the Council have consented a similar digital LED display (125120/AOH/2019) at the Railway Embankment on Hyde Road M18 8HA which is nearby but in a far more prominent location (see **figure 2**). **Figure 1** provides an image of another existing and longstanding illuminated advertisement display which renders the Council's decision to refuse planning application reference 124683/AOH/2019 somewhat inconsistent.

This application is part of a wider project to modernise Clear Channel's network utilising new display technology that is lightweight and can be erected with limited additional engineering, as the digital poster weighs little more than the paper and paste poster it will replace. The quality of the image produced will mimic that of a traditional poster, with the overall aim of the project being to replace like for like with no adverse impact on visual amenity.

The Proposal

The proposal seeks to "repost" the existing display at 544-546 Hyde Road, Manchester, M18 7AA with a "D-poster" which will display multiple static advertisements on rotation.

The proposals allow the existing advertising network to be better managed, monitored and maintained, to meet modern requirements of advertisers. This will bring a wide range of benefits as follows:

- Upgrade of sites lacking in investment;
- Reduction in vehicle trips for reposting adverts;
- Consolidation and overall reduction in the number of billboards in the network;
- Eradicating the need to print posters and avoiding the associated waste involved in the production process;
- Ability to broadcast emergency messaging;
- Ability to use void periods for non-commercial campaigns;
- Opportunity for more creative real time and locally relevant advertising;
- Opportunity to integrate additional hardware to meet Smart City objectives.

Content will be controlled remotely in real time from a Networks Operation Centre (NOC) and the site will be monitored remotely 24/7 to facilitate responsive maintenance. Diagnostics software will report any faults back to the NOC and a kill switch will turn the content to black until it can be resolved.

In most instances the re-posting of a D-Poster can be achieved at a similar speed to traditional posting, with minimal structural work and the existing 150mm frames repaired or replaced and painted black.

In order to ensure that the nature of the advertisement does not substantially or materially change, it is proposed to control its operation via condition. Suggested conditions include:

- Static images to be displayed only (no moving or flashing images);
- Changes between adverts to take place instantly with no sequencing, fading, swiping or merging of images;
- Maximum level of night time illuminance to be set to 300cd/m² in accordance with ILP Guidelines;
- Advertisements to change no more frequently than once every ten seconds.

The above conditions are industry standard and are now commonly seen applied to applications of this type. Where circumstances demand, additional controls or variations of these conditions may be acceptable to the applicant.

It should be noted that the appropriate level of illuminance for digital signage varies depending on the level of ambient light in the surroundings. The Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP) guidelines set a night time limit at which the display will not cause glare to drivers and will be appropriate within in an urban or suburban character area (300cd/m²). The level of illuminance will be set on site manually to be at an appropriate level for the area and to mimic the poster being replaced. Whilst the ILP guidelines will represent the upper limit, the actual level of illuminance in all likelihood will be well below this. The displays are capable of being dimmed to within 1% of their maximum output and as such any concerns regarding levels of illuminance at a particular site can be dealt with swiftly and remotely. Lower levels of illuminance prolong the lifetime of the display and reduce electricity costs and as such there is an imperative to ensure that upgraded sites are not over illuminated.

The Site

The proposal site is located on the corner of Hyde Road and Sunny Brow Road and supports 1 externally illuminated billboard. The site surroundings are a mixture of commercial and residential in character and the existing board sits on the side of a building with retail on the ground floor and residential on the upper floors. The site sits on a residential street and faces onto a blank gable end

of a residential apartment building. There are no other advertising boards in the area and there are no heritage assets in close proximity to the site and is not located within a conservation area.

The proposal site is an established location for advertising, having supported the current advertising board since October 2008. As the size and nature of the advertisement has not altered in over ten years the signage benefits from deemed consent under Class 13(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007.

Figure 1: existing externally illuminated poster board on junction with Williams Road/Hyde Road



Figure 2: Approved digital LED display (125120/AOH/2019) at Railway Embankment Hyde Road M18 8HA



Planning Policy

The legislative framework for the control of advertisements is contained within *The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007* (the “Regulations”). Regulation 3 states that advertising should be controlled in the interest of amenity and public safety, taking into account the provisions of the development plan, in so far as they are material, in addition to any other relevant factors.

The National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF) sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. In accordance with Paragraph 132 of the NPPF, advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking into account cumulative impacts. As described in the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) the regime is a “lighter touch” than the system for obtaining planning permission for development. The NPPG also clarifies that a local plan does not have to contain advertisement policies and that if such policies are considered necessary to protect the unique character of a particular area, these should be evidence-based.

The development Plan for the area consists of the 2012 adopted Core Strategy and the extant Policies from the Unitary Development Plan 1995. Chapter 15 of the extant Unitary Development Control Policies relates to advertising and contains three relevant policies for consideration:

DC15.1 The Advertisement Regulations require that applications for advertisements be considered only in the interests of amenity and public safety. In determining applications for free standing hoardings and wall mounted posters the Council will take account of the following matters in assessing these interests:

- a. the general location of the proposed development and the effect on visual amenity;*
- b. the scope for posters and hoardings to make a positive contribution to the locality;*
- c. the design of the structures, and the relationship with any premises on which they are located;*
- d. the effect of the proposal on permanent redevelopment of the land;*
- e. public safety resulting from the positioning of the design of the display;*
- f. the ease with which the structure is capable of being satisfactorily maintained;*
- g. the use of hoardings to screen vacant sites or buildings during development, or where development is known to be imminent;*
- h. the use of hoardings as part of a scheme to prevent access by unauthorised users onto land pending development;*
- i. the use of hoardings to disguise or improve the appearance of unsightly features, operations or activities;*
- j. the number of advertisements in the locality and their cumulative effect on visual amenity.*

DC15.2 In assessing the interests of amenity and safety the Council will take account of the following criteria:

- a. developments of this kind should not harm the character or architectural features of a building, nor interfere with its proper use;*
- b. they should be in scale with the locality and relate properly to the site on which they stand;*
- c. they should be unobtrusive and should not intrude into residential neighbourhoods and areas of high amenity value;*
- d. a proposal which would be injurious to public safety or adversely affect the flow of traffic, by reason of its position, size, or design will not be permitted.*

DC15.3 Where, having regard to the preceding policies, the Council considers the proposed development to be acceptable in principle, conditions may be imposed in order to protect safety and amenity.

Planning Considerations

The proposal will not cumulatively increase the number of adverts in the area and overall the project will see a reduction in the number of advertising sites. The like for like replacement of the display and the control over operation seeks to ensure that the change in the visual impact of the site on the surroundings is de minimis and not material. Nevertheless, it is acknowledged by the applicant that the change in the type of illumination and the potential to increase the rate of change of the adverts would require express advertisement consent. The impact of these alterations has been considered in amenity and public safety terms as follows:

Amenity

As the proposal seeks to “repost” the existing advert and therefore mimic the existing situation, there will be minimal impact on visual amenity during the daytime. The size and positioning of the advertisement will remain the same and the level of illumination will be set to ensure that the proposed advertisement is not materially different from the existing position. The side by side comparison photograph on the specification sheet provided with the planning drawings helps to

illustrate the minimal difference between the existing type of display and the proposed replacement once controls are put in place.

Public Safety

When assessing public safety, the key considerations are whether the location is appropriate (i.e. undemanding on the driver) and whether the level of illumination and the sequential change between advertisements is controlled to prevent distraction from the driving task. As the principle of an advertisement has already been established at this location, the Council must only consider whether the proposed controls are sufficient to ensure that there is no additional distraction which would cause an unacceptable impact on highway safety. Should the Council's Highways department identify any reasons why the location might be challenging to drivers, the applicant would be open to discussing alternative controls.

Conclusion

This application is part of a project to bring Clear Channel's stock of poster and paste billboards into the 21st century.

The proposal will not change the size, position or orientation of the advert. As such the established acceptability of the advertisement should not change materially. The proposed conditions to control the luminance of the screens and the operation of the digital screens will ensure that there is no additional harm to amenity or road safety.

For these reasons and the positive benefits set out above, it is considered that the application should be granted consent.

Application Submission

In order to complete and validate the application, please find attached the following documentation:

- Completed application forms prepared by GL Hearn;
- Letter Statement prepared by GL Hearn (this letter);
- Architectural drawings and CGIs
- [0203-4859_PA_01 Site Location Plan]
- [0203-4859_PA_02 Existing Site Plan]
- [0203-4859_PA_03 Proposed Site Plan]
- [0203-4859_PA_04 Elevation AA]
- [0203-4859_PA_05 Specification]

This is a revised application following a refusal and therefore no fee is payable.

I trust that the above is clear and we look forward to receiving notification that the application has been registered in due course. Should you have any queries in relation to any of the attached information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Selwyn Atkinson'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S'.

Selwyn Atkinson BSc (Hons) MPhil (Cantab) MRTPI

Planning Associate Director

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