JCDecaux

Head of Planning
Chief Executive's Department
Manchester City Council
PO Box 532
Manchester
M60 2LA

17 April 2012

F.A.O. Julie Roscoe

Our Ref A00779

Dear Madam,

Town and Country Planning Act 1990
Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007

Re: LED Display Screen at City Tower Piccadilly Plaza Manchester

Please find enclosed an application for advertising consent to install an LED advertisement sign at Piccadilly Plaza, in accordance with the details attached to the application form.

The application comprises the following documents;

- Regulation 9 application for advertisement consent
- OS plan of application site No A00779/01
- Detail plan and elevation drawing 1:500 No A00779/02
- Elevation plan No A00779/03
- Detail plan of display screen No A00779/04
- Photomontage image No A00779/05
- Letter from Peter Crowther Bruntwood Estates
- LED manufacturers specification detail

Application Background

This application is one of three separate proposals submitted by JCDecaux on behalf of our client Bruntwood Estates, relating to the development of new advertising locations on four sites in the City. Bruntwood Estates is a privately owned commercial property company specialising in the provision of high quality office space, serviced offices, meeting facilities and other commercial buildings.

As such the Company owns or controls an extensive range of commercial holdings across the City. Although a nationwide Company, Bruntwood Estates has a close connection with Manchester and plays an integral supporting role in the commercial and business economy of the City.

Bruntwood Estates has over the last year worked in partnership with JCDecaux to identify and develop a limited number of iconic and innovative advertising proposals. I enclose a letter from Peter Crowther, the Development Director for Bruntwood, who has been actively involved in the project and supportive of the current proposals. The locations have been chosen in light of their commercial setting and the scale of surrounding buildings, which is consistent with the advice in local and national policy guidance. The three locations being developed by JCDecaux are the subject of related but separate applications. They are;

- **City Tower Piccadilly Plaza**
- Armstrong House MTC Oxford Road, and
- Oxford House Oxford Road.

The first of these locations is the subject of this application.

The partnership with Bruntwood Estates creates a unique opportunity to develop a number of contemporary and innovative advertising displays on primary locations within Manchester. JCDecaux have been at the forefront of development in the outdoor media, with extensive experience of creating some of the most inventive and striking advertising sites across the Country in road, rail, retail and airport environments. In all developments the Company's aim is to secure the best locations and to set the highest standards in build quality, design and innovation. JCDecaux has pioneered the use of modern technologies in the outdoor media road side environment and fully embrace the drive for greater efficiency and sustainability across the industry.

LED Technology

The advertisements proposed in this and other locations on the Bruntwood Estate will utilise the latest technology in the form of low energy LED back lighting and screen displays. Modern digital formats are redefining the advertising media, not just the roadside environment. The Company supports

the aim of ensuring a future sustainable approach to the media to meet changing commercial and consumer needs. The environmental benefits of LED technology are clear not only in the reduced demand for energy to post and light the advertisements but also in eliminating the need to recycle waste material. Our own research consistently indicates a 50-70% reduction in electricity consumption. LED lighting is also a much cleaner form of display methodology with a 2/3 reduction in carbon emissions compared with traditional fluorescent and incandescent lighting.

LED modules have a longer life and are easier and cleaner to recycle and dispose of. The reduction in consumption is due in large part to the ability of LED's to light in one direction rather than the more wasteful 360° light spillage found in other forms of illumination. The transition to digital forms of advertising also eliminates the need to print vinyl 'skins', which are ordinarily replaced and recycled every two weeks on traditional back lit formats. Digital technology provides enhanced flexibility and functionality that enables an image or message to be displayed instantly via a computer feed. The displayed images offer far superior definition, which generate clearer crisper images, comparable in quality to the advertising images found on television and in publications.

The proposed sites identified in our client's portfolio are the type of prime locations that merit the investment to create iconic and inspiring advertisement developments that enhance local character and symbolize the aspirations of the City.

Application Site & Surroundings

City Tower Piccadilly Plaza

The site is located in the heart of Manchester City centre at the City Tower complex, Piccadilly Plaza. The site is located on the south west side of Piccadilly Gardens and is bounded by Parker Street, which faces Piccadilly Gardens, Portland Street and New York Street. The Piccadilly Plaza complex dates back to the early 1960's and includes the 30 storey office building now known as City Tower and the 15 storey 'Mercure' Hotel, which has a prominent and distinctive frontage to Portland Street. The scale and mass of Piccadilly Plaza dominates both Piccadilly Gardens and the City and presents a form of architectural brutalism that was progressive and symbolic for the period, but unforgiving to the 21st century eye. The design of the hotel is singularly unusual

and features a cantilevered block that appears to overhang Portland Street and an open podium or parking above the retail units below.

The ground floor premises within the complex and wider area mainly comprise commercial retail units befitting the nature and character of the City centre. In general the scale of buildings within the area is substantial and represents an eclectic mix of styles, designs and materials. Piccadilly Gardens, once the site of the City's Royal Infirmary, is laid out as a public garden with water features, pavilion and landscaped areas. The gardens are also the location for the City's main public transport terminus. The area is one of a vibrant active and busy city centre location. Within the area there are many examples of commercial signage and imagery consistent with the predominant land use. An LED display screen currently exists on the Piccadilly Plaza complex facing onto Parker Street, at approximately third floor level, which was permitted in 2005 under reference no 075295/AOH/2005/C2.

Application Detail

The application relates to the open car parking deck area to the hotel at the junction of Portland and Parker Street. The application site is the corner location set between the existing open parking spaced as indicated on plan A00779/01. The proposal is to erect a single sided, portrait orientated, LED screen incorporated within the building fabric. The current view from Portland Street is of the double height glazed façade at street level surmounted by a concrete parapet wall behind which is the surface parking deck. The main hotel building is visible behind this façade at a right angle to Portland Street. The proposed screen will sit behind the parapet wall at the eastern corner inset.

The proposed screen will have a maximum illuminance that does not exceed 3500 Nitts/m² but will be controlled by light sensors to vary the brightness of the screens according to the brightness of the day, a measure recommended by Highway Services in other recent proposals for LED displays, and necessary to make the screens visible during the day. The illuminance of the screens will then be reduced to 10% of maximum capacity between dusk and dawn reducing the visual impact of the advertisements at night-time. The light sensors will ensure that the level of illuminance of the displayed image is sensitive to daylight and seasonal changes.

The proposed screen will be orientated to face Portland Street and is designed to fit within a purpose built surround that will match the look of the concrete material of the parapet wall and hotel building. The height of the screen and surrounding frame is designed to be comparable in scale to the existing LED screen on Parker Street, which measures 9m x 6m. The proposed screen will be portrait orientated and measure 7.5m in height by 5m wide. The proposal is intended to match the design and appearance of the existing signage and to be seen as a sympathetic addition to the building.

The installation of an additional LED screen to the City Centre would reinforce the objective of promoting new technology and encouraging development that improves the perception and image of the City. Permitted LED displays at Mancunian Way, Piccadilly Plaza, City Gateway Tower, the Axis Tower at Albion Wharf, The Printworks and the Triangle Centre contribute to creating a progressive image of the City and a centre for innovation in the outdoor media.

Display Content

The technology used in the screen will provide the functionality and level of control that would enable a range of advertisement images to be displayed.

Principally the images displayed on the screen will advertise commercial products; however the technology will provide the flexibility to display a range of information including more locally based messages. The Company has for many years provided advertising space for charitable organisations to create a level of exposure that would otherwise be cost prohibitive. Each year the Company makes available 10% of all advertising space to our chosen charities, which this year is Macmillan Cancer Support and the NSPCC. Digital formats have also provided a platform for annual charity campaigns such as the Poppy Appeal and Children in Need. The Company is proud of its role in supporting national and local charities and their work with local communities. As part of our contract with Bruntwood Estates, they intend to use the screen each year to promote their own sponsored charity. It is also anticipated that the screen will be made available and used to promote council initiatives, local charitable campaigns and emergency safety information.

The proposed advertisement complies with the Standard Conditions set out in Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 and the applicant is content that these conditions should be

applied. In addition the applicant would accept the following conditions recommended by the Head of Highway Services in the interests of highway safety;

1. The advertisement will be static only and not include any animation, flashing, scrolling intermittent or full motion video.
2. The advertisements will change no more frequently than once every 8 seconds with the transition between advertisements being a gradual and subtle process taking no more than 3 seconds.
3. In the event of breakdown, the screens will automatically power-off to prevent flashing error messages being shown.

Planning Considerations
Amenity Issues

The 2007 Advertisement Regulations require application to be assessed in the interests of amenity and public safety. In respect of amenity one needs to examine the character of the local area, which would include the nature and type of land uses and buildings, which together with features of interest make an areas character distinctive. The application site building is unique in the context of the City. There are a number of heritage buildings within the central area around the application site, however the site itself and the scale and design of the hotel building creates a singularly distinctive form of architecture and environment within which the proposed screen would comfortably fit.

The scale of buildings within the locality is substantial and that scale provides the backdrop for assessing the effect of the proposal. In this localised context it is reasonable to conclude that the buildings, rather than the proposed screen, will remain the more visually dominate feature of the street. On the issue of scale and proportion, Circular guidance 03/07 touched upon this issue in paragraph 8 of Appendix E, which states

> *'In predominantly commercial surroundings, the scale of buildings may be sufficiently large to accommodate larger poster displays without any adverse effect upon visual amenity…and it is to be expected that decisions on applications and appeals in commercial areas will seek to match the scale of poster displays with the scale of adjacent buildings'*

The proposal should be considered within the context of the local environment and its effect assessed in light of the composition and scale of surrounding buildings. The proposed display structure would be seen above the road and will be in a prominent position on Portland Street but would fall short of being unacceptably intrusive. The simplicity and elegance of the design, seen as a duplication of the existing LED structure, would provide a striking contrast to the unprepossessing buildings that form the visual context. The proposal would enliven an otherwise barren and sterile building facade and provide a positive addition to the townscape to complement character and enhance the amenity of the area. The existing LED structure approved in 2005 was considered on its merit and found to be appropriate to the local context without causing harm. The same conclusions apply to this current proposal and would not be against the interests of visual amenity.

Public Safety Issues

In respect of public safety, the key issue is whether the proposed screen and its location would be so distracting or confusing to motorists as to create a hazard and prejudice the safety of road users. The display screen will be positioned at a high level and will be seen for some distance by drivers on the approach to the application site along Portland Street. There will be ample opportunity to see the simple message being displayed on the screen without causing distraction, particularly with the introduction of sufficient controls to prevent full motion displays. The approach to the application site is on a straight section of road devoid of any features where road conditions would demand more care on the part of the driver.

Advertising is part of the fabric of commercial areas such as the City centre, whereby the presence of the proposed screen would not appear as an unexpected, distracting or confusing feature that is likely to prejudice road safety. Driver expectation of seeing commercial images in main retail areas is already very high and they are alert to such visual stimuli and adjust their driving accordingly. The introduction of LED technology to the City centre is not such an unusual form of development as there is a significant number of existing LED displays across the City to which drivers and pedestrians have become accustomed to seeing.

The proposed development would be consistent with both national and local policies regarding advertisement consent, including the Council's Unitary

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Development Plan policy DC15 “Advertisements, Hoardings and Posters”. The proposal will have the effect of improving the appearance and perception of the City for visitors and locals. The investment in modern cleaner and greener technology within Manchester is a progressive approach that creates a positive impression of the City and one that embraces sustainable development through exciting and new media formats.

Please contact me should you require any further details or information regarding the application.

Yours faithfully,



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