

MMU Sandra Burslem Signage Project

Manchester Metropolitan University

Design and Access Statement BSA Project No: 25-003 | DA-01 | February 2025



**Manchester
Metropolitan
University**



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Tracker

Issue	Date	Revision	Received By	Comment	Approved
01	14/02/2025	01		Report issued for 'Planning'	

Consultant Team

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1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

Bowker Sadler Architecture have a history of undertaking architectural project work for Manchester Metropolitan University dating back to 2017. In 2025, we were asked to look at the proposals for new signage for The Sandra Burslem Building including acting as Lead Consultant for a wider team including Signage Specialists and Cost Consultants.

Manchester Metropolitan University has several large scale building and public realm projects which collectively underpin the University's strategy – the Road to 2030. A key component of this strategy is to retain their commitment to on-campus education, the student experience and research, via the delivery of a range of projects to deliver a safe, accessible and connected civic campus. These will include new developments and facilities, refurbishment, conserving heritage assets, and improving the public realm and green spaces. Alongside the building projects, the University has developed a brand strategy which articulates the importance for the Manchester Met brand to be consistently applied across its buildings and for the experience of all who interact with the University at any of our numerous touch points to come away with the same positive experience.

Through the introduction of new buildings and refurbishment of existing ones, it has become apparent there are inconsistencies in how and where we apply the University brand to enhance wayfinding and the ability of all our visitors, staff and students to be able to navigate their way across the city and onto campus. Rather than take a piecemeal approach to rectifying this, they have decided to implement a holistic appraisal of the entire estate which will bring in the following projects, while applying the principles which underpin both our brand strategy and overarching University strategy. The ongoing building entrances signage project – a review and update of all new and existing building entrances has already begun and this particular application deals with the signage at the Sandra Burslem Building.



2.0 Context, Evaluation & Design

2.1 Context

The “University Realm” that makes up Manchester Metropolitan University campus is something all staff, students and visitors experience. It is one of the Universities greatest assets. The public realm contributes to its users wellbeing and a key part of that experience is creating a distinctive sense of place, unique to Manchester Metropolitan’s identity.

In 2018 the University commissioned a comprehensive audit of the estate masterplan, this document addressed current constraints, objectives and key opportunities to guide the principles and strategies of the University’s masterplan. As part of these works the campus signage and wayfinding was reviewed with key observations including:

- Campus boundary is weakly defined
- Poor gateway markers and lacking a strong identity
- A huge variety of signs that are inconsistent
- Key entrances are difficult due to lack of signage impact
- Wayfinding to be improved with coherent strategy
- Poor sense of place

2.2 Evaluation

Key Observations:

- Variety of signs layouts
- Campus boundary is weakly defined
- Not coherent with present MMU brand
- Not coherent with wayfinding signage strategy
- Poor visibility at key gateways
- Illegible scales for viewing distances
- As the campus has developed the positioning of some signs have become redundant
- Low visibility and contrast levels

Key Principles:

- Improve campus identity and create strong thresholds
- Improve outward facing edges of the campus
- Create a consistent and identifiable campus
- Unify the material palettes
- Define University owned buildings
- Use consistent branding
- High level signs to work in conjunction with low level wayfinding signs and building identifier signs to build a strong sense of place
- Strengthen connection to Birley and All Saints

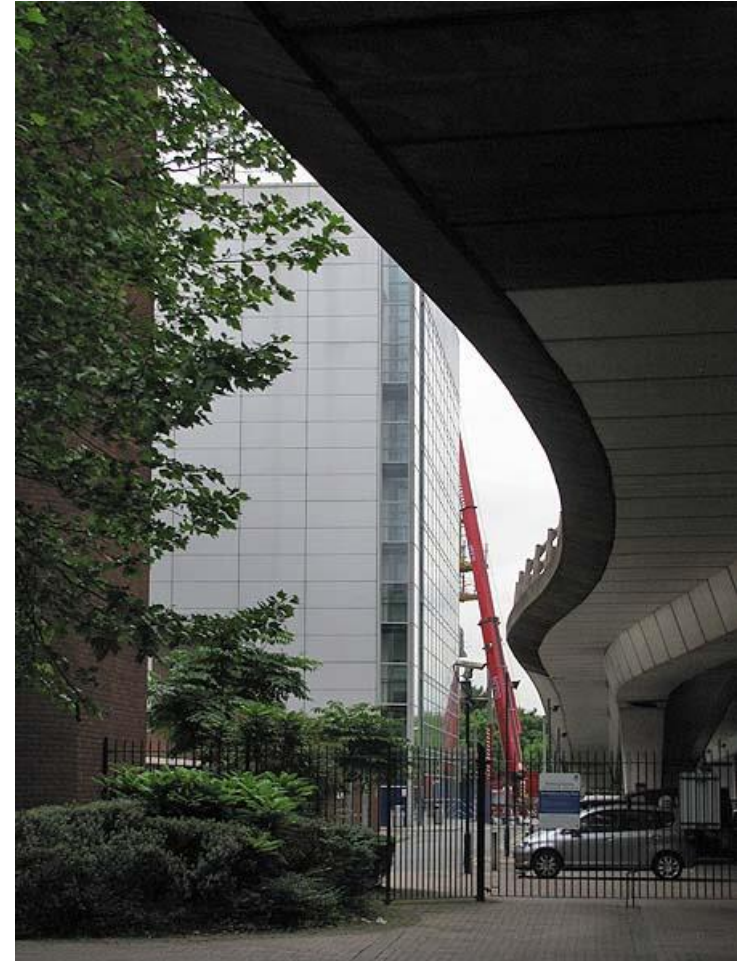
3.0 The Brief

The brief, as outlined by MMU outlines the following requirements for new signage at The Sandra Burslem Building:

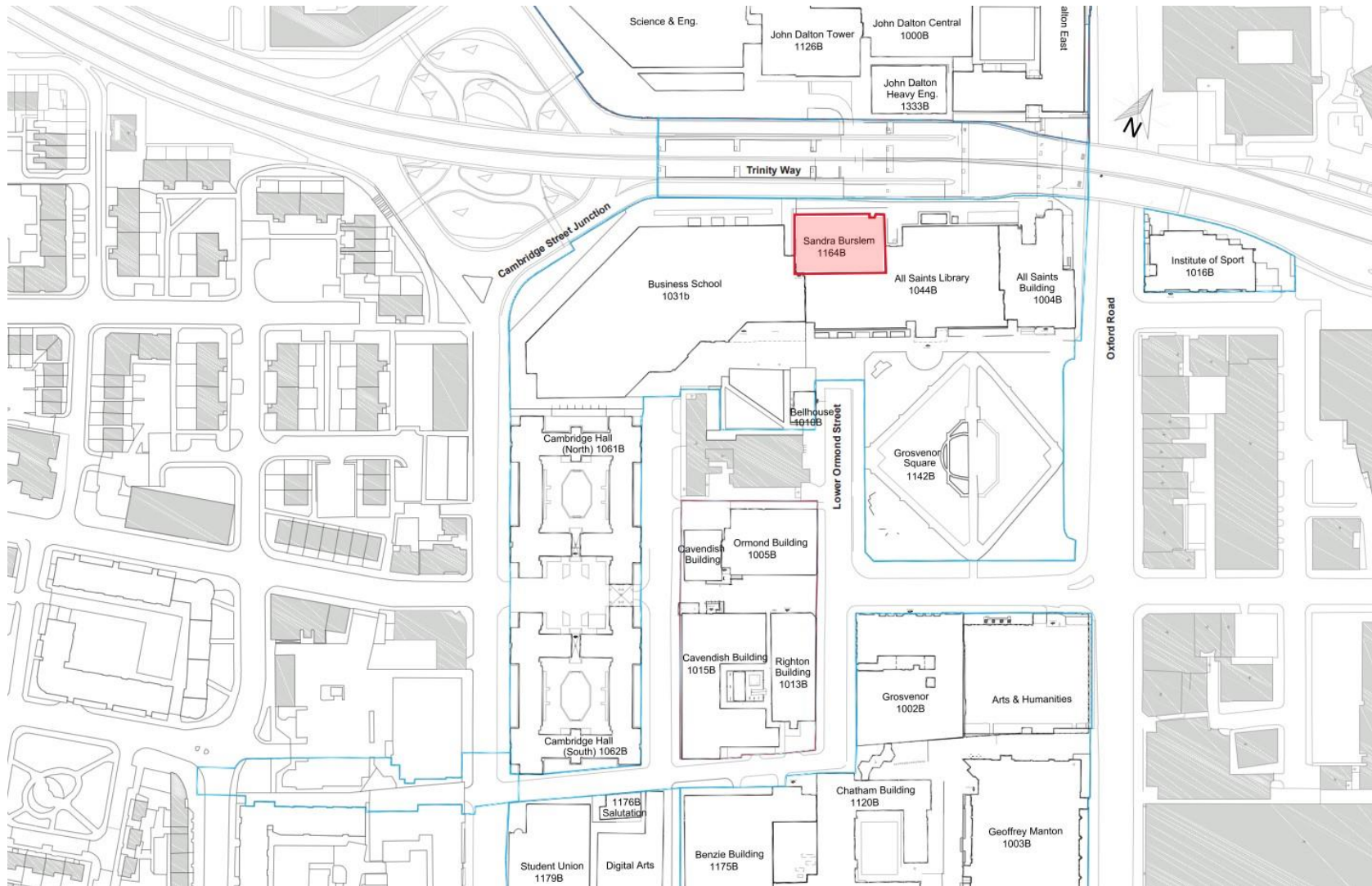
- Investigate option for overlaying spade logo onto existing MMU logo on the North Elevation (now discounted)
- New 'header' logo to plant room glazing to North Elevation
- Investigate option for overlaying spade logo onto existing MMU logo on the South Elevation
- New 'header' logo to plant room glazing to South Elevation
- New 'header' return panels on East & West Elevations to match

The proposals, as described in this statement, are to be read in conjunction with the Planning Drawings submitted with this application:

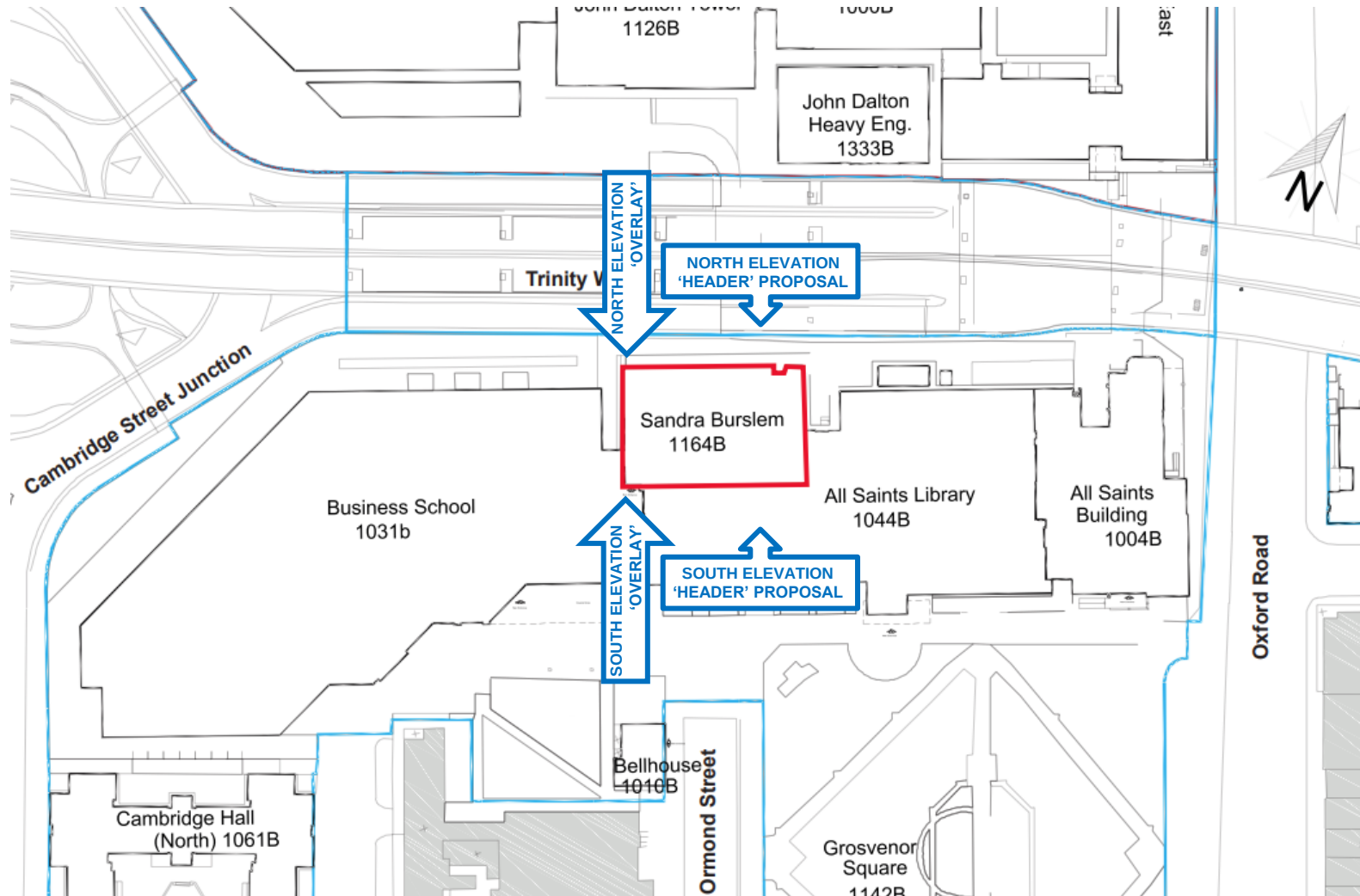
1000	Location Plan
1001	Existing & Proposed Elevations (North & South)
1002	Existing & Proposed Elevations (East & West)



4.0 Signage Proposals | 4.1 Context Location Plan



4.0 Signage Proposals | 4.2 Location Plan for all signs



4.0 Signage Proposals | 4.3 North & South Elevations: Spade Logo 'Overlay'

A desktop exercise was carried out to see if superimposing the MMU Spade Logo over the existing high-level MMU logo would work.

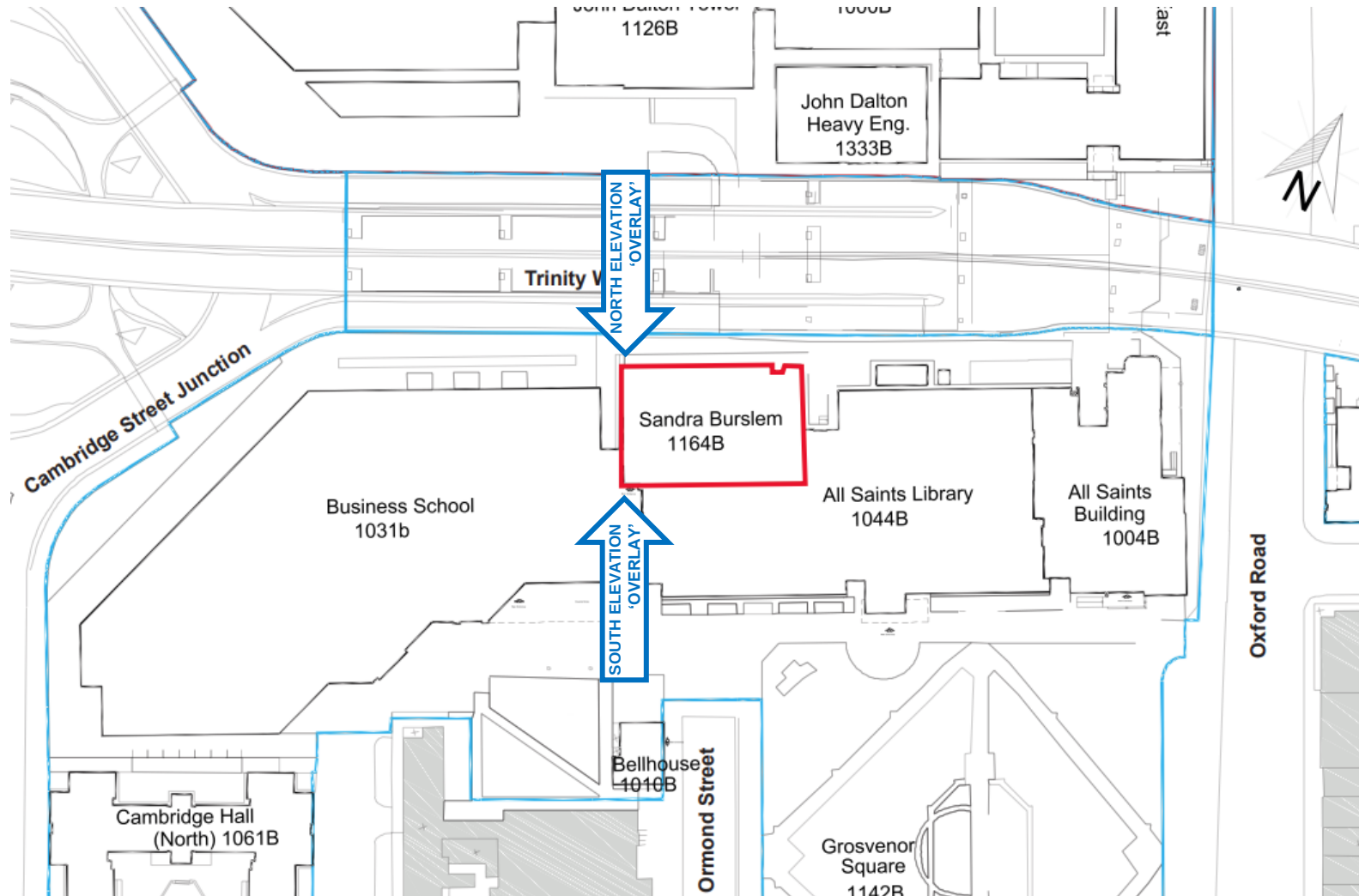
Prior to this, we visited site and in particular the plantroom at the top level to see how practical this might be.

We found that the existing blue acrylic MMU signs, both sets were flush mounted to the rear of the glazing on the North and South Elevations. The full width of 22 no existing glazed panels on each elevation also has an internally applied teal coloured etch vinyl to obscure visibility of the plant equipment from external view.

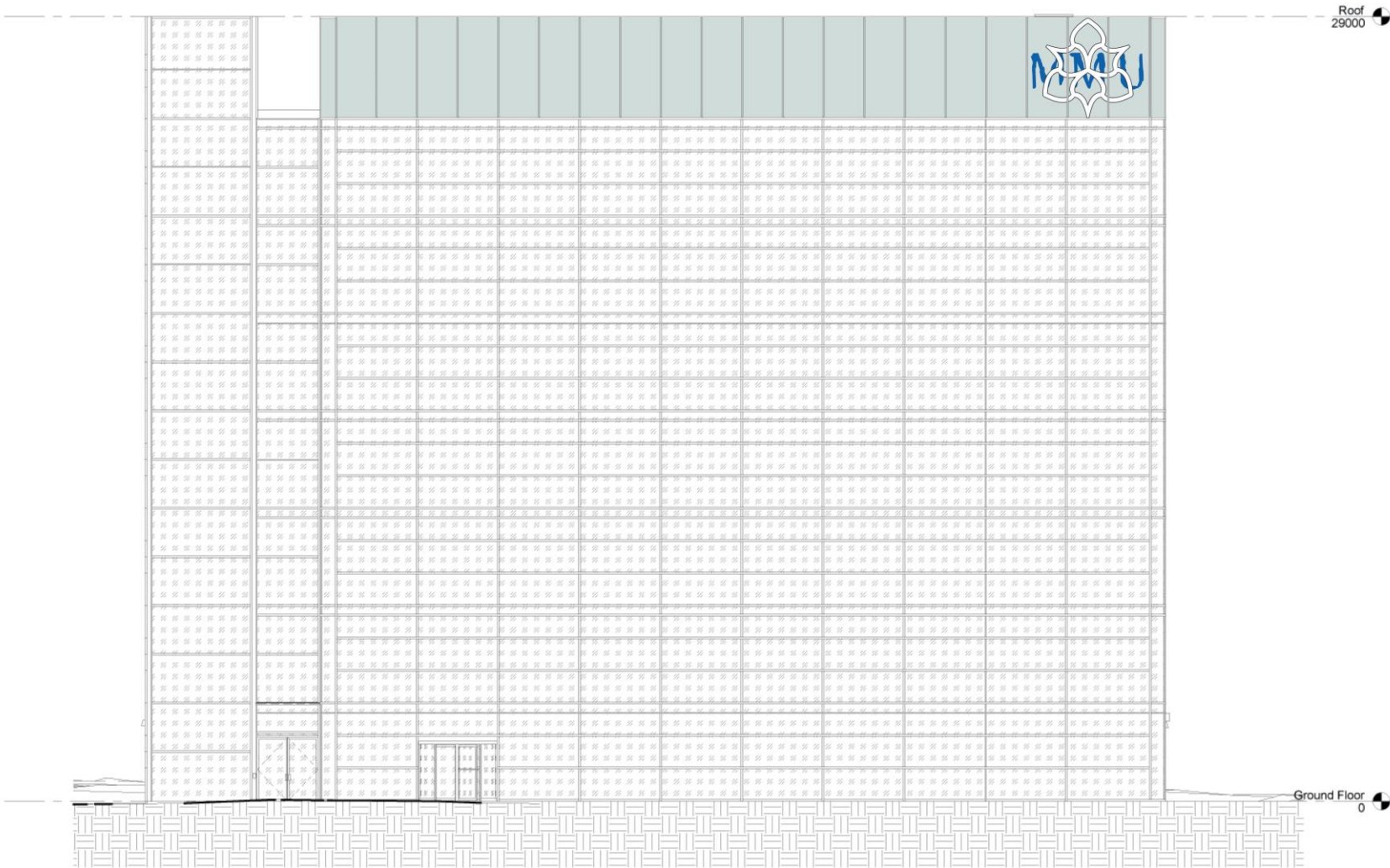
Unfortunately, as you can see from the attached images, the existing MMU letters and vinyl on both elevations have been completely encapsulated by MDF boards preventing any means of safely gaining access to remove this signage. In addition, as the signage was installed prior to the introduction of the current plant equipment/gear, the area directly in front of each set of letters has a large fixed ducting system running the full length of the plant room which cannot be moved. Due to these reasons, we have no safe means of accessing the existing MMU letters nor the internally applied etched vinyl.



4.0 Signage Proposals | 4.3 North & South Elevations: Spade Logo 'Overlay'



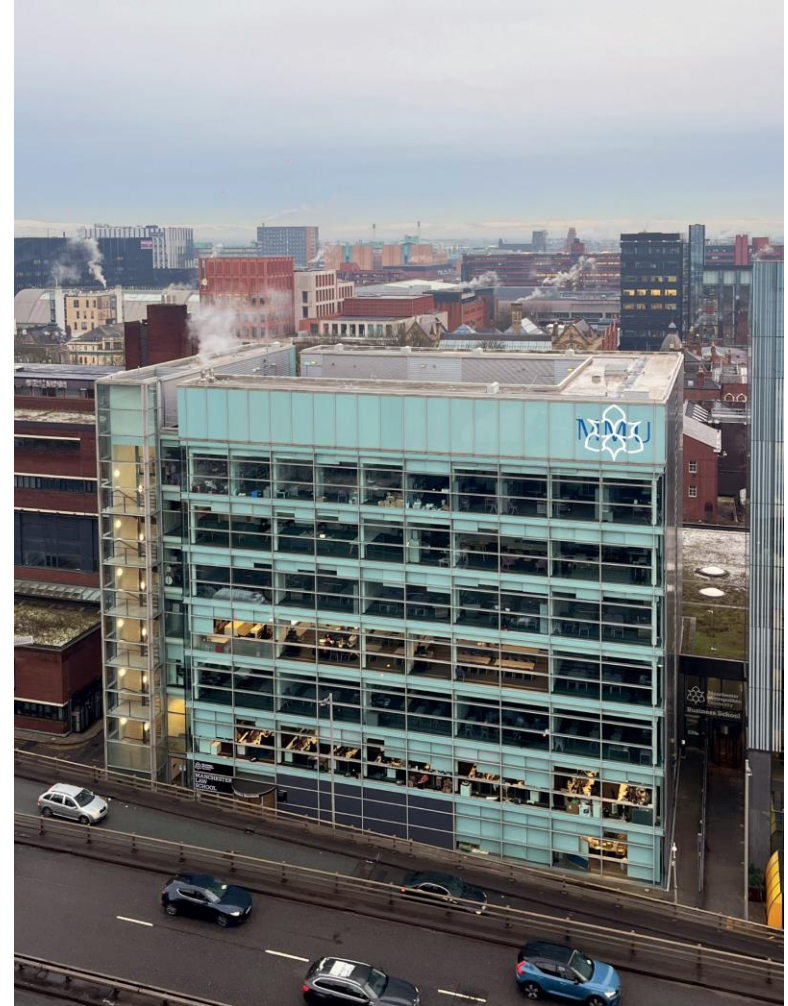
4.0 Signage Proposals | 4.3 North Elevation: Spade Logo ‘Overlay’



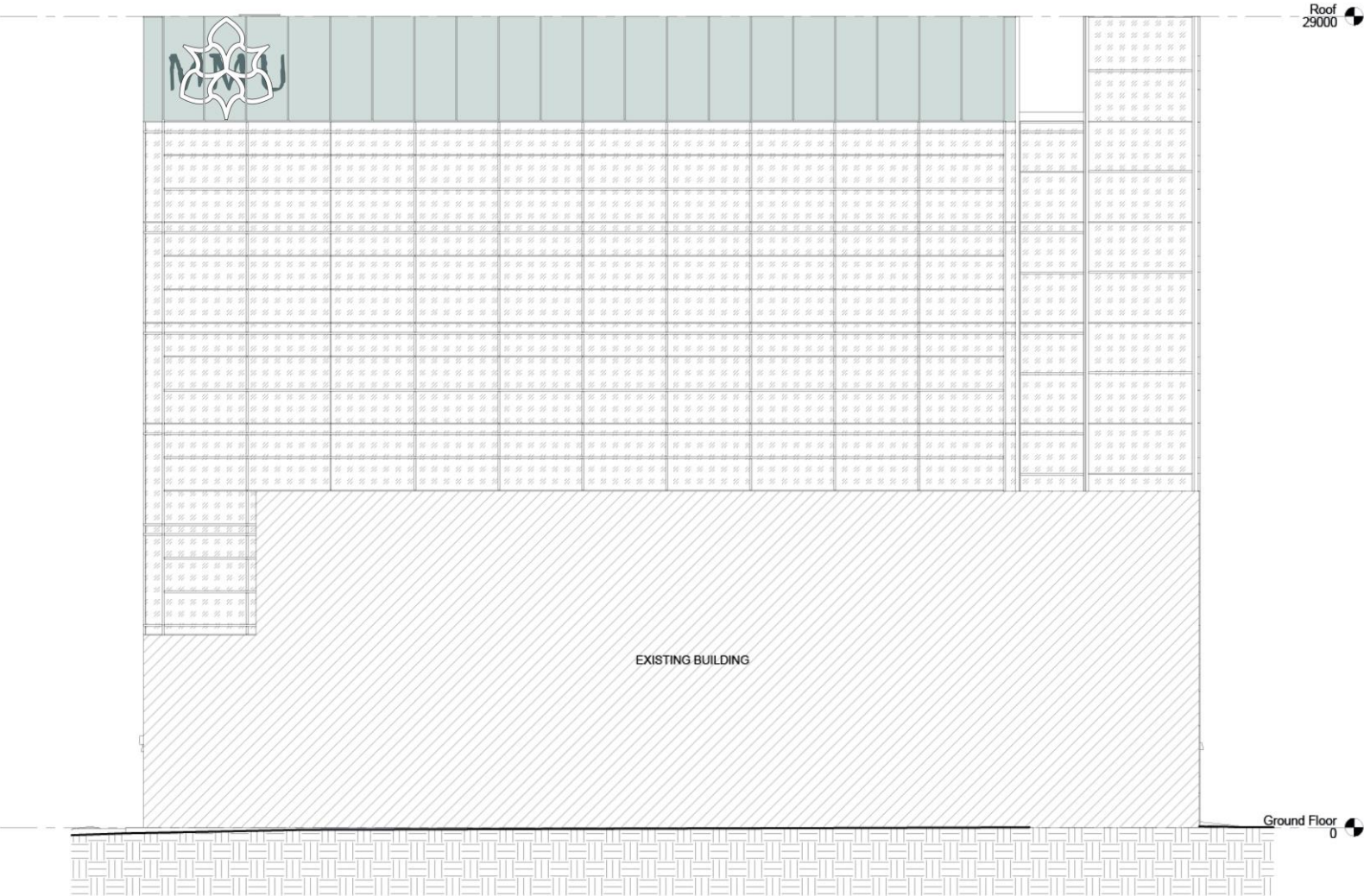
4.0 Signage Proposals | 4.3 North Elevation Spade Logo 'Overlay'



Proposal to show how applying a new Spade Logo over the existing logo to the north façade would result in two overlapping logos



4.0 Signage Proposals | 4.3 South Elevation: Spade Logo ‘Overlay’



4.0 Signage Proposals | 4.3 South Elevation: Spade Logo 'Overlay'



Proposal to show how applying a new Spade Logo over the existing logo to the south façade would result in two overlapping logos



4.0 Signage Proposals | 4.4 North & South Elevations: Light Silver Header

Due to the shortcomings of the desktop study which looked at superimposing the new logo, a new solution was developed that looked to apply a consistent film of vinyl externally onto the outward facing glazing panels. On top of this would be added the new vinyl logo.

By doing this, all of the original teal coloured glass would be hidden as would the existing 'MMU' logo resulting in no old/new logo clashes and no requirement to try and colour match the existing teal.

The following pages show photoshopped mock-ups of how this will look as well as the new vinyl / logo's in elevation.

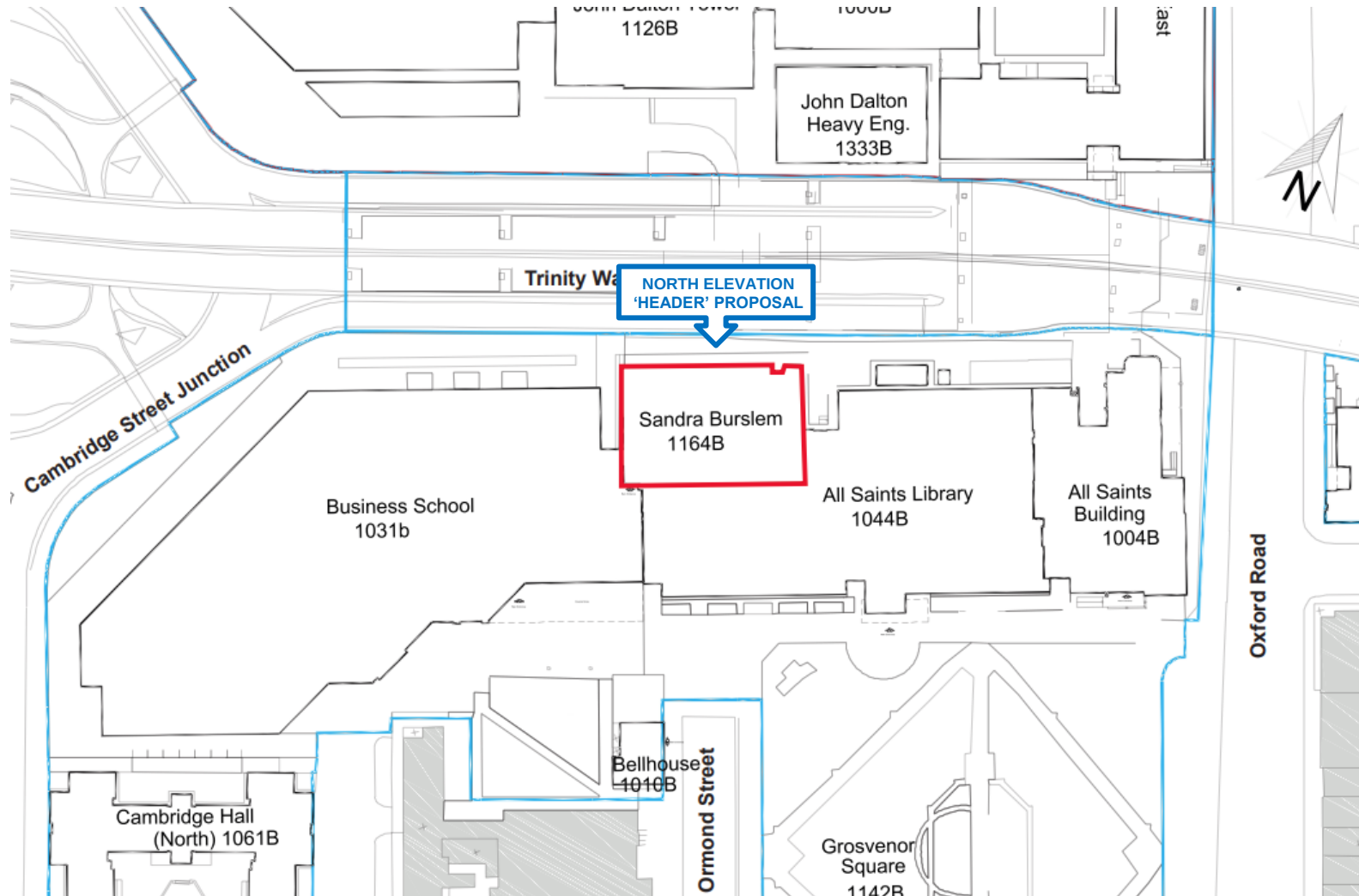
In terms of colours proposed:

Backing Vinyl: Light Silver Pantone PMS Cool Gray 3 C
Logo Vinyl: White Logo

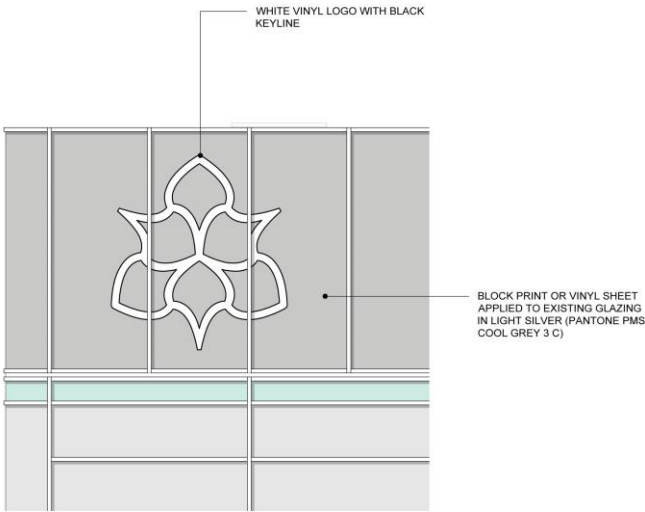
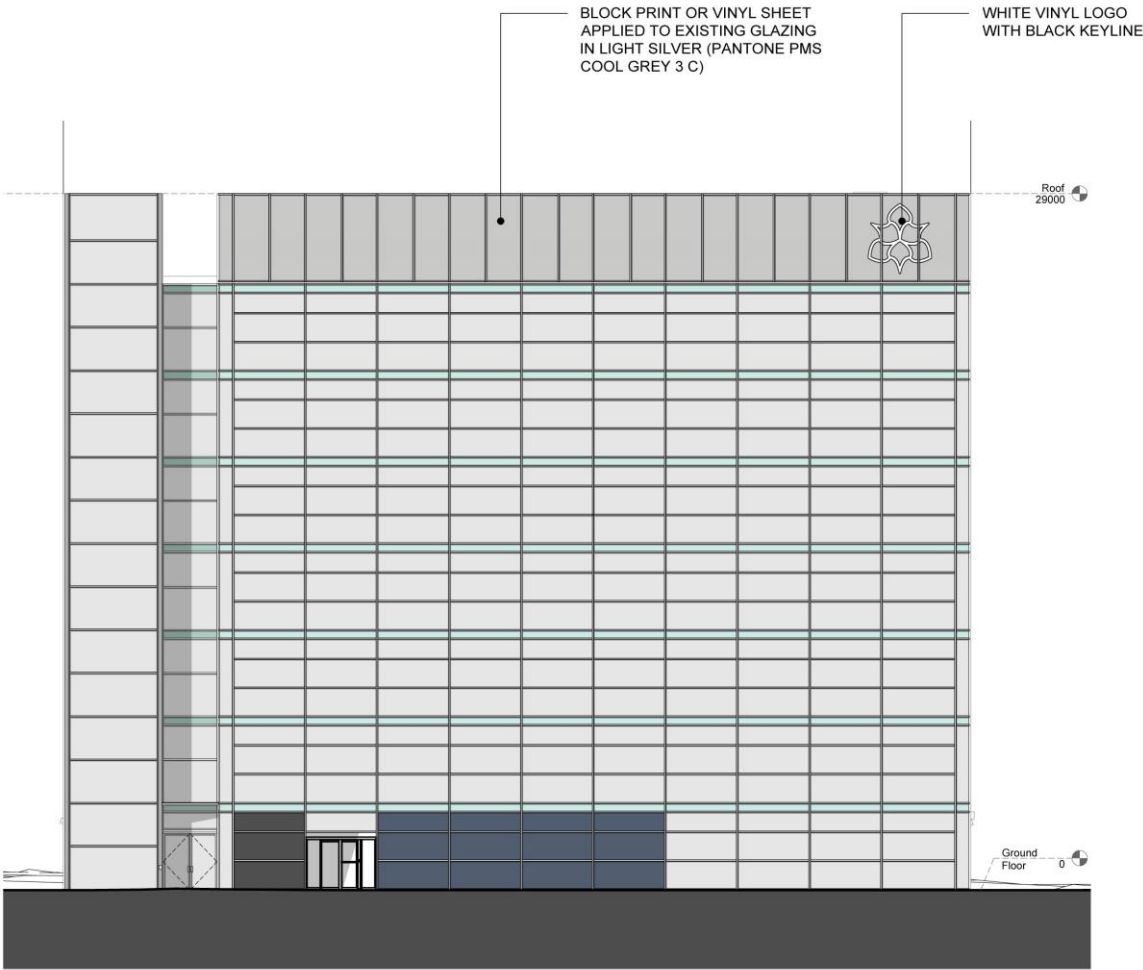
The 'spade' logo will have a black keyline which will help further define the logo. This also ties back with new external signage installed last summer to provide continuity.

In terms of longevity of the applied vinyl, it is understood that cast vinyl as proposed, can be expected to have in excess of 8 years life expectancy before any potential risk of delamination.

4.0 Signage Proposals | 4.4 North Elevation: Silver Header



4.0 Signage Proposals | 4.4 North Elevation: Silver Header



LOGO DETAIL

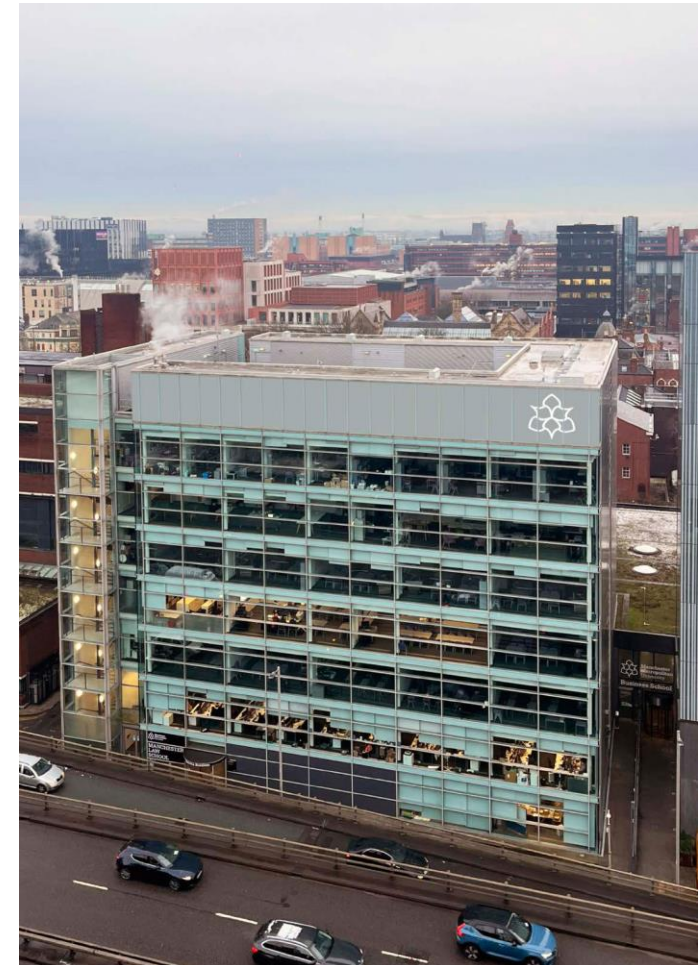
PROPOSED NORTH FACING ELEVATION

4.0 Signage Proposals | 4.4 North Elevation: Silver Header

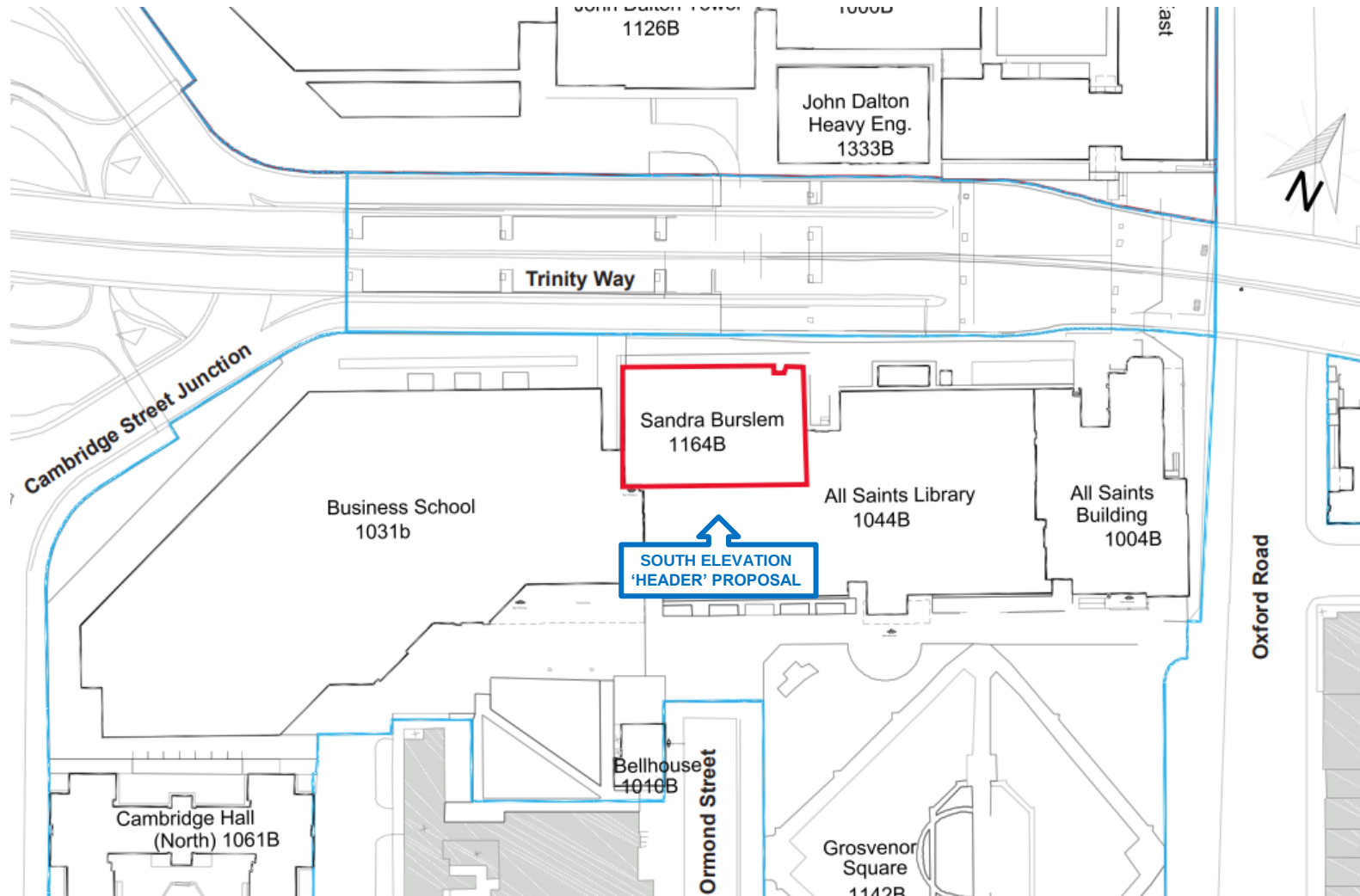


Proposal is to cover each glazed panel with a cast vinyl sheet to Pantone PMS Cool Gray 3 C together with a new white 'spade' logo also in vinyl.

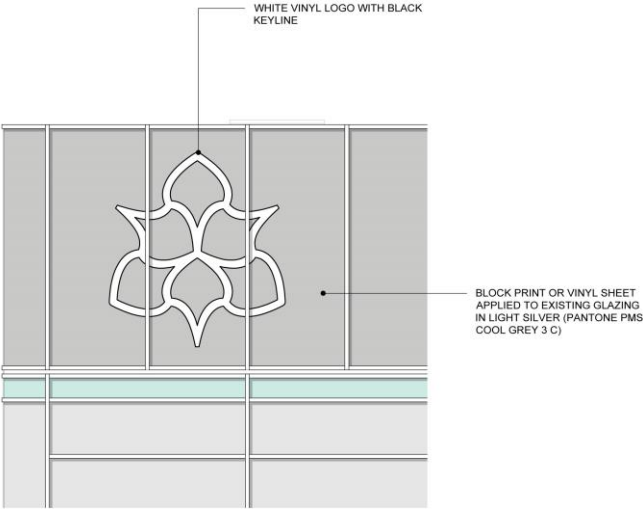
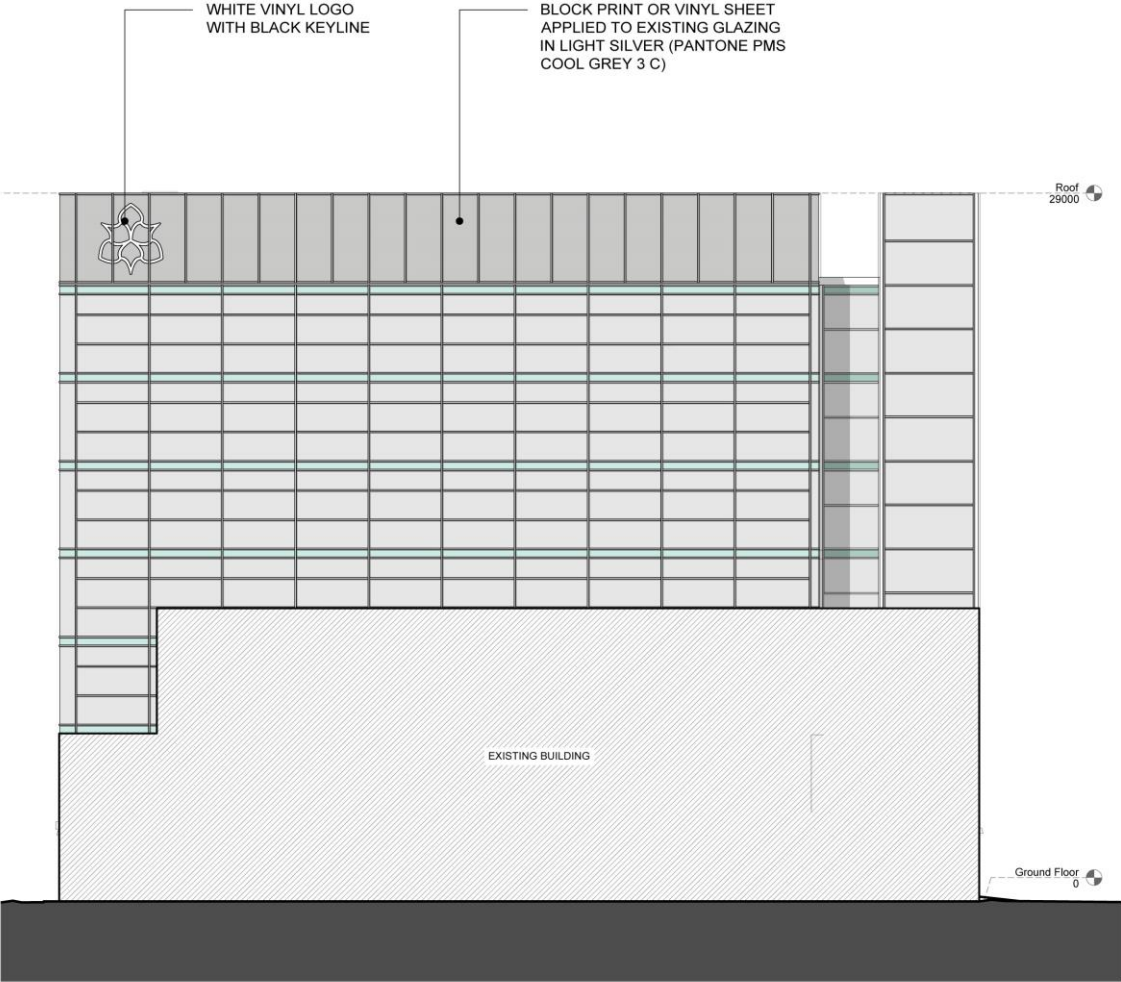
The 'spade' logo will have a black keyline which will help further define the logo. This also ties back with new external signage installed last summer to provide continuity.



4.0 Signage Proposals | 4.4 South Elevation: Silver Header



4.0 Signage Proposals | 4.4 South Elevation: Silver Header



LOGO DETAIL

PROPOSED SOUTH FACING ELEVATION

4.0 Signage Proposals | 4.4 South Elevation: Silver Header



Proposal is to cover each glazed panel with a cast vinyl sheet to Pantone PMS Cool Gray 3 C together with a new white 'spade' logo also in vinyl.

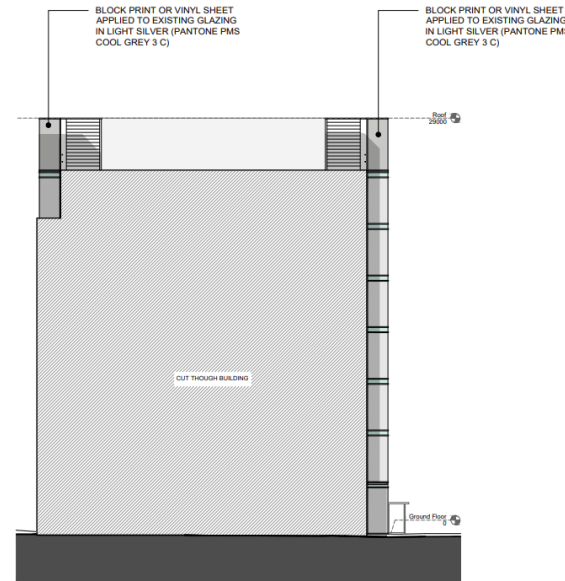
The 'spade' logo will have a black keyline which will help further define the logo. This also ties back with new external signage installed last summer to provide continuity.



4.0 Signage Proposals | 4.4 East and West Elevations: Silver Header



PROPOSED WEST FACING ELEVATION



PROPOSED EAST FACING ELEVATION
View cut through stair tower to show curtain
walling return.

Note: although the signage and applied vinyl backing are predominantly visible on the north and south elevations, there is a small return of one panel on both the east and west elevations – as shown here and on accompanying drawing 1002.

Proposal is to cover each of these glazed panels with a cast vinyl sheet to Pantone PMS Cool Gray 3 C together with a new white 'spade' logo also in vinyl.

5.0 Conclusions

As outlined above and within the accompanying drawings and reports, the Applicant believes that the proposals are compliant with policy.

The 'Overlay' options produced under Section 4.3 are to illustrate how it is impractical to infill the existing pale green coating to the rear of the existing glazed panels and subsequently apply a new graphic to the front of the glass – this creates an obvious conflict in graphics.

For the 'Header' options to the North and South elevations (including return panels on East & West elevations - Section 4.4), consideration has been given to the application of vinyl sheets to the full height glazing panels along the length of the plant room. It is understood that cast vinyl as proposed, can be expected to have in excess of 8 years life expectancy before any potential risk of delamination.

The Applicant respectfully encourages the Authority to approve this application in order to facilitate new branding on this key building to bring consistency to the campus as a whole.

