

Planning

Growth & Development

Delegated officer report for planning application

Application no.	141379/AO/2024	
Date registered valid:	31 December 2024	
Proposal:	Installation of 1no. internally illuminated digital totem sign, 1no. entry sign and 1no. directional sign.	
Address:	Citylabs 4.0 , Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0JE	
Ward(s):	Ardwick	Ward
Applicant:	Bruntwood SciTech Ltd	
Agent (if any):	Jennifer Chatfield	
Case officer:	Max Tel: 0161 219 Email: maximillian.gibson@manchester.gov.uk	Gibson 6359
Recommendation:	Approve	
Date of recommendation:	22/01/2024	

Application details

Type of application: Advertisement Consent

Development type: Advertisements

Date of site visit:

Standard consultations:

Printed: 7 January 2025 Expired: 28 January 2025

Neighbour notifications

Printed: 7 January 2025 Expired: 28 January 2025

Site notice

No site notice has been produced

Press advert

No press advert had been published

Departure from Development Plan: No

Environmental Statement: Not required

Description of site/building

The site relates to Citylabs 4.0, a newly constructed building on Hathersage Road, near the junction with Oxford Road opposite Whitworth Park. It forms part of the Citylabs campus which is spread out and integrated across the site of the Manchester Royal Infirmary. This broader Manchester Joint Hospital site, located between Oxford Road and Upper Brook St, has been the subject of substantial remodelling over the past 7 years to allow for redevelopment to accommodate the Manchester Royal Infirmary, new children's hospital, expanded accident and emergency facilities, new maternity hospital and other specialist accommodation, along with improving access into and through the new eye hospital site, new car parking, and establishing a new Boulevard as a public open space, pedestrian corridor and vehicular and public transport spine.

Listed building: Not applicable

Conservation area: Victoria Park Conservation Area 1972

Tree Preservation Order:

Description of area

The area relates to the Oxford Road corridor, a stretch of this Road leading southwards from the city centre, which is dominated by the University of Manchester, Manchester Metropolitan University and the hospital. The character of the area comprises several different uses in addition to educational and healthcare, including dining, drinking, retail, residential and ecclesiastical. The area does not fall within a conservation area.

Description of development

The development relates to the installation of 1no. internally illuminated digital totem sign, 1no. entry sign and 1no. directional sign related to the new Citylabs 4.0 building.

Consultations & Notification Responses

Publicity - letters were sent to surrounding occupiers notifying them of the development. One representation has been received as a result of this publicity, objecting to the development for the following reasons:

1. The proposed signs could in my opinion physically impair the ability of pedestrians to walk on the pavement, compromising their safety. This is a busy stretch of pavement used by local residents and students. The road is busy, and anything which might cause pedestrians to move out of the pavement onto the road could, in my opinion, create a dangerous situation.
2. The proposed signs could distract pedestrians and drivers, again, in my opinion, potentially endangering pedestrians.
3. The proposed signs will impair the character of the neighbourhood. The applicants don't seem to make any reference to the character of the neighbourhood when considering nearby residential blocks, such as Melrose apartments at 159 Hathersage Road, and how the proposed signs are in complete contrast to that character. The well-being of local residents could be impacted by such change in neighbourhood character.
4. I feel that the applicants have not demonstrated why the proposed signs are essential.
5. The applicants state in their application that they consulted the neighbours – I am not aware they consulted the residents of Melrose apartments 159 Hathersage Road - did they consult them?

MCC Highways - sufficient headroom and carriageway clearance, illuminance level of totem acceptable, not located on adopted highway and hence no projecting over licence required.
Environmental Health – no comments to make on application.

Issues

The main issues for consideration relate to the acceptability of the proposal in terms of its impact upon visual amenity, impact upon the adjacent Conservation Area and Public Safety. The main policies that relate to the assessment of the proposal are the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 and Core Strategy policies DM1 (Development Management), SP1 (Spatial Principles), EN3 (Heritage) and CC9 (Design and Heritage) the Saved Policies contained within the Unitary Development Plan for Manchester in particular DC14 (Shop fronts and Related Signs), DC15 (Advertisements, Hoardings and Posters) and DC19 (Listed Buildings) and the National Planning Policy Framework, in particular Section 12 (Achieving well-designed places) and Section 16 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment).

Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007

The Local planning authority shall exercise its powers under these Regulations in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking into account—

- (a) the provisions of the development plan, so far as they are material; and
- (b) any other relevant factors.

(2) Without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (1)(b)—

- (a) factors relevant to amenity include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural or similar interest;
- (b) factors relevant to public safety include—

- (i) the safety of persons using any highway, railway, waterway, dock, harbour or aerodrome (civil or military);
 - (ii) whether the display of the advertisement in question is likely to obscure, or hinder the ready interpretation of, any traffic sign, railway signal or aid to navigation by water or air;
 - (iii) whether the display of the advertisement in question is likely to hinder the operation of any device used for the purpose of security or surveillance or for measuring the speed of any vehicle.
- (3) In taking account of factors relevant to amenity, the local planning authority may, if it thinks fit, disregard any advertisement that is being displayed.
- (4) Unless it appears to the local planning authority to be required in the interests of amenity or public safety, an express consent for the display of advertisements shall not contain any limitation or restriction relating to the subject matter, content or design of what is to be displayed

Issues

The Advertisement Regulations require that applications for shop signs be considered only in the interests of amenity and public safety. An assessment of the proposals under these criteria is outlined below.

Visual amenity

The proposed digital advertisement totem, by virtue of its siting, illuminance and materiality, is not considered to be significantly detrimental to visual amenity. The totem would be of high-quality materiality, comprising a PPC aluminium body on a corten plinth. There would be an illuminated recess 400mm from the top of the totem. Lettering would either be fret cut, internally illuminated titles or applied matt vinyl directional content. The colour palette is restrained to black, white and the copper tone characteristic of Corten. Together with the low illuminance level of 300cd/m² stated by the applicant, this totem should not be overly obtrusive elements in the street scene.

The content of the screen would be limited to directional and informational content relating to Citylabs and its work. The limited nature of the content should help reduce the impression of advertisement clutter to a small degree. The nature of the content is supported pursuant to policy DC15.2 (c) as it relates properly and directly to the premises on which the totems would be situated.

Likewise, the two non-illuminated sign would relate entirely to the adjacent building by providing directional/instructional information for visitors to the building and wide campus. These two signs, which would comprise PPC aluminium sheets mounted to metal legs with white lettering on a black background, are modest and relatively discrete. The monochromatic colour palette would not be overly obtrusive and help integrate the signage into the wider street scene. The signs are small in scale, the directional sign measuring 1mx0.8m and the no-entry sign 0.6mx0.6m and hence would not be overly dominant against the primary elevation of Citylabs 4.0 or within the street scene.

Whilst there is a Grade II listed building at the western junction of Hathersage Road and Oxford Road, the site is sufficiently removed that it would not be detrimental to the character and setting of the building. The site is not located within a conservation area. Thus, there are no heritage concerns that would warrant a refusal.

Public safety

The totems would be set back from the public highway. The illuminance level would be controlled by condition to 300cd/m², which is considered low enough to mitigate against driver distraction. No concerns regarding public safety have been raised by MCC Highways or Environmental Health. Given the above, it is considered that there are no public safety concerns that would warrant a refusal.

Public comment/ objection

One objection to the development has been received by the City Council, comprising five points listed below. A response is provided to each response.

1. *The proposed signs could in my opinion physically impair the ability of pedestrians to walk on the pavement, compromising their safety. This is a busy stretch of pavement used by local residents and students. The road is busy, and anything which might cause pedestrians to move out of the pavement onto the road could, in my opinion, create a dangerous situation.*

It is not proposed to site any of the signage on the adopted highway, with the arrangement of the signage entirely within the applicant's demise. Thus, it should not create any obstruction to pedestrian movement as it would not be located on the footway. Highways Services assessed the application and were satisfied with this arrangement and the relationship of the signage with the footway.

2. *The proposed signs could distract pedestrians and drivers, again, in my opinion, potentially endangering pedestrians.*

The totem sign is to be illuminated to a maximum of 300cd/m², half the 600cd/m² recommended by the Institute of Lighting Professionals. The content is proposed to change at intervals of no less than 10 seconds. This was considered acceptable by Highways Services and thus it is considered that the signage would not cause driver distraction.

3. *The proposed signs will impair the character of the neighbourhood. The applicants don't seem to make any reference to the character of the neighbourhood when considering nearby residential blocks, such as Melrose apartments at 159 Hathersage Road, and how the proposed signs are in complete contrast to that character. The well-being of local residents could be impacted by such change in neighbourhood character.*

The character of the local area is dominated by the hospital buildings on the other side of Hathersage Road, which comprises a mixture of historic and modern, utilitarian buildings. There is a large amount of illuminated signage related to the hospital, both freestanding and building mounted, in situ. On the application side of the road, the buildings adjacent to the site are all late 20th/ early 21st century buildings of varying architectural styles. The uses include residential, retail, student accommodation and medical. In this context, it is not considered that the local area is one of a distinctly residential character, nor of a high amenity value and thus it is considered that the signage accords with the aims of saved policy DC15.2 (c) which states that signage *should be unobtrusive and should not intrude into residential neighbourhoods and areas of high amenity value.*

The signage would mainly be read in the context of the newly constructed Citylabs 4.0 building, which is distinctly modern in appearance and monochromatic in colour. Thus, the installation of black and white signage of contemporary design would not appear distinctly out of place within the street scene.

4. *I feel that the applicants have not demonstrated why the proposed signs are essential.*

Saved policy DC15.2 (b) states that signage should be in scale with the locality and relate properly to the site on which they stand. The signage is modest in scale in the context of the minimum four storey tall buildings that surround it. The contents of the signage relate

entirely to the Citylabs 4.0 building and wider Citylabs campus and is intended to aid wayfinding.

5. *The applicants state in their application that they consulted the neighbours – I am not aware they consulted the residents of Melrose apartments 159 Hathersage Road - did they consult them?*

Whilst this may constitute best practice, there is no requirement for the applicant to consult neighbours and failure to do so would not be pertinent to the determination of this application. The City Council has fulfilled its statutory duty to notify neighbours, which was done via letter. This has included letters sent to residents at the Melrose apartments building to notify them of the works. These letters have provided residents with an opportunity to provide feedback on the installation.

Other Legislative Requirements

Equality Act 2010

Section 149 (Public Sector Equality Duty) of the Equality Act 2010 requires due regard to the need to: Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act and; Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The Equality Duty does not impose a legal requirement to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment. Compliance with the Equality Duty involves consciously thinking about the aims of the Equality Duty as part of the process of decision-making.

Human Rights Act 1998 considerations

This application needs to be considered against the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998. Under Article 6, the applicants (and those third parties, including local residents, who have made representations) have a right to a fair hearing and to this end the local planning authority must give full consideration to their comments.

Protocol 1 Article 1, and Article 8 where appropriate, confer(s) a right of respect for a person's home, other land and business assets. In taking account of all material considerations, including Council policy as set out in the Core Strategy and saved policies of the Unitary Development Plan, the Director of Planning, Building Control & Licensing has concluded that some rights conferred by these articles on the applicant(s)/objector(s)/resident(s) and other occupiers and owners of nearby land that might be affected may be interfered with but that that interference is in accordance with the law and justified by being in the public interest and on the basis of the planning merits of the development proposal. She believes that any restriction on these rights posed by the recommendation given is proportionate to the wider benefits of and that such a decision falls within the margin of discretion afforded to the Council under the Town and Country Planning Acts.

Recommendation: Approve

Condition(s) to be attached to decision for approval

1) No advertisement is to be displayed without the permission of the owner of the site or any other person with an interest in the site entitled to grant permission.

No advertisement shall be sited or displayed so as to:

(a) endanger persons using any highway, railway, waterway, dock, harbour or aerodrome (civil or military);

- (b) obscure, or hinder the ready interpretation of, any traffic sign, railway signal or aid to navigation by water or air; or
- (c) hinder the operation of any device used for the purpose of security or surveillance or for measuring the speed of any vehicle.

Any advertisement displayed, and any site used for the display of advertisements, shall be maintained in a condition that does not impair the visual amenity of the site.

Any structure or hoarding erected or used principally for the purpose of displaying advertisements shall be maintained in a condition that does not endanger the public.

Where an advertisement is required under these Regulations to be removed, the site shall be left in a condition that does not endanger the public or impair visual amenity.

2) The advertisements hereby approved shall be installed only in accordance with the following drawings and documents:

-Drawing - Proposed L025-SRA-00-01.XX-D-A-000226 C03 SITE ELEVATION EAST ELEVATION received by the City Council, as Local Planning Authority, on 26/11/2024

-Drawing - Proposed L025-SRA-00-01.XX-D-A-000225 C02 SITE ELEVATION NORTH ELEVATION (HATHERSAGE ROAD)

-Drawing - Proposed L025-SRA-00-01.XX-D-A-000228 C02 SITE ELEVATION WEST ELEVATION

-Supporting Information 90-EX.00-D-L-001001 C02 GENERAL ARRANGEMENT
All received by the City Council, as Local Planning Authority, on 31/12/2024

-Supporting Information SIGNAGE SPECIFICATION received by the City Council, as Local Planning Authority, on 25/10/2024

Reason - in the interest of visual amenity and to ensure the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans pursuant to policies DM1 and SP1 of the Manchester Core Strategy (2012)

- 3) a) The intensity of the illuminance of the advertisement shall be no greater than 300 cd/m²
- b) The minimum display time for each piece of content on the digital display screens shall be 10 seconds.
- c) The interval between each piece of content on the digital display screens shall take place over a period no greater than one second; the complete screen shall change with no visual effects (including swiping or other animated transition methods) between displays
- d) There shall be no audio or audible element associated with the digital display screen
- e) Should a malfunction, breakdown or fault be detected or reported with the screen or advertisement, the screen will be programmed to automatically switch to a blank screen with black background.

Reason - in the interest of the amenity of surrounding occupiers and highway safety pursuant to policies DM1 and SP1 of the Manchester Core Strategy (2012)

Appendix 1 – List of consultees & neighbours notified

Highway Services
Environmental Health

St Gabriels Hall, 1 Oxford Place, Manchester, M14 5RP

Flat 104, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX

Flat 110, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX

Flat 404, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX

Flat 303, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX

Flat 216, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX

Flat 113, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX

Flat 403, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX

Flat 112, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX

Flat 413, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX

Flat 316, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX

Flat 412, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX

Flat 3, Devell House, 11 Rusholme Place, Manchester, M14 5TG

Flat 23, Devell House, 11 Rusholme Place, Manchester, M14 5TG

Flat 7, Devell House, 11 Rusholme Place, Manchester, M14 5TG

Flat 44, Devell House, 11 Rusholme Place, Manchester, M14 5TG

Flat 47, Devell House, 11 Rusholme Place, Manchester, M14 5TG

Flat 41, Devell House, 11 Rusholme Place, Manchester, M14 5TG

200 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0BH

Flat 207, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX

Flat 12, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX

Flat 9, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX

Flat 417, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX

Flat 308, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX

Flat 14, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX

Flat 118, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX

Flat 101, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX

Flat 16, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX

Flat 19, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX

Flat 15, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX

Flat 201, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX

Flat 1, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX

Flat 301, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX

Flat 406, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX

Flat 21, Devell House, 11 Rusholme Place, Manchester, M14 5TG

Flat 51, Devell House, 11 Rusholme Place, Manchester, M14 5TG

Flat 16, Devell House, 11 Rusholme Place, Manchester, M14 5TG

Flat 9, Devell House, 11 Rusholme Place, Manchester, M14 5TG

Flat 34, Devell House, 11 Rusholme Place, Manchester, M14 5TG

Flat 32, Devell House, 11 Rusholme Place, Manchester, M14 5TG

Flat 35, Devell House, 11 Rusholme Place, Manchester, M14 5TG

Flat 11, Devell House, 11 Rusholme Place, Manchester, M14 5TG

Flat 38, Devell House, 11 Rusholme Place, Manchester, M14 5TG

Flat 8, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX

Flat 114, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX

Flat 213, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX

Flat 306, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX

Ronald McDonald House, Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0BH

Flat 7, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX

[illegible]

Flat 33, Devell House, 11 Rusholme Place, Manchester, M14 5TG
Flat 42, Devell House, 11 Rusholme Place, Manchester, M14 5TG
Flat 4, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX
Flat 419, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX
Flat 2, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX
Flat 305, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX
Flat 11, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX
Flat 204, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX
Flat 414, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX
Flat 315, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX
Flat 302, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX
Flat 314, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX
Flat 402, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX
Flat 119, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX
Flat 6, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX
Flat 208, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX
Flat 109, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX
Flat 52, Devell House, 11 Rusholme Place, Manchester, M14 5TG
Flat 28, Devell House, 11 Rusholme Place, Manchester, M14 5TG
Flat 12, Devell House, 11 Rusholme Place, Manchester, M14 5TG
Flat 6, Devell House, 11 Rusholme Place, Manchester, M14 5TG
Flat 37, Devell House, 11 Rusholme Place, Manchester, M14 5TG
Flat 309, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX
Flat 105, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX
Flat 304, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX
Flat 415, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX
Flat 108, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX
Flat 117, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX
Flat 209, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX
Flat 212, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX
Flat 319, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX
Flat 409, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX
Flat 418, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX
Flat 39, Devell House, 11 Rusholme Place, Manchester, M14 5TG
Flat 5, Melrose Apartments, 159 Hathersage Road, Manchester, M13 0HX
Flat 25, Devell House, 11 Rusholme Place, Manchester, M14 5TG
Flat 27, Devell House, 11 Rusholme Place, Manchester, M14 5TG
Flat 50, Devell House, 11 Rusholme Place, Manchester, M14 5TG
Flat 31, Devell House, 11 Rusholme Place, Manchester, M14 5TG
Flat 43, Devell House, 11 Rusholme Place, Manchester, M14 5TG
Flat 30, Devell House, 11 Rusholme Place, Manchester, M14 5TG
Flat 49, Devell House, 11 Rusholme Place, Manchester, M14 5TG
Flat 5, Devell House, 11 Rusholme Place, Manchester, M14 5TG
Flat 10, Devell House, 11 Rusholme Place, Manchester, M14 5TG
Flat 8, Devell House, 11 Rusholme Place, Manchester, M14 5TG

Appendix 2 – Planning constraints

Article 4 Direction - Removal Of PD Rights Change Of Use From Class C3 To Class C4
Coal Authority - Development Low Risk - Name: DEVELOPMENT_LOW_RISK_AREA
Conservation Area - Victoria Park Conservation Area 1972
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Less) -

Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Middle) -
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Middle) -
Susceptible to Surf Water Flood (Middle) -
Area Team Boundary - Name: CENTRAL