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Dear Sir/Madam

Application for Advertisement Consent at Printworks, Withy Gove, Manchester on behalf of DTZ Investors

Introduction

On behalf of our client, DTZ Investors, we are pleased to submit this application for advertisement consent at Printworks, Withy Grove, Manchester ('the site'). This advertisement consent application is submitted due to the requirement to revise the nature of the display of images shown on the existing LED screens at the Printworks.

As such, the application specifically seeks consent to allow moving elements to be displayed on the existing LED screens on both the Withy Grove and Corporation Steet elevations of the Printworks building, approved under application ref. 136226/AO/2023. In this regard, the current consent restricts the display of static images only.

It is not possible to seek a minor-material amendment under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 in respect of advertisement consent applications. Accordingly, a new advertisement consent application must be submitted in order to take account of changes to the approved scheme. The application relates solely to the 'ribbon screens' in place at the top of the elevations of the Printworks.

The application has been submitted via the Planning Portal (ref: PP-13660411), and the requisite application fee has been paid under separate cover.

The following information is submitted to support this application:

- Application form;
- Site Location Plan (ref: PL(0100) revision P1)
- Proposed Elevation Dantzic and Balloon Street (ref: PL(1020) revision P10)
- Proposed Elevation Withy Grove and Corporation Street (ref: PL(1022) revision P9)
- This covering letter; and
- Highway Safety Note, produced by Astute Transport.

Background and Planning History

The Printworks complex is a key driver for the leisure economy in Manchester city centre and accommodates a wide and dynamic range of leisure operators, attracting visitors throughout the day and evening, seven days a week.

Printworks is a recognised Manchester landmark and has architectural and historical importance. It is classed as a non-designated heritage asset and sits within the Shudehill Conservation Area and immediately overlooks the Cathedral Conservation Area.

Planning permission was granted by the Manchester City Council ('the Council') on the 11th February 2020 for the refurbishment of the external elevations and installation of new signage at the Printworks (ref: 125294/FO/2019). Concurrently, planning permission (ref: 125295/AOH/2019) was granted for advertisement consent for proposed LED screens and signage along the Withy Grove and Corporation Steet elevations.

Wider improvements to the building have been granted consent by the Council since the original refurbishment application, including the following new, improved signage along the elevations of the building:

- Two non-material amendment applications (refs: 128218/NMC/2020 and 132025/NMC/2021) relating to Condition 2 of application ref. 125294/AOH/2019 were approved in October 2020 and November 2021 respectively. These changes related to alterations to the location of some signage around Printworks;
- A section 73 application (ref: 136069/JO/2023) relating to Condition 2 of application ref. 125294/FO/2019 was approved in March 2023. This was for an update to the originally approved LED screens and fascia signage;
- Advertisement consent (ref: 136226/AO/2023) was approved on the 6th April 2023 and granted permission for the proposed LED screens and fascia signage. The consent sought an update to the originally approved scheme (ref: 125294/AOH/2019).

The most recent advertisement consent (reference 136226/AO/2023) includes the following condition controlling the types of images which can be displayed on the ribbon screens:

'3) (a) Prior to the first use of the advertisements hereby approved, a strategy to control the signage shall be submitted for approval in writing by the City Council, as Local Planning Authority. This shall include:

- **No individual advertisements displayed on the LED panel shall contain moving images, animation, video or full motion images or any images that resemble road signs, traffic lights or traffic signs.**
- **No individual advertisements shall be displayed for duration of less than 10 seconds.**
- **Controls shall be in place to ensure smooth uninterrupted transition of images displayed on the panel.**
- **The display panel shall be fitted with a light sensor, designed to adjust the brightness to changes in ambient light levels.**
- **A mechanism shall be in place so that if the installation breaks down, it defaults to a black screen to avoid any flashing error messages or pixilation.**
- **The maximum luminance level of the advertisements displayed on the panel shall not exceed 300 cd/m2during non-daylight hours / inclement weather**
- **Confirmation of the maximum luminance level during the daytime**
- **A report to confirm details of how the screen can be monitored remotely for faults and also adjusted remotely should complaints be received. The report shall include a management strategy which details frequency of inspection, testing and confirms how faults are reported or non compliance with the agreed luminance level and what action is taken (i.e. screen shuts down) - hours of use.'**

The Proposal

The application specifically seeks consent to allow moving elements to be displayed on the existing LED screens on both the Withy Grove and Corporation Steet elevations of the Printworks building, approved under application ref. 136226/AO/2023.

It is not possible to seek a minor-material amendment under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 in respect of advertisement consent applications. Accordingly, a new advertisement consent application must be submitted in order to take account of changes to the approved scheme. The application therefore solely relates to the ribbon screens in place along the top of both of the elevations.

These existing LED screens are oriented southwards, overlooking Withy Grove. Additionally, a section of LED screens are located on the southern section of the western elevation of Printworks, facing Corporation Street and Exchange Square, as illustrated in Figure 1.1. below. Further details on the existing LED screens can be found within the proposed elevations plan (ref. PL(1022) revision P9) submitted as part of this application. The plans illustrate the proposed locations of both the LED screens at the top of the building and a billboard at the building's entrance. However, for the purposes of this application, the focus is solely on the LED screens situated at the top of the building.



Figure 1.1 Ribbon Screens on the Withy Grove Elevation

Withy Grove serves as a general traffic route with a single-carriageway arrangement. To the immediate west of the site, it forms part of the Withy Grove/Corporation Street/Fennel Street four-arm signalised junction, which is equipped with controlled pedestrian crossings. The placement and orientation of the ribbon screens are carefully considered to ensure integration with the surrounding streetscape while enhancing the visual appeal of the Printworks building.

Planning Policy Considerations

The development plan for Manchester City Council comprises the Manchester Core Strategy Development Plan Document (adopted July 2012), extant Unitary Development Plan ('UDP') Policies (adopted July 1995) and Places for Everyone Plan (adopted March 2024).

The proposed scheme is consistent with Manchester City Council's Core Strategy, specifically:

- Policy SP1 (Spatial Principles) - states that the Regional Centre will be the focus for economic and commercial development, retail, leisure and cultural activity;

- Policy EN3 (Heritage) - In conservation areas and near listed buildings, advertisements must preserve or enhance the historic environment. Special attention is given to the design and placement to avoid any negative impact on heritage assets;
- Policy EN16 (Air Quality) - Advertisements should not contribute to air pollution. This includes restrictions on illuminated signs that may increase energy consumption and emissions; and
- Policy DM1 (Development Management)- This policy covers the general principles for managing development, including advertisements. It emphasises the need for advertisements to respect local amenity and public safety, avoiding clutter and ensuring they do not cause harm to the visual or physical environment.

The following 'saved' UDP Policies are also of relevance to the application proposal:

- Policy DC14.1 (Shops and Related Signs) - In determining applications relating to these premises for shop fronts, security grilles, advertisement signs, canopies and awnings, the Council will seek to ensure that proposals are in keeping with the character of the building and adjoining buildings, of adjoining shopfronts, where appropriate, and of the area within which the premises are located. The criterion relevant to this application are:

  ''A. In the interests of amenity,
  a. signs should not normally be positioned other than at fascia level.
  b. signs should respect the architectural form of buildings and shop frontages.
  c. where no obvious fascia level exists, signs above shopfronts should be in keeping with the scale of the frontage of the building and in particular should not fill the gap between ground floor shop windows and first floor windows.
  d. projecting box signs, or any other type of sign which projects significantly beyond the shopfront, should line up with the associated fascia board. Where this is not the case, such proposals will not be permitted.
  e. On listed buildings and on buildings within Conservation Areas, signs consisting of individually mounted letters will be preferred to box fascia signs.

  B. In the interests of public safety,
  h. any sign which is detrimental to the safety of pedestrians or motorists will be refused.''

- Policy DC14.5 (Shops and Related Signs) - The Advertisement Regulations require that applications for shop signs be considered only in the interests of amenity and public safety;
- Saved Policy DC18.1 (Conservation Areas) - States that the Council will seek to preserve and enhance the character of its designated conservation areas by carefully considering issues including the effect of signs and advertisements; and
- Saved Policy DC19.1 (Listed Buildings) - Advises that in determining applications for listed building consent the Council will have regard to the desirability of securing the retention, restoration, maintenance and continued use of such buildings and to protecting their general setting. The City Council will not permit any external or internal alteration or addition to a listed building where in its opinion, there would be an adverse effect on its architectural or historic character.

The Places for Everyone Plan includes specific policies related to advertisements, with the key policies listed below:

- Policy JP-P 1 (Sustainable Development) - Advertisements should contribute to sustainable development by using energy-efficient lighting and sustainable materials;
- Policy JP-P 2 (Design) - Advertisements must be well-designed, respecting the character and appearance of the area. They should avoid visual clutter and enhance the overall aesthetic quality;
- Policy JP-P 3 (Heritage) - In heritage areas, advertisements must preserve or enhance the historic environment. This includes careful consideration of design and placement to avoid negative impacts on heritage assets;
- Policy JP-P 4 (Public Safety) - Advertisements should not compromise public safety, including road safety. They must be positioned and illuminated in a way that does not distract drivers or obstruct visibility; and
- Policy JP-P 5 (Amenity) - Advertisements should respect the amenity of nearby residents and businesses. This includes considerations around size, illumination, and placement to avoid being intrusive or disruptive.

Consideration of the Proposed Development

The main issues for consideration relate to the acceptability of the proposal in terms of its impact upon public safety and impact upon visual amenity as required by the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007.

We provide our consideration in respect of both matters below.

Highways Considerations

The proposed LED screens have been designed to ensure that there is no adverse impact on highway safety and seek to comply with the Policy JP-P 4 of the Places for Everyone Plan.

The Highway Safety Note produced by Astute Transport submitted as part of this application, confirms that the placement of the LED screens on the southern elevation of the Printworks is significantly above the eyeline and movement paths of drivers, minimising the potential for distraction from the static images with moving elements. On Withy Grove, the screens are positioned at an acute sideways angle, reducing their visibility to drivers and ensuring no interference with sightlines or attention. Similarly, on Corporation Street, the southbound vehicular flow runs opposite to the direction of the screens, meaning drivers on this approach will not see the display.

The straight alignment of Fennel Street provides approaching drivers with clear visibility of the LED screens within the wider streetscape. This ensures that the presence of the LED screens is assimilated well before drivers need to negotiate the nearby junction. Additionally, the placement of the LED screens does not obstruct sightlines for vehicles exiting Fennel Street or conflict with the flow of traffic at the crossroads.

Regarding nearby tram operations, the LED screens on the southern elevation are not visible to trams approaching Exchange Square Tram Stop from the west, eliminating the potential for distraction. For trams exiting Exchange Square, the LED screens on the western portion of Withy Grove are positioned above the tram drivers eyeline and to the right, ensuring no interference with their focus or sightlines. It is also considered that the tram traffic signal and the LED screens will not interact in respect of approaching trams, maintaining safety for drivers and passengers alike, in accordance with the city's commitment to sustainable transport systems.

Based on the above, it is considered that the proposed development complies with the relevant highway and public safety related policies.

Impact on Visual Amenity

The LED screens are designed to enhance the aesthetic appeal of the Printworks, as has been demonstrated through the significant improvements demonstrated through the Printwork's refurbishment scheme.

The proposal, which simply seeks to enable moving images across the screens, would not result in an increase in luminance and will contribute further to the vibrancy of the area by creating a dynamic and modern visual element, that complements the commercial area of the city centre. Additionally, their placement and brightness levels ensure that they integrate harmoniously with the surroundings, without creating visual clutter or light pollution, thus respecting Policy DM1 of the Core Strategy and Saved UDP Policy DC18.1 which seek to preserve the character and appearance of the city's key areas.

In relation to heritage considerations, the delegated officers report relating to application ref. 125294/AOH/2019 confirms that: *"the proposals are considered to be acceptable and are not considered to cause harm to the character, appearance and setting of the building as a non-designated heritage asset and of surrounding designated heritage assets".* The delegated officers report relating to application ref. 136226/AO/2023 further confirms that *"the installation of the proposed LED screens and fascia signs are not considered to have a negative impact on the visual amenity of either the architecture of the Printworks site itself or the surrounding Shudehill Conservation Area".* It is considered that integration of moving elements on the existing LED screens will not impact upon the setting of the nearby heritage assets and in fact, in a discrete way, emphasise the heritage detail across the elevations of the building.

Given the above, it is considered that the proposed development is acceptable in terms of visual amenity considerations and compliant with the relevant polices.

Summary and Conclusions

In conclusion, the proposed LED screens at the Printworks represent a well-considered enhancement to the building's elevation and the wider streetscape. The proposal has been designed with careful attention to the character and context of the site, ensuring compliance with relevant policies under the Manchester Core Strategy, Saved UDP Policies, and the Places for Everyone Plan.

The application demonstrates policy compliance in terms of design quality, heritage conservation, and public safety. By minimising potential highways impacts and respecting the unique attributes of nearby heritage assets, the proposal achieves a balance between innovation and responsibility.

I trust the enclosed information will be sufficient to validate the application. Should you have any queries or require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

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Heather Lindley-Clapp
Director