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30 September 2024

FAO Jack Naven
Manchester City Council
Planning Department
PO Box 532
Town Hall
Manchester
M60 2LA

Dear Jack

Globe and Simpson, St John's, Manchester - Application for Full Planning Permission
Digital Artwork Wall

Please find enclosed an application for Full Planning Permission, submitted by Manchester Quays (G&S) Developments Limited, to secure approval for the installation of a new digital artwork on the New Quay Street elevation of Globe and Simpson.

The proposals relate to further details initially required by Condition 42 attached to Planning Permission 125222/JO/2019 relating to the Globe and Simpson ('G&S') development in St John's, Manchester City Centre. Condition Discharge application CDN/23/0826 approved the principle of a digital LED screen on the New Quay Street elevation of the building, with the content to be agreed through a Full Planning Permission and associated conditions as set out in this letter and supporting documents.

Background

An application to discharge condition 42 was submitted on 05 December 2023, setting out the proposals for a new digital artwork to be located on the Quay Street elevation of the Globe and Simpson building. This was submitted following positive feedback received from the Local Planning Authority's Planning Officer regarding the principle of the proposals in October 2023, who noted that environmental and highways considerations would be the key material issues associated with the application.

Although the Planning Authority had expressed their support in principle, anticipated feedback during the determination of this condition discharge application from TfGM and Highways stated that:

> "*Highways has concerns about the use of 'videos' being displayed on these screens. Highways have never supported the inclusion of full motion video on digital signs that are visible from the public highway, and most notably where visible from signalised junctions*

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where any driver distraction could create highway safety concerns. This is the approach they take for all LED signage applications and in this case for the following reasons:

- *The photomontages show that there could be potential issues with the offside primary signal at the New Quay Street approach. TfGM UTC would request that new backing boards are conditioned which may help to alleviate the problem.*

- *At this stage Highways would not propose to support full motion video on any of the displays, they did advise however, that if the applicant provides further approved guidance which justifies the use of full motion digital displays adjacent to key and intensively used highway infrastructure we will further review this.*

Any digital screens must be in accordance with the following guidance:

- *The LED screen should not feature any moving images; and*

- *The images should not change too frequently (no greater than once every 10 seconds).”*

As part of this response, consultees requested justification through evidencing any other similar locations throughout the country where full video motion has been permitted and data confirms that no subsequent highway safety issues have been recorded.

In response to these comments, evidence was provided during determination to address these concerns, with a Highways Safety Audit document prepared by SLR providing details examples of other full video motion advertising displays which have been consented and which, by assessing the accident record, have not given rise to any highway safety issues.

Despite this evidence, the Local Planning Authority (‘LPA’) considered that the condition discharge mechanism would not allow for sufficient control in the content of the display, as conditions cannot be applied to this type of decision notice. The LED screen was therefore approved in principle and in line with the restrictions set out by TfGM and MCC Highways, with a view to then discuss the proposals in more detail and subsequently agree the details through Full Planning Permission with conditions attached.

Since Condition 42 was discharged, a pre-application meeting has taken place with the Applicant and TfGM, MCC Highways and the Local Planning Authority to discuss what flexibility could be introduced through imposing potential conditions. It was agreed at the meeting that:

- The art wall will not use the colours red, green, or amber to help avoid any potential driver confusion with traffic lights and the art wall.

- Officers from MCC Planning Department and TFGM are to be invited onsite during the programming to review live the content and may ask for reasonable changes to speed or brightness if there are any safety concerns.

- Accident data to be reviewed in 6 months' time to ensure no adverse effect has been created by the full motion artwork - if any incidents arise earlier, the review will happen sooner.

- Candela to be within the recommendations contained within the Institute of Lighting Professionals.

This application therefore sets out the details of the digital artwork would then be tested, refined, and agreed in collaboration with TfGM and MCC Highways to make sure there are no remaining safety concerns and for that to be reflected in any future Planning Permission granted.

Proposals

The description of development on the application form is as follows:

"Full Planning Permission for the installation of digital artwork and associated works."

The location of the digital illuminated artwork is on New Quay Street elevation of the new Globe and Simpson Building. The design of the building always included a blank section of elevation that would be utilised to agree details for a new piece of artwork that would help provide a wayfinding marker for St. John's.

The commercial and culture-led regeneration area of St. John's is home to over 1,000,000 sq. ft. of now fully occupied new and refurbished commercial office floorspace, Aviva Studios, 1,600 co-living bedspaces across two buildings, two hotels and a series of refurbished TV Studios, set amongst new high quality public realm on the former ITV Granada studios estate.

The size of the artwork installation is approximately 30m tall by 17m wide and is to be backed by grey curtain walling ready for the new artwork to be installed. Due to this elevation being inset, the artwork that comprises 13,500 LEDs attached to a backing structure, will appear flush to the façade of Globe and Simpson. A document is enclosed with this application setting out the artists proposals, including the inspiration for the imagery and the type of content to be displayed.

Planning Assessment

National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in July 2018 and most recently updated in December 2023. The NPPF sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied and is a material consideration in the determination of all planning applications.

At the heart of the NPPF lies the 'presumption' in favour of sustainable development; the golden thread running through plan-making and decision taking. The NPPF notes there are three dimensions to sustainable development; economic, social, and environmental.

Pertinent to the proposals are considerations in relation to amenity and highways safety, with Paragraph 115 stating that "Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety." Paragraph 191(c) then goes on to state that proposals should "limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity". This assessment therefore focusses on mitigating any potential highways safety and amenity issues caused by light pollution.

Manchester Core Strategy (2012)

Manchester's Core Strategy (2012) sets out the long-term strategic policies for Manchester's future development and forms the Framework that planning applications will be assessed against.

Core Strategy Policy DM1, which requires development to consider appropriate siting, layout, scale, form, massing and materials. Impact on the local area in terms of design, scale, and appearance in order to preserve residential amenity is the most pertinent to this application and has been considered in more detail below.

Manchester Unitary Development Plan 1995 (Saved Policies)

The Unitary Development Plan was adopted in July 1995. Coinciding with the adoption of the Core Strategy in 2012 significant proportions of the UDP have been replaced; however, a number of polices were saved on 11 July 2012 and remain extant.

Guide to Development in Manchester

The 'Guide to Development' document contains supplementary information to provide further detail on planning policy and specifically in relation to design. Pertinently, it states "The identity, character and level of usage of streets and spaces can be enhanced by high quality, attractive street furniture, good quality lighting and public art. Developers will be encouraged to consider the provision of such elements where this will enhance the character of the public realm and contribute to a sense of place."

St John's Strategic Regeneration Framework

The St John's Strategic Regeneration Framework ("the SRF") was originally endorsed by Manchester City Council in 2012, updated in 2015 and again in 2017, following the joint venture formed by Manchester City Council and Allied London to deliver a remarkable development opportunity in and around the former Granada studios in Manchester City Centre.

Consideration of Proposed Development

The proposed digital artwork at the Globe and Simpson building in St. John's, Manchester, aligns with the principles of sustainable development outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework (2023). By enhancing the visual appeal of the area and serving as a wayfinding marker, the artwork contributes to the social and economic dimensions of sustainable development. It enhances the area's attractiveness, potentially attracting more visitors and contributing to the local economy.

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Furthermore, the proposal considers the Manchester Core Strategy (2012), particularly Policy DM1, by addressing the artwork's siting, scale, and appearance. The artwork is strategically positioned on an existing blank elevation specifically designed to accommodate such installations. Its size and design have been carefully considered to integrate with the building's architecture and the surrounding environment. It provides an important piece of public art that helps to give identify and character to the local area and reflects a strategically important regeneration project.

In turn, this application also demonstrates adherence to the St John's Strategic Regeneration Framework, which emphasises creating a vibrant and attractive destination. The digital artwork aligns with this vision by introducing a modern and engaging element to the area, enhancing its overall appeal, and contributing to the regeneration goals. The proposals therefore align with the local plan policies and guidance, contributing to the overall vision and objectives of the City Centre's strategic development.

Regarding mitigation discussed as pre-application stage, the Applicant has agreed in consultation with statutory bodies that the following controls will be adhered to as part of the operation of the artwork:

- It will be capped at a brightness of 550cd/m2 in the daytime and reducing in brightness to 350cd/m2 in the nighttime in line with the Institute of Lighting Professionals.

- The displays will avoid the colour red, amber, or green to avoid any potential conflict with the traffic signals on Quay Street.

- There will be time limits associated with the display so that the screen does not operate at night (11pm curfew).

- A Highways Safety Audit review with 6 months of operation to confirm no change in traffic incidents since the artwork was installed.

The Highways Safety Assessment and Highway Safety Response documents referred to in this letter are also submitted with this Application to set out how the proposals will not give rise to a highway safety issue. The Applicant proposes that compliance conditions are attached to the planning permission to reflect and reference the details set out above and within the enclosed documentation.

If required, a site visit will be arranged to 'live test' the visuals to ensure that they are compliant with the mitigation measures set out in this letter.

On this basis, the proposals are considered to be in accordance with the relevant tenets of national and local planning policy in addition to material considerations that are pertinent to this type of application in this area.

Summary

In addition to the details set out in this Covering Letter and the submitted Application Form, the following information has been prepared and submitted as part of this Application for Full Planning Permission:

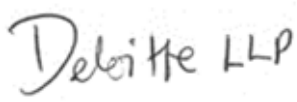
- Site Location Plan prepared by Exterior Architecture;

- General Arrangement Drawing (North Elevation - Existing) prepared by Axis Architects;
- Highways Safety Assessment prepared by SLR;
- Highways Safety Audit prepared by SLR; and
- The Globe Artwork Proposal document prepared by ENESS, including:
    - Proposed Section Drawing prepared by ENESS;
    - Technical Specification Sheets; and
    - Detailed Technical Drawings prepared by ENESS.

The Application Form has been submitted via the Planning Portal to formalise this Application. Payment will be made to Manchester City Council for £363, in respect of the application fee for this application to agree details reserved by condition, via the Planning Portal (Planning Portal Reference: PP-13387605).

We trust you will find this application in order, and we look forward to receiving written confirmation of its registration. If you require any further details, please contact my colleague Michael Percival on 0161 455 6672 (mipercival@deloitte.co.uk).

Yours sincerely



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