

REPORT ON JUSTIFICATION FOR REPLACEMENT SIGNAGE AND DESIGN ON JOHN DALTON TOWER MANCHESTER METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

The John Dalton Building High Level Tower Sign Location For Manchester Metropolitan University

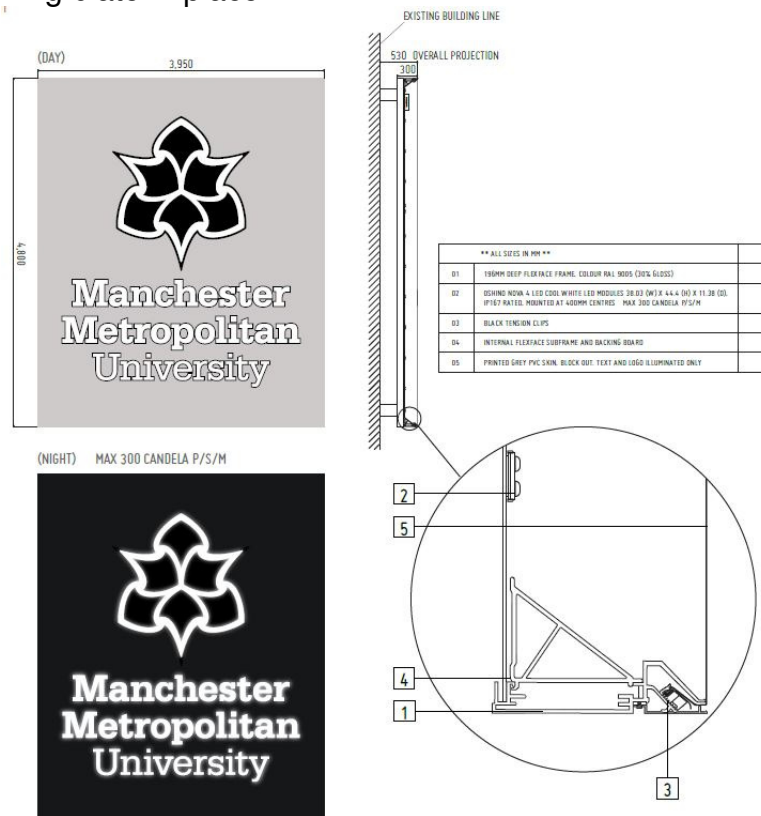
This report outlines the recommendations and justifications put forward with respect to the Proposed Replacement Signage of the above University Campus Building.

Introduction

The University are currently replacing signage across campus site wide in line with recent rebranding and approvals across a number of buildings. A number of low and high level signage across campus are intended to be implemented to enhance visibility, connectivity, sense of place and boundary demarcation across All Saints and Birley Fields locations and links between. However, this particular justification report deals specifically with the proposed high level signage to John Dalton Tower

Description of the Signage:

The proposals for the John Dalton Tower high level signs consist of an Illuminated Flexface PVC sign with printed logo and aluminium framed returns / background colour grey (to match existing cladding) with white / black logo and black rimmed white lettering. The size of the sign is determined by the current backing plate in place



Proposed Sign Details

These match with similar signs approved on the Sandra Burslem building and the overall design and branding noted across the wider campus buildings.

The Flexface sign has been chosen for the large illuminated logo and lettering due to the existing structure, cladding, safety at height and fixing structure on the existing sign in place. This lightweight sign on a aluminium back plate background will allow simpler installation at height and concealment of the existing fixing details in place on the building cladding.

The height of the sign at approx. 33m from ground level will be challenging to install, reducing the weight and complexity of the sign installation have been a priority in the safety and ease of the signage replacement strategy.

To install aluminium logo signs without any backing plates (or reutilising the existing) in this location would require removal of the existing signage and support structure that penetrates the cladding of the building. This would leave openings in the cladding that would be unsightly and require weatherproofing / protection and new full cladding panels would be required to enable an aesthetically acceptable solution. Given the age and length of time the cladding has been installed it will not be possible to install matching units (due to lack of supply of the system and discolouration / weathering of the existing finishes) and this would be at enhanced cost / installation time, with potential scaffold needs and removal of numerous panels (upto 10) to complete the installation. This is also likely to remove any current warranties and insurances in place with the original installation. The additional costs for replacement works compared to the proposed sign with existing support backing plate (given the existing sign is also on a backplate) is considered as exponentially higher than the benefit gained for the location.



Existing Sign and Fixings showing impact on numerous cladding panels

Purpose and Need:

As previously outlined a replacement sign is required to match with recent rebranding and installation of signage across campus for a visible and consistent appearance. The aim is to define campus boundaries, identity and sense of place with connections across the 2 campuses.

Additional information of the signage design strategy can be found in the accompanying Design and Access Statement.

Impact on the Surrounding Area:

The proposed design and installation that excludes the replacement of existing cladding on the tower façades will allow for a quicker installation and reduce the need for long term scaffolding on the building, lessening the impact for surrounding areas and building users.

Time required for access to install and remove existing signage at height can be lessened with the current Flex Face design, reducing the risk and disruption impact. The proposed signage can be installed to suit the current cladding appearance and the new sign will match those being installed across the campus achieving visual harmony. Road closures may still be required but for shorter periods due to the simpler sign installation.

Public and Student Benefits:

As noted above the signage is intended to benefit the public and students by identifying clear campus boundaries along with wayfinding and identity between the 2 campuses and the adjoining city centre / university boundaries.

Alternative Options Considered:

Alternates for individual building mounted signage have been considered during the design processes but further to site surveys and investigations on current signage fixing method, already on a backplate design, and the consequential improvements needed to remove holes within the cladding to conceal and weather-proof the openings with replacement panels would be difficult to achieve an aesthetically and programme acceptable solution. As such a design that covers the area of the current sign will allow concealment of the fixings and any weathering needs/ deterioration and pollution affect to the cladding behind. The lightweight design also meets with structural requirements to fix to the existing backing plates and weights this can support.

Consultation and Community Engagement:

Discussions were held with the Local Authority on the Campus Wide strategy and further discussions held on the design being submitted to assist understanding the reasoning and process for the large panel formats proposed.

This justification statement covers the items raised and the processes followed to review the sign design and justification for the proposals within this application.

Precedents and Case Studies:

Flex face illuminated signage has been used successfully on other buildings and is intended to be installed on the nearby Sandra Burslem building. Examples can be seen across the city centre.

Conclusion:

The proposals put forward for this application should be considered favourably for approval in line with the designs submitted.

Replacement of existing cladding to achieve a single logo sign without a back plate design is problematic due to replacement cladding unavailability, height of works, safety of installation and the additional costs that would be incurred.

The proposed sign offers a new design in line with current branding and signage to be installed across campus, matching aesthetics and design with a lightweight installation that has minimal impact on the existing structure and cladding.