



Highway Safety Response

The Globe Art Wall, New Quay Street, M3 4BN

Manchester Quays Development (G&S) Ltd

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Highway Safety Response - Globe Art Wall, New Quay Street

Introduction

1.1 This document addresses the comments received from Manchester City Council (MCC) Highways and Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM), in relation to an application to discharge planning conditions for the globe media art wall on the eastern façade of No. 1 Quay Street in Manchester, M3 4BN (CDN/23/0826).

1.2 For ease of reference, the comments received are extracted below:

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 where any driver distraction could create highway safety concerns. This is the approach they take for all LED signage applications.

As per TfGMs earlier response digital screens must:

- The LED screen should not feature any moving images;*
- The images should not change too frequently (no greater than once every 10 seconds);*

It is noted that no highway safety incidents were recorded in this location between 2018-2022 in the existing arrangement. However, Highways and TfGM have requested that the applicant provide evidence of other screen showing videos and the impact on highway safety across other cities.

TfGMs UTC were consulted in relation to the impact the screen could have on the signals and provided the following comments:

- 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.*
- As part of this, they suggested that the applicant provides further justification from other similar locations throughout the country where full video motion has been permitted and confirms that no subsequent highway safety issues have been recorded.*

1.3 In response to these comments, this document 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. These examples are considered next.



Existing Examples of Full Motion Advertisements

- 1.4 This Section provides examples where full video motion displays have been introduced at similar locations to that of the proposals, ie. in the vicinity of signalised junctions. As part of this, accident data has been reviewed, to assess whether there have been any changes in the number of accidents on the local highway network, since each of the moving displays have been introduced.

Axis Tower, Whitworth Street, Manchester City Centre

- 1.5 As part of the Axis Tower residential development located in Manchester City Centre, a 29.8m x 7m screen was proposed on the northern elevation of the tower (refer to **Figure 1**). This screen would be sited above Albion Street and would be in full view for drivers utilising Albion Street and the signalised junction with Albion Street, Great Bridgewater Street and Lower Mosley Street.
- 1.6 This application was approved by MCC on the 20th of February 2015. Subsequently, an additional application was submitted on the 25th of February 2019 for additional consent to allow for moving images, animation, video and full motion images to be displayed on the existing media screen. It was considered by MCC that the installation of moving images on this screen would not have a detrimental impact on highway safety and subsequent permission was granted.
- 1.7 This full motion advertising display is located within a prominent location with the City Centre, with a variety of manoeuvres being undertaken by drivers at the adjacent signalised junction.

Figure 1 – Axis Tower Full Motion Digital Display (Source: Google Maps – image dated October 2023)



- 1.8 The advertising screen has been operational with moving images since 2019. An accident data review of Albion Street and the Albion Street/Great Bridgewater Street junction has been undertaken to assess whether there have been any changes in the number of accidents on the adjacent highway network (where the advertising display is in view to drivers). This accident analysis is presented in **Table 1** below:

Table 1 – Accident Data: Axis Tower Vicinity (Source: Crashmap)

	Pre-Screen (displaying moving images)			Implementation Year	Post-Screen (displaying moving images)		
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Albion Way (north of Axis)	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
Albion Way / Gt Bridgewater Jcn	2	4	0	0	0	0	0
Total	3	4	1	1	0	0	0

- 1.9 The review of recent accident data does not demonstrate any upward trend in accidents since the erection of the advertisement screen to display moving images. Therefore, it is not considered that the subsequent permission to show moving images / video advertisements has resulted in any negative impact on the local highway network.

Land at Portland Tower, Manchester

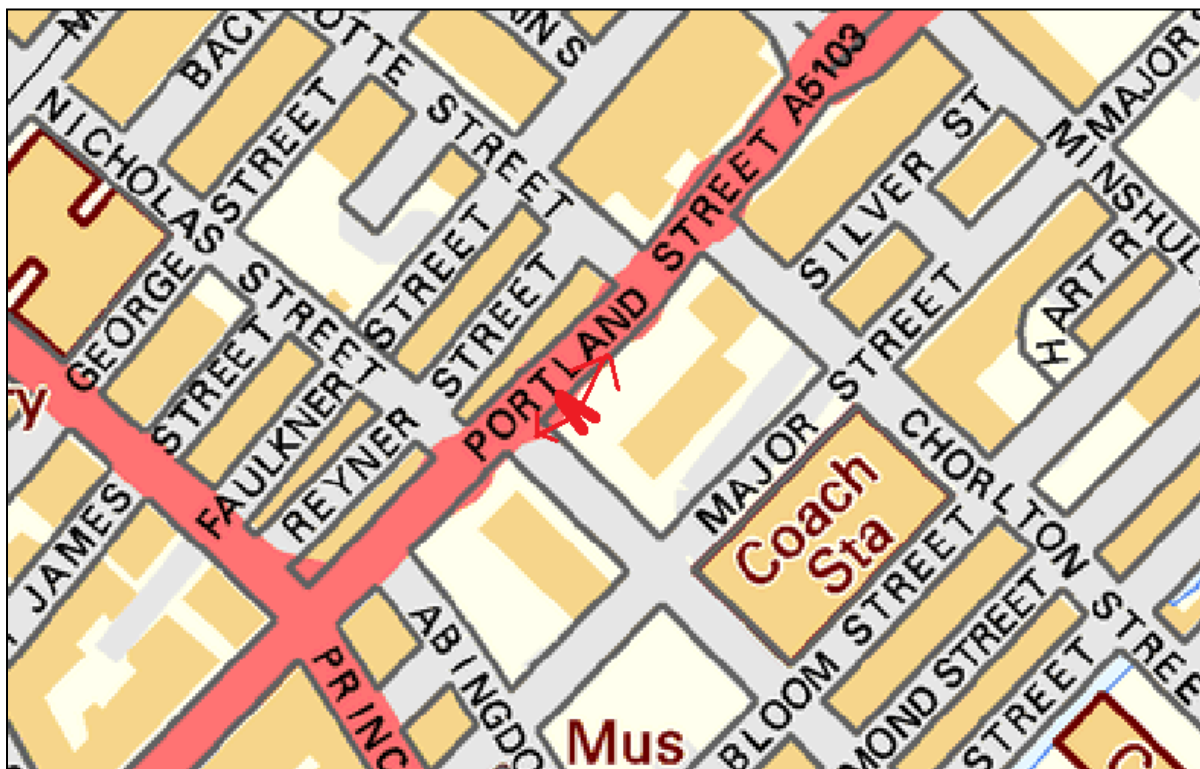
- 1.10 This full-motion digital advertising display is situated at the northeast corner of the Portland Street / Sackville Street signalised junction in Manchester. The display consists of a two-sided full-motion digital advertising structure and both screens face towards oncoming vehicular traffic on Portland Street.
- 1.11 The site's original application related to the replacement of the existing landlord-branded advertising boards with digital signs (*planning reference number: 097131/AO/2011*). This application was refused based on highways safety grounds, with the following reasons given:
- “This junction has high levels of bus traffic, long-distance coaches and very heavy footfall. Due to the combination of vehicular movements from a number of different directions and high volumes of pedestrians; the signage has the potential to cause distraction and therefore would be a safety risk in the proposed location”.*
- 1.12 The application was successfully appealed against, with approval being granted on 7th January 2014 (*reference number: APP/B4215/H/13/2203370*). The sign and location can be seen in **Figures 2** and **Figure 3** below.



Figure 2 – Portland Street / Sackville Street Junction Digital Advertising Display
(Source: Google Map)



Figure 3 – Advertising Display Location at Portland Street / Sackville Street Junction



- 1.13 The Inspector included the following commentary in the Appeal Decision on the use of full-motion signs adjacent to busy carriageways and signalised junctions:

“In the light of the evidence before me, I am satisfied that full-motion signs, can be operated without them necessarily having an adverse impact on public safety. Furthermore, as these signs become more commonplace, it means that they become more accepted and less of a distraction. Based on this, in my view, the position of this sign is such that the risks of an accident as a result of the full-motion screens is likely to be very small and not so significant to warrant the refusal of consent, or restricting the consent to a year, whilst further monitoring is undertaken. Consequently, for the reasons set out above I conclude that the upgrading of the existing digital displays to full-motion would not be detrimental to the road user safety and so the appeal should be allowed”.

- 1.14 This full motion digital advertising display was therefore considered not to present any risk to highway safety, despite being located adjacent to a signalised junction in a busy City Centre environment.
- 1.15 It is considered that this double-sided advertising screen has been operational with moving images since its approval in 2014. An accident data review of the adjoining highway has been undertaken to assess whether there have been any changes in the number of accidents on the local highway network where the sign is in view. This accident analysis is presented in **Table 2** below:

Table 2 – Accident Data: Portland Tower Vicinity (Source: Crashmap)

	Pre-Screen			Implementation Year	Post-Screen		
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Portland Street	5	8	7	9	3	8	6
Sackville Street	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Nicholas Street	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	5	9	7	9	2	8	6

- 1.16 The review of recent accident data does not demonstrate any upward trend in accidents since the erection of the double-sided advertisement screen and the display of video / moving images. It is not considered that the installation of the screen and subsequent permission to show moving images/video advertisements has resulted in any highway safety issues or any negative changes in local accident rates.



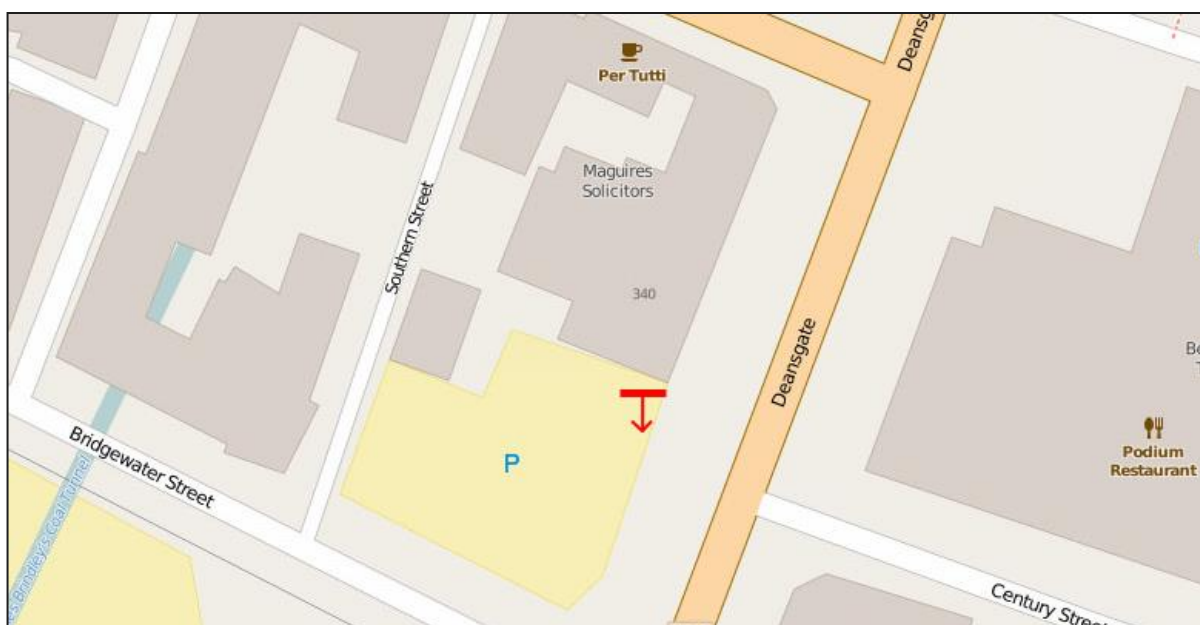
Deansgate Tower, Manchester

- 1.17 This digital advertising sign is located facing northbound traffic on Deansgate, one of the main routes through Manchester City Centre (<https://www.cityoutdoormedia.com/sites/the-deansgate-tower>). The site displays full-motion images that are visible to passing traffic and active travel users, with a signal-controlled junction a short distance along the carriageway on Deansgate. The sign and location can be seen in **Figures 4 and 5**.

Figure 4 – Deansgate Tower, Manchester Digital Advertising Display (Source: Google Maps)



Figure 5 – Advertising Display Location at Deansgate Tower on Deansgate



- 1.18 Google imaging suggests that this advertising display was erected sometime in 2014. An accident data review of the adjoining highway has been undertaken to assess whether there have been any changes in the number of accidents on the local highway network where the sign is in view. This accident analysis is presented in **Table 3** below:

Table 3 – Accident Data: Deansgate Tower (Source: Crashmap)

	Pre-Screen			Implementation Year	Post-Screen		
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Deansgate	2	1	2	0	0	0	1
Deansgate / B6469 Junction	1	0	1	2	2	1	0
Total	3	1	3	2	2	1	1

- 1.19 The review of recent accident data does not demonstrate any upward trend in accidents since the erection of the advertisement screen and the display of video / moving images. These findings suggest that the installation of the full motion screen did in no way adversely impact highway safety in the area.

Liverpool Media Wall

- 1.20 An application was submitted in 2012 for the erection of 206sqm full-motion LED screen on the façade of the St John's shopping centre in Liverpool city centre (refer to **Figure 6**). This was subsequently approved and is fully operational, displaying brightly coloured advertisements with both static and moving images.



Figure 6 – Liverpool Media Wall (Source: Google Maps – image dated September 2022)



- 1.21 The location of the screen is directly opposite the entrance to Liverpool Lime Street train station and is visible to motorists on the A5038 Lime Street (both directions), St George's Place (eastbound) and Skelhorne Street (westbound). It is also noted that this is a busy intersection within Liverpool city centre, with a signalised junction and various routes that can be undertaken requiring particular attention by motorists due to lane changes that may be required.
- 1.22 The media wall granted planning consent in October 2007 and based on a desktop review using Google Earth, we can assume an approximate implementation year of 2010.
- 1.23 The Crashmap database has been interrogated to compare the 'before' and 'after' accident rates in the vicinity of the A5038 Lime Street / St George's Place signalised junction in relation to the St John's Centre media screen wall. In the eight-year period from 2002 to 2009, before the erection of the advertising display, approximately 24 accidents occurred in the vicinity of the site, which equates to an accident rate of three per year. In the eight-year period from 2010 to 2017, when the media wall was fully operational, around 16 accidents occurred within the vicinity of the site, which equates to an accident rate of two per year.
- 1.24 This frequency of accidents indicates that there is no evidence to suggest a worsening of the accident record in the vicinity of the site and at the A5038 Lime Street / St George's Place signalised junction, since the erection of the existing advertising in 2010. Therefore, is not considered that the installation of the screen and subsequent permission to show moving images/video advertisements has resulted in any negative impact on highway safety.

New Barratt House, 47 North John Street, Liverpool, L2 6SG

- 1.25 An application was submitted in 2022 for a full motion advertising display on New Barratt House in Liverpool. The location of the site forms the corner of a five-storey building that faces the signalised junction of North John Street and Lord Street. The proposal would face to the south-west and be visible to traffic travelling eastbound on Lord Street (refer to **Figure 7**).



Figure 7 – New Barratt House, Proposed View towards Full Motion Advertising Display



- 1.26 The application received planning permission on appeal in December 2023 (ref: APP/Z4310/Z/23/3326278), with the planning inspectorate stating the following:

‘The proposed advertisement would not have an unacceptable harmful impact on public safety. I note that both the Council and the appellant make reference to a number of development plan policies, and also to the National Planning Policy Framework. Reference has also been made to other guidance. Whilst I have taken them into account as material considerations, the power to control advertisements under the regulations may be exercised only in the interests of public safety and amenity. Consequently, in my determination of this appeal, these matters have not, themselves, been decisive.’

- 1.27 This full motion / video digital advertising display was therefore considered not to present a risk to highway safety, despite being located adjacent to a signalised junction in a busy City Centre environment.

Piccadilly Lights, London

- 1.28 The iconic Piccadilly Lights were upgraded in 2017 to a 784sqm full-motion digital advertising screen, which is reportedly the largest advertising display in Europe. The screen is visible from vehicles travelling through Piccadilly Circus and various approach roads which are signal controlled, such as the A4 Piccadilly and A4201 Regent Street, as shown in **Figure 8**. This is an intensely trafficked location in Central London, with a very high pedestrian and vehicular footfall.



Figure 8 – Piccadilly Lights, London (Source: Google Maps – image dated November 2022)



- 1.29 It is understood that the LED screen was erected to show full motion videos in 2017. An accident data review of the adjoining highway has been undertaken to assess whether there have been any changes in the number of accidents on the local highway network where the display is in view. This accident analysis is presented in **Table 4** overleaf.

Table 4 – Accident Data: Piccadilly Lights Vicinity (Source: Crashmap)

	Pre-Full Motion Screen			Year of Upgrade	Post-Full Motion Screen				
	2014	2015	2016		2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Piccadilly / Shaftesbury Avenue	4	4	4	3	1	3	1	2	2
Regent Street	3	2	3	2	1	4	2	2	2
Regent Street Saint James's	0	2	1	2	3	5	2	2	3
Total	7	8	8	7	5	12	5	6	7



- 1.30 The review of the accident data shows that there has been an average of 7 accidents per year, post the implementation of moving images, with this accident rate almost identical to the average number of accidents per year prior to the upgrade. It is therefore not considered that the installation of the full motion screen has resulted in a material impact on highway safety.

Holland Park Roundabout, Hammersmith and Fulham, London

- 1.31 Holland Park Roundabout in Fulham hosts a large digital advertising screen. Holland Park Roundabout is signal controlled with the screens visible from vehicle travelling around the roundabout from multiple lanes (refer to **Figure 9**).

Figure 9 – Holland Park Roundabout (Source – Google Dated July 2022)



- 1.32 A piece of research undertaken by CH2M Hill in 2014 analysed five sites in Greater London in relation to the historical safety impact of roadside digital advertising installations. The results of the research indicated that there was no statistical relationship between digital advertising (including full motion / video advertising) and increased accident rates and that an average reduction of 20% of accidents was observed across the five sites following the erection of the displays.
- 1.33 The Holland Park signalised roundabout was one of the sites that showed an accident reduction in the period after the advertising display became operational, with the accident rate at the Holland Park roundabout improving since the existing advertising has been operational, with 'before' and 'after' advertisement accident rates of 5.3 and 3.7 collisions per year respectively. It can be seen in the image above that there are traffic signal heads positioned in front of the advertising screen, and this has not exacerbated any road safety issues at this location. This digital advertising display was therefore considered not to present any risk to highways safety, despite being located interfacing with a busy urban location adjacent to a signalised junction.



Westfield Square, London

- 1.34 This 220sqm full-motion digital advertising screen is reportedly London's largest full-motion retail screen (<https://oceanoutdoor.com/locations/westfield-square-westfield-london/>). The screen is visible from vehicles travelling along the A219 Wood Lane and Ariel Way on the approach to Westfield Shopping Centre, as shown in **Figure 10**. The Wood Lane / Ariel Way junction is signalised across all arms.

Figure 10 – Westfield Square (Source – Google Dated July 2022)



- 1.35 Google imaging suggests that this advertising display was erected sometime in 2018. An accident data review of the adjoining highway has been undertaken to assess whether there have been any changes in the number of accidents on the local highway network where the sign is in view. This accident analysis is presented in **Table 5** below:

Table 5 – Accident Data: Westfield Square, London (Source: Crashmap)

	Pre-Screen			Implementation Year	Post-Screen		
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Wood Lane	3	2	1	1	0	0	4
Ariel Way	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total	3	3	1	1	0	0	5



- 1.36 These findings suggest that the installation of the full motion screen did not adversely impact highway safety in the area.

Interaction with the Offside Primary Signal

- 1.37 As discussed, a comment has been received relating to the proposed screen having potential issues with the offside primary signal at the New Quay Street approach.
- 1.38 Upon reviewing this comment, it appears that the Council has misunderstood the location of the proposed screen, mistakenly confusing it with an existing static advertisement that is located on an adjacent building. **Figure 11** below shows the photomontage on this approach, with the location of the proposed wall illustrated in red.

Figure 11 – The New Quay Street Approach in relation to the Proposal Site



- 1.39 As outlined in the Highway Safety Report (SLR Report No: 410.065761.00001), it is clarified that the proposed art wall position and the location of the primary traffic signal at the New Quay Street approach will in no way conflict nor pose any safety concerns for approaching drivers within the 25m SSD for the 20mph approach speed (refer to SLR drawing 410.065761-D100 within the submitted Highway Safety Report).

Conclusion

- 1.40 The examples provided above illustrate that digital advertisements and LED screens featuring videos and full motion, are now commonplace in many parts of the highway network, including



in busy city centre locations and in close proximity to signalised junctions. There are various examples throughout the UK where full motion advertising has been consented and operates with no concerns for highway safety.

- 1.41 With such precedence established and no conflict with existing traffic signal heads, there is no reason why the proposals for the globe media art wall on the eastern façade of No. 1 Quay Street in Manchester, should not be permitted. Furthermore, there is no indication to suggest that permitting full motion imaging at this location will adversely affect highway safety.
- 1.42 The comments received by MCC Highways and TfGM have been addressed by SLR in this technical response. This work should allow Highways and the Local Planning Authority to take a considered view to support the application for full approval.





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