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27 November 2023

Planning Department
Manchester City Council
PO Box 532
Town Hall
Manchester M60 2LA
F.A.O. Anthony Mitchell

Dear Anthony,

Application for Advertisement Consent for two Digital Totem Signs at Citylabs 1.0, Manchester

Please find enclosed an application submitted under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended) (hereafter referred to as the 'Advertising Regulations'). The Applicant is Bruntwood SciTech Ltd.

The Application is for Advertisement Consent to erect two digital totem signs at Citylabs 1.0, Oxford Road Corridor, Manchester (the 'Site').

Background

Planning Permission was granted in 2011 (Ref: 095134/FO/2010/C1) for the erection of an extension to the former Royal Eye Hospital to create a new building for use as a research and development facility, known as Citylabs 1.0. The development completed construction in 2015 and has been occupied since.

An application was approved on 15 September 2016 at Citylabs 1.0 for the installation of two fascia signs to the north and west elevations on the corner of Oxford Road and Nelson Street respectively, in addition to a single totem sign outside the building's main entrance off Nelson Street (Ref: 113379/AO/2016). A revised application for this signage was approved in February 2017, to formalise a reduction in scale of the approved totem signage. This advertisement consent has since been implemented. The approved signage is shown on Figure 1 overleaf.

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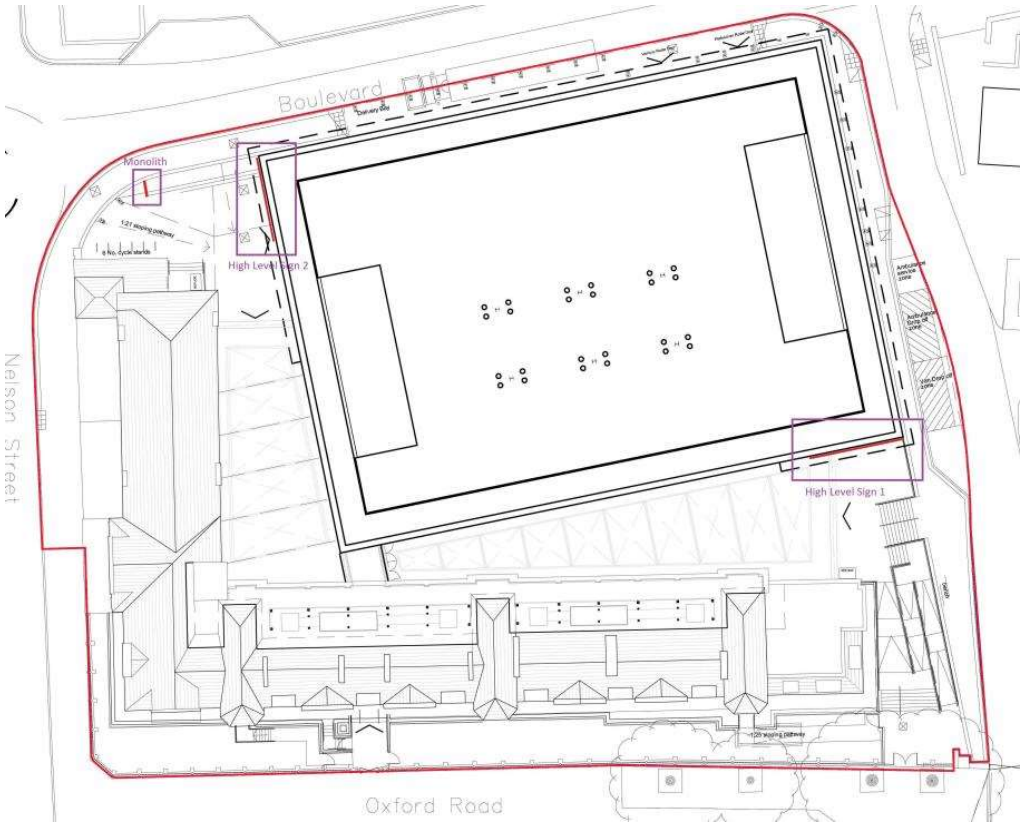
Figure 1: Signage implemented under Advertisement Consent Ref. 114948/AO/2017 (Source MSP)



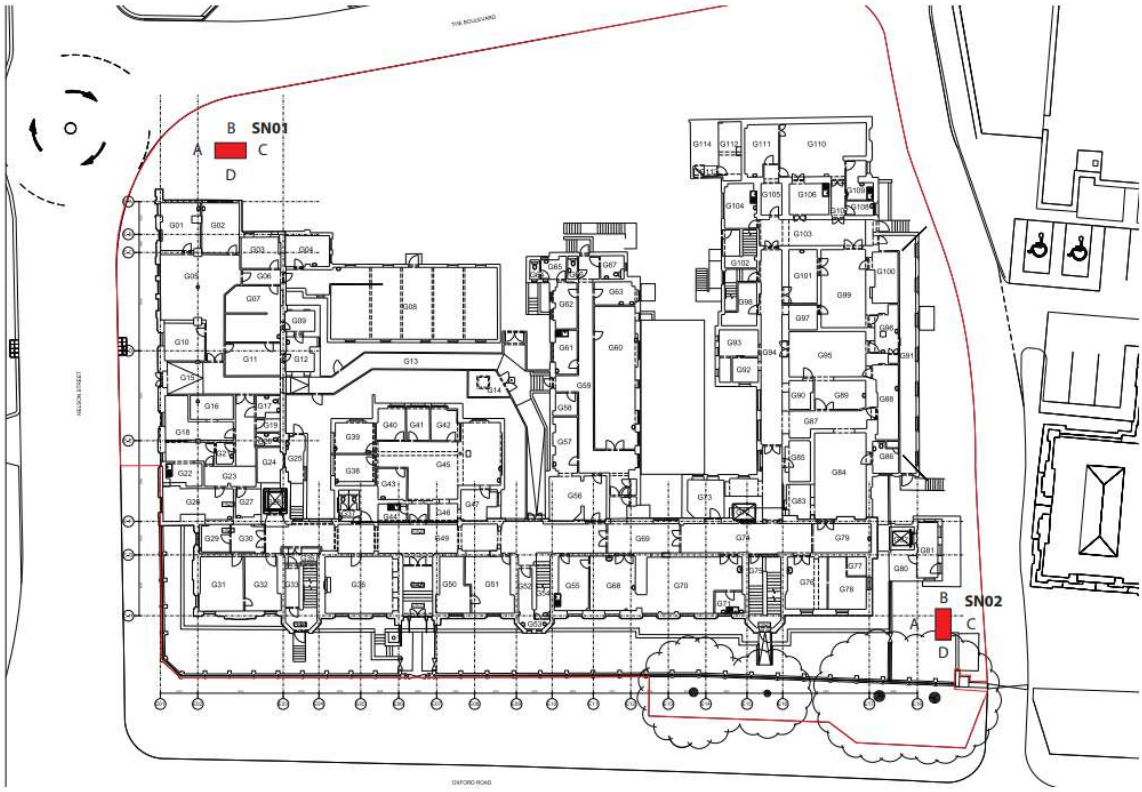
The Applicant is now proposing to improve wayfinding and identification around the Citylabs Campus at street level through proposals for two new totem signs at Citylabs 1.0, as discussed further below.

A separate application for three further totem signs, following the same design aesthetic, is submitted concurrently for Citylabs 2.0.

Application Proposal

This Application seeks advertisement consent for the erection of two totem signs at Citylabs 1.0, as shown in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Proposed Digital Totem signs SN01 and SN02 at Citylabs 1.0 (source: Widd Signs)



Further information on the proposed signage can be found in the '*Citylabs Campus MFT – Planning Drawing'* document prepared by Widdsigns and the Application Form, submitted in support of this Application for Advertisement Consent.

Sign SN01 proposes to replace the existing totem sign approved under advertisement consent Ref. 114948/AO/2017 at Citylabs 1.0 to match the new branding proposed across the estate.

The wayfinding totem signs are proposed to be freestanding with a concrete foundation support. The signs comprise a fret cut aluminium finish self-supporting core (RAL 9011) with a steel frame. Both totems include recessed opal 069 acrylic on the header panel of the totem to enable static internal illumination of text to a maximum output of 200cd/m2. White vinyl directional content is also proposed on the two larger elevations.

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Both signs (SN01 and SN02) comprise digital totems with two back-to-back 43 inch outdoor IP65 rated screens. These totems will be predominantly used to display directional information and welcome messages but will occasionally be used to advertise events taking place across the Citylabs campus.

For completeness, the signage details can be found in Table 1 and illustrated in Figure 3 below.

Table 1: Dimensions and Metrics of Proposed Advertisement

Sign Type	Dimensions (height x width x depth)	Illumination	Materials
Digital Totems (x2) **(SN01, SN02)**	2200mm x 800mm x 400mm Maximum height of static text: 40cm.	Internal - 200cd/m2	Aluminium; Steel Frame; RAL 9011; Matt 069 opal acrylic finish static internally illuminated header text; back-to-back 43 inch outdoor IP65 rated screens; high tac plotted matt white vinyl directional content.

Figure 3: Proposed Digital Totems (x2)

National Planning Policy & Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides the following guidance in relation to outdoor advertisements within Chapter 12. Achieving well-designed places at Paragraph 136:

'The quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed. A separate consent process within the planning system controls the display of advertisements, which should be operated in a way which is simple, efficient, and effective. Advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts.'

Planning Practice Guidance ('live' document)

The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) provides further clarification of the matters that can be taken into account when assessing applications for Express Advertisement Consent in relation to public safety and amenity.

In terms of public safety, the PPG details at Paragraph: 067 (Reference ID: 18b-067-20140306; Revision date: 06 03 2014) that advertisements are less likely to create road safety problems if they are located away from roads, junctions, roundabouts, pedestrian crossings, or other places where local conditions represent traffic hazards. In addition, there are also less likely to be road safety problems if the advertisement is on a site within a commercial locality.

Signs also need to ensure they do not obstruct or confuse a driver's view and that internally illuminated signs must not be overly bright or be subject to frequent changes of the display (Paragraph: 068; Reference ID: 18b-068-20140306; Revision date: 06 03 2014).

In terms of amenity, the PPG reiterates the wording of the Advertisement Regulations and the NPPF in stating that amenity is understood to mean the effect on visual and aural amenity in the immediate neighbourhood of an advertisement (Paragraph: 079; Reference ID: 18b-079-20140306; Revision date: 06 03 2014). Therefore, in assessing amenity, a Local Planning Authority should always consider the local characteristics of the neighbourhood and whether the proposed advertisement is in keeping with that setting.

National Design Guide (2019)

The National Design Guide was published by the Ministry of Communities and Local Government in October 2019 and is a material consideration in the determination of a planning application. It sets out the characteristics of well-designed places and demonstrates what good design means in practice. It notes at Paragraph 99 that signage plays a part in achieving well-designed places.

Local Planning Policy

Manchester Core Strategy (2012)

The Core Strategy does not set out specific policies related to advertisements. However, Policy DM1 (Development Management) sets out a range of specific issues to which all development should have regard, including:

- Regard to appropriate siting, layout, scale, form, massing, materials, and details; and
- Regard of the character of the surrounding area, and the impact on the surrounding areas in terms of the design, scale, and appearance of the proposed development.

Saved Policies of the Unitary Development Plan (2012)

While the Core Strategy supersedes a large number of the policies contained within the Unitary Development Plan (UPD), a number of policies were 'saved' in 2012 and remain in effect today. This includes Policy DC15 (Advertisements, Hoardings and Posters) which sets out that:

"The Advertisement Regulations requires that applications for advertisements be considered only in the interest of amenity and public safety. In assessing the interest of amenity and safety the Council will take account of the following criteria:

> *a) Developments of this kind should not harm the character or architectural features of a building, no interfere with its proper use;*
>
> *b) They should be in scale with the locality and relate properly to the site on which they stand;*
>
> *c) They should be unobtrusive and should not intrude into residential neighbourhoods and areas of high amenity value;*
>
> *d) A proposal which would be injurious to public safety or adversely affect the flow of traffic, by reason of its position, size, or design will not be permitted.*

Where having regard to the proceeding policies, the Council considers the proposed development to be acceptable in principle, conditions may be imposed in order to protect safety and amenity."

Compliance with Planning Policy and Guidance

A review of the relevant policies and guidance has identified three key considerations for an advertisement application, as covered in the headings below.

Design and Appropriateness for Setting

The majority of uses immediately surrounding Citylabs 1.0 are associated with the Citylabs Campus and the Manchester Royal Infirmary. The main Manchester Royal Infirmary campus is located to the east, with a multi-storey car park and public house located to the north of Nelson Street. To the west of Oxford Road comprises student accommodation and ground floor retail units and Whitworth Park.

There is no overriding architectural or design style within the hospital campus and as such, the signs have been designed to be consistent with the design of Citylabs 1.0. and 2.0.

It is therefore considered that the proposed advertisements are appropriately designed and are suitable for the location.

Public Safety

The construction and installation of these displays will take place with reference to the latest best practices.

The totem signs are proposed to be erected to the north-east and south-west of Citylabs 1.0, and thus would be intentionally visible for pedestrians entering the site from Oxford Road and The Boulevard, providing means of wayfinding. The signs have been designed with due consideration for drivers and cyclists and will be illuminated to a limit of 200cdm/m2, considered an appropriate illumination level for its context.

It is therefore considered that the nature of illumination is not excessive and is proportionate for the location near to the highway and would not be distracting or cause safety issues to road users.

The signs are set within a concrete base and is to be located within the public realm area away from the main junctions of Oxford Road and Nelson Street, and will therefore not obstruct or confuse any driver's view or impede on the safety of road users or pedestrians.

It is considered that the erection of the wayfinding totem signs will not adversely impact public safety within the area.

Amenity

Regarding any impact on amenity, and in considering both the local characteristics of the surrounding area to the Site (particularly with regard to the listed building), it is considered that the proposed signage will be in keeping with the scale and form of the existing features of the Site's immediate context.

Although the signs will be internally illuminated, the illumination is proposed to low level to avoid light spillage to neighbouring properties. Furthermore, none of the proposed signs will have an audible element.

On this basis, it is considered that amenity will not be adversely affected by the proposed signage and that the Application therefore satisfies the requirements of planning policy with regard to due consideration of these matters.

Summary

For the reasons set out above, the two digital totem signs at Citylabs 1.0, proposed as part of this Application for Advertisement Consent, are considered to comply with the relevant national and local policies and guidance. There are no other relevant policy considerations, and as such it is considered that the proposal is in accordance with the Development Plan and relevant material considerations.

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Submission

The application comprises this Letter and the following submitted via the Planning Portal (Ref. PP-12042945) alongside the requisite application fee of £132.00 plus the administrative fee from the Planning Portal:

- Application Form – prepared by Deloitte;
- Covering Letter – prepared by Deloitte;
- Citylabs Campus MFT – Planning Drawing Pack prepared by Widdsigns, comprising:
    - Elevations of proposed signs; and
    - Site Plans; and
    - Location Plan.

We trust that you have all the information required to validate the Application, and we look forward to receiving written confirmation of their registration. Please do not hesitate to contact my colleague Ollie Eyre (odeyre@deloitte.co.uk / 020 7303 4102) if you have any questions or require any further information.

Yours sincerely

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