

24 May 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 illuminated hoarding advertisement and four fascia signs, at Citylabs 4.0, Hathersage Road, 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 Limited.

The Site to which this application relates comprises the land south of Hathersage Road, within the Oxford Road Corridor in Manchester, to which Planning Permission for Citylabs 4.0 was granted in March 2020 (Ref. 125592/FO/2019) ("the Site").

This letter is submitted in support of an application for Advertisement Consent for illuminated signage and an integrated 65 inch LCD screen on hoarding to be erected around the Citylabs 4.0 construction site, in addition to four illuminated fascia signs denoting "CITYLABS 4.0" on the north, east and west elevations of Citylabs 4.0.

Background

Planning Permission was granted for the Site on 20 March 2020 for the development of Citylabs 4.0 (Ref. 125592/FO/2019), described as follows:

"Erection of a seven storey building comprising flexible Office (Use Class B1a), Research and Development (Use Class B1b) and Educational Space (Use Class D1), together with ground floor ancillary Retail uses (Use Classes A1 and A3), in addition to associated cycle parking, accessible car parking, landscaping, provision of plant and servicing and related access and highway's works, and other associated works (associated advert application reference 125593/AO/2019)."

Advertisement Consent (Ref. 125593/AO/2019) was also granted in March 2020 for four illuminated external fascia signs. The Applicant has since slightly revised the branding and logo design of the external signage at Citylabs 4.0 necessitating a new application for advertisement consent.

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Condition 32 of the Citylabs 4.0 Planning Permission requires all signage proposed to accord with the signage principles detailed within the approved Design and Access Statement. The revised fascia signs present a slightly updated logo design. As such, a revised Design and Access Statement, containing the revised Signage Strategy has been submitted as part of this application. An application for a non-material amendment (NMA) to Planning Permission Ref. 125592/FO/2019 is submitted to Manchester City Council (MCC) concurrently, under Section 96a of the Town and Country Planning Act. The NMA also includes for a small amendment to the elevation at ground floor level within the service yard.

The proposed location, type of sign, and nature of illumination of the four illuminated external fascia signs remain unchanged from previously approved.

Pre-Application Consultation

The Local Planning Authority has been made aware of these proposals and confirmed agreement to the form and scope of the application on 10th January 2023.

Proposed Advertisements

Signage, which includes an integrated 65 inch LCD screen, is proposed to be included on hoarding to be erected around the Citylabs 4.0 construction site, on the Hathersage Road and east and west boundaries. Four fascia signs are also proposed on the north, east and west elevations of Citylabs 4.0. These are discussed in turn in further detail below.

Fascia signs (x4)

Three high-level elevational fascia signs relating to the building name are proposed to be erected on the plant screening to the north, east and west elevations of the building.

A further smaller fascia sign relating to the building name is proposed on the north elevation above the entrance to Citylabs 4.0 from Hathersage Road.

All the proposed elevational signs will be made from bespoke fabricated internally illuminated letterings, the face of which will be white opal acrylic. Aluminium housing is proposed to sit behind the face of the high-level signs so as to not be visible and will be powder coated RAL 9011. The entrance fascia sign is proposed to be erected on a frame erected on the spandrel panel and will also be coloured to match the existing cladding (RAL 9011).

The location of the proposed elevational signs is outlined on the elevation plans prepared by Sheppard Robson.

The signs have been specifically designed and located to ensure they are visible when viewed from the pedestrian level on Hathersage Road and further afield, including the wider Citylabs Campus, Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust Campus and the Oxford Road Corridor. The Proposed Advertisements will act as a means of wayfinding to direct people to the building. Further information and sign dimensions are provided in Table 1 below and submitted elevations.

Hoarding

Hoarding is proposed to be erected around the Citylabs 4.0 construction site on its Hathersage Road, east, and west boundaries. The hoarding advertisement will be in place whilst construction works are underway.

The hoarding spans 75 metres and will display a mix of typologies including illustrations and iconography, background and illustration patterns, a QR code, an integrated 65 inch LCD screen, and text which is in keeping with the overall Citylabs brand. The hoarding aims to identify the development being constructed on the Site, highlighting how the development will support the Applicant's ambitions to improve the health and quality of life of our diverse population, contributing to the economic and social well-being of Greater Manchester and beyond.

All hoardings will be manufactured in high quality materials comprising plywood and 3mm composite aluminium with anti-graffiti coating, in a style which complements the contemporary design of the building. The font is proposed to comprise printed vinyl.

The hoarding is proposed to be internally illuminated in lightboxes built out at a depth of 125mm and evenly distributing light across the hoarding advertisement. Halo lights are proposed to the back edge of the lettering and downlighters will illuminate the hoarding face. All lighting is proposed to be limited to 200 cd/m² and will be static.

The LCD screen, which will be integrated into the hoarding, will include images of the proposed development, with images smoothly transitioning every 10.5 seconds to mitigate against any distraction to highway users. The luminance of the unit will not exceed 400 cd/m², and the images will not display anything which can be confused as highway signage.

Further information and dimensions are provided in Table 1. Further details on the specification, design and location of the signage being proposed can also be found on the enclosed 'Citylabs 4.0 Hoarding' pack and the Application Form submitted in support of the Application via the Planning Portal.

It is envisaged that the hoardings will provide an informative and attractive interface for the Site boundary, which will provide interest for residents and passers-by, and will also enhance the visual appearance of the Site during construction.

Table 1: Dimensions and Metrics of Proposed Advertisements

Sign	Dimensions (mm)	Height from Ground to base of advertisements (metres)	Illumination	Cd/m2	Materials
High-level Fascia Signs x 3	10000 x 1085 x 100	29.5	Static	300	Aluminium housing to be powder coated black RAL 9011. Face of signage to be illuminated white opal acrylic to face.

Sign	Dimensions (mm)	Height from Ground to base of advertisements (metres)	Illumination	Cd/m2	Materials
Entrance Fascia Sign x 1	4500 x 500 x 120	3.8	Static	300	Aluminium housing to be powder coated black RAL 9011. Face of signage to be illuminated white opal acrylic to face. Framing to signage to match RAL 9011
Hoarding x 1	75000 x 2440 x 125	0	Static	200	Printed vinyl and Perspex, timber. Back-lit light box, halo lighting and downlighters. 65 inch LCD screen, integrated into the hoarding.

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.

Appropriateness for Setting / Design

The majority of uses immediately surrounding Citylabs 4.0 are associated with the Citylabs Campus and the Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust (MFT).

The main Manchester Royal Infirmary campus is located to the north, with the Ronald McDonald House situated directly to the north. To the west is Oxford Road, which comprises student accommodation and ground floor retail units and Whitworth Park. Vacant 20th century University of Manchester buildings are located directly to the south, and residential flats are located to the east.

There is no overriding architectural or design style of building signage across the hospital campus or surrounding area and as such, the signs have been designed to be consistent with the existing signs found on Citylabs 1 and 2. The LCD screen will display images relating to Citylabs 4.0.

The level of illumination is suitable for the location and scale of the proposed advertisements as discussed further in the following section.

It is therefore considered that the proposed hoardings and fascia signs 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 hoarding will be securely fixed to the ground, and will be coated in anti-graffiti coating. The hoarding is to be erected to the pavement edge of Hathersage Road, as agreed with MCC Highways and will prevent pedestrian access into the Citylabs 4.0 construction site.

The Applicant's transport consultant, Curtins, consulted with MCC Highways prior to the submission of this application, who confirmed that the LCD screen and hoarding illumination to 400 cd/m² is not excessive and is proportionate for the location adjacent to the highway and would not be distracting or cause safety issues to road users. The LCD images will transition no less than every 10.5 seconds, as per MCC recommendations. Correspondence with MCC Highways is submitted in support of this application.

Similarly, it is considered that the illumination of the fascia sign would be proportionate for their location, and their erection will not adversely impact public safety within the area. The fascia sign illumination is proposed to be maintained at 300 cd/m², considerably lower than the 600 cd/m² which was consented in the scheme's previous advertisement strategy (125593/AO/2019).

The construction and installation of the hoardings and fascia signs will take place with reference to best practice. It is considered that the signage proposals will maintain 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, it is considered that the proposed fascia and hoarding advertisements will be in keeping with the scale and form of the existing features of the Site's immediate context.

The fascia signs will be internally illuminated, whilst the hoarding is proposed to be internally and externally illuminated. Nonetheless, the level of illumination is proposed to be proportionate and to a low level to avoid light spillage to neighbouring properties. Furthermore, none of the proposed signs will have an audible element.

Although the hoardings will be internally illuminated, the illumination and integrated LCD screen are proposed to a low level to avoid light spillage to neighbouring properties. Furthermore, none of the proposed hoardings 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 advertisements 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.

Submission

The application comprises this Letter and the following submitted via the Planning Portal (Ref: PP-11923510) alongside the requisite application fee of £132.00 plus the administrative fee from the Planning Portal:

- Completed Application Form and Certificates – prepared by Deloitte;
- Approved Plans and Elevations, prepared by Sheppard Robson, comprising:
 - General Arrangement North Elevation – 6312-SRA-XX-XX-DR-A-00845 REV P00;
 - General Arrangement East Elevation – 6312-SRA-XX-XX-DR-A-00846 REV P00;
 - General Arrangement West Elevation – 6312-SRA-XX-XX-DR-A-00848 REV P00;
 - Entrance Signage – 6312 – SRA-00-00-DR-A-70100 P01; and
 - Building Signage – 6312 – SRA-00-R1-DR-A-70101 P01.
- Revised Plans and Elevations, prepared by Sheppard Robson, comprising:
 - General Arrangement North Elevation – 6312-SRA-XX-XX-DR-A-20200 REV P08;

- General Arrangement East Elevation – 6312-SRA-XX-XX-DR-A-20201 REV P06;
 - General Arrangement West Elevation – 6312-SRA-XX-XX-DR-A-20203 REV P06;
 - Entrance Signage – 6312 – SRA-00-00-DR-A-70100 P03;
 - Building Signage – 612 – SRA-00-R1-DR-A-70101 P04.
- Site Hoarding Design Pack for Citylabs 4.0, prepared by Assembly and Bruntwood SciTech; and
 - Correspondence from MCC Highways (dated 22 February 2023).

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

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Deloitte LLP". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

Deloitte LLP