

21st April 2023

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**Manchester City Council
City Centre Team – DM
P.O. Box 532
Town Hall
Manchester M60 2LA**

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Town and Country Planning Act 1990
Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements)
(England) Regulations 2007**

Proposal Site – Pavement outside 61 Great Ancoats Street, M4 5AB

This letter is submitted in support of an application for Advertisement Consent under Regulation 9 of the Advertisement Regulations, part of the recent program to upgrade and replace the City Council's existing advertising estate.

Application Background

The location is listed above and represents the relocation of the existing approved site rather than additions to the Manchester City Council estate. In site in question is an alternative for the existing location in GROUP 6 consented in October 2021 under reference 130791/AOH/2021. For the last year the site has been effectively obscured by scaffolding relating to the adjacent properties redevelopment and it is understood that the future layout of the gardens will not allow for the continued presence of this advertising unit in this particular location. For this reason, an alternative location was found on Great Ancoats Street.

In consultation with the Council's commercial team and with the support of Officers we therefore propose the new location as detailed in the attached application documentation. The new unit will maintain the consistent "Forum" design contained within Part 3 documentation attached and the remainder of the estate. The Forum unit is tailored for Manchester and features the MCC logo and the iconic Manchester Bee, displayed on the skirt on each side of the unit, as illustrated in the application documents.

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Planning Considerations

The application is submitted under the provisions of the 2007 Advertisement Regulations and relate to the display of advertisements. As such, the primary consideration relates to the impact on visual amenity and public safety, as set out in the Regulations. The advertisement comprises two LCD screens, positioned back-to-back on a single structure and showing illuminated images that automatic change by means of a remote server. The advertisements will comprise static images at both locations and the light level adjusts to ambient levels during the daytime and pre-set to ILP maximum levels during the hours of darkness. Should the unit malfunction, the screen will switch off and automatically alert the Digital team of the fault.

The application site is a new location that have been chosen in light of the local context and character of their surroundings to ensure the introduction of the roadside advertising displays would not appear out of place.

Amenity

Amenity considerations concern the effect of development on the appearance and character of an area, which is often experienced through the mix and type of land uses and buildings that form the townscape. In the case of the current application site the character is broadly comparable, as each is located within the same or very similar context of a busy main routes in the City. The character of Great Ancoats Street is that of vibrant urban streets that carry high volumes of pedestrians and vehicular traffic throughout the day and nighttime. The street includes active commercial frontages to large scale commercial premises that range in age and architecture but combined contribute to how one experiences the local character. Policy guidance requires proposals to have regard to the general characteristics of an area in advertising proposals and is generally supportive of advertising within retail and commercial areas where it can positively contribute to vitality and place.

The scale of buildings and character of the City Centre is varied, ranging from substantial commercial retail and office buildings to small scale shop premises. An element of residential use is also a feature of the City Centre, although typically confined to upper floors. Each proposal site is located within this visual context and away from the most sensitive and historic parts of the City where local setting could be harmed by insensitive positioning of the unit.

The proposal does not seek to add more furniture to the street, rather they displace an existing and approved location that is being moved for the reasons outlined above. There can be no suggestion therefore that their installation would

create visual clutter as the overall number of units is maintained across the City and these applications would not result in additional furniture. The proposed unit at the application site represent a relatively minor alteration to the street scene and one that would be visually neutral in impact. The advertisement is intended to be visible, however they serve as complementing features of the urban street without appearing intrusive or out of place. One of the principle aims of policy is to ensure a high quality of design and conformity with the general principle of safeguarding amenity and public safety as contained within national guidance. Overall, the Proposal would accord with policy guidance and will not harm local visual amenity.

Public Safety

Public safety issues are concerned with the effect an advertisement would have on drivers and pedestrians and whether the position of the advertisement or the manner of its display is likely to be so distracting or confusing as to endanger the public. It is clear that outdoor advertising is designed to be seen and is typically found within commercial settings amongst other forms of prominent advertisements or retail operations. Within commercial contexts and alongside busy streets, such as the centre of Manchester, there is a heightened awareness and expectation of seeing commercial images such that they do not tend to appear unusual, out of place or distracting.

The advertising displays on the Forum CIP unit are elevated by 750mm above the pavement and intended to be visible principally to pedestrians, although some displays may be visible, albeit obliquely, to passing vehicular traffic. As mentioned earlier the character and setting for each location is overwhelmingly commercial, along well-lit streets and close to lit shop fronts and other premises forming the immediate backdrop. The prominence of the site will provide ample opportunity for people to see the simple messages on display. The same is true for those advertisements that are visible to drivers, who will see the displays alongside active street frontages and so are less likely to be distracted when viewed in this context. Furthermore, in both cases passing traffic is at low speed and the circumstances of the road layout at each site doesn't place a burden on a driver's concentration.

The proposed unit is designed to create a consistent look and quality standard across the entire estate. The location and positioning of the unit have been the subject of pre-application consultation with the Council's Highways Department to ensure they are suitable and sufficiently distanced from road edges so as not to present a danger to drivers. In terms of the impact of the proposed units on pedestrian movement and safety, this too has been reflected in the unit positioning. It is considered, in light of the local context and existing level of activity in the City

centre, that the proposed display structure will not be against the interests of public safety.

The proposed development would be consistent with both national and local policies regarding advertisement control, including the City Council's local plan policy. The investment in modern, cleaner and greener technology is a progressive approach that creates a positive impression of the City and embraces sustainable development through exciting and new media formats.

Summary

The replacement of the permitted Forum unit to the proposed alternative site at Great Ancoats Street would not be against the interests of visual amenity or public safety and are acceptable in Planning terms. I trust that the above and enclosed documents clearly explain the nature of the Proposal but please call me if there are any further matters on which you may need clarification.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'T Johnston', written over a light blue circular stamp.

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