

The Corner of London Road and Altrincham Street, Manchester, M1 2PW

STATEMENT OF CASE – PLANNING APPEAL

Prepared on Behalf of Network Rail

August 2022

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ALTRINCHAM RAILWAY VIADUCT LISTED BUILDING**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Appeal Statement has been prepared by Tetra Tech Planning on behalf of Network Rail (the applicant) in response to Manchester City Councils ("the LPA") refusal of an application for advertisement consent (133376/AOH/2022) for the installation of one 48 sheet digital LED billboard to replace two 48 sheet billboards on site. The site is located on the corner of London Road and Altrincham Street, Manchester, M1 2PW.

Description of Proposal

- 1.2 The description of development as detailed on the decision notice is;
- 1.3 *"Installation of 1 no. 48 sheet LED digital billboard"*

Reasons for Refusal

- 1.4 The decision notice dated 29th June 2022, listed the reason for refusal as follows;
- 1.5 *'The proposed advertisement would by virtue of its size, location, design and appearance have a detrimental impact on visual amenity, character, appearance and ongoing regeneration of the surrounding area constituting an unduly obtrusive, incongruous and overly dominant feature to the listed viaduct on which it would be located and within the wider street scene. The proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of heritage assets and there would not be the required public benefits to outweigh this. The advertisement would be contrary to Government Guidance contained in Section 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework, the Core Strategy for the City of Manchester in particular policies EN1 (Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas), CC9 (Design and Heritage), EN3 (Heritage), DM1 (Development Management) and SP1 (Spatial Principles), the Guide to Development in Manchester, in particular paragraphs 2.6 and 11.45 and saved policies DC15.1, and DC15.2 (Advertisements, Hoardings and Posters), DC18.1 (Conservation Areas), DC19.1 (Listed Buildings) of The Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester (UDP) and Manchester Piccadilly Strategic Regeneration Framework.'*

Appeal Sections

- 1.6 This appeal statement is divided into the following sections:
- Section 2 describes the site, surroundings and relevant planning history;
 - Section 3 describes the proposed development;
 - Section 4 provides the planning policy context;
 - Section 5 provides the grounds for appeal, including a planning assessment of the appeal proposal, focusing on the reasons for refusal; and
 - Section 6 provides the conclusion to this statement of case.

2. APPLICATION SITE AND CONTEXT

- 2.1 The appeal site is located on the corner of Altrincham Street and London Road. The site currently supports 2 illuminated 48 sheet billboards with a sign positioned on either side of London Road. The board position on the eastern side of London Road is internally illuminated and stands on two wooden posts whilst the board on the western side of the road is externally illuminated and fixed to the railway viaduct.
- 2.2 The viaduct is a grade II listed structure - referred to as the Manchester South Junction and Altrincham Railway Viaduct (List Entry 1200837). The listing for the viaduct covers an extensive length of the structure, spanning from close to Piccadilly Station to the east of the appeal site, across the city centre before it splits into 2 separate arms. The southern arm extends to Dawson Street, with the northern arm extending to the viaduct's crossing of the River Irwell. In total the listed structure accommodates approximately 1.75 miles of railway line. The site surroundings are predominantly commercial in character, being located on a busy main road into the city centre. The Macdonald Hotel is directly to the east of the site, with Manchester Piccadilly Railway Station neighbouring the site to the north-east. The nearest advertisements of comparable design are found approximately just 40m away to the north of the viaduct facing northwards. This consists of a 48 sheet internally illuminated billboard and an adjacent 96 sheet internally illuminated billboard sited on the corner of London Road and Fairfield Street. Further such billboard signs are found in the wider locality on both Fairfield Street and to the south on London Road. There are no residential properties in the vicinity although the proposed sign to be upgraded can be seen in long views from the Macdonald Hotel.
- 2.3 The proposal site is an established location for advertising, having supported static advertisements in this location for in excess of 10 years, ensuring the signs benefit from deemed consent. Photographic evidence of this is presented at Appendix D of this Statement.

3. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 The advertisement consent application in question formed part of a national roll out across Network Rail's advertisement panel portfolio aiming to upgrade existing static billboards as part of a programme of modernising their advertising stock to a digital poster (D-poster) format. The site falls under Network Rail's land ownership.
- 3.2 The proposal sought to "repost" the existing externally illuminated display fixed to the viaduct to the west of London Road with a single "D-poster" which will display multiple static advertisements on rotation. The new screen dimensions proposed are 6500mm width x 3500mm height. The screen would be installed at the same height as the existing 48 sheet sign which it would be replacing and with the same orientation to appropriately avoid against any potential for vandalism and to provide suitable visibility to passers-by.
- 3.3 As part of the works, both of the existing static advertisement boards at the site would be removed, as illustrated on the submitted plans. This would include the removal of an existing 48 sheet board on the eastern side of London Road.
- 3.4 The proposal would allow Network Rail's existing advertising network to be better managed, monitored and maintained, to meet the modern requirements of advertisers. This will bring a wide range of benefits including:
- The upgrade of sites lacking in investment;
 - Revenue generated is in the public interest as it can be reinvested in the UK's railway and passenger infrastructure by Network Rail.
 - Ensuring a consistent quality of advertisement image, unaffected by weathering damage or ageing;
 - The ability for the illumination of signs to adjust to ambient light conditions, avoiding any potential for signs to be 'over illuminated';
 - Consolidation and delivering an overall reduction in the number of billboards in the network;
 - A reduction in vehicle trips for reposting paper adverts;
 - Eradicating the need to print posters and avoiding the associated waste involved in the production process;
 - The ability to broadcast emergency messaging;
 - The ability to use void periods for non-commercial campaigns;
 - Opportunity for more creative real time and locally relevant advertising; and
- 3.5 Digital content would be controlled remotely in real time from a Networks Operation Centre (NOC) and the site will be monitored remotely 24/7 to facilitate responsive maintenance.

Diagnostics software will report any faults back to the NOC and a “kill switch” would be able to turn the content to black until it can be resolved.

- 3.6 The proposal would utilise new display technology that is lightweight and can be erected with limited additional engineering, as digital poster installations typically weigh little more than the traditional paper and paste poster billboards.
- 3.7 The level of luminance can be suitably controlled in line with the Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP) relevant guidelines. During the hours of darkness, the sign will not exceed the maximum threshold set in the ILP guidelines, of 300cd/m² within urban and suburban areas. The signs are also capable of automatically adjusting to current lighting conditions ensuring against any “over illumination”.
- 3.8 The displays are capable of being dimmed to within 1% of their maximum output and as such any concerns regarding levels of illuminance at a particular site can be dealt with swiftly and remotely. Lower levels of illuminance prolong the lifetime of the display and reduce electricity costs and as such there is an operational and economic imperative to ensure that digital signs are not “over illuminated”.
- 3.9 To ensure that the proposed digital advertisement does not materially or detrimentally impact upon amenity or public safety, the applicant is willing for the sign’s operation to be controlled via the use of appropriate planning conditions. Suggested conditions could include the following:
- Maximum level of illuminance during the hours of darkness (between sunset and sunrise) to be no greater than 300cd/m²;
 - Maximum level of illuminance during daylight hours to be no greater than 600cd/m²;
 - Static images to be displayed only (no moving or flashing images);
 - Changes between adverts to take place instantaneously with no sequencing, fading, swiping or merging of images; and
 - Advertisement images to change no more frequently than once every ten seconds.
- 3.10 The above conditions are industry standard and are commonly seen applied to applications of this type. Where circumstances demand, additional controls or variations of these conditions may be acceptable to the applicant and where these may be sought, we would welcome dialogue to agree these.
- 3.11 An advertisement consent drawing pack and covering letter were submitted in support of the application detailing the above proposed advertisement (included at **Appendices B and C** of this statement).

Listed Building Consent Requirement

- 3.12 The applicant is aware that the installation of the proposed digital advertisement sign will require listed building consent. Should this appeal be successful it is intended that a subsequent listed building consent application would be submitted to the local planning authority in order to seek this necessary consent in advance of any installation.

4. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 4.1. Advertisement consent applications are to be determined in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (Regulations). The regulations state that local planning authorities are to consider factors in the interests of amenity and public safety when assessing an application for advertisement consent.
- 4.2. The application was refused amenity grounds and the impact it would have on the listed viaduct to which it would be attached. This section of the Appeal Statement focuses on considering the planning policies of relevance to the appeal as contained in the Development Plan and other policy documents material to the determination of the appeal.

Statutory Development Plan

- 4.3. Section 3(1)(a) of The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 states that a local planning authority shall exercise its powers under these Regulations in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking into account the provisions of the development plan, in so far as they are material.
- 4.4. The statutory development plan for the Manchester City Council authority area is currently comprised of the following relevant documents;
- Core Strategy (2012 - 2027)
 - Saved policies from the Unitary Development Plan (1995 – 2012)
 - Guide to Development in Manchester (Adopted April 2007)
 - Manchester Piccadilly Strategic Regeneration Framework (Adopted March 2018)

Material Considerations

- 4.5. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2021), National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), Relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance, Manchester Core Strategy (2012 – 2027) and saved policies from the Unitary Development Plan form material considerations in relation to this advertisement consent application.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2021)

- 4.6. The key NPPF Policy test relating to advertisements is set out in Section 12, Paragraph 136, which states that advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety. The NPPF also indicates that the advertisement consent process should be operated in a way that is simple, efficient and effective.

National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)

- 4.7. In relation to advertisements, the NPPG reiterates the two considerations in determining proposals: amenity and, where relevant, public safety. The general characteristics of the area,

including the presence of any features of historic, architectural, cultural or similar interest are highlighted as being important in considering amenity.

- 4.8. The NPPG notes at paragraph 079 that *‘in practice, amenity is usually understood to mean the effect on visual and aural amenity in the immediate neighbourhood of an advertisement or site for the display of advertisements, where residents or passers-by will be aware of the advertisement’.*

Reason for Refusal

- 4.9. The decision notice refusing consent for the scheme considers the proposal to be contrary to the following policies:

National Planning Policy Framework – Section 12

- 4.10. The refusal reason indicates the application to be contrary to Section 12 of the NPPF *‘Achieving Well-designed Places’.*
- 4.11. Paragraph 126 states *‘the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve.’*
- 4.12. Paragraph 127 states *‘Plans should, at the most appropriate level, set out a clear design vision and expectations, so that applicants have as much certainty as possible about what is likely to be acceptable. Design Policies should be developed with local communities so they reflect local aspirations, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area’s defining characteristics.’*
- 4.13. Paragraph 130 provides a series of requirements which planning decisions should ensure for developments. These include that developments:
- ‘a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development,*
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping.’*
- 4.14. Paragraph 136 states *‘The quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed, advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety.’*

National Planning Policy Framework – Section 16

- 4.15. The refusal reason also indicated the application to be contrary to Section 16 of the NPPF *‘Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment.’*

- 4.16. Paragraph 195 states; *'Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal'.*
- 4.17. Paragraph 206 states; *'Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.'*
- 4.18. Paragraph 207 states; *'Not all elements of a Conservation Area or World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 202, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole.'*
- 4.19. Paragraph 208 states; *'Local planning authorities should assess whether the benefits of a proposal for enabling development, which would otherwise conflict with planning policies but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset, outweigh the disbenefits of departing from those policies.'*

Manchester Core Strategy (2012 – 2027) – EN1 (Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas)

- 4.20. The policy makes specific reference to defined character areas. Of relevance to this appeal site is the 'City Centre Character Area' stating;
- *'Developers will be expected to consider the City's heritage and continue the rich pattern of activity in the core area.'*
 - *'Wherever possible the opportunity should be realized to enhance existing and provide new areas of meaningful open space, and the maintenance and improvement of the city's permeability should be considered in all proposals.'*

Manchester Core Strategy (2012 – 2027) – EN3 (Heritage)

- 4.21. The policy refers to heritage assets and features, specifically; *'New developments must be designed so as to support the Council in preserving or, where possible, enhancing the historic environment, the character, setting and accessibility of areas and buildings of acknowledged importance, including scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings, registered parks and gardens, conservation areas and archaeological remains.'*

Manchester Core Strategy (2012 – 2027) – EN12 (Area priorities for Open Space, Sport and Recreation)

- 4.22. The Officers' Report refers to the proposal being contrary to this policy regarding open space. Of relevance to the proposal is the considerations for the city centre to, *'enhance quality of existing areas and integrate new facilities within the character of the area.'*

Manchester Core Strategy (2012 – 2027) – CC9 (Design and Heritage)

- 4.23. The policy provides reference for accommodating new proposals alongside heritage assets;
- *‘Development in Manchester City Centre should preserve or enhance the heritage assets that have been identified, including listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled ancient monuments.’*
 - *‘New development must support the range of uses the Council expects in the City Centre and contribute to a coherent and integrated physical environment.’*
- 4.24. Paragraph 8.54 states; *‘The scale and density of development anticipated in the City Centre will require that different uses co-exist in close proximity and new development sits alongside some of the city’s best built heritage.’*

Manchester Core Strategy (2012 – 2027) – DM1 (Development Management)

- 4.25. The policy provides a number of specific principles which all developments should have regard to. Of specific reference to the appeal proposals these include;
- *‘Appropriate siting, layout, scale, form, massing, materials and detail.’*
 - *‘Impact on the surrounding areas in terms of the design, scale and appearance of the proposed development. Development should have regard to the character of the surrounding area.’*
 - *‘Effects on amenity, including privacy, light, noise, vibration, air quality, odours, litter, vermin, birds, road safety and traffic generation.’*
 - *‘Effects relating to biodiversity, landscape, archaeological or built heritage.’*

Manchester Core Strategy (2012-2027) – SP1 (Spatial Principles)

- 4.26. Policy SP1 identifies core development principles. This includes a requirement that development in all parts of the city should *‘make a positive contribution to neighbourhoods of choice.’*

Guide to Development in Manchester (April 2007)

- 4.27. The Guide to Development in Manchester is a supplementary planning document adopted in April 2007 providing further details on UDP policies. The decision notice has stated that the proposal is contrary to the following 2 paragraphs within the document;
- 4.28. Paragraph 2.6 states; *‘New developments should acknowledge the character of these areas and will only be acceptable if they preserve or enhance the special nature of these varied parts of the city.’*
- 4.29. Paragraph 11.45 states; *‘Our aim is to ensure that new developments fit comfortably into, and enhance the character of each distinct, and that the city does not become a homogenous urban*

sprawl. This does not mean that new and different developments will be rejected but that where they add to and enhance the area's distinct sense of place they will be welcomed.'

Saved Unitary Development Plan Policies – DC15.1 and DC15.2 Advertisements, Hoardings and Posters

- 4.30. Both policies set out the relevant considerations with regard to advertisements and hoardings. The policies are as follows;

DC15.1 'The advertisements regulations require that applications for advertisements be considered only in the interests of amenity and public safety. In determining applications for free standing hoardings and wall mounted posters the council will take account of the following matters in assessing these interests:

- a. the general location of the proposed development and the effect on visual amenity;*
- b. the scope for posters and hoardings to make a positive contribution to the locality;*
- c. the design of the structures, and the relationship with any premises on which they are located;*
- d. the effect of the proposal on permanent redevelopment of the land;*
- e. public safety resulting from the positioning of the design of the display;*
- f. the ease with which the structure is capable of being satisfactorily maintained;*
- g. the use of hoardings to screen vacant sites or buildings during development, or where development is known to be imminent;*
- h. the use of hoardings as part of a scheme to prevent access by unauthorised users onto land pending development*
- i. the use of hoardings to disguise or improve the appearance of unsightly features, operations or activities;*
- j. the number of advertisements in the locality and their cumulative effect on visual amenity.'*

DC15.2 'In assessing the interests 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, nor 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.'

Saved Unitary Development Plan Policies – DC18.1 Conservation Areas

- 4.31. This policy outlines the council's considerations with regard to proposals within conservation areas;

'The council will seek to preserve and enhance the character of its designated conservation areas by carefully considering the following issues:

- i) The relationship of new structures to neighbouring buildings and spaces;*
- ii) The effect of major changes to the appearance of existing buildings;*
- iii) The desirability of retaining existing features, such as boundary walls, gardens, trees, (including street trees);*
- iv) The effect of signs and advertisements;*
- v) Any further guidance on specific areas which has been approved by the council.'*

Saved Unitary Development Plan Policies – DC19.1 Listed Buildings

- 4.32. This policy refers to the council's approach to developments that will have some form of impact on listed buildings or heritage assets;

'The council will have regard to the desirability of securing the retention, restoration, maintenance and continued use of such buildings and to protecting their general setting. In giving effect to this policy, the council will:

- a) Not grant listed building consent for the demolition of a listed building other than in the most exceptional circumstances, and in any case, not unless it is satisfied that every possible effort has been made to continue the present use or to find a suitable alternative use;*
- b) Not permit a change of use of a listed building, where it would have a detrimental effect on the character or appearance of the building;*
- c) Not permit any external or internal alteration or addition to a listed building where, in its opinion, there would be an adverse effect on its architectural or historic character;*
- d) Seek to preserve and enhance the settings of listed buildings by appropriate control over the design of new development in their vicinity, control over the use of adjacent land, and where appropriate, by the preservation of trees and landscape features;*
- e) Permit demolition only where there are approved detailed plans for redevelopment and where there is evidence of a firm building contract;*
- f) Not permit alterations to a listed building which would prevent the future use of any part of the building, in particular upper floors or basements, or where poor maintenance is likely to result.'*

Manchester Piccadilly Strategic Framework (March 2018)

- 4.33. This strategic framework establishes the vision and guiding principles for the regeneration of the Piccadilly area of Manchester.

Corridor Manchester: North Campus (May 2017)

- 4.34. This Strategic regeneration framework has been published to guide future development in the North Campus area of central Manchester. Specifically relating to this proposal is the section for Altrincham Street that proposes the pedestrianisation of the street. With regards to the pedestrianisation of the street the framework states; *'the aim is for a vibrant thoroughfare where active frontages are housed within the historic railway viaduct.'*

5. GROUNDS FOR APPEAL

Introduction

- 5.1. As mentioned above and in accordance with the NPPF, advertisement proposals must only be considered in terms of amenity and public safety.
- 5.2. The Planning Officers Report and the subsequent decision notice have concluded that the proposal would *'by virtue of its size, location design and appearance have a detrimental impact on visual amenity, character, appearance and ongoing regeneration of the surrounding area constituting an unduly obtrusive, incongruous and overly dominant feature to the listed viaduct.'*
- 5.3. The reason for refusal will now be addressed and conclusions drawn with reference to the pertinent elements of development plan policy and national planning policy. No concerns were raised regarding public safety and therefore the rest of this statement will focus on the consideration of amenity for the determination of this application.

Refusal Reason

- 5.4. The sole reason for refusal is as follows;

'The proposed advertisement would by virtue of its size, location, design and appearance have a detrimental impact on visual amenity, character, appearance and ongoing regeneration of the surrounding area constituting an unduly obtrusive, incongruous and overly dominant feature to the listed viaduct on which it would be located and within the wider street scene. The proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of heritage assets and there would not be the required public benefits to outweigh this. The advertisement would be contrary to Government Guidance contained in Section 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework, the Core Strategic Character Areas, CC9 (Design and Heritage), EN3 (Heritage), DM1 (Development Management) and SP1 (Spatial Principles), the Guide to Development in Manchester, in particular paragraphs 2.6 and 11.45 and saved policies DC15.1, and DC15.2 (Advertisements, Hoardings and Posters) DC18.1 (Conservation Areas), DC19.1 (Listed Buildings) of The Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester (UDP) and Manchester Piccadilly Strategic Regeneration Framework.'

- 5.5. The key aspects of the proposals which potentially impact upon visual amenity are subsequently identified and discussed below.

Size, Design and Appearance of the Advertising Board

- 5.6. The proposed advertisement will replicate the size and appearance of the 48 sheet board currently on site, with the height and orientation also remaining unchanged. When the proposed digital sign is compared to the existing static sign which it is proposed to replace, there would be very little material difference upon viewing the two signs. In adopting a matching position, views of the sign would be largely unchanged for passers-by.

- 5.7. The proposed sign would introduce LED illumination, however, such illumination design is now commonplace across the road network and is gradually replacing more traditional externally or internally illuminated static advertisement boards and represents a more sustainable form of advertising.
- 5.8. We would contend that the transition to digital format advertisements provides opportunity to present better maintained advertisements which are less susceptible to weathering damage and poor levels of maintenance as exhibited by many traditional static advertisement board locations. As such, we do not agree with the notion that the proposed digital sign would represent an *'unduly obtrusive, incongruous and overly dominant feature'*, as judged by the Council's decision in the case of this application.
- 5.9. The proposed LED illumination should not present any material detrimental impact for visual amenity. Both of the existing signs are already illuminated. The illumination of the proposed replacement sign can be suitably controlled in accordance with the Institute of Lighting Professionals 'The Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements PLG 05' guidance with illumination during the hours of darkness limited to 300cd/m² (Table 4, Section 8 of the guidance). The maximum level of illumination during daylight hours can also be conditioned to no greater than 600cd/m², which is also common practice for such digital advertisements. As identified earlier within this statement, the applicant is happy for the maximum levels of illumination and operation of the proposed advertisement sign to be suitably controlled via industry standard conditions. These conditions would align with those proposed in comments provided by the Local Highway Authority in their consultation response to the application.
- 5.10. In this overall context, neither the size nor the proposed design for the sign would represent incorporating an incongruous or overly dominant feature which in our view could justifiably be viewed as resulting in any significant detriment to the character of the street scene.

Location and Siting

- 5.11. The proposal site is an established location for advertisements, having accommodated advertisements for in excess of 10 years. Evidence is provided at Appendix D showing the advertisements displayed at the site in September 2012. We are aware that the existing signs were installed well before 2012 and have been continually in place since their installation. This ensures the signs benefit from deemed consent.
- 5.12. In the determination process it is important to fully consider the context of the site and its character, as required by both the NPPF. Notwithstanding the listed status of the viaduct to which the sign would be fixed, the wider location does not represent a particularly sensitive location in respect to the introduction of commercial features. The site is not located within a Conservation Area. The locality is a bustling area of the city centre, very close to Manchester Piccadilly Railway Station and is positioned on a busy arterial A-road.
- 5.13. The wider surrounding area exhibits multiple examples of illuminated billboard signs, alongside advertisements of other types. There are 2 internally illuminated billboard signs directly to the north of the railway bridge and an LED sign to the south of the site facing northwards along

London Road. The proposed sign would therefore be in-keeping with the precedent set by other signs of a similar nature in the immediate vicinity.

- 5.14. The officers report places importance on the regeneration initiatives which are taking place in the area. In making this point the report states; *'it is considered that the proposed advertisement would not be consistent with the strategic regeneration objectives for Mayfield and would hinder regeneration efforts and investment to improve visual amenity in the area.'* Firstly, it is important to clarify that the site does not fall within the Mayfield Strategic Regeneration Framework area. The boundary for this Framework area follows the eastern side of London Road and encompasses land to the south of Manchester Piccadilly Railway Station around Mayfield Depot. This area is distinct from the application site, with the Macdonald Hotel and London Road forming a clear boundary between the two. This being the case, we cannot share the view that the proposals would in any way jeopardise the aspirations for this Framework area.
- 5.15. It is accepted that the site does fall within the North Campus Regeneration Framework Area. With the area earmarked for regeneration it would be appropriate that advertisements within the area are modernised and take advantage of new technology and investment opportunities to ensure consistent quality of advertisement images and move towards a more sustainable approach. The upgrading of the site, combined with a consolidation in the number of advertisements through removing the second sign on this site is, we believe, consistent with the regeneration aims for the area.
- 5.16. In conclusion, in seeking to utilise an established location for advertisements in a busy city centre location which benefits from deemed consent, the siting of the proposed advertisement sign does not present a justified reason for refusal, in replicating an existing sign position.

Visual Amenity

- 5.17. We are of the view that insufficient weight has been provided in the Council's decision-making process to the benefit to visual amenity which would be delivered through reducing the overall number of advertisements which would be displayed at the site. In reducing the number of advertisements at the site from 2 to 1 there would be a tangible improvement for the visual amenity of the street scene, removing an advertisement board from view for drivers and pedestrians travelling north along London Road. The reduction in the number of advertisements on site would contribute to the further regeneration of the area through de-cluttering the area and improving views of the listed viaduct.
- 5.18. The Officer's Report makes a point that *'the continued display of the advertisement would not represent an upgrade in appearance of a major radial entry route as it would screen the side elevation of a listed building and diminish the legibility of the listed building.'* To the contrary, in the proposals offering the removal of the existing sign on the eastern side of London Road, this would actually reduce the screening of the listed viaduct, improving views of this structure to the benefit of visual amenity. The proposed new sign, in replicating the size and position of the existing sign, would not screen the viaduct to any greater extent.

- 5.19. It is telling that the Local Planning Authority have not used their powers to seek the removal of deemed consent from the existing signs at this location for over a decade. This provides clear evidence that the existing signs have not, and are not, causing material harm to visual amenity or the character of the listed viaduct.
- 5.20. In contradiction to the Council's assessment of the application in concluding that the proposed digital advertisement would have a detrimental impact for the visual amenity of the area, Appendix E provides a number of relevant examples of sites within the Manchester City Council Local Planning Authority area, where LED digital billboard signs have been installed or where recent advertisement consents have been granted for the upgrade of static signs to a digital format. The examples presented include a number of sites adjacent to main arterial roads within the city centre, very similar to the character exhibited by the appeal site. This illustrates that digital advertisements already form part of the established urban character on the local area's arterial roads, with the further transition towards digital advertisements inevitable in such urban environments as advertisers move towards this format.
- 5.21. Finally, it should be noted that the proposed sign would not incorporate any moving, flashing, or animated images, with the rotation of advertisements images being instantaneous. The advertisement images will all be static and there would be no fading or merging of images as the adverts rotate. This will replicate the existing arrangement at the site, with the switch to a digital display having minimal impact for the character of the street scene.

Impact on Heritage Assets

- 5.22. The Council's assessment of the application considers that the proposed new sign would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the grade II listed Manchester South Junction and Altrincham Railway Viaduct. The Council's assessment also considers there to be no public benefit to the proposal. We would challenge this assessment.
- 5.23. In terms of assessing any harm, as previously mentioned, the location is an established one for advertisement use and the proposed 48 sheet advertisement board would replicate the position and orientation of the current advertisement board in place, continuing the status-quo.
- 5.24. Secondly, it is important in the assessment process to understand the significance of the designated heritage asset. The Manchester South Junction and Altrincham Railway Viaduct is a vast structure which spans across a significant part of Manchester City Centre. The asset's listing identifies that the viaduct spans a length of 1.75 miles and incorporates 224 brick arches. Given the vast scale of the structure, the proposal relates to a very small part of the viaduct.
- 5.25. Historic England in their listing entry identify 4 main reasons for the asset's designation;
- Design Interest
 - Significance of Date
 - Historic Interest
 - Group Value

- 5.26. With regards to its design, Historic England state the structure *'is an impressive 1 ¾ mile long urban viaduct incorporating a series of well-detailed bridges; some with highly decorative Gothic-style ironwork.'* On the section of the structure which relates to the appeal site there is little in the way of architectural detailing. The current advertisement sign does not cover any intricate brickwork or any ironwork. The adjacent bridge over London Road similarly exhibits little architectural detailing. As the proposed sign replicates the position of the current sign, views of the structure would be unchanged.
- 5.27. Following interpretation of the asset's listing, we are of the view that the proposal would not materially impact upon any of the key architectural merits identified for the structure, with the viaduct's importance and significance presented in large part through its historic significance as an infrastructure undertaking of its time as well as through its ornate bridges. Neither of these aspects would be impacted. It is also important to consider the approach taken by the local planning authority in their management of this heritage asset. With the viaduct cutting across the city centre, it is evident that a level of alternation, including the frequent installation of advertisements, has been accepted. By way of evidence of this point, Appendix F provides a number of examples of advertisement signs fixed to the listed viaduct across its length. Many more advertisements are found where the viaduct's arches accommodate commercial premises.
- 5.28. With appropriate consideration provided to the scale of the viaduct, the level of impact resultant from this very small-scale proposal and the prevalence of advertisements along the length of the viaduct, we are of the view that no material harm would occur to the significance of the heritage asset.
- 5.29. In terms offering public benefits as required by the NPPF where less than substantial harm would occur to a designated heritage asset, there are two beneficial aspects of the scheme. Firstly, the scheme would see a reduction in the number of signs at the site from 2 to 1, improving views of the listed viaduct and having a de-cluttering effect for the setting.
- 5.30. Secondly, any revenue generated from Network Rail's advertisement portfolio is made in the public interest, given their status as a regulated public sector company. Revenue generation from their sites goes back towards investing in the UK's railway infrastructure across the network, leading to improved services and stations facilities for the public.
- 5.31. In conclusion, we do not consider that the proposed development would result in any material harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset, given the site's context and nature of the listed viaduct in being such a sizeable structure. Furthermore, public benefits would be achieved, both for visual amenity and public services.

Conclusion

- 5.32. In the consideration of the application, it is important to provide due regard for the well-established nature of the application site to support illuminated advertisements.
- 5.33. For the reasons outlined above, we consider the proposed development provides an overall, on-balance, benefit to the visual amenity of the street scene through reducing the number of

advertisement signs in place from 2 to 1. We do not consider that the replacement of an existing static sign, with a sign of matching size and positioning, but featuring a digital display, would have a detrimental impact upon the London Road street scene.

- 5.34. Our assessment has presented the case as to why we do not believe that the small-scale proposal presented would materially harm the significance or setting of the listed viaduct, given proper consideration to the viaduct's context and scale. The proposed development would also provide public benefits in the form of reducing visual clutter and generating revenue for reinvestment in the public railway network.
- 5.35. The reason for refusal indicates that the proposed sign would *'by virtue of its size, location, design and appearance have a detrimental impact on visual amenity, character, appearance and ongoing regeneration of the surrounding area constituting an unduly obtrusive, incongruous and overly dominant feature to the listed viaduct on which it would be located and within the wider street scene.'* We have outlined why each of these factors would not materially cause harm to the street scene or the listed viaduct when accurately considered in the context of the site.
- 5.36. Advertisements already present a prominent characteristic in this location, given the prevalence of such installations around the application site. There are a number of signs of a similar size and scale within the direct vicinity, specifically to the immediate north of the railway viaduct.
- 5.37. With appropriate consideration given to the site's context, we do not consider the proposal to be contrary to Paragraph 136 of the NPPF which specifically relates to advertisements or Section 16 which deals with the historic environment. Similarly, with the benefits provided to declutter the site, we consider that the proposal can be found in accordance with the Local Development Plan, with there being no material harm caused to the street scene or the character of the surrounding area.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1. This Appeal Statement is submitted in support of an appeal against the decision of Manchester City Council to refuse advertisement consent application on 29th June 2022 for the following development on the corner of London Road and Altrincham Street, Manchester, M1 2PW;
- 6.2. *'Installation of 1 no. 48 sheet LED digital billboard'*
- 6.3. The application was refused on the basis of visual amenity and that less than substantial harm would be caused to the grade II listed Manchester South Junction and Altrincham Railway Viaduct. This Statement has presented the case that the proposed development would not have a material detrimental impact upon the street scene, the wider area or the listed viaduct when appropriate consideration is provided to the site's setting, context and the established nature of the site as a location for advertisements.
- 6.4. There are currently 2 advertisement boards on site, one 48 sheet internally illuminated board on the eastern side of London Road and one 48 sheet externally illuminated board proposed be replaced on the western side of London Road which is attached to the viaduct. A tangible improvement would be achieved for visual amenity by the proposals in rationalising the number of signs from 2 to 1.
- 6.5. Whilst incorporating digital LED illumination, it has been explained as to why this can be suitable controlled by industry standard conditions, with it ultimately not considered that this proposed change would have a material detrimental impact for the visual amenity of the area.
- 6.6. This Statement establishes that any impacts of the proposal would be negligible when appropriately assessed against the existing situation. When applying a balanced judgement, it seems reasonable that the decision of the local planning authority should be overturned and that this proposal be granted advertisement consent.

APPENDIX A – DECISION NOTICE – Ref. 133376/AOH/2022



Town & Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007

Refusal of Advertisement Consent

Applicant

Network Rail
C/o Agent

Agent (if used)

Mr Sam Beresford
Tetra Tech
Quay West
Media City
Trafford Wharf Road
Manchester
M17 1HH

Part 1 – Particulars of the application/development

Proposal: Installation of 1 no. 48 sheet LED digital billboard

Location: Corner Of London Road And Altrincham Street, Manchester, M1 2PW

Date of application: 16 May 2022

Application number: 133376/AOH/2022

Part 2 – Particulars of decision

Manchester City Council gives notice that the development referred to in Part 1 has been **Refused** in accordance with the application and plans submitted for the reason(s) listed below.

Article 35 Declaration

Reason(s) for decision

1) The proposed advertisement would by virtue of its size, location, design and appearance have a detrimental impact on visual amenity, character, appearance and ongoing regeneration of the surrounding area constituting an unduly obtrusive, incongruous and overly dominant feature to the listed viaduct on which it would be located and within the wider street scene. The proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of heritage assets and there would not be the required public benefits to outweigh this. The advertisement would be contrary to Government Guidance contained in Section 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework, the Core Strategy for the City of Manchester in particular policies EN1 (Design Principles and Strategic Character Areas), CC9 (Design and Heritage), EN3 (Heritage), DM1 (Development Management) and SP1 (Spatial Principles), the Guide to Development in Manchester, in particular paragraphs 2.6 and 11.45 and saved policies DC15.1, and DC15.2 (Advertisements, Hoardings and Posters), DC18.1 (Conservation

Areas), DC19.1 (Listed Buildings) of The Unitary Development Plan for the City of Manchester (UDP) and Manchester Piccadilly Strategic Regeneration Framework.

Date: 29 June 2022

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julie Roscoe', written in a cursive style.

Julie Roscoe
Director of Planning, Building Control & Licensing

Manchester City Council, P O Box 532, Town Hall, Manchester M60 2LA

Notes

1. This decision refers only to that required under the Town and Country (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 does not include any consent or approval under any other enactment, byelaw, order or regulation.

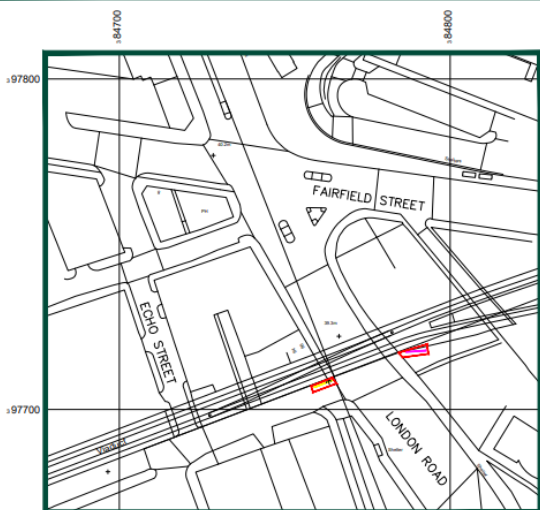
2. If the applicant is aggrieved by the decision of the local planning authority to refuse consent or approval for the proposed development, or to grant consent or approval subject to conditions, they may appeal to the Secretary of State in accordance with section 78 of the Act as amended by the Regulations within eight weeks of the date of the notice of the decision.

The Planning Inspectorate have introduced an online appeals service that can be used to make appeals online. This service is available through the gov.uk website – www.gov.uk/planning-inspectorate. The Inspectorate will publish details of your appeal on the internet. Alternatively If you are unable to access the online appeal form, please contact the Planning Inspectorate to obtain a paper copy of the appeal form on tel: 0303 444 5000.

APPENDIX B – DRAWING PACK

[illegible]

				CLIENT		ADDRESS SIGNAGE REPLACEMENT AT ICON – LONDON ROAD ADJACENT TO MCDONALDS HOTEL, MANCHESTER, M1 2PW	
				A FIRST ISSUE CAR 31.01.22 CHK		TITLE DRAWING ISSUE REGISTER	
				REV DESCRIPTION BY DATE CHKD			
		SCALE AS SHOWN		DRAWN CAR DATE 31.01.22 DCC		CHECKED CHK DATE 31.01.22	
				APPROVED PC DATE 31.01.22		DRAWING NUMBER YZ020301005601_DIR_A	

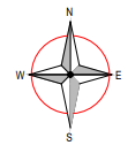


LOCATION PLAN



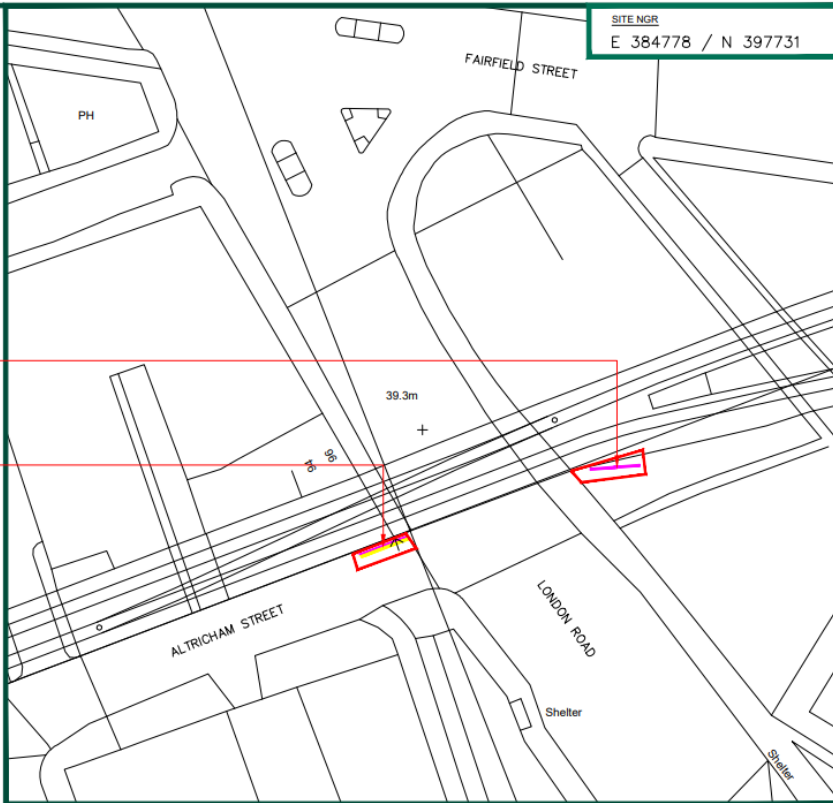
SITE PHOTOGRAPH

STREETVIEW LINK - <https://goo.gl/maps/vSSseJVA6JZTbph87>



EXISTING 48 SIGN TO BE REMOVED AS PART OF APPLICATION

EXISTING/PROPOSED SIGN LOCATION



SITE PLAN

- SITE DEMISE LINE
- EXISTING 48-SHEET ADVERTISING HOARDING
- UPGRADE OF 1No. 48-SHEET ADVERTISING HOARDING TO DIGITAL LED DISPLAY



CLIENT

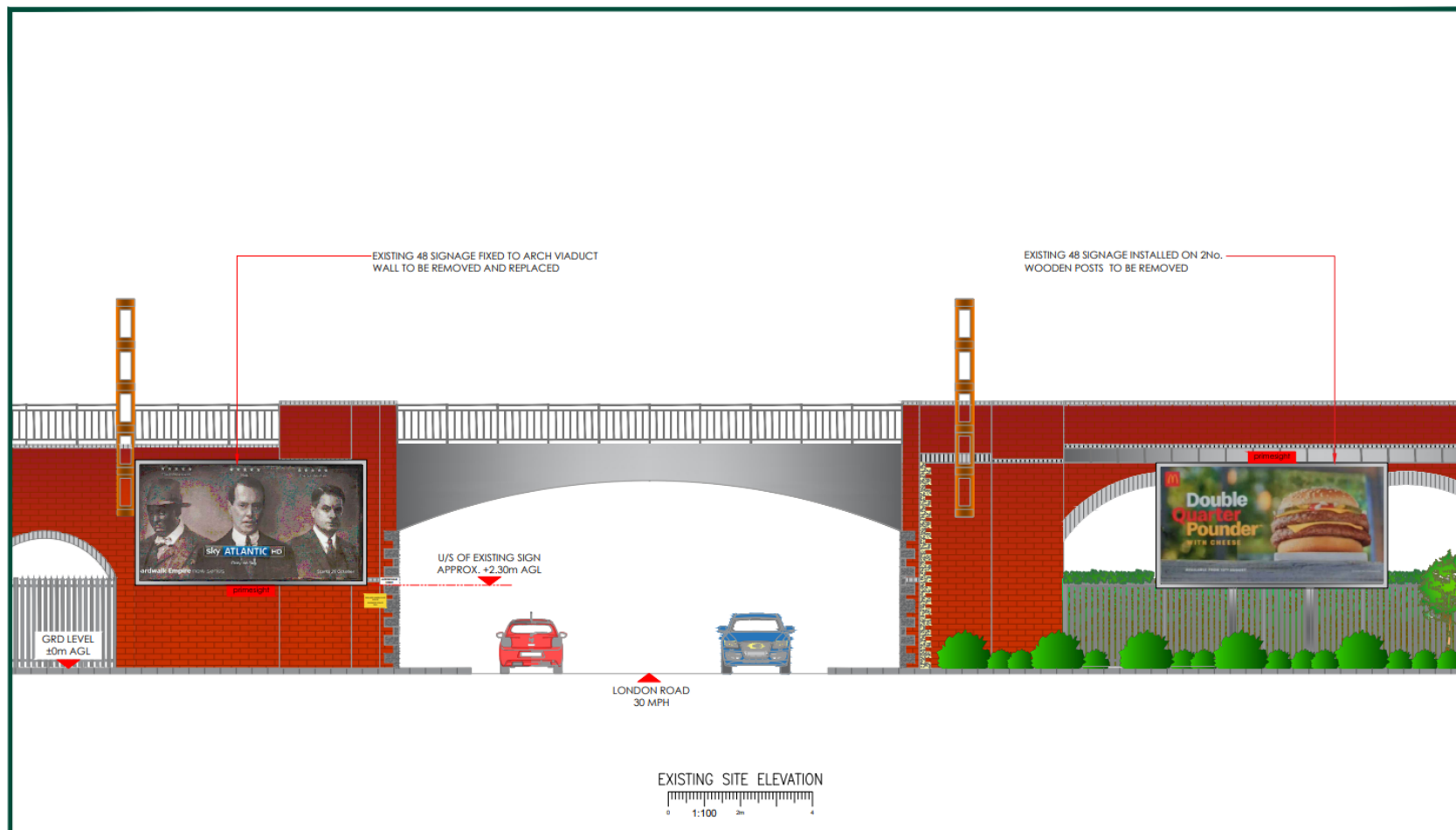


A	FIRST ISSUE	CAR	31.01.22	CHK
REV	DESCRIPTION	BY	DATE	CHKD
SCALE	DRAWN	CHECKED	APPROVED	
AS SHOWN	CAR	CHK	PC	
	DATE	DATE	DATE	
	31.01.22	DCC	31.01.22	

ADDRESS
SIGNAGE REPLACEMENT AT ICON - LONDON
ROAD ADJACENT TO MCDONALDS HOTEL,
MANCHESTER, M1 2PW

TITLE
SITE LOCATION PLAN

DRAWING NUMBER
YZ020301005601_001_A



CLIENT



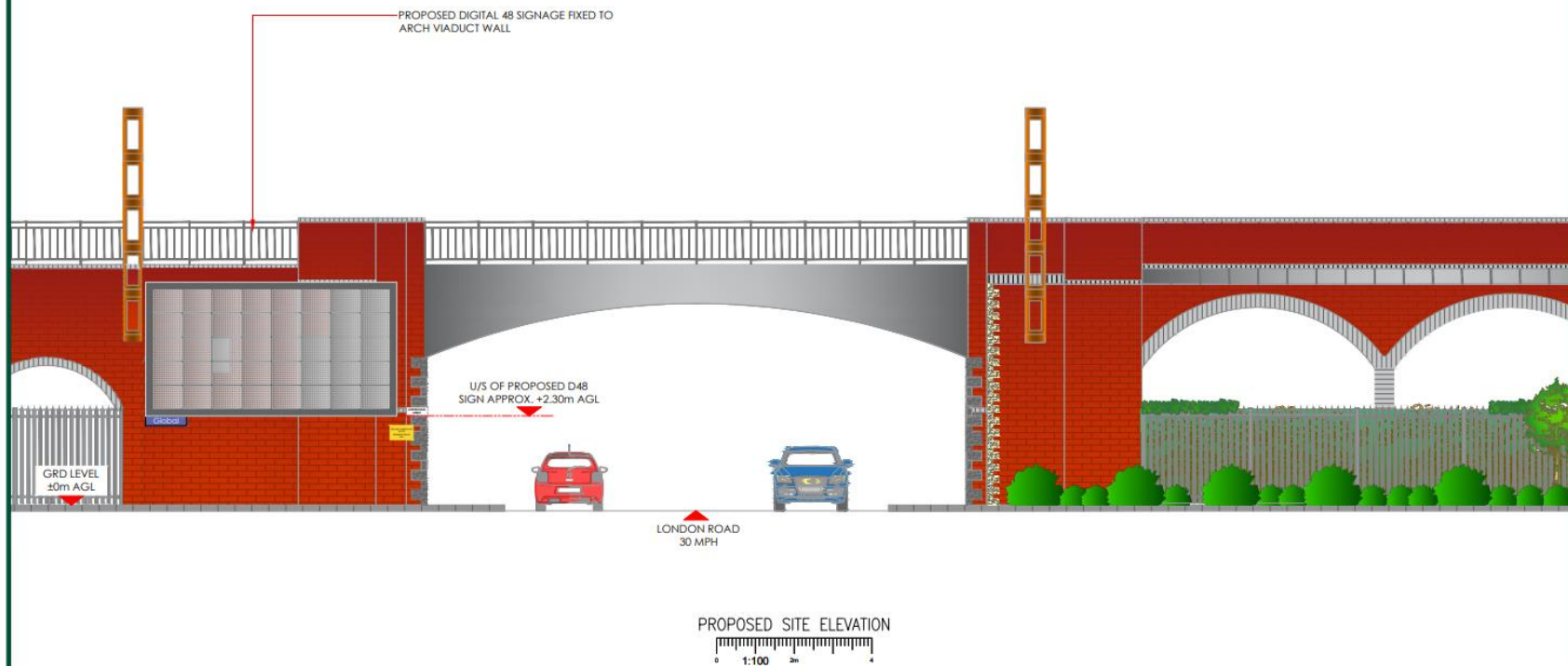
ADDRESS
SIGNAGE REPLACEMENT AT ICON – LONDON
ROAD ADJACENT TO MCDONALDS HOTEL,
MANCHESTER, M1 2PW

TITLE
EXISTING SITE ELEVATION

DRAWING NUMBER
YZ020301005601_002_A

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REV	DESCRIPTION	BY	DATE	CHKD
SCALE	DRAWN	CHECKED	APPROVED	
1:100	CAR	CHK	PC	
	DATE	DATE	DATE	
	31.01.22	DCC	31.01.22	

DESKTOP SURVEY CAVEAT
 SITE INFORMATION HAS BEEN DERIVED FROM 3rd PARTY SOURCES
 AS NECESSARY, ALTHOUGH BEST EFFORTS HAVE BEEN MADE TO
 ENSURE THE DRAWING REPRESENT THE SITE FROM INFORMATION
 AVAILABLE IT MUST BE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE FINAL SETTING OUT
 ON SITE MAY VARY



CLIENT



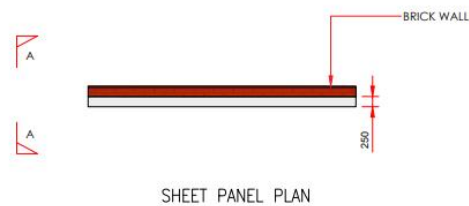
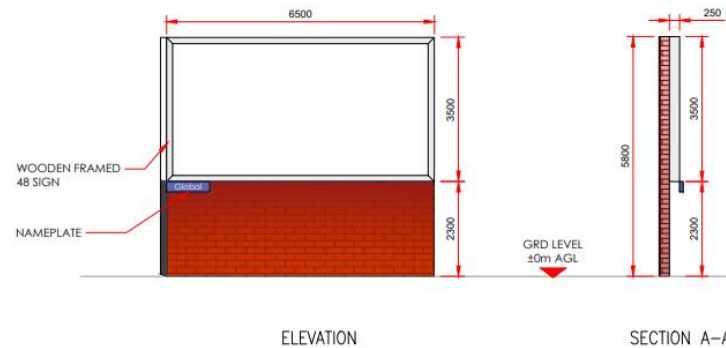
A		FIRST ISSUE		CAR	31.01.22	CHK
REV		DESCRIPTION		BY	DATE	CHKD
SCALE	DRAWN		CHECKED		APPROVED	
	1:100		CAR		PC	
	DATE		DATE		DATE	
	31.01.22		DCC		31.01.22	

ADDRESS
 SIGNAGE REPLACEMENT AT ICON – LONDON
 ROAD ADJACENT TO MCDONALDS HOTEL,
 MANCHESTER, M1 2PW

TITLE
 PROPOSED SITE ELEVATION

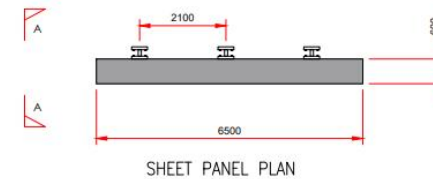
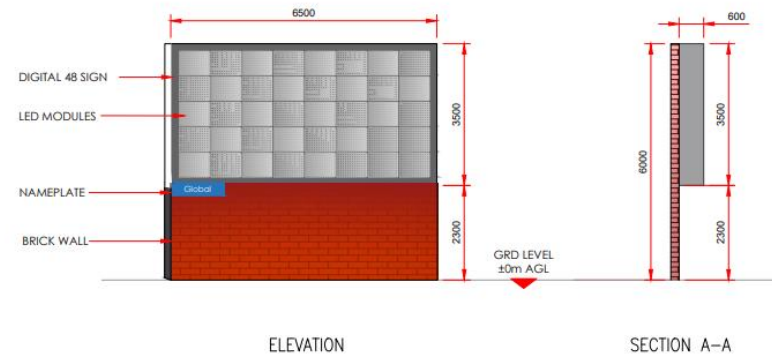
DRAWING NUMBER
 YZ020301005601_003_A

DESKTOP SURVEY CAVEAT
SITE INFORMATION HAS BEEN DERIVED FROM 3rd PARTY SOURCES
AS NECESSARY, ALTHOUGH BEST EFFORTS HAVE BEEN MADE TO
ENSURE THE DRAWING REPRESENT THE SITE FROM INFORMATION
AVAILABLE IT MUST BE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE FINAL SETTING OUT
ON SITE MAY VARY



EXISTING SPECIFICATION – 48 SHEET PANEL

0 1:100 2m 4



PROPOSED SPECIFICATION – DIGITAL 48 SHEET PANEL

0 1:100 2m 4



CLIENT



A	FIRST ISSUE	CAR	31.01.22	CHK
REV	DESCRIPTION	BY	DATE	CHKD
SCALE	DRAWN	CHECKED	APPROVED	
1:100	CAR	CHK	PC	
	DATE	DATE	DATE	
	31.01.22	DCC	31.01.22	

ADDRESS
SIGNAGE REPLACEMENT AT ICON – LONDON
ROAD ADJACENT TO MCDONALDS HOTEL,
MANCHESTER, M1 2PW

TITLE
EXISTING & PROPOSED SIGN SPECIFICATION

DRAWING NUMBER
YZ020301005601_004_A

EXISTING 48 SIGN TO BE REMOVED AS PART OF APPLICATION



EXISTING SITE VIEW



PROPOSED SITE VIEW

	CLIENT					ADDRESS SIGNAGE REPLACEMENT AT ICON – LONDON ROAD ADJACENT TO MCDONALDS HOTEL, MANCHESTER, M1 2PW	
		A	FIRST ISSUE	CAR	31.01.22	CHK	TITLE
		REV	DESCRIPTION	BY	DATE	CHKD	PHOTO MONTAGE
		SCALE N.T.S	DRAWN CAR DATE 31.01.22	CHECKED CHK DATE DCC	APPROVED PC DATE 31.01.22	DRAWING NUMBER YZ020301005601_005_A	

APPENDIX C – APPLICATION COVERING LETTER



Our Ref: 784-B032514 / YZ020301005601

Planning
Manchester City Council
PO BOX 532
Manchester
M60 2LA

24.03.2022

Dear Sir/Madam

**ADVERTISEMENT SIGNS AT RAILWAY BRIDGE ON CORNER OF LONDON ROAD AND
ALTRINCHAM STREET, M1 2PW**

**APPLICATION TO UPGRADE EXISTING ADVERTISEMENT BILLBOARD TO A DIGITAL LED
ADVERTISEMENT**

Tetra Tech has been instructed to submit an application for advertisement consent to upgrade the existing static billboard at the site address above as part of a programme of modernising Network Rail's advertising stock to a digital poster (D-poster) format.

The digital poster advertisements are capable of being posted from a central location without the need to visit each site individually. The digital image display will ensure a consistent quality of image is always presented, mimicking that of a traditional poster. The overall aim of the advertisement upgrading project is to replace like for like, with no adverse impact on visual amenity or public safety.

This application is accompanied by the below drawings and plans:

- Completed application forms prepared by Tetra Tech;
- Supporting Statement prepared by Tetra Tech (this letter);
- Drawing no. YZ020301005601_001_A - Site Location Plan
- Drawing no. YZ020301005601_002_A - Existing Site Elevation
- Drawing no. YZ020301005601_003_A - Proposed Site Elevation
- Drawing no. YZ020301005601_004_A - Existing and Proposed Sign Specification
- Drawing no. YZ020301005601_005_A - Photo Montage

We have arranged for payment for the sum of £462 to cover the statutory application fee for the advertisement consent application.

The Site

The proposal site is located on the corner of Altrincham Street and London Road and currently supports 2 static 48 panel billboards that are internally illuminated positioned on either side of London Road. The site surroundings are predominantly commercial in character, being located on a busy main road in to the city centre, the Macdonald Hotel is directly to the east of the site. The nearest advertisements of comparable design are to the north of the railway bridge facing northwards. This

TETRA TECH

Quay West at MediaCity, Trafford Wharf Road, Manchester, M17 1HH

consists of a 48 sheet internally illuminated billboard and a 96 sheet internally illuminated billboard. There are no residential properties in the vicinity though the proposed sign to be upgraded can be seen in long views from the MacDonald Hotel. There are no heritage assets in the vicinity.

The proposal site is an established location for advertising, having supported a static advertisement in this location for over 10 years.

The Proposal

The proposal seeks to "repost" the existing static display on the western side of London Road with a "D-poster" which will display multiple static advertisements on rotation. The new screen dimensions are to be 6500mm width x 3500mm height. The screen would be installed at a suitable height above ground level to appropriately avoid against any potential for vandalism.

The upgraded D-poster advertisement board would adopt the same position and orientation as the existing static advertisement billboard in situ.

As part of the proposed works the removal of Network Rail's existing neighbouring static advertisement board which fall within Network Rail's land ownership on the eastern side of London Road is proposed, as illustrated on the provided plans. The removal of this sign will reduce the number of advertisements on the street scene, providing a tangible improvement for the visual amenity of the locality.

The proposals will allow Network Rail's existing advertising network to be better managed, monitored and maintained, to meet the modern requirements of advertisers. This will bring a wide range of benefits including:

- Ensuring a consistent quality of advertisement image, unaffected by weathering damage or ageing.
- Providing investment to improve the appearance of existing advertisement sites;
- Revenue generated is in the public interest as it can be reinvested in the UK's railway and passenger infrastructure by Network Rail;
- Consolidation and delivering an overall reduction in the number of billboards in the network, helping to declutter street scenes;
- A reduction in vehicle trips for reposting paper adverts;
- Eradicating the need to print posters and avoiding the associated waste involved in the production process;
- The ability to broadcast emergency messaging;
- The ability to use void periods for non-commercial campaigns;
- Opportunity for more creative real time and locally relevant advertising;

Content will be controlled remotely in real time from a Networks Operation Centre (NOC) and the site will be monitored remotely 24/7 to facilitate responsive maintenance. Diagnostics software will report any faults back to the NOC and a "kill switch" will turn the content to black until it can be resolved.

The proposal will utilise new display technology that is lightweight and can be erected with limited additional engineering, as the digital poster installations typically weigh little more than the traditional paper and paste poster billboard it will replace.

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The level of luminance can be suitably controlled in line with the Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP) relevant guidelines. During the hours of darkness the sign will not exceed the maximum threshold set in the ILP guidelines¹ of 300cd/m² within urban and suburban areas. The signs are also capable of automatically adjusting to current lighting conditions ensuring against any "over illumination".

The displays are capable of being dimmed to within 1% of their maximum output and as such any concerns regarding levels of illuminance at a particular site can be dealt with swiftly and remotely. Lower levels of illuminance prolong the lifetime of the display and reduce electricity costs and as such there is an operational and economic imperative to ensure that digital signs are not "over illuminated".

In order to ensure that the proposed digital advertisement does not materially or detrimentally impact upon amenity or public safety, the applicant is willing for the sign's operation to be controlled via the use of appropriate planning conditions. Suggested conditions could include the following:

- Maximum level of night time illuminance to be set to 300cd/m²;
- Static images to be displayed only (no moving or flashing images);
- Changes between adverts to take place instantly with no sequencing, fading, swiping or merging of images; and
- Advertisements to change no more frequently than once every ten seconds.

The above conditions are industry standard and are commonly seen applied to applications of this type. Where circumstances demand, additional controls or variations of these conditions may be acceptable to the applicant and where these may be sought, we would welcome dialogue with the case officer to agree these.

Planning Policy

The legislative framework for the control of advertisements is contained within the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 ("the Regulations"). Regulation 3 states that advertising should be controlled in the interest of amenity and public safety, taking into account the provisions of the development plan, in so far as they are material, in addition to any other relevant factors.

The National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. In accordance with Paragraph 136 of the NPPF advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking into account cumulative impacts. As described in the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) the regime is a "lighter touch" than the system for obtaining planning permission for development. The NPPG also clarifies that a local plan does not have to contain advertisement policies and that if such policies are considered necessary to protect the unique character of a particular area, these should be evidence-based.

¹ Institution of Lighting Professionals, 'The Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements PLG 05' (2015)

The Local Plan for the local authority area principally comprises the Core Strategy (2012-2027) and saved policies from the Unitary Development Plan.

Policy DM 1 (Development Management 1) in the Manchester Core Strategy emphasises the need for any proposal to take into consideration the character of the surrounding area. The policy establishes that developments should be appropriate with regards to siting, layout, scale, form, massing, materials and detail. The policy also indicates that development proposals should have regard to their potential impacts upon amenity.

Policies DC15.1 and DC15.2 in the Manchester Unitary Development Plan specifically refer to advertisements and hoardings. The policies identify a number of considerations to be taken into account in the consideration of advertisement consent applications. Within Policy DC15.1 this includes providing appropriate consideration to the impacts upon visual amenity and public safety.

Policy DC15.2 states the Council will also consider a proposal's effect on the architectural integrity of any buildings that are on site or any effects upon a building's proper use. Any proposal should be unobtrusive and should not intrude into residential neighbourhoods and areas of high amenity value in addition to having no adverse effects on public safety or adversely affecting the flow of any traffic in the vicinity.

Importantly, the Council's policies accept that *'advertisements can have a positive role in improving the quality of the visual environment in the City'*.

Planning Considerations

In replacing an existing static advertisement sign with an upgraded digital sign, the proposal will not increase the number of adverts in the area. The like for like replacement of the display and the controls put in place over the sign's operation will ensure that any change to the visual impact of the site and its surroundings will be "de minimus" and not material.

Notwithstanding that the principle for the site to accommodate advertisements has already been established, it is acknowledged by the applicant that the change in the type of illumination and the potential to increase the rate of change of the adverts requires express consent. The impact of the proposal in respect to amenity and public safety is considered in turn below.

Amenity

As the proposal seeks to "repost" the existing advertisement and therefore mimic the existing situation, there will be minimal impact on visual amenity. The size and positioning of the advertisement will remain unchanged. The side-by-side comparison photo montage of the D-Poster installation provided with the planning drawings helps to illustrate the minimal difference between the existing type of display and the proposed digital replacement.

The existing sign at the site is currently internally illuminated. The replacement sign's illumination can be suitably controlled by a standard condition to ensure that the change to a digital format will not cause material harm to amenity, including to any neighboring occupants or properties. The level of luminance will be set at no greater than 300cd/m² during hours of darkness. The context of the site's urban surroundings, which include other illuminated adverts and street lighting establishes the site as appropriate for an illuminated advert of this type. Additional controls over the display can be considered if necessary to remedy a specific amenity concern.

In addition, the proposed removal of Network Rail's existing billboard sign on the eastern side of London Road in the direct vicinity will assist to improve visual amenity on the street scene through reducing the cumulative number of adverts in the locality.

Public Safety

When assessing public safety, the key considerations are whether the location is appropriate (i.e. not detrimental to highway safety) and whether the level of illumination and the sequential change between advertisements is controlled to prevent distraction from driving. Consideration has been provided to the sign's siting to ensure it will not impact upon the safe operation of the highway network or impact upon pedestrian movements.

As the principle of an advertisement has already been established at this location, the Council must only consider whether there is any additional distraction arising from the proposed digital sign which would cause an unacceptable impact on highway safety.

Should the Council's Highways department identify any reasons why the location might be challenging to drivers, the applicant would be open to discussing alternative controls.

Conclusion

This application is part of a project to rationalise and bring Network Rail's stock of poster and paste billboards into the 21st century.

The proposal will not change the size, position or orientation of the advert. As such, the established acceptability of an advertisement in this location should not materially change. Commonly used standard conditions can be employed to appropriately control the luminance and operation of the digital screen to ensure that no material harm to amenity or road safety would occur.

For these reasons and the positive benefits set out above, it is considered that the application should be granted express advertisement consent.

We trust that the above is clear and we look forward to receiving notification that the application has been registered in due course. Should you have any queries in relation to any of the attached information, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Yours sincerely



Sam Beresford
Sports / Town Planner
SAM.BERESFORD@tetrattech.com
07815015743

TETRA TECH

APPENDIX D – HISTORIC PHOTO OF APPEAL SITE

September 2012



APPENDIX E – PRECEDENT DIGITAL ADVERTISEMENT CONSENTS IN MANCHESTER

Ref: 097559/AO/2011/C1 – ‘One number LED screen and one light box attached to bridge’ – Approved 13th December 2011.

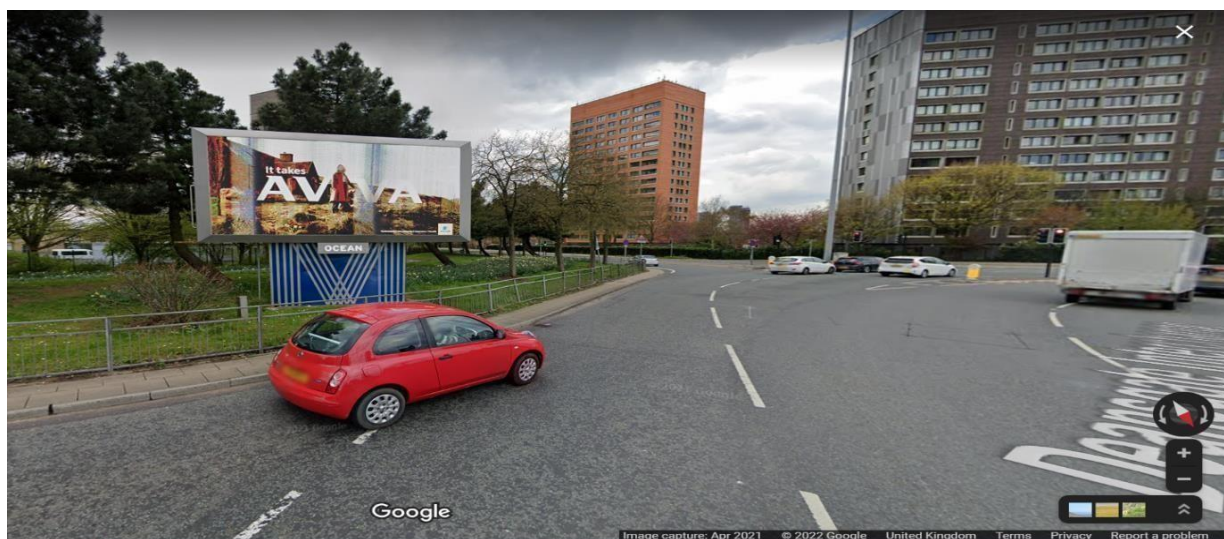
Chester Road/Mancunian Way Manchester



An example of a large LED sign on a major orbital route around Manchester.

Ref: 111385/AO/2016/S1 - ‘Installation of a 5.4 metre high Static Digital Advertisement Display Panel in replacement of existing Static Back Illuminated Vinyl Advertisement Display Panel’ – Approved 18th April 2016.

Land At Chorlton Road/Chester Roundabout, Hulme, Manchester, M15 5AR



An example of an LED advertisement on a roundabout on a major orbital route around Manchester.

Ref: 128694/AOH/2020 - *'Installation of digital (LED) advertisement hoarding following removal of existing illuminated advertisement hoarding'* – Approved 22nd January 2021.

London Road Approach Mancunian Way, Manchester, M1 2PG



An example of a large LED sign on a major orbital route around Manchester.

Ref: 131479/AOH/2021 - *'Replacement of 4 no. existing externally illuminated 48 sheet advertising panels with 2 no.48 sheet digital LED advertising display'* – Approved 19th October 2021.

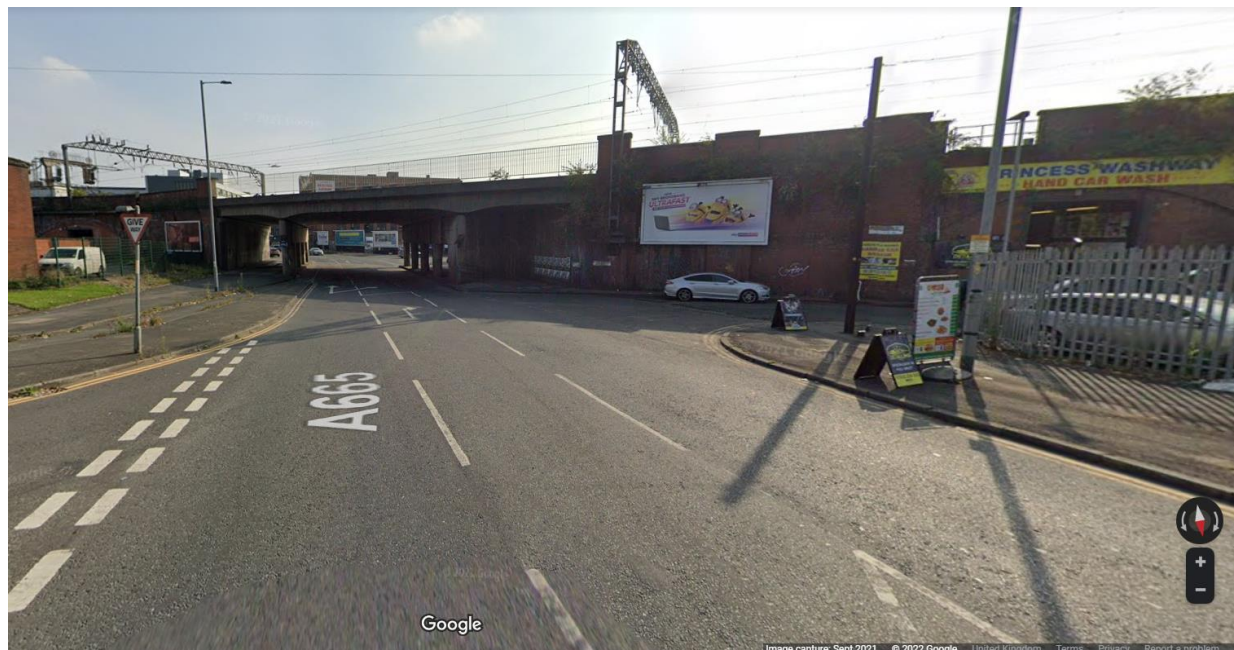
Land And Buildings On The East Side Of Waterloo Road, Manchester, M8 8AE



An example of an approved proposal to replace externally illuminated signs with LED signs facing residential units in Manchester. Note: Google Street View has not yet recorded the change.

Ref: 133204/AOH/2022 – ‘Installation of 48 sheet digital LED wall mounted billboard to replace 2x existing advertisement hoardings’ – Approved 4th May 2022.

Corner of Chancellor Lane and Northwestern Street, Manchester, M12 6JY



An example of a recently approved proposal to replace externally illuminated signs with LED digital signs. Note Google Street View has not yet recorded the change.

Ref: 133180/AOH/2022 – ‘Installation of 48 sheet digital LED billboard following the removal of existing hoarding’ – Approved 23rd May 2022.

Land at Hyde Road, 85 metres from the Junction with Thornbury Way, Manchester



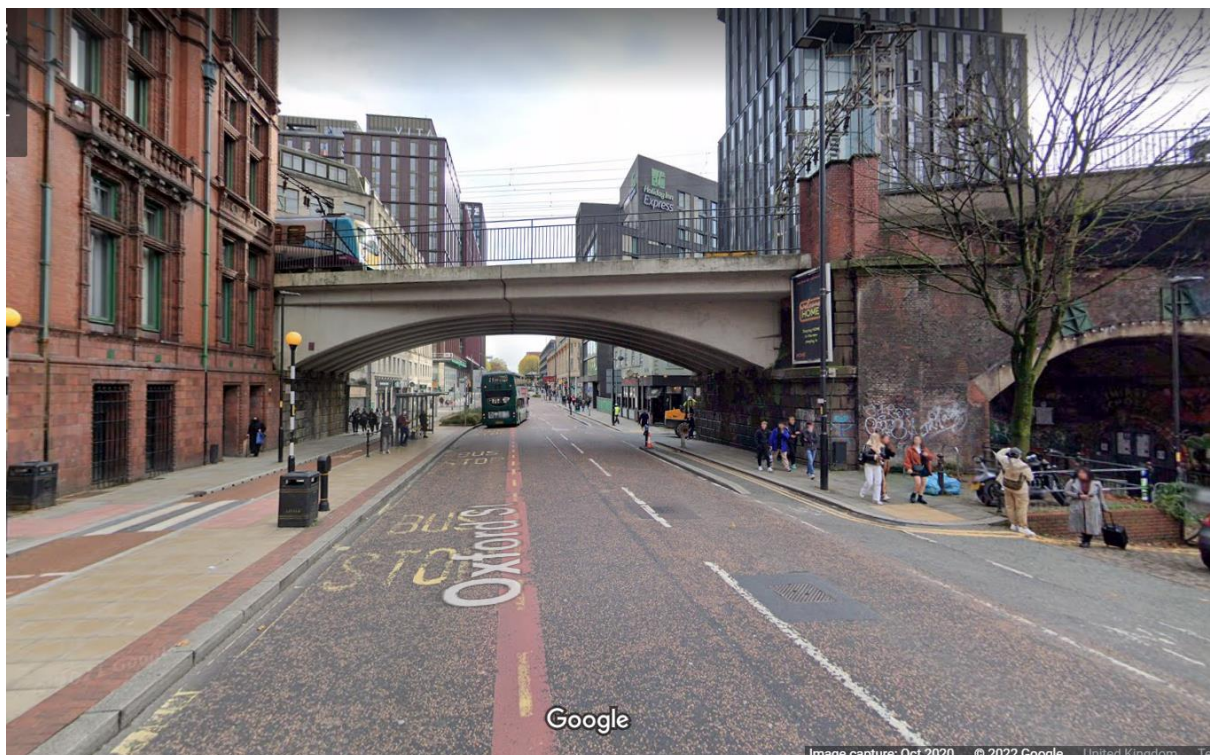
An example of a recently approved proposal to replace an externally illuminated sign with an LED digital sign on a major road in Manchester. Note Google Street View has not yet recorded the change.

APPENDIX F – PRECEDENT ADVERTISEMENTS ATTACHED TO MANCHESTER SOUTH JUNCTION AND ALTRINCHAM RAILWAY VIADUCT LISTED BUILDING

Princess Street Crossing – April 2021



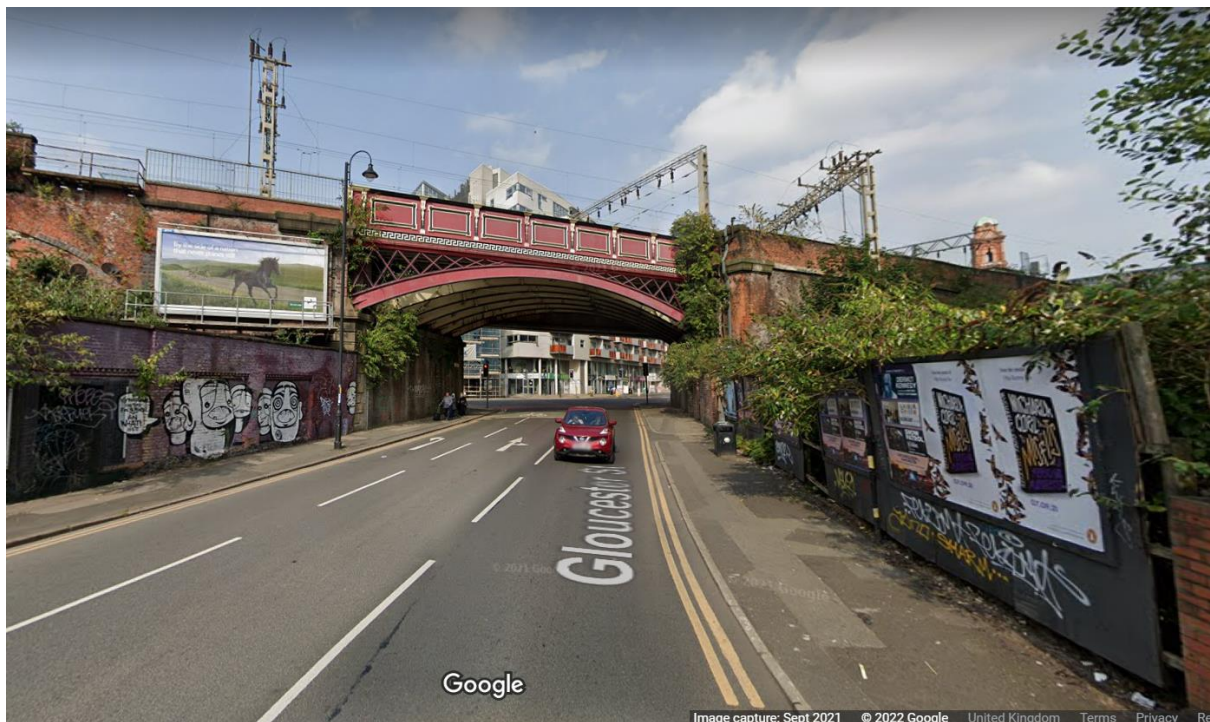
Oxford Road Crossing Facing South – October 2020



Oxford Road Crossing Facing North – September 2021



Gloucester Street – September 2021



New Wakefield Street – April 2021

