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Planning

Circle Square Digital Screen
Symphony Park - Site 1
Planning Statement

28/05/2026

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REFERENCE

3203 - Circle Square Manchester

PROJECT

Site 1

REVISION

Rev00

DATE

28/05/2026

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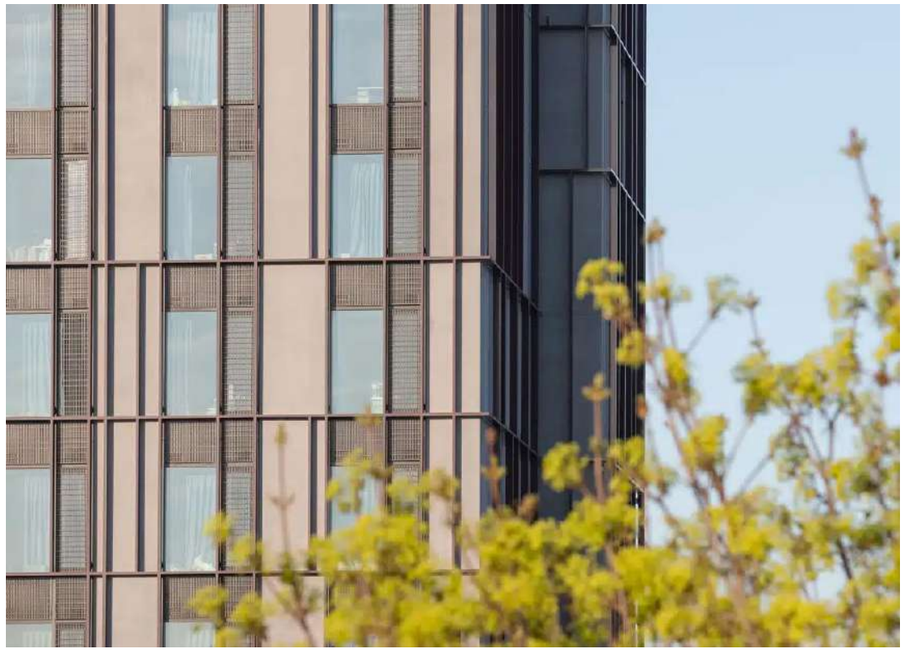
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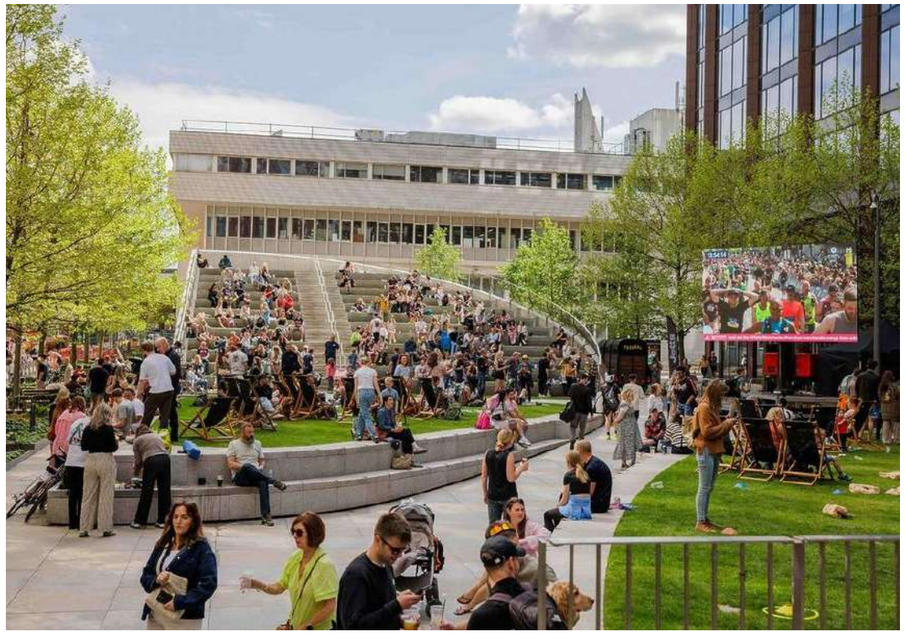
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Introduction









Circle Square, Manchester

Introduction

1.0 This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of an application for advertisement consent for the installation of one freestanding digital advertisement totem at Site 1, Circle Square, Oxford Road, Manchester M1 7ED.

1.1 The application relates to Site 1 only. The proposal forms part of a wider site-wide strategy for estate signage, wayfinding, public information and digital advertising within Circle Square; however, this application seeks consent only for the individual unit described in this statement.

1.2 Site 1 is located on the corner of Oxford Road and Symphony Park, within the pedestrianised route leading from Oxford Road into Symphony Park. The location is shown as Site 1 on the submitted Location Plan.

1.3 The proposal seeks to replace an existing illuminated wayfinding totem with one freestanding digital advertisement totem. The principle of a freestanding illuminated estate signage structure in this location is therefore already established.

1.4 The application site is located within the privately managed Circle Square estate. Although the route is publicly accessible, the proposed unit would be located on private land and would not be positioned on adopted public highway land.

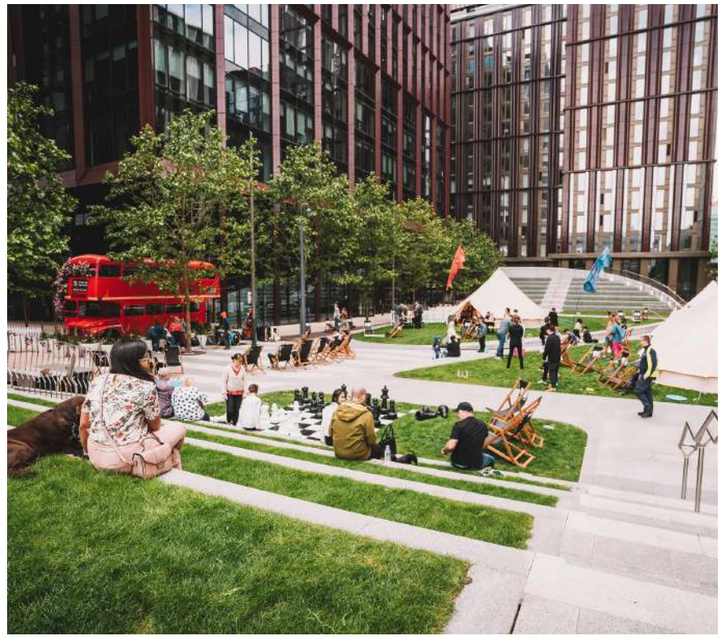
1.5 The proposed unit would be a slim, portrait-format digital display. The submitted screen schematic identifies the unit as incorporating an 84-inch Ultra HD screen, built-in ambient light sensor, laminated vandal glass and IP66-rated design.

1.6 The application has been assessed having regard to the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007, the National Planning Policy Framework, Planning Practice Guidance and relevant local planning policy. The key considerations are visual amenity and public safety.

Site Context



Circle Square Location Plan





Circle Square Commercial Character

Site Context

2.0 Circle Square is a contemporary mixed-use district located off Oxford Road in Manchester city centre. The estate contains commercial, office, leisure, food and beverage, residential and landscaped public realm uses.

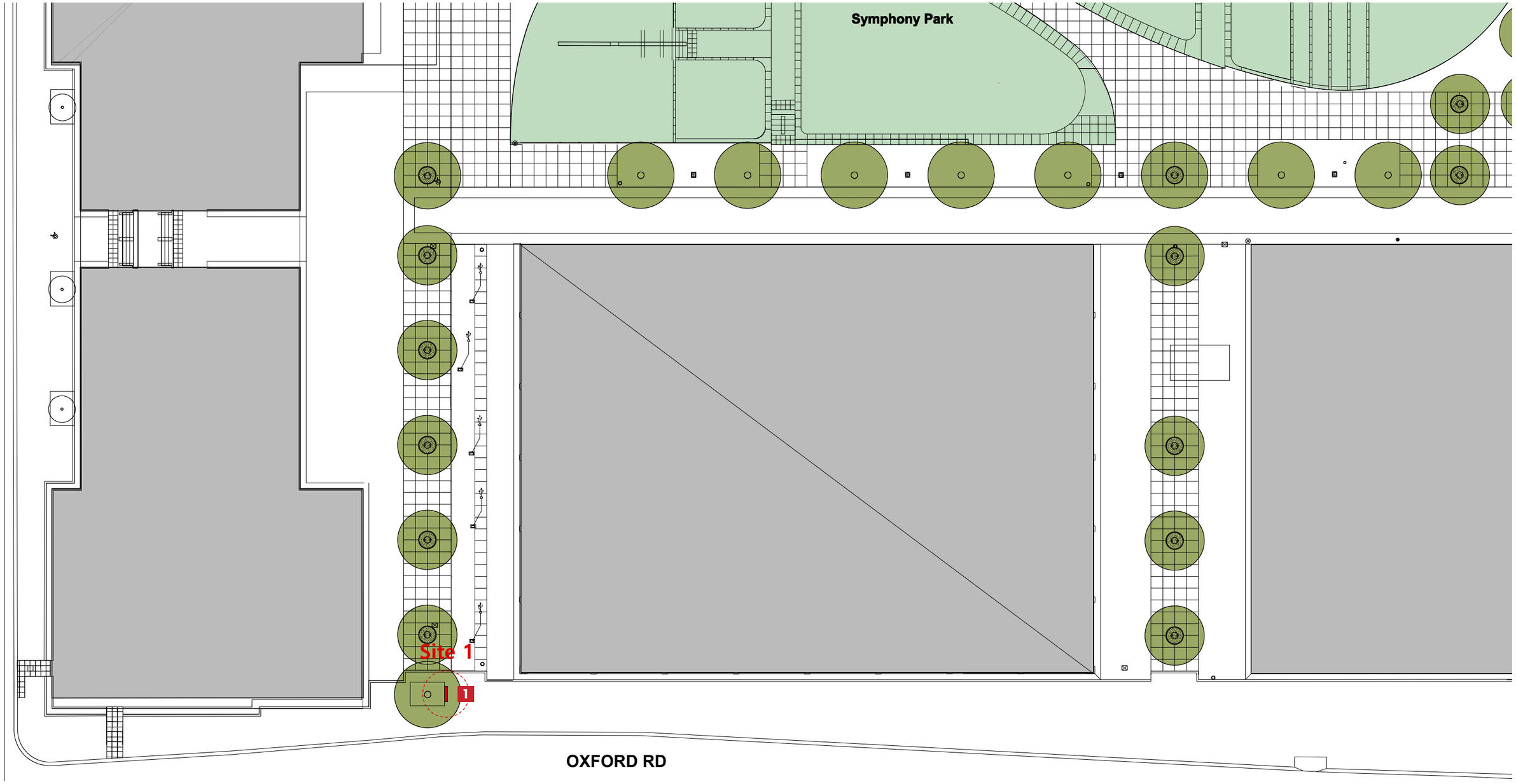
2.1 Site 1 is located on the corner of Oxford Road and Symphony Park, within the pedestrianised route leading from Oxford Road into the landscaped public realm of Symphony Park.

2.2 The site occupies a prominent estate arrival point. It is located within a pedestrianised route and already contains an illuminated wayfinding totem. The location therefore already performs an established estate signage and wayfinding function.

2.3 The immediate context is urban, commercial and pedestrian-focused. The proposed unit would be viewed alongside existing estate furniture, lighting, landscaping, active frontages and pedestrian activity associated with Circle Square and the Oxford Road corridor.

2.4 The proposal would replace the existing illuminated wayfinding totem and would not introduce a freestanding signage structure into an otherwise clear area of public realm.

Existing Position - Oxford Road



Proposed Location Plan

Existing Position

3.0 Site 1 already contains an existing illuminated wayfinding totem. This provides the relevant baseline for assessment.

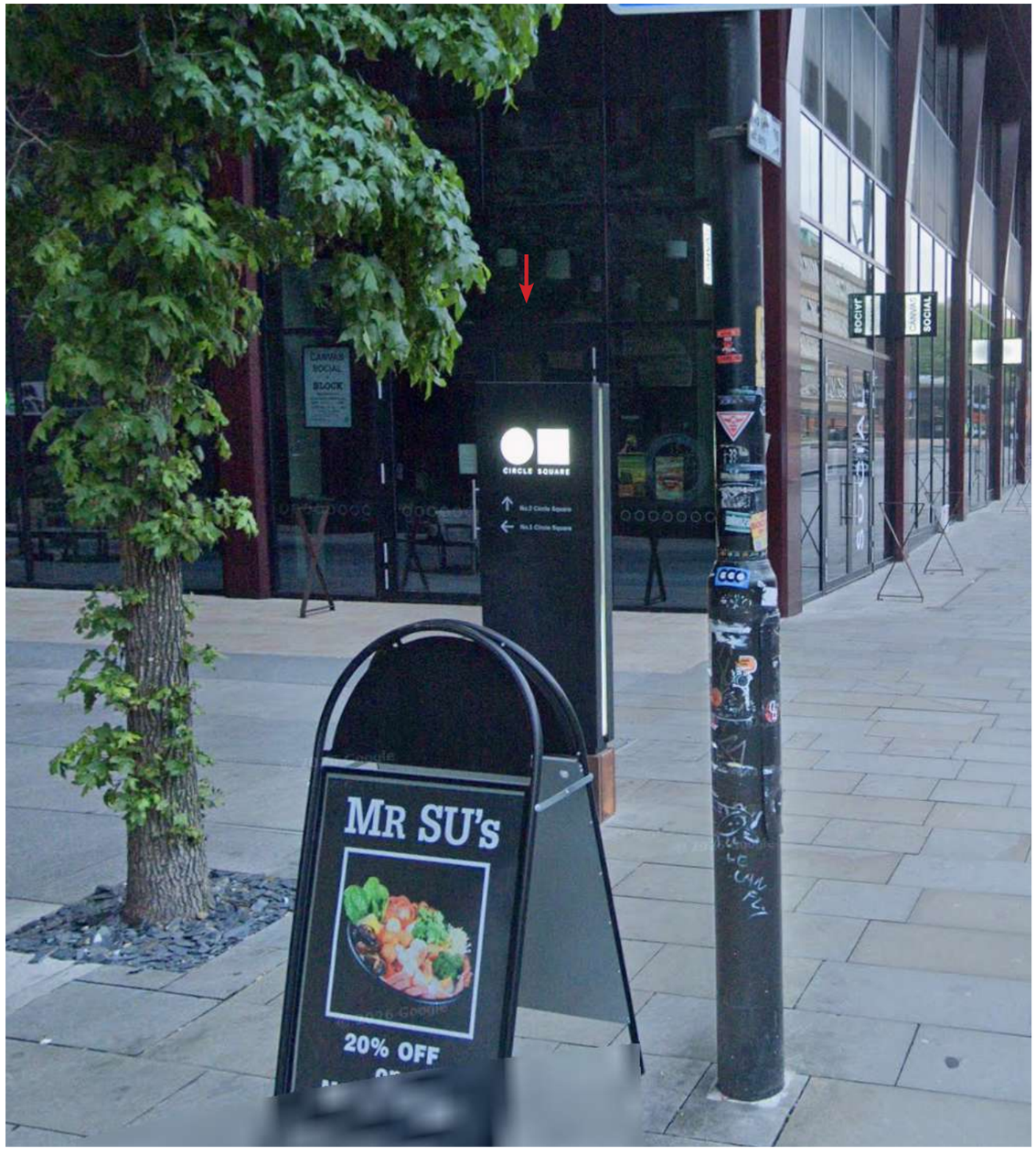
3.1 The proposal would replace the existing illuminated wayfinding totem with a new freestanding digital advertisement totem. The application therefore relates both to the display of advertisements and to the associated freestanding structure required to display them.

3.2 The physical presence of a freestanding illuminated estate signage structure is already established in this location. The proposal would change the form and function of the existing signage from an illuminated wayfinding totem to a digital display capable of showing commercial advertising, estate information, wayfinding and public information content.

3.3 The proposed replacement structure would be located within the same managed estate environment and would continue to perform an estate signage and communication function.

3.4 The site lies within the wider Circle Square estate, where signage, lighting, wayfinding, seating, landscaping and other estate-managed public realm features form part of the established character of the area. The proposal should therefore be assessed in that context.

3.5 The submitted location plan identifies Site 1 at the corner of Oxford Road and Symphony Park, within the pedestrianised route leading into the estate. The location is therefore one where estate signage, wayfinding and public information are already expected and functionally appropriate.



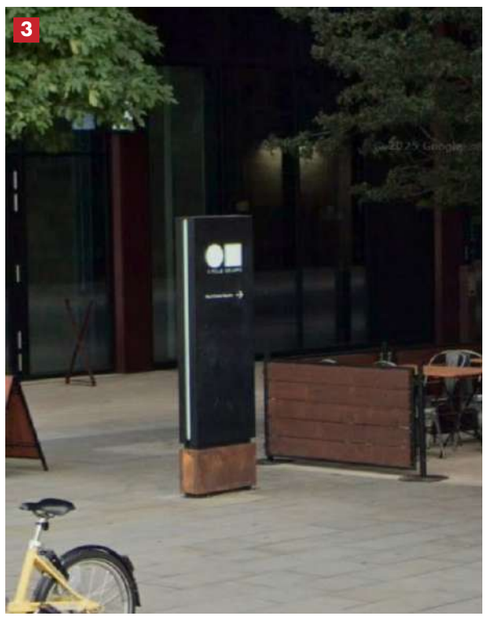
Existing location of Totem Display Oxford Road (Site 1)

Existing Estate Signage Context

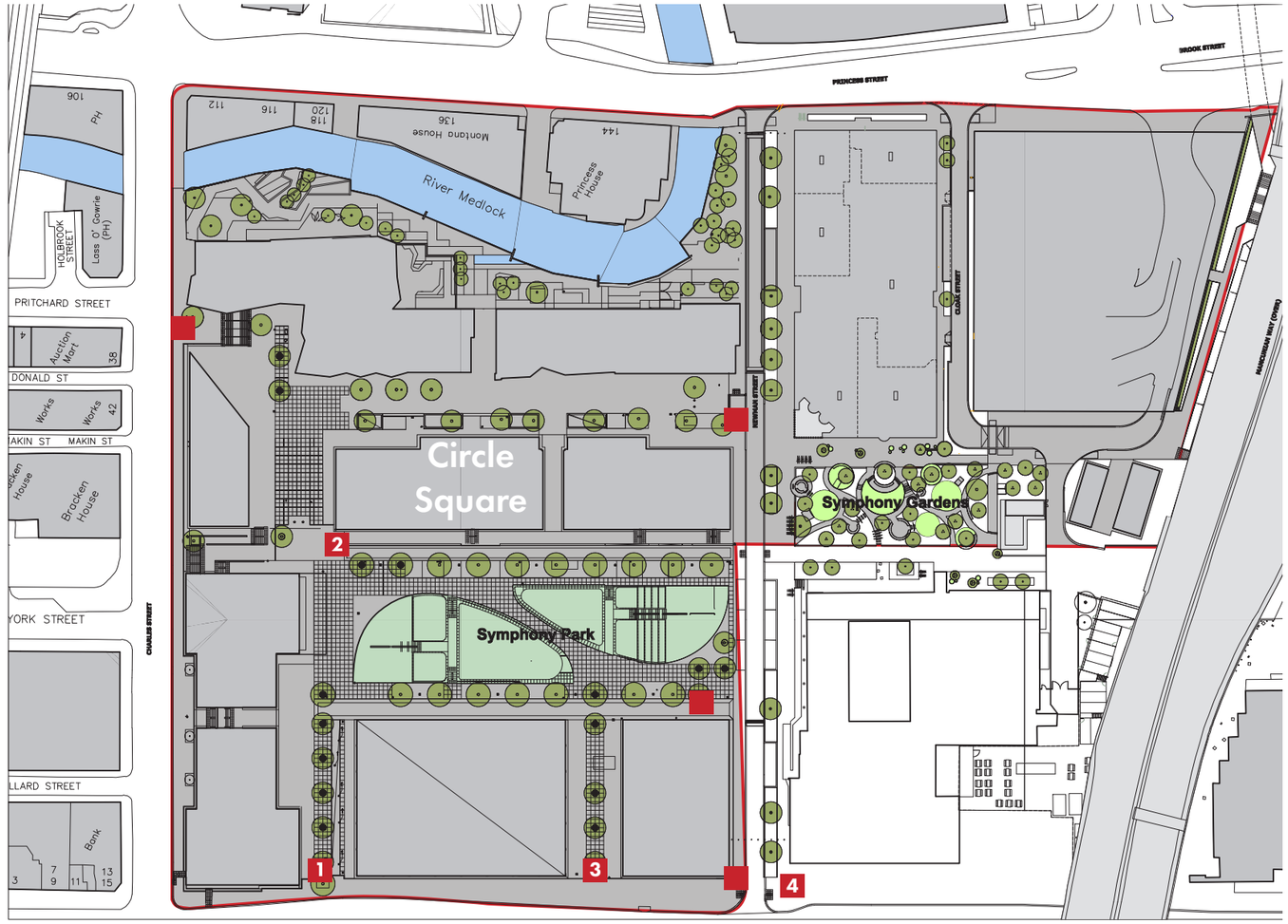
Existing Totem Examples on the Circle Square Estate











1 Shown Examples

Other Totems

Planning Policy Framework

4.0 The application is made under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007.

4.1 The Advertisement Regulations require applications for advertisement consent to be considered in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of the provisions of the development plan so far as they are material.

4.2 The application relates to a freestanding digital advertisement totem. Although the proposal includes a physical structure, Government guidance confirms that the display of advertisements is controlled through a specific advertisement consent process and that separate planning permission is not required in addition to advertisement consent. Under section 222 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, planning permission is deemed to be granted for development involved in the display of advertisements where it accords with the Advertisement Regulations.

4.3 Paragraph 141 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that the quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed. It also confirms that advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts.

4.4 The Government's Planning Practice Guidance confirms that the control of advertisements is exercised in the interests of amenity and public safety. It also explains that amenity is not defined exhaustively, but includes visual and aural amenity and requires regard to the general characteristics of the locality.

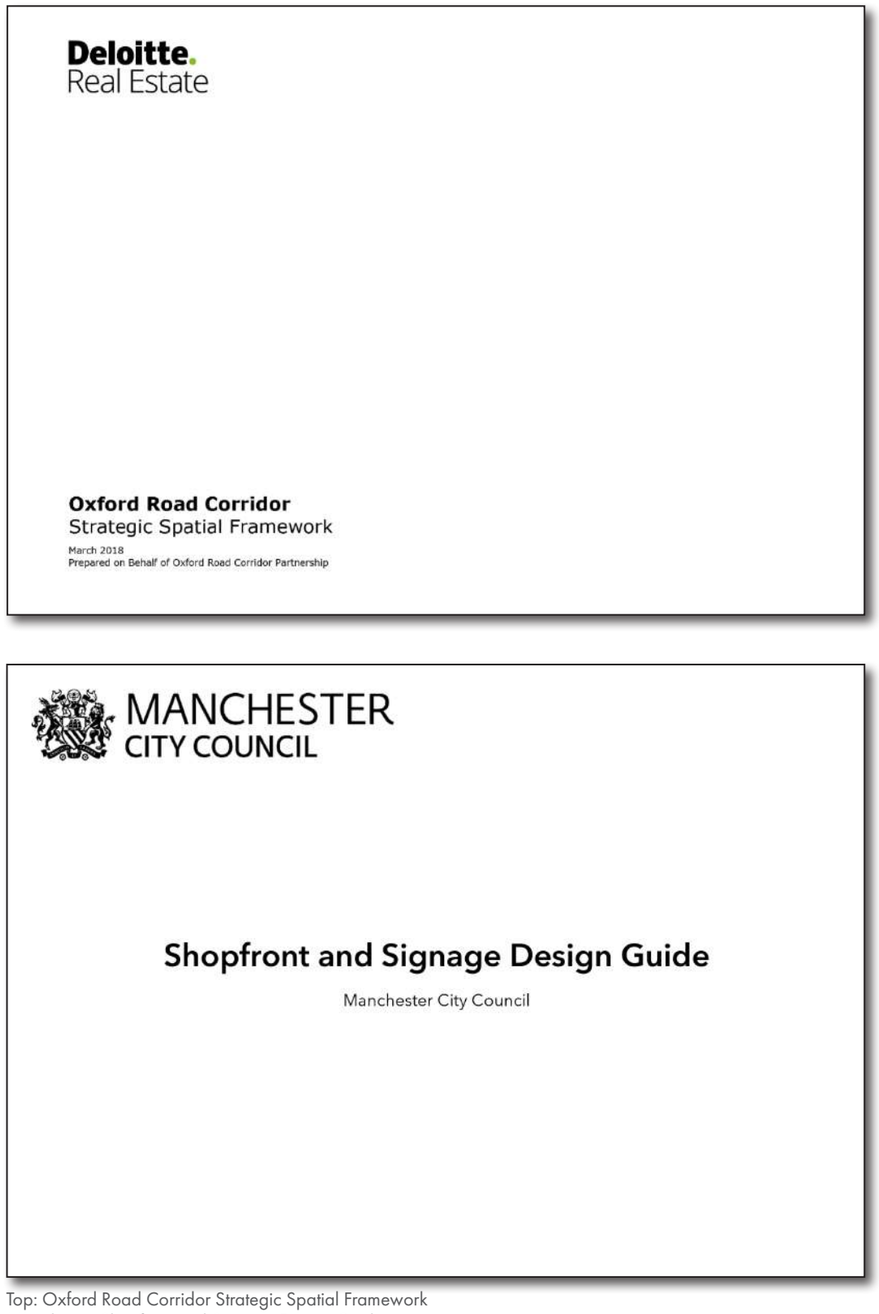
4.5 Manchester's saved Unitary Development Plan Policy DC15 relates to advertisements, hoardings and posters. It requires consideration of matters including the general location of the proposal, its effect on visual amenity, the design of the structure, its relationship with the land or premises on which it is located, public safety, maintenance and the cumulative effect of advertisements in the locality.

4.6 Policy DC15.2 further states that advertisement development should not harm the character or architectural features of a building, should be in scale with the locality, should not be intrusive in residential neighbourhoods or areas of high amenity value, and should not be injurious to public safety or adversely affect traffic flow by reason of position, size or design.

4.7 The supporting reason to Policy DC15 recognises that advertisements can have a positive role in improving the quality of the visual environment, while also identifying the need to maintain public safety, avoid clutter and safeguard the particular features of buildings or land.

4.8 The Manchester Shopfront and Signage Design Guide is also relevant insofar as it provides guidance on well designed signage and advertisements. The Guide identifies that proposals should be considered having regard to matters including design, scale and appearance, effects on amenity, road safety, accessibility, existing environmental conditions and built heritage. In this case, the proposed digital advertisement totem would replace an existing illuminated wayfinding totem, would be of a slim and contemporary design, and would be located within a managed commercial estate environment where estate signage and wayfinding are already established features.

Planning Policy Framework



Top: Oxford Road Corridor Strategic Spatial Framework
Manchester Shopfront and Signage Design Guide

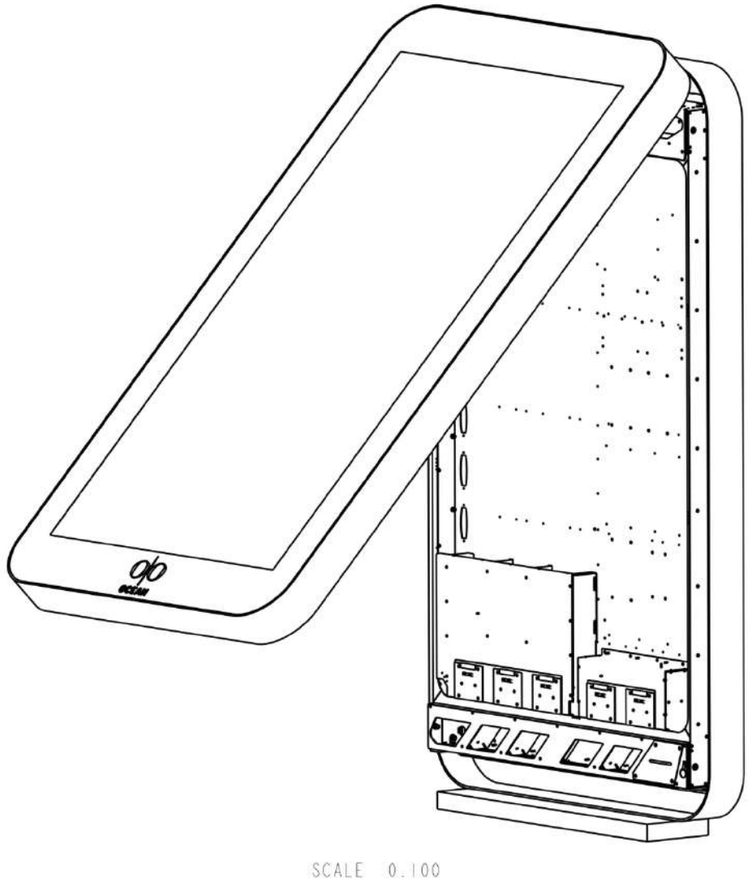
4.9 The Oxford Road Corridor Strategic Spatial Framework is also a relevant contextual document. It identifies the importance of good quality and legible connections, consistency and quality of public realm, good quality wayfinding and signposting, and the use of digital platforms as part of the success of the Oxford Road Corridor as an innovation district. The proposal is consistent with that broader place-making context, as it would modernise an existing estate signage location and provide a flexible digital format capable of displaying wayfinding, public information, estate content and commercial advertising.

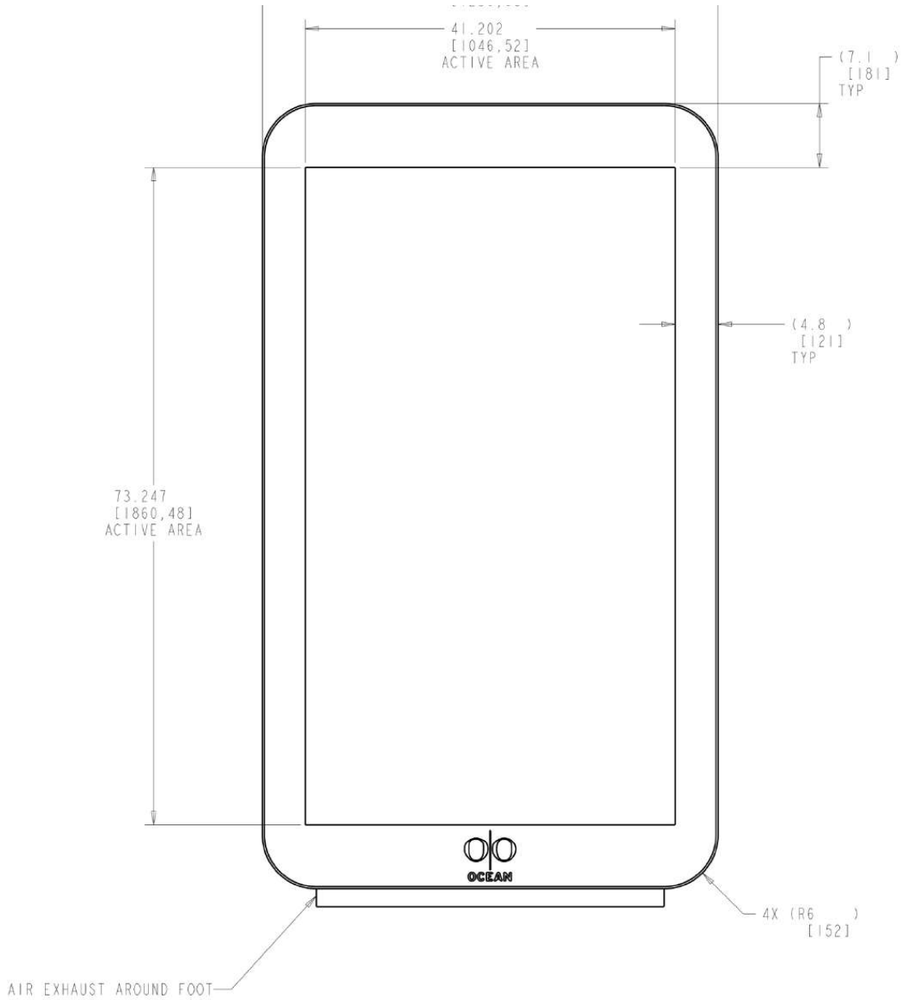
4.10 Wider local plan policies and guidance relating to design, public realm, pedestrian movement and the character of the city centre are relevant insofar as they inform the assessment of amenity and public safety. The central question is whether the proposed replacement digital advertisement totem would be acceptable having regard to its siting, scale, design, illumination, relationship with the existing public realm and impact on pedestrian movement.

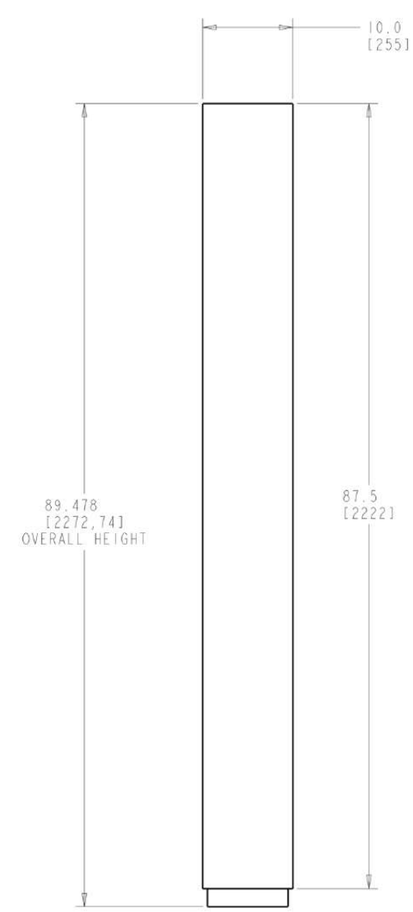
4.11 In this case, the proposed structure replaces an existing illuminated wayfinding totem within a contemporary, privately managed commercial estate. It is therefore assessed against the established baseline of an existing freestanding illuminated signage structure in this location.

PROPOSED SCHEME

Proposed Scheme - Typical Signs







Typical Double Sided Digital Totem

Proposed Scheme

5.0 Advertisement consent is sought for the installation of one freestanding digital advertisement totem at Site 1, including the associated structure required to display the advertisement content.

5.1 The proposed unit would replace the existing illuminated wayfinding totem currently located at the corner of Oxford Road and Symphony Park.

5.2 The unit would comprise a new slim, portrait-format digital display structure set within a simple freestanding casing. The submitted line drawing shows the active screen area, overall casing and depth of the proposed unit.

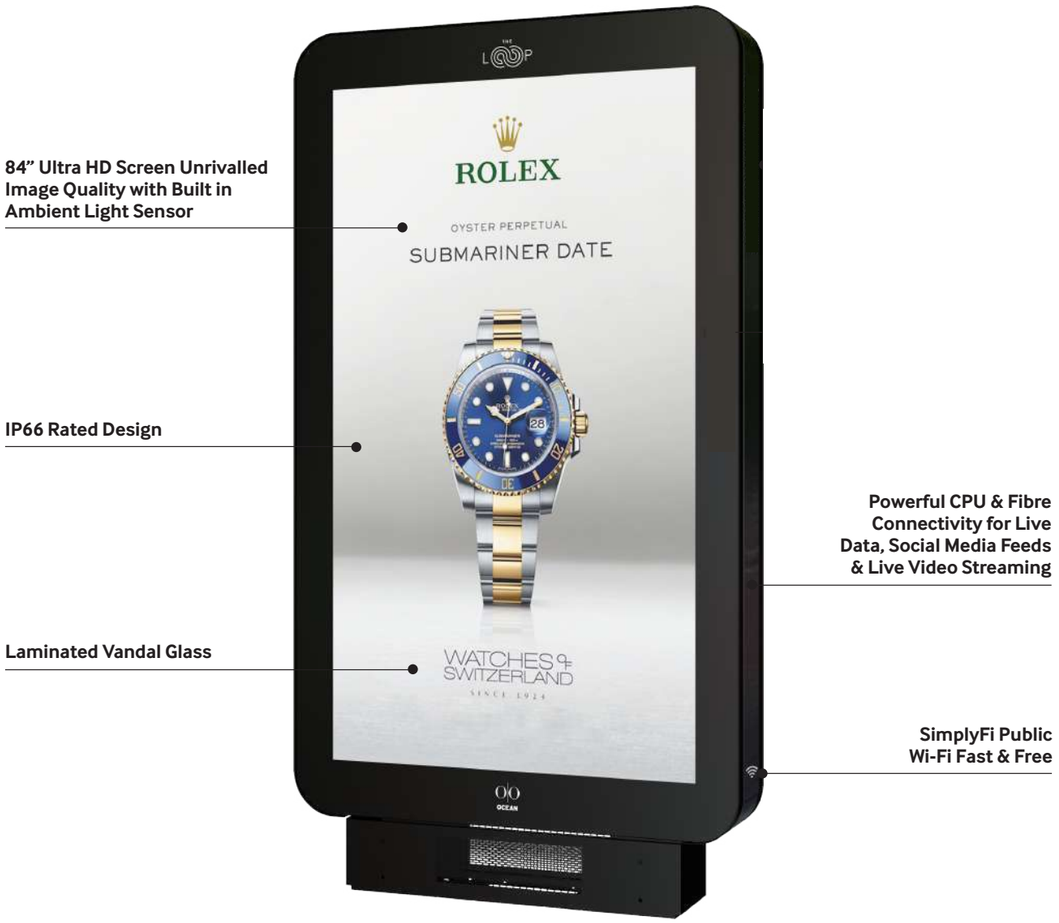
5.3 The screen schematic confirms that the unit incorporates an 84-inch Ultra HD screen, ambient light sensor, laminated vandal glass and IP66-rated design.

5.4 The display would be internally illuminated and would be controlled by an ambient light sensor so that brightness responds to surrounding lighting conditions.

5.5 The display would be capable of showing commercial advertising, estate information, wayfinding and public information content.

5.6 No sound is proposed.

5.7 The unit would be managed and maintained as part of the wider estate signage and digital communication strategy.



Typical Double Sided Digital Totem

Proposed Scheme

Operational Information

5.8 **Sound**

The proposed totem and associated digital screen would not emit sound. There would be no publicly audible content.

5.9 **Operating Hours and Brightness**

The digital display would operate between 07:00 and 21:00.

5.10 The screen would be internally illuminated and controlled by an ambient light sensor so that luminance responds to surrounding lighting conditions. On bright days, daytime luminance may operate at higher levels to maintain legibility. During duller daytime, evening or lower ambient-light conditions, luminance would reduce accordingly.

5.11 The display would be capable of being controlled by photocells, timers, luminance caps and other brightness-management systems to ensure that luminance remains appropriate to the site context and any condition imposed by the Local Planning Authority.

Times and Luminance

5.12 The screen can adapt and operate at varying luminance levels. For example, on bright sunny days, daytime luminance may range between 2,500 cd/m^2 and 4,800 cd/m^2. On cloudy, dull daytime, evening or sunset conditions, luminance may range between 300 cd/m^2 and 800 cd/m^2, allowing the screen to be sensitively scheduled.

5.13 **Content Transitions**

Digital display operates across day and night so performance will vary requirements vary. Focus has always been on night-time levels, but ILP Guide 05/23 now take into account daytime operation and ambient light.

5.14 There are numerous ways to control brightness/luminance in line with ambient light and/or location requirements/ consent conditions- photocells, timers, caps/collars and tracking algorithms. Ocean apply combinations of those methods to achieve optimum performance and compliance.

5.15 Net zero and energy consumption to meet climate change benchmarks are taken into account.

5.16 Transition between content is designed to be seamless within a scheduled loop. Loops will include a combination of Event content, Public service messaging and commercial advertising.

5.17 **Public Safety**

The proposed display would be located within a pedestrianised estate route and would replace an existing illuminated wayfinding totem. It would not obstruct pedestrian movement, interfere with visibility, or create glare or distraction.

Proposed Scheme

Digital Content Information

5.18 **Social / Public Information**

The totem would display advertisement content, together with wayfinding and/or Circle Square content, for example, travel information, promoting local partners, charities and events.

5.19 Other information that could be included within the digital content include:

1) Transport News – especially during the evenings/night

2) Safe Dispersal information - Information for people exiting/entering Circle Square in the evenings

3) 24h Security - Contact information

5.20 **Advertising Restrictions**

In many advertising agreements held by Ocean Outdoor we specify restricted content which cannot be displayed under any circumstances. These include but are not limited to:

5.21 1. Religious messages and political content

2. Tobacco, vaping or similar nicotine-based products

3. Alcohol advertising will require prior approval

4. Any advertisement that contravenes the code set out by the Advertising Standards Authority

5.22 These restrictions will be specified in any advertising agreement that Ocean Outdoor enters into in relation to the totem and screen implemented under this proposal

Scheme Assessment

Impact on Visual Amenity

6.0 Site 1 is located within the commercial and mixed-use environment of Circle Square. The proposed unit would be viewed in the context of a contemporary managed estate containing active frontages, lighting, landscaping, street furniture, wayfinding and pedestrian activity.

6.1 The proposed unit would replace an existing illuminated wayfinding totem. The principle of a freestanding illuminated estate signage structure in this location is therefore already established.

6.2 The proposal would alter the content and display format of the existing signage position, but it would not introduce a new freestanding signage structure into an otherwise clear area of public realm.

6.3 The physical structure has also been considered in its own right. Its height, width, depth, siting and relationship with pedestrian movement would be appropriate to this part of the estate, particularly having regard to the existing illuminated wayfinding totem that it would replace.

6.4 The unit would have a simple and high quality appearance. Its slim portrait-format casing would be appropriate to the contemporary character of Circle Square and would sit comfortably alongside existing street furniture, lighting and landscape features.

6.5 The proposal would also support the broader Oxford Road Corridor objective of providing legible, high quality public realm and digital communication infrastructure within a contemporary innovation-district environment.

6.6 The display would be controlled by an ambient light sensor. This would ensure that illumination responds to surrounding lighting conditions and would not appear unduly bright or dominant within this commercial city-centre setting.

6.7 The proposal would form part of the wider site-wide strategy for estate signage, wayfinding, public information and digital advertising, while being acceptable on the basis of its individual siting, scale and impact.
The proposal is therefore considered acceptable in visual amenity terms.

Impact on Public Safety

6.8 The proposed unit would be located within the privately managed Circle Square estate and would not be positioned on adopted public highway land.

6.9 The unit would replace an existing illuminated wayfinding totem. The established pedestrian environment would therefore remain broadly unchanged.

6.10 The proposed unit would not obstruct the pedestrian route from Oxford Road into Symphony Park. It would not interfere with building entrances, servicing routes, pedestrian desire lines or access through the estate.

6.11 The display would not include sound. It would also be controlled to avoid glare or distraction.

6.12 Given its location within a pedestrianised estate route, and its replacement of an existing illuminated wayfinding totem, the proposal would not harm public safety.

Conclusion

7.0 This application seeks advertisement consent for one freestanding digital advertisement totem at Site 1, Circle Square, Oxford Road, Manchester.

7.1 The application relates to Site 1 only and would replace an existing illuminated wayfinding totem at the corner of Oxford Road and Symphony Park.

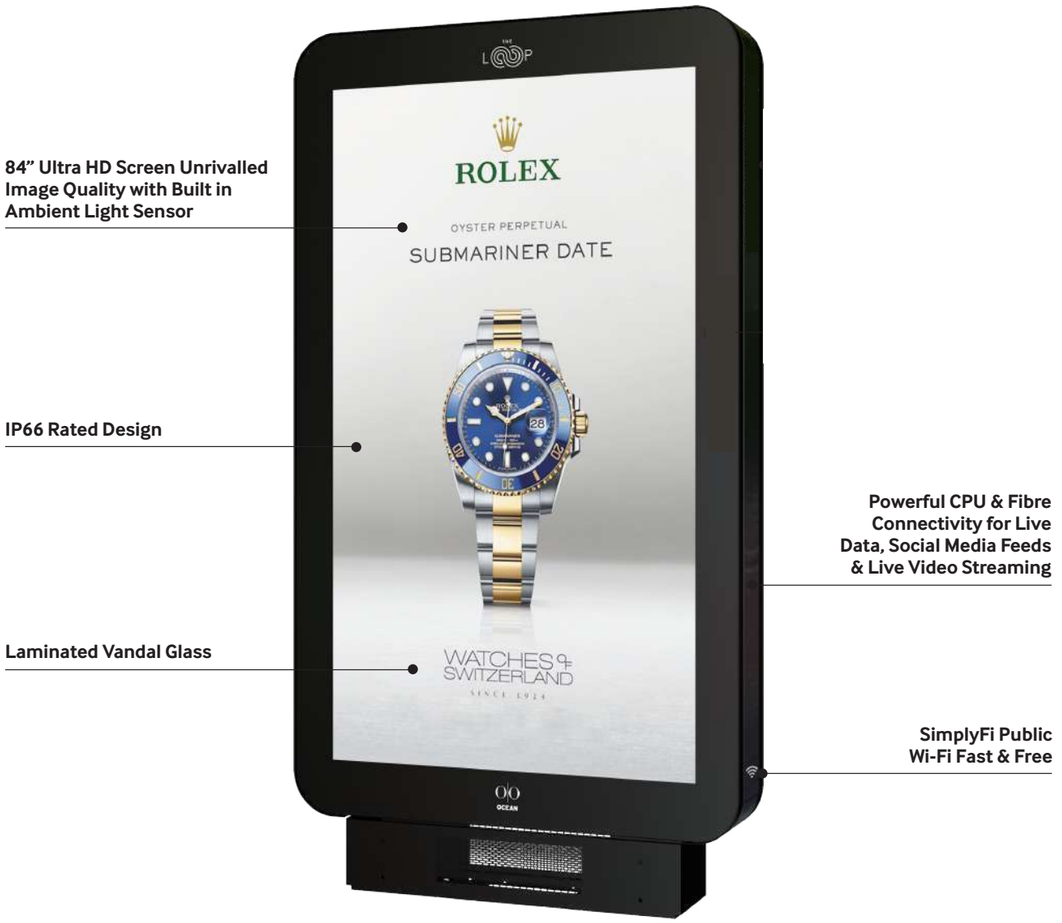
7.2 The site is located within the privately managed Circle Square estate and does not form part of the adopted public highway.

7.3 The proposal would modernise an existing freestanding illuminated signage position. While the display format would change, the principle of an illuminated estate signage structure in this location is already established.

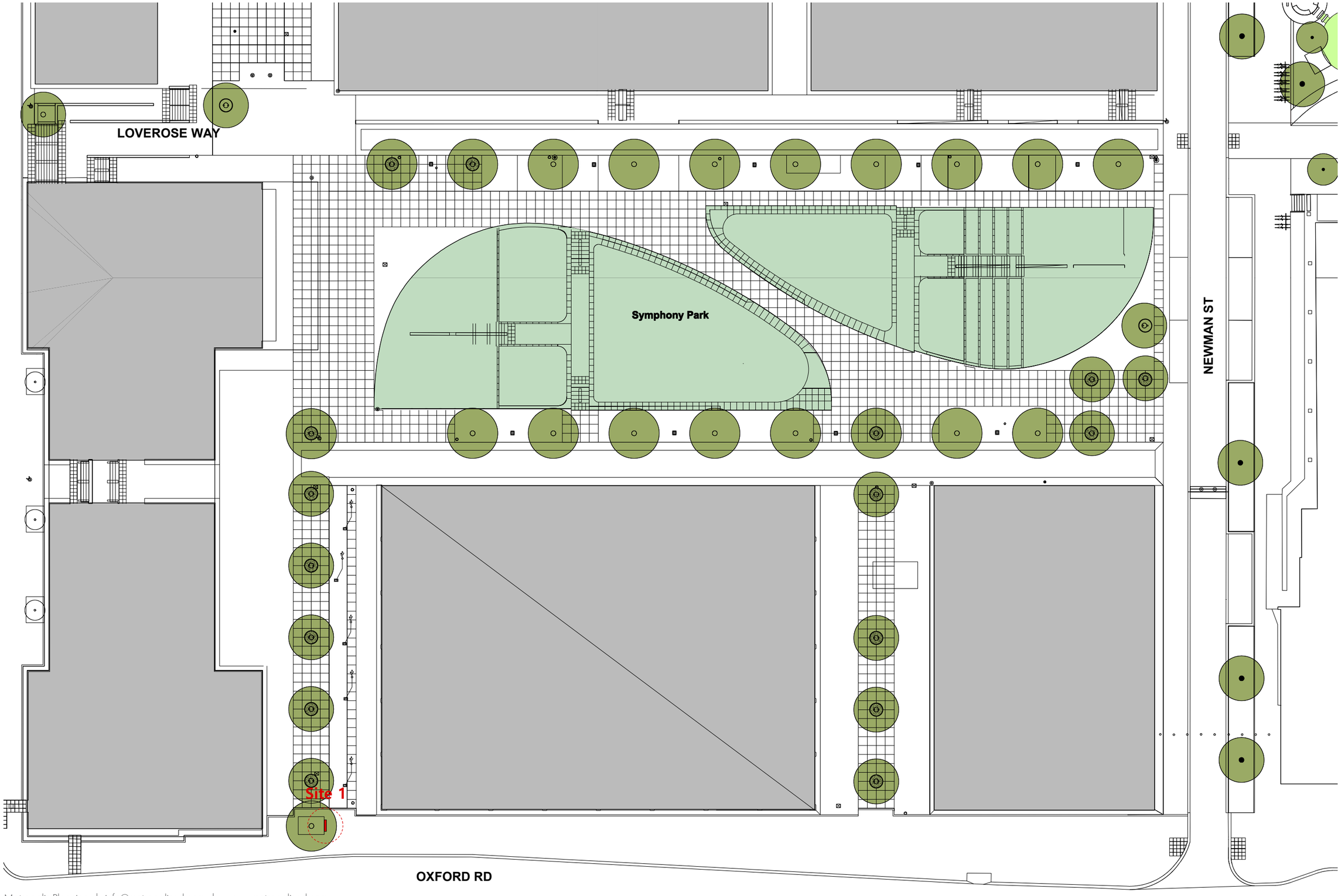
7.4 The proposed unit would be of a high quality, slim and coordinated design, with illumination controlled by an ambient light sensor.

7.5 The proposal would not harm visual amenity or public safety and would be appropriate to the commercial character and managed public realm of Circle Square.

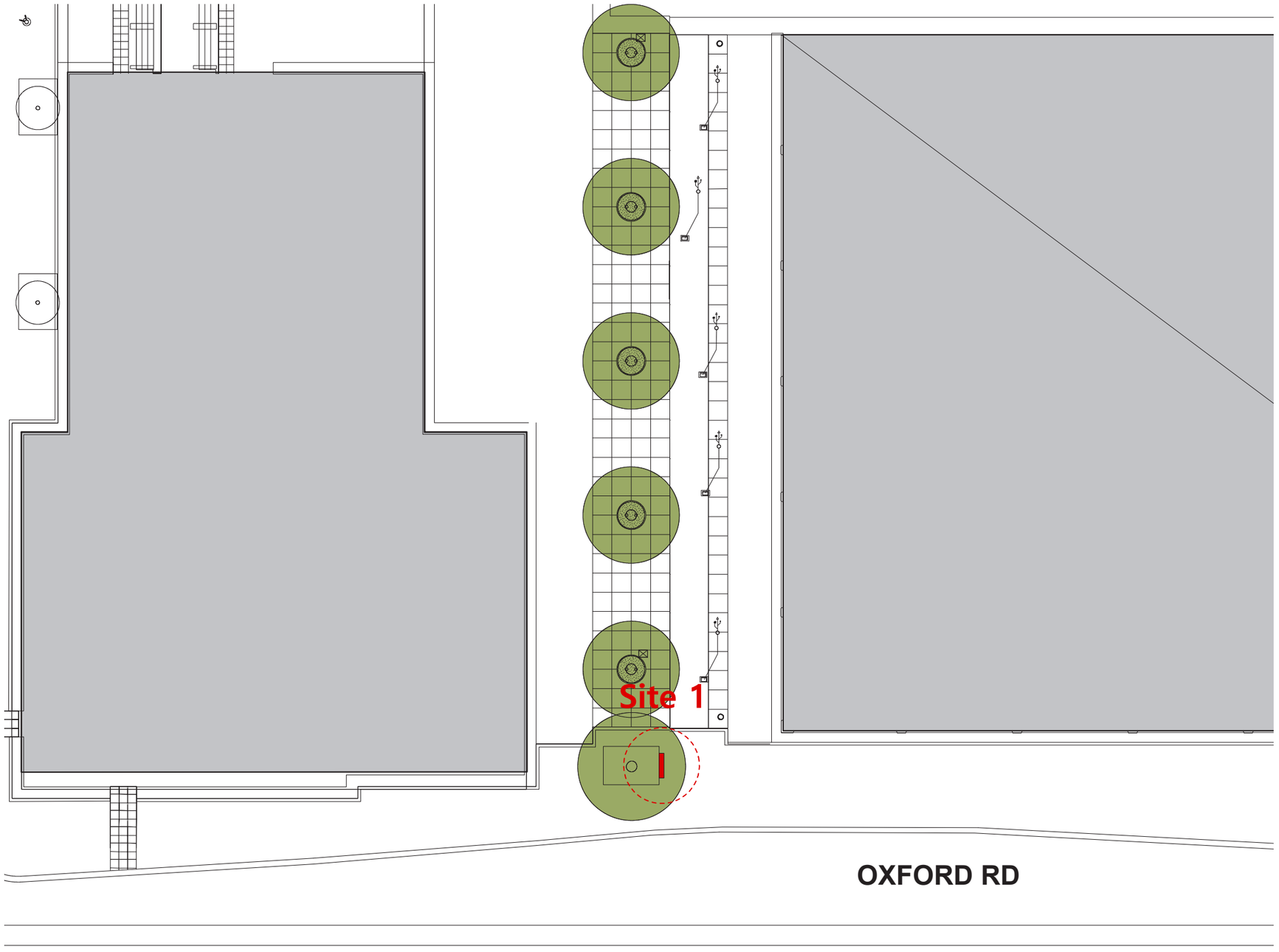
7.6 It is therefore respectfully requested that advertisement consent is granted.

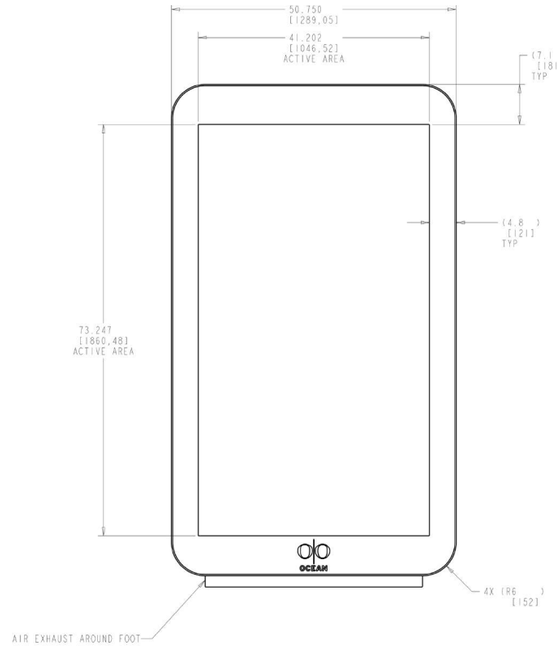


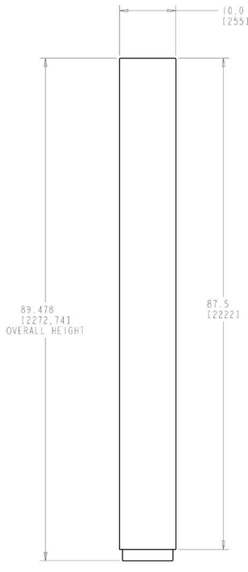
APPENDIX ONE


LOVEROSE WAY
Symphony Park
NEWMAN ST
Site 1
OXFORD RD

Site 1:







Location Plan

Site 1 Existing Photos - Oxford Road



