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Planning

Circle Square Digital Screen
Symphony Park - Site 3
Planning Statement

08/06/2026

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REFERENCE

3203 - Circle Square Manchester

PROJECT

Site 3 - Adjacent to No. 2 Circle Square and Symphony Park

REVISION

Rev00

DATE

08/06/2026

Metropolis Planning Ltd
Suite LP59350
20-22 Wenlock Road
London
N1 7GU

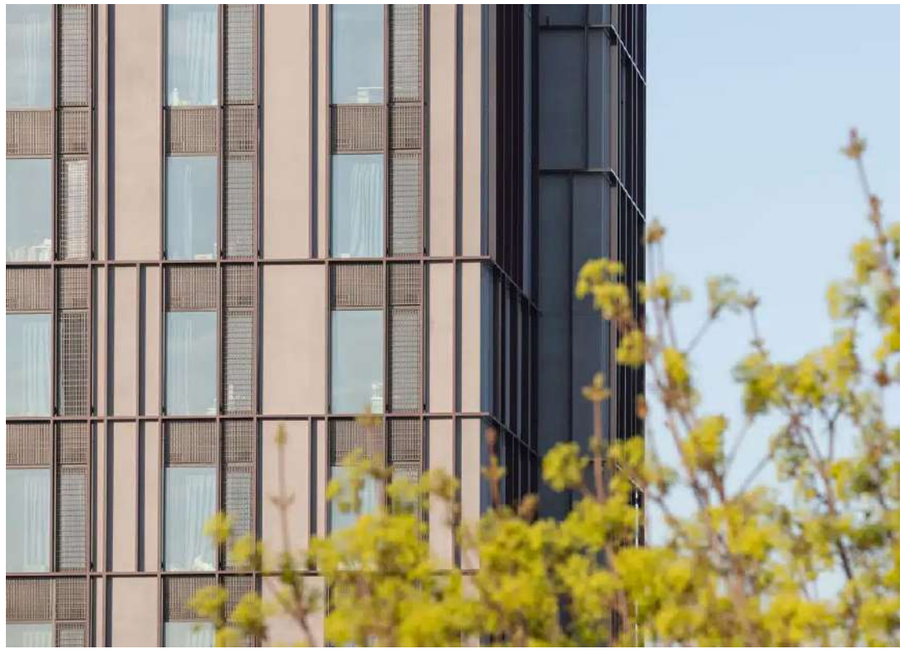
www.metropolispd.com

info@metropolispd.com

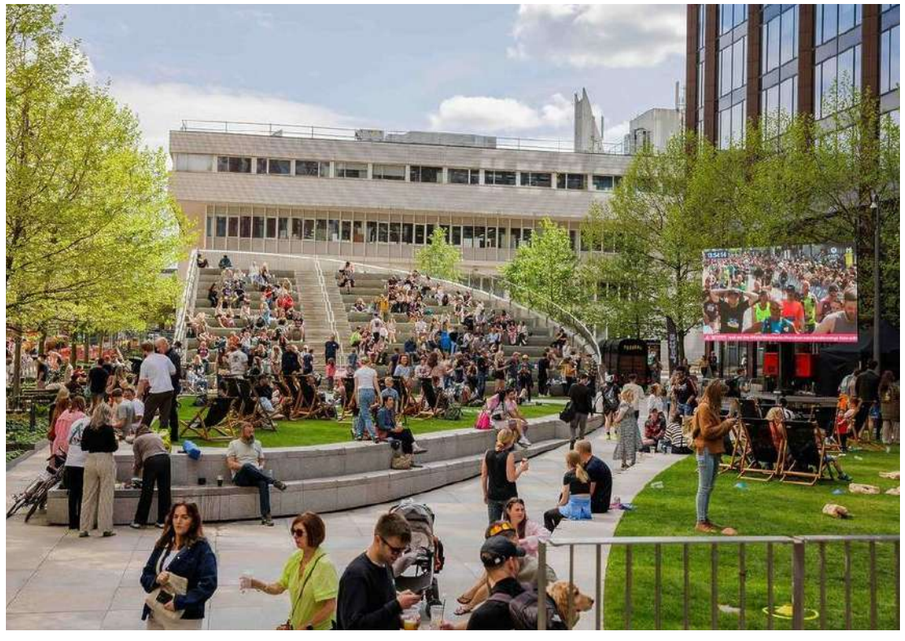
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Introduction









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 3, Circle Square, Oxford Road, Manchester M1 7ED.

1.1 The application relates to Site 3 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 3 is located adjacent to No. 2 Circle Square, along Symphony Park, within the pedestrianised public realm of the Circle Square estate. The location is shown as Site 3 on the submitted Location Plan.

1.3 The proposal seeks consent for one new freestanding digital advertisement totem. Unlike Sites 1, 2 and 4, Site 3 does not replace an existing totem in the same location. The proposal is therefore assessed on the basis of its individual siting, scale, design, illumination and impact on visual amenity and public safety.

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.

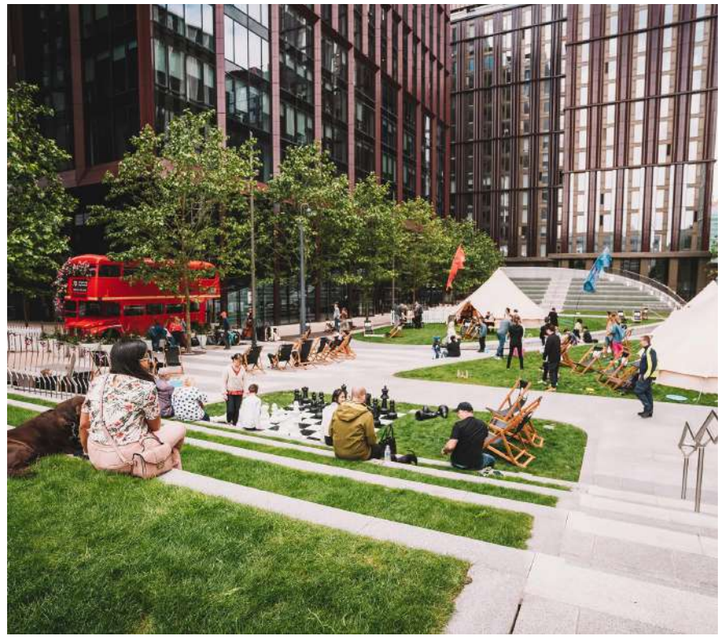
1.5 The proposed unit would be a slim, portrait-format digital display. The submitted screen schematic identifies the unit as incorporating an 84-inch Ultra HD screen, built-in ambient light sensor, laminated vandal glass and IP66-rated design.

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.

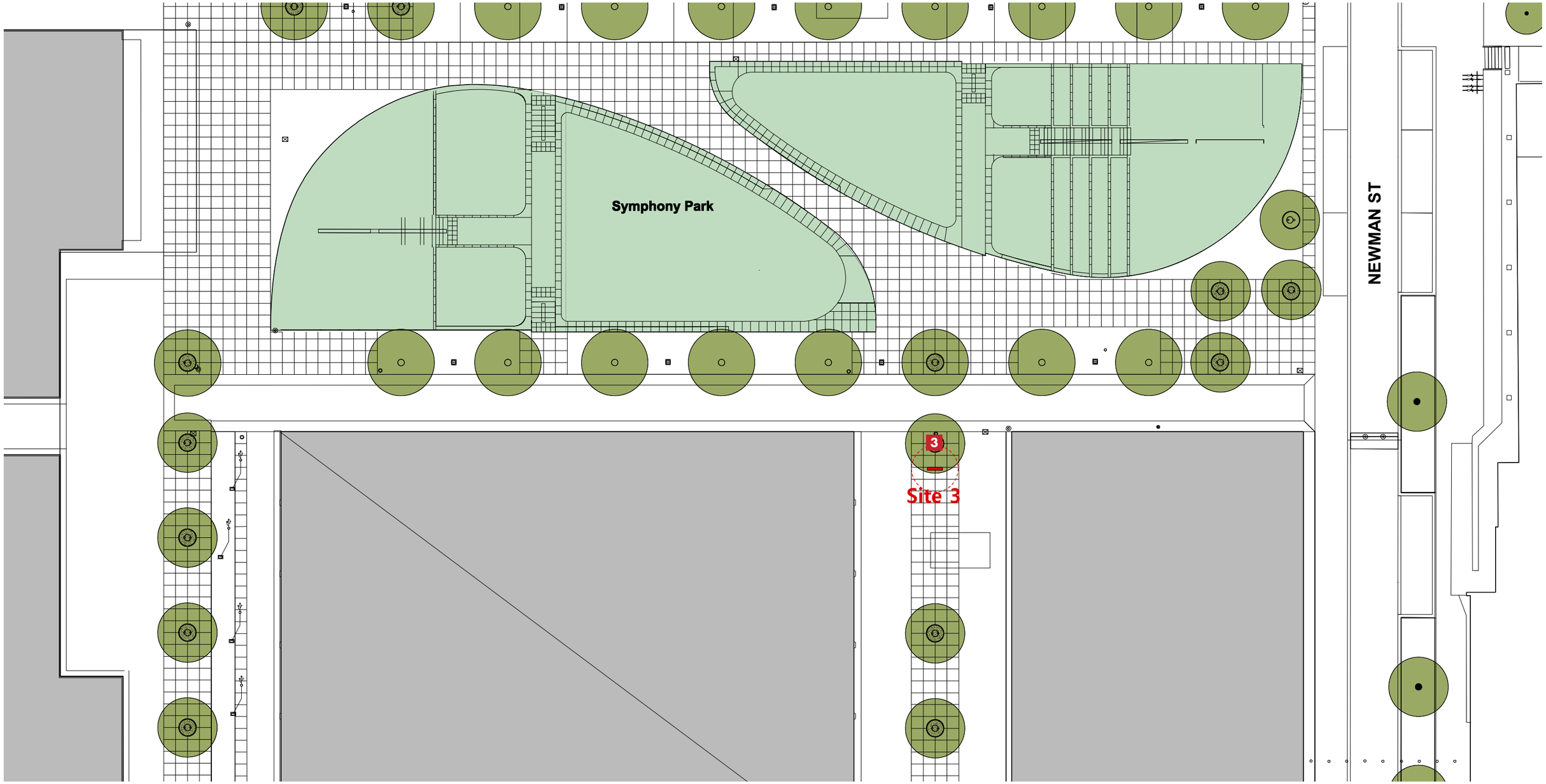
2.1 Site 3 is located adjacent to No. 2 Circle Square, along Symphony Park. The site sits within the internal pedestrian environment of Circle Square and is experienced in the context of the landscaped setting of Symphony Park and the surrounding contemporary commercial buildings.

2.2 The immediate context is urban, commercial and pedestrian-focused. The surrounding public realm includes estate furniture, lighting, landscaping, active frontages, wayfinding and high levels of pedestrian activity associated with Circle Square and Symphony Park.

2.3 The proposed unit would be located within a managed estate environment where public realm features, lighting, signage and pedestrian activity are already established parts of the character of the area.

2.4 The proposal would introduce a new freestanding digital advertisement totem. However, the unit would be positioned within a contemporary commercial estate context and would be of a slim, high-quality design appropriate to its surroundings.

Existing Position - Adjacent to No. 2 Circle Square / Symphony Park



Proposed Location Plan

Existing Position

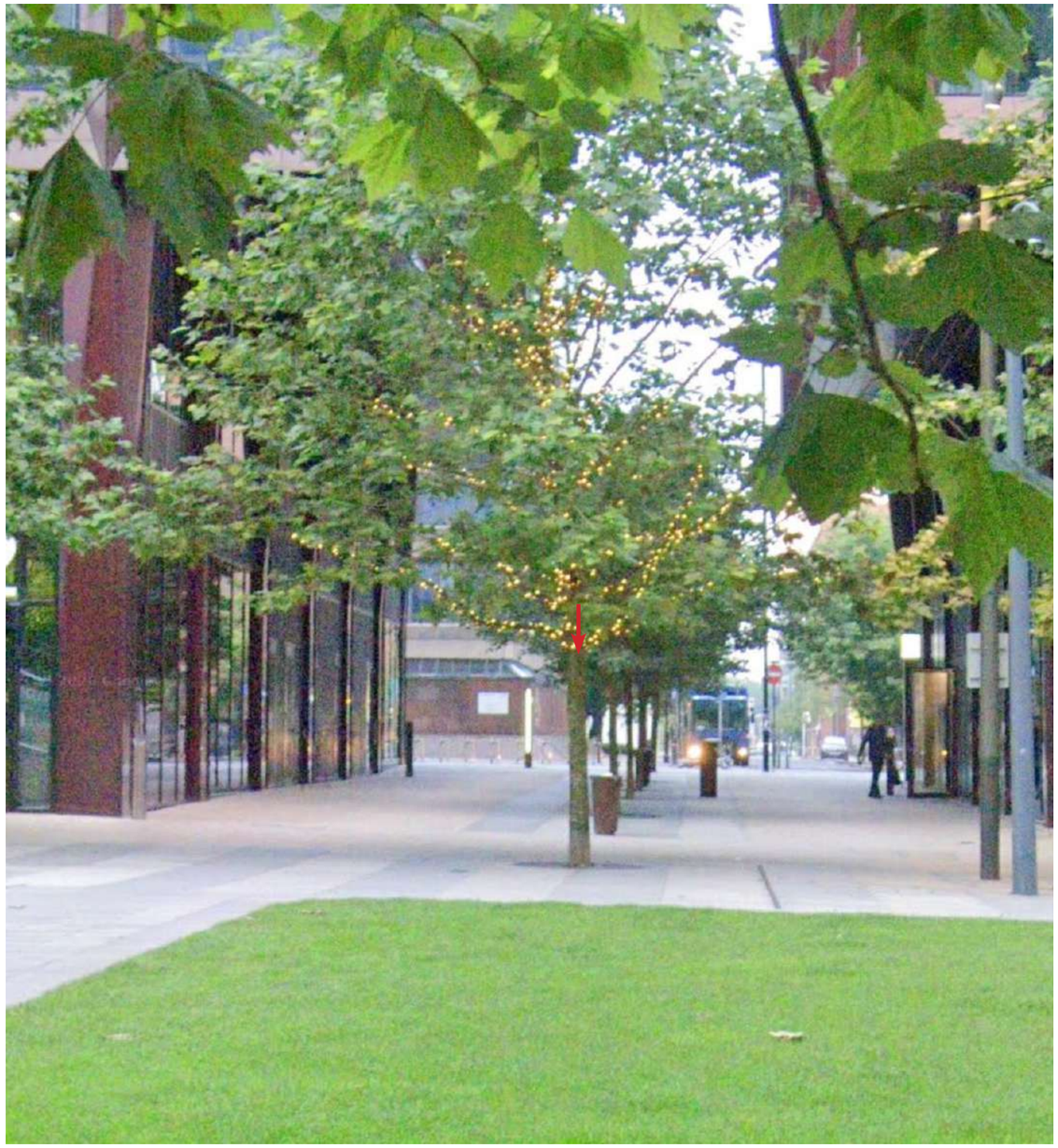
3.0 Site 3 does not currently contain a totem in this precise location. The proposal would therefore introduce one new freestanding digital advertisement totem.

3.1 The application relates both to the display of advertisements and to the associated freestanding structure required to display them.

3.2 Although Site 3 is not a replacement location, it sits 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.

3.3 The proposed totem would be located adjacent to No. 2 Circle Square and along Symphony Park, where estate signage, wayfinding and public information are functionally appropriate given the level of pedestrian movement and the commercial character of the estate.

3.4 The proposal should therefore be assessed on the basis of its individual siting, scale, design and impact, rather than as part of any adopted highway or uncontrolled street furniture context.



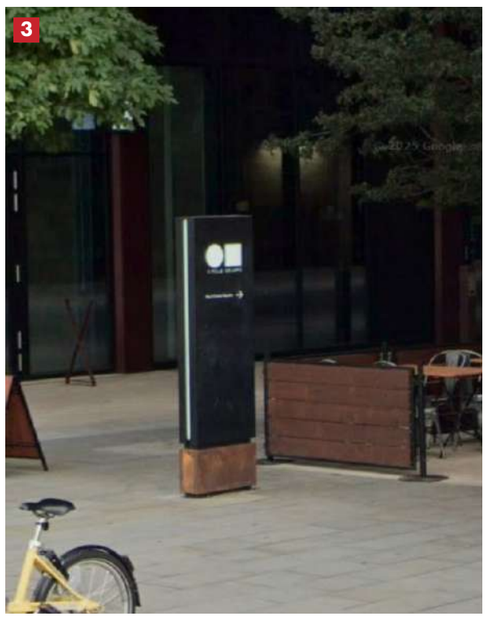
Existing view of Site 3 adjacent to No. 2 Circle Square and Symphony Park

Existing Estate Signage Context

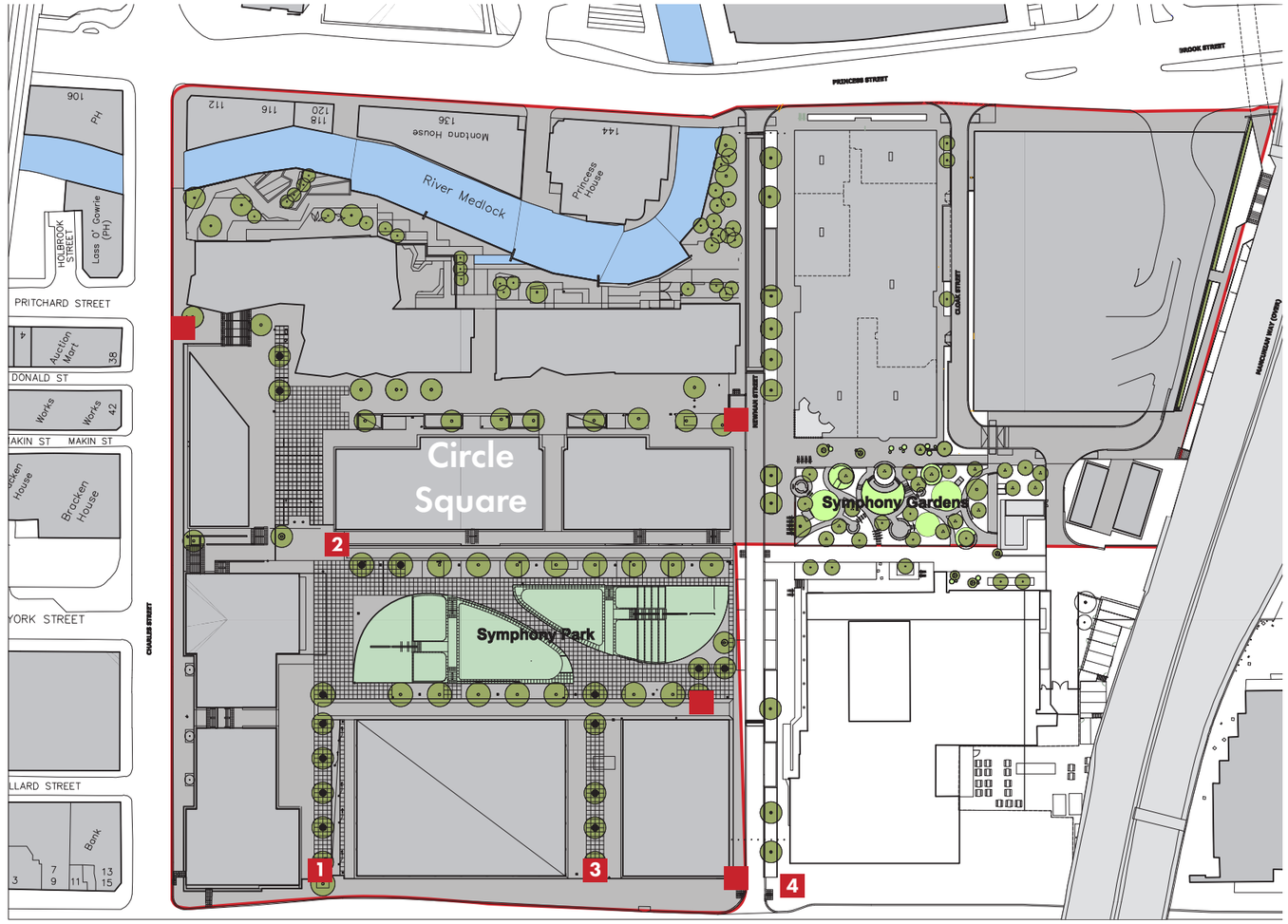
Existing Totem Examples on the Circle Square Estate











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.

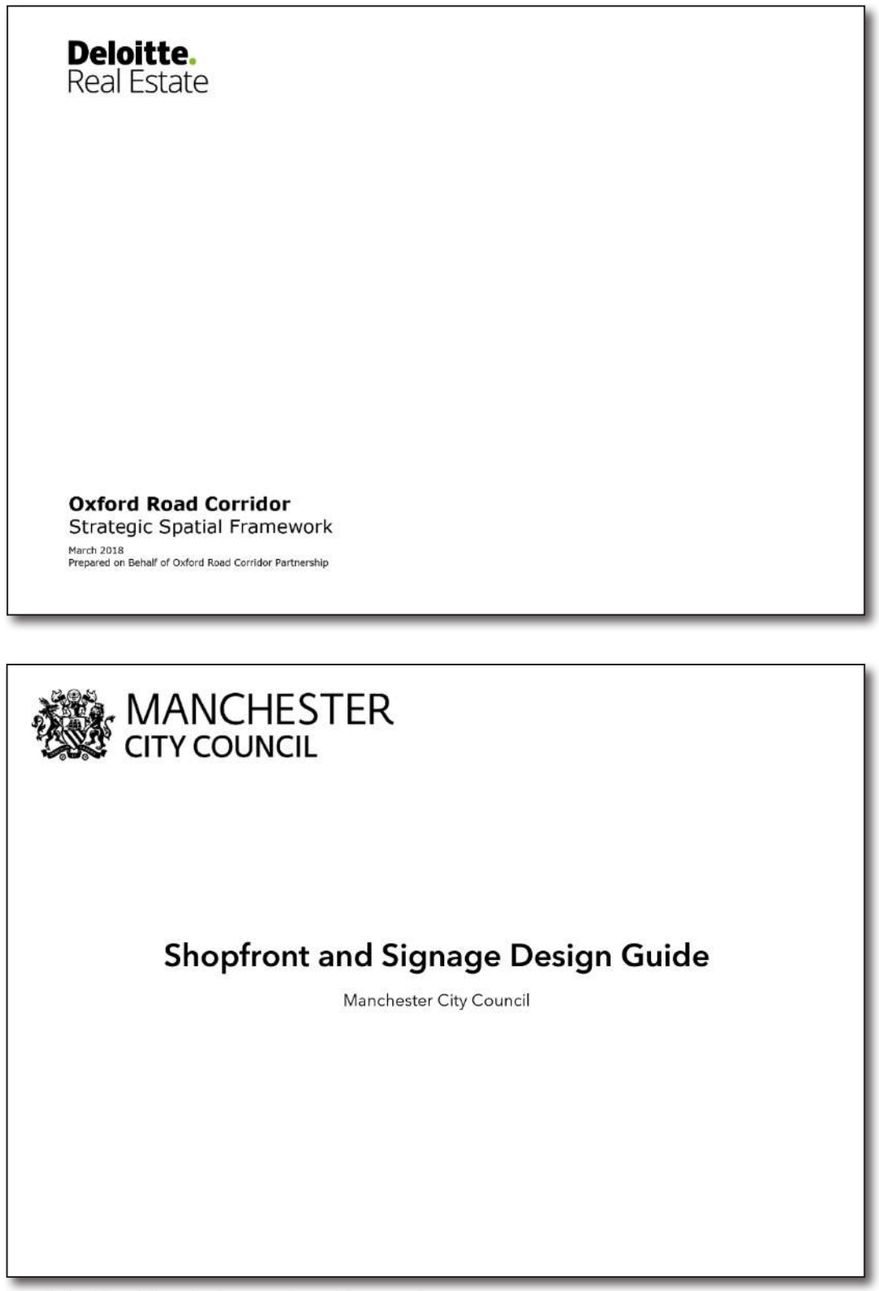
4.4 The Government's Planning Practice Guidance confirms that the control of advertisements is exercised in the interests of amenity and public safety. It also explains that amenity is not defined exhaustively, but includes visual and aural amenity and requires regard to the general characteristics of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

Planning Policy Framework



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

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 be of a slim and contemporary design and would be located within a managed commercial estate environment where estate signage, wayfinding and public realm furniture are already established features.

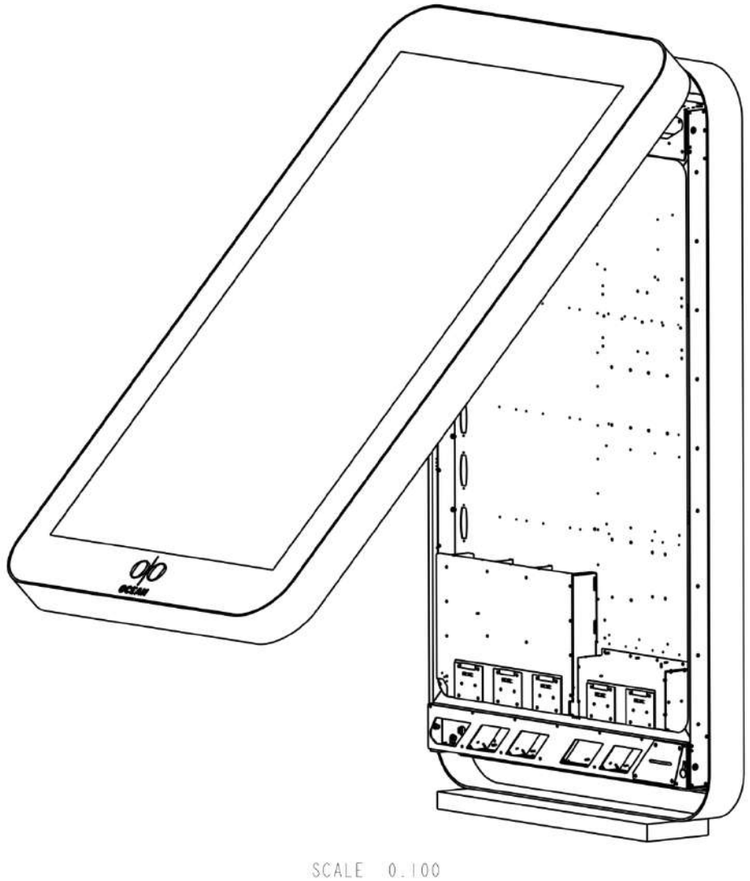
4.9 The Oxford Road Corridor Strategic Spatial Framework is also a relevant contextual document. It identifies the importance of good quality and legible connections, consistency and quality of public realm, good quality wayfinding and signposting, and the use of digital platforms as part of the success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

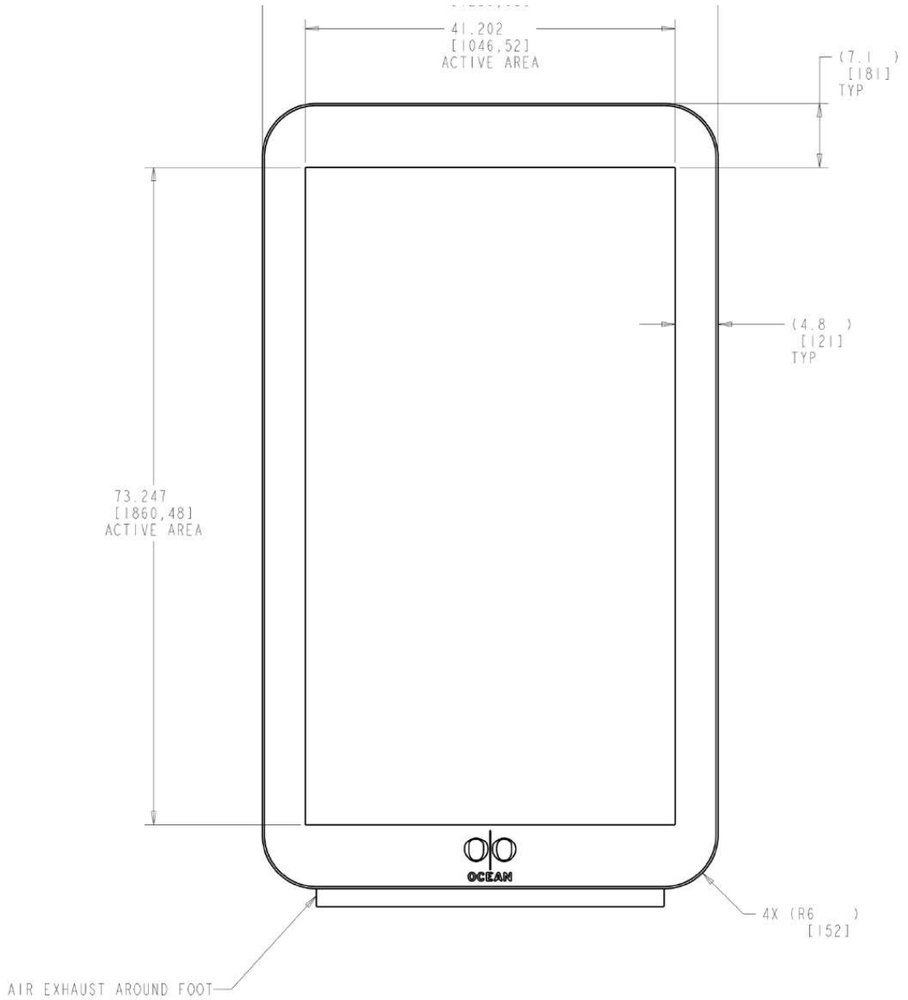
4.10 Wider local plan policies and guidance relating to design, public realm, pedestrian movement and the character of the city centre are relevant insofar as they inform the assessment of amenity and public safety. The central question is whether the proposed new digital advertisement totem would be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

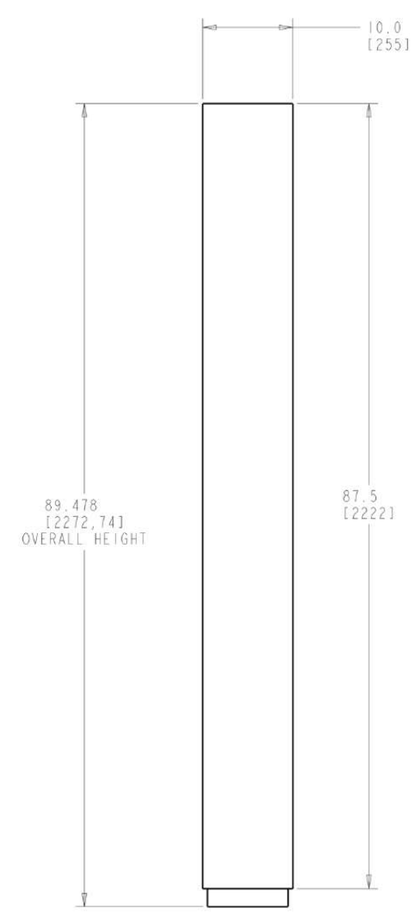
4.11 In this case, the proposed structure would be located within a contemporary, privately managed commercial estate. It is therefore assessed in the context of the established estate environment, where street furniture, signage, lighting, landscaping and pedestrian movement are already integral to the character of the area.

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 3, including the associated structure required to display the advertisement content.

5.1 The proposed unit would be located adjacent to No. 2 Circle Square, along 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.

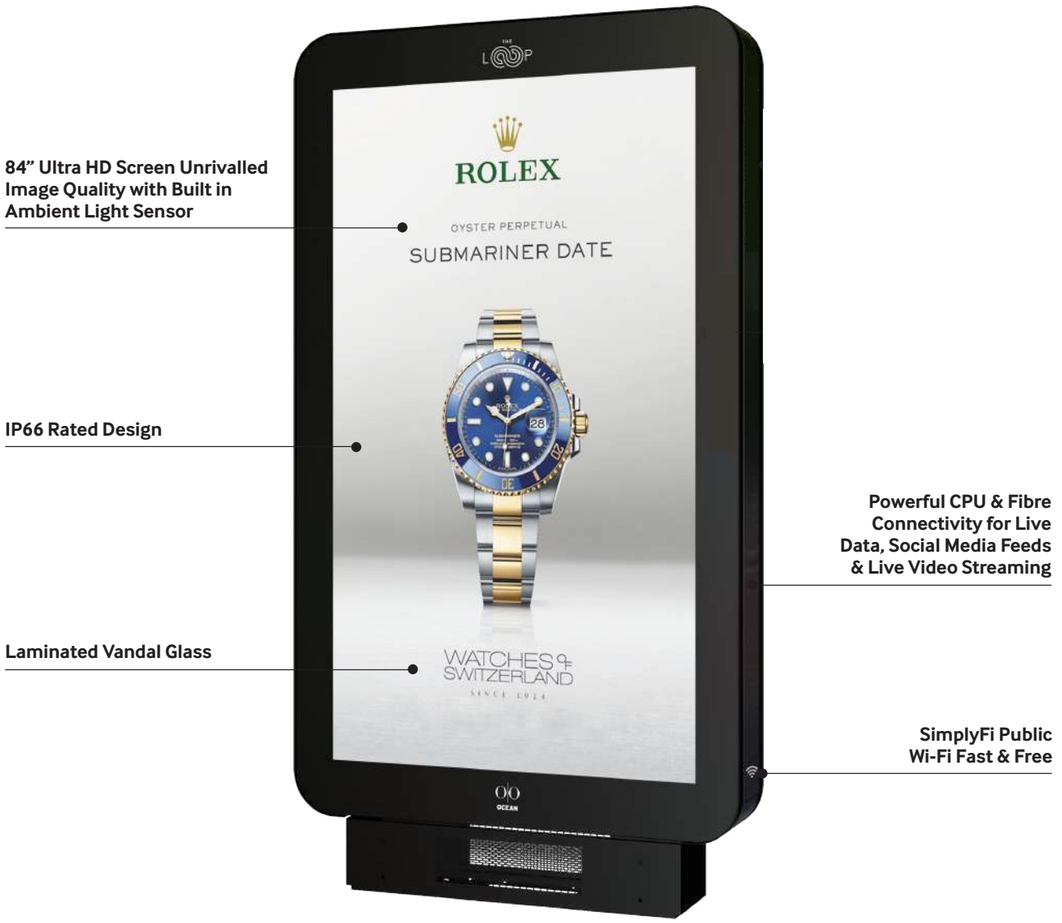
5.3 The screen schematic confirms that the unit incorporates an 84-inch Ultra HD screen, ambient light sensor, laminated vandal glass and IP66-rated design.

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

Sound

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

Operating Hours and Brightness

5.9 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.

Content Transitions

5.13 The display's luminance requirements will vary depending on ambient light conditions. ILP Guidance Note 05/23 addresses both daytime and night-time operation.

5.14 There are numerous ways to control brightness and luminance in line with ambient light, site context and consent conditions, including photocells, timers, luminance caps and other brightness-management systems. Ocean Outdoor applies combinations of these methods to achieve optimum performance and compliance.

5.15 Transition between content would be designed to be seamless within a scheduled loop. Loops would include a combination of event content, public service messaging and commercial advertising.

Public Safety

5.16 The proposed display would be located within a pedestrianised estate route adjacent to No. 2 Circle Square and Symphony Park. It would not obstruct pedestrian movement, interfere with visibility, or create glare or distraction.

Proposed Scheme

Digital Content Information

5.17 **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.

5.18 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

Advertising Restrictions

5.19 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:

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

5.20 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 3 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 proposal would introduce one new freestanding digital advertisement totem. However, the site is already part of a managed pedestrian environment where estate signage, lighting, landscaping and street furniture form part of the established public realm character.

6.2 The unit would be located adjacent to No. 2 Circle Square and along Symphony Park. It would be seen within the context of contemporary commercial buildings and a landscaped estate environment, rather than within a visually sensitive, residential or unmanaged public highway setting.

6.3 The physical structure has 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.

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.

6.8 The proposal is therefore considered acceptable in visual amenity terms.

Impact on Public Safety

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

6.10 The proposed unit would be positioned so as not to obstruct pedestrian movement along Symphony Park, access to No. 2 Circle Square, 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 siting within a managed public realm environment, the proposal would not harm public safety.

Conclusion

7.0 This application seeks advertisement consent for one freestanding digital advertisement totem at Site 3, Circle Square, Oxford Road, Manchester.

7.1 The application relates to Site 3 only and seeks consent for one new freestanding digital advertisement totem adjacent to No. 2 Circle Square, along Symphony Park.

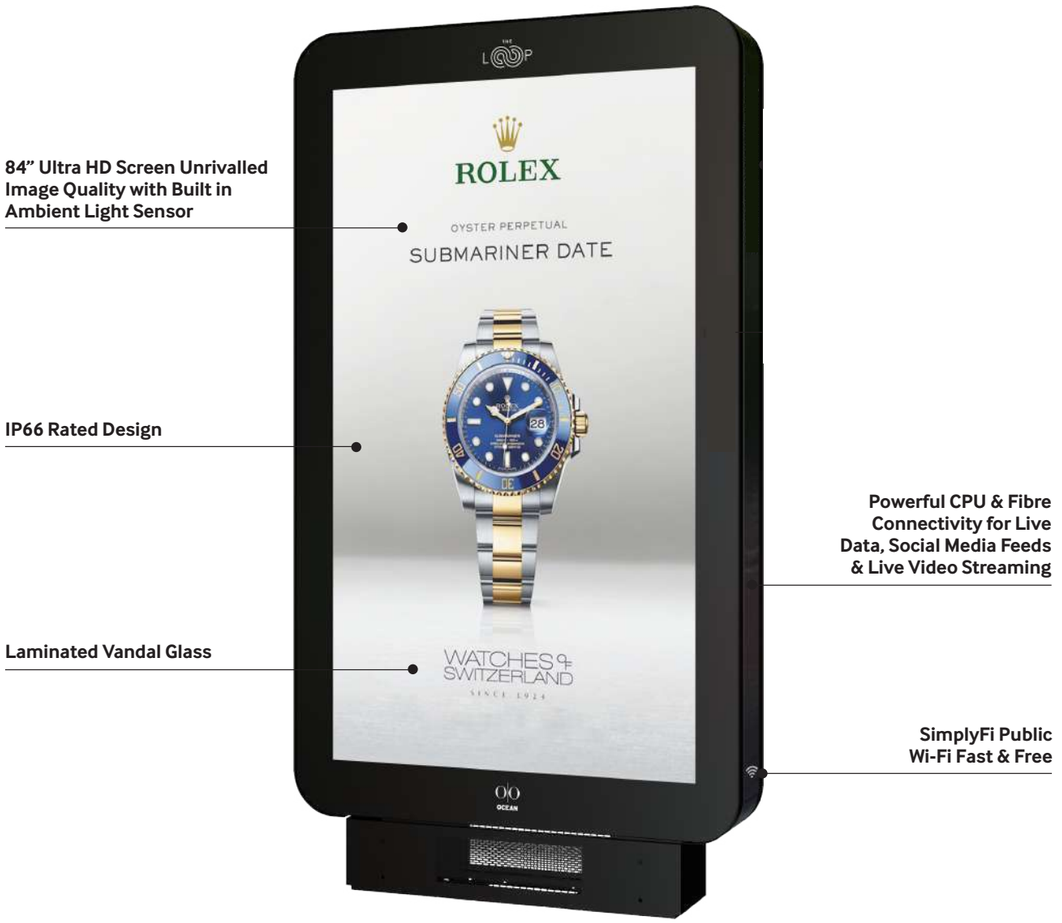
7.2 The site is located within the privately managed Circle Square estate and does not form part of the adopted public highway.

7.3 Although the proposal would introduce a new freestanding structure, it would be located within a contemporary commercial estate environment where estate signage, lighting, landscaping, street furniture and pedestrian activity are already established features.

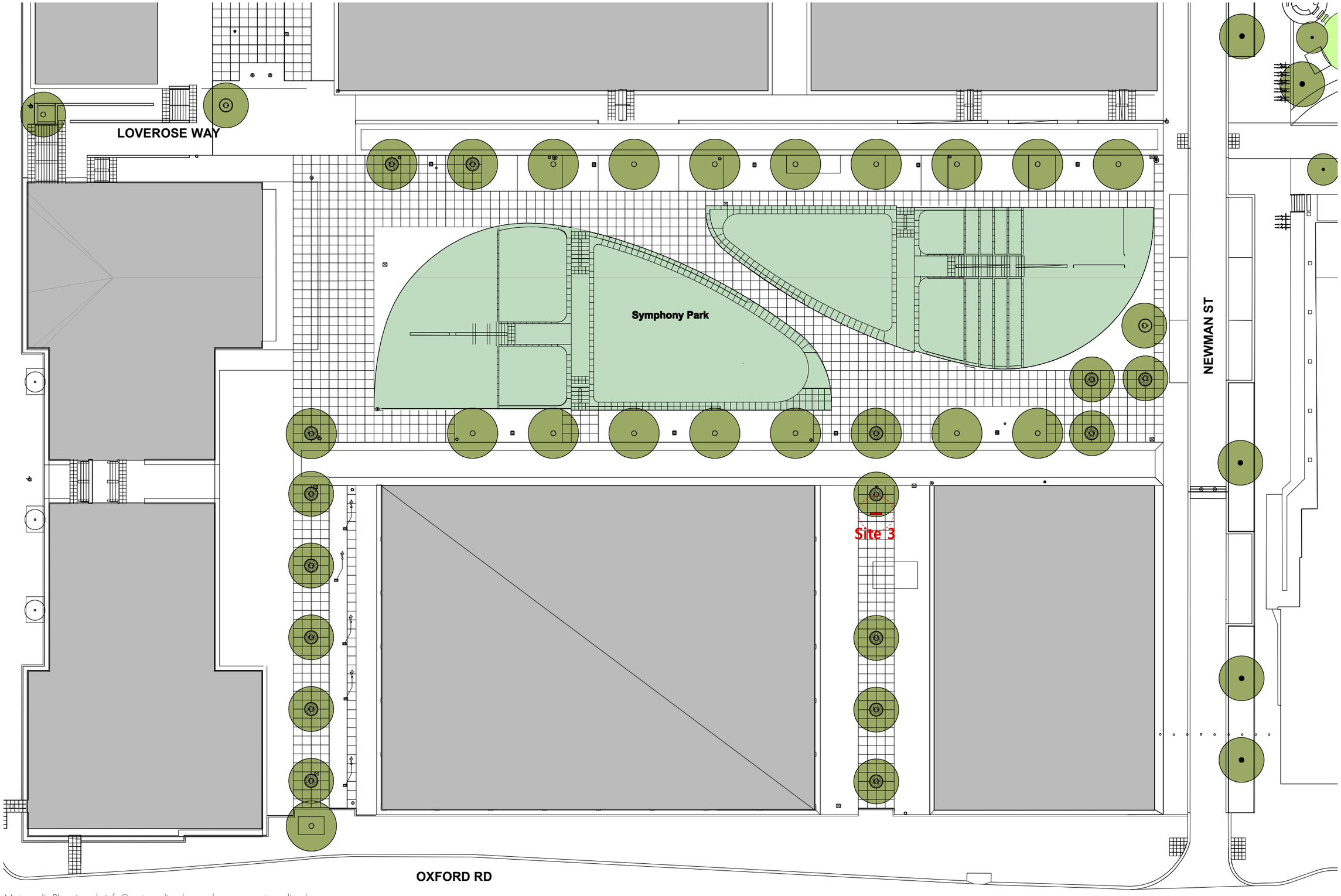
7.4 The proposed unit would be of a high-quality, slim and coordinated design, with illumination controlled by an ambient light sensor.

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.

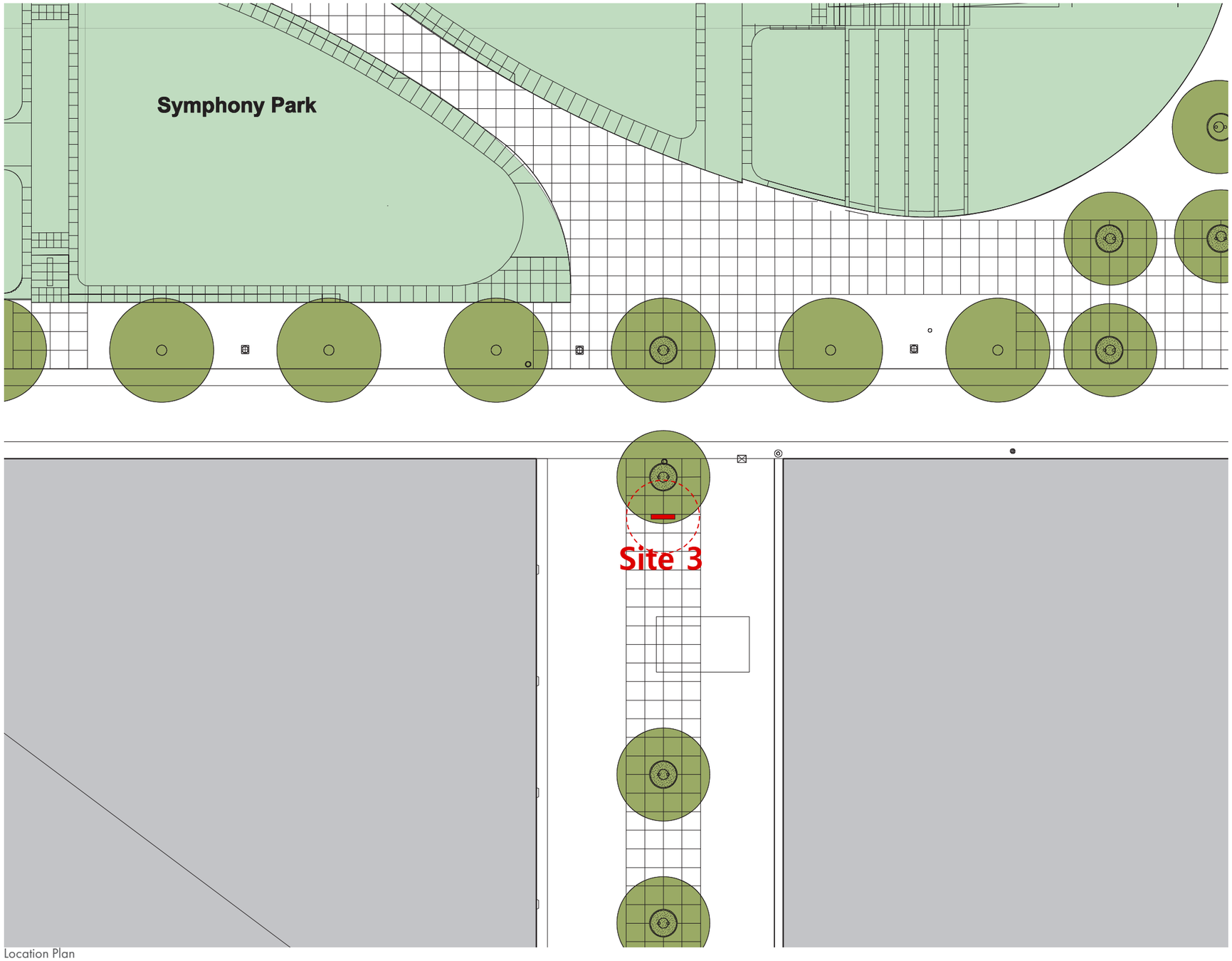
7.6 It is therefore respectfully requested that advertisement consent is granted.



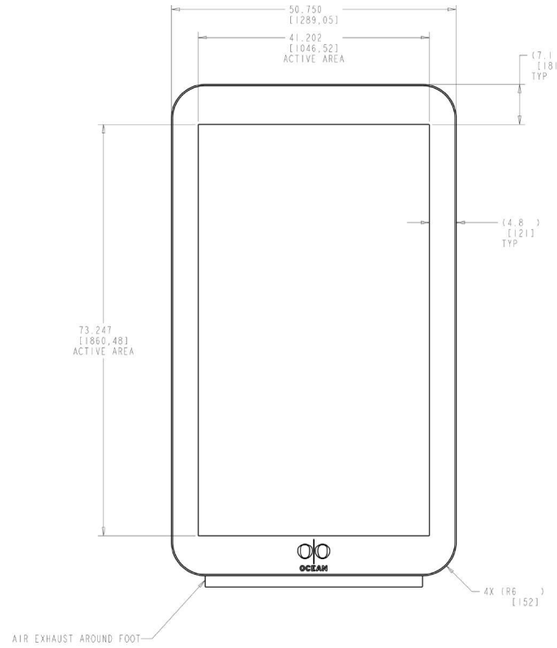
APPENDIX ONE

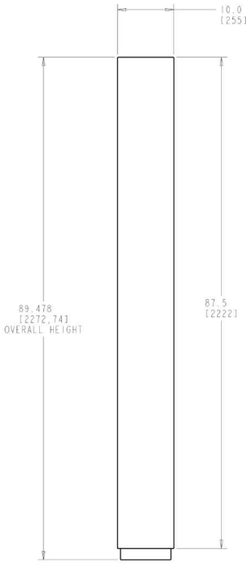

LOVEROSE WAY
Symphony Park
Site 3
NEWMAN ST
OXFORD RD

Site 3:



Location Plan





Site 3 Existing Photos - Adjacent to Building 2 Symphony Park

