BowkerSadler

MMU Sandra Burslem Signage Project

Manchester Metropolitan University

Design and Access Statement BSA Project No: 25-003 | DA-01 | July 2026

Manchester Metropolitan University



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Issue	Date	Revision	Received By	Comment	Approved
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Ascot Signs	Signage Specialists	Director: Stephen Pollock (stephen.pollock@ascotsigns.com)	ASCOT EST. 1938
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1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

Bowker Sadler Architecture have a history of undertaking architectural project work for Manchester Metropolitan University dating back to 2017. In 2025, we were asked to look at the proposals for new signage for The Sandra Burslem Building including acting as Lead Consultant for a wider team including Signage Specialists and Cost Consultants.

Manchester Metropolitan University has several large scale building and public realm projects which collectively underpin the University's strategy – the Road to 2030. A key component of this strategy is to retain their commitment to on-campus education, the student experience and research, via the delivery of a range of projects to deliver a safe, accessible and connected civic campus. These will include new developments and facilities, refurbishment, conserving heritage assets, and improving the public realm and green spaces. Alongside the building projects, the University has developed a brand strategy which articulates the importance for the Manchester Met brand to be consistently applied across its buildings and for the experience of all who interact with the University at any of our numerous touch points to come away with the same positive experience.

Through the introduction of new buildings and refurbishment of existing ones, it has become apparent there are inconsistencies in how and where they apply the University brand to enhance wayfinding and the ability of all visitors, staff and students to be able to navigate their way across the city and onto campus. Rather than take a piecemeal approach to rectifying this, they have decided to implement a holistic appraisal of the entire estate which will bring in the following projects, while applying the principles which underpin both our brand strategy and overarching University strategy. The ongoing building entrances signage project – a review and update of all new and existing building entrances has already begun and this particular application deals with the signage at the Sandra Burslem Building.



2.0 Context, Evaluation & Design

2.1 Context

The “University Realm” that makes up Manchester Metropolitan University campus is something all staff, students and visitors experience. It is one of the Universities greatest assets. The public realm contributes to its users wellbeing and a key part of that experience if creating a distinctive sense of place, unique to Manchester Metropolitan’s identity.

In 2018 the University commissioned a comprehensive audit of the estate masterplan, this document addressed current constraints, objectives and key opportunities to guide the principles and strategies of the University’s masterplan. As part of these works the campus signage and wayfinding was reviewed with key observations including:

- Campus boundary is weakly defined
- Poor gateway markers and lacking a strong identity
- A huge variety of signs that are inconsistent
- Key entrances are difficult due to lack of signage impact
- Wayfinding to be improved with coherent strategy
- Poor sense of place

2.2 Evaluation

Key Observations:

- Variety of signs layouts
- Campus boundary is weakly defined
- Not coherent with present MMU brand
- Not coherent with wayfinding signage strategy
- Poor visibility at key gateways
- Illegible scales for viewing distances
- As the campus has developed the positioning of some signs have become redundant
- Low visibility and contrast levels

Key Principles:

- Improve campus identity and create strong thresholds
- Improve outward facing edges of the campus
- Create a consistent and identifiable campus
- Unify the material palettes
- Define University owned buildings
- Use consistent branding
- High level signs to work in conjunction with low level wayfinding signs and building identifier signs to build a strong sense of place
- Strengthen connection to Birley and All Saints

2.0 Context, Evaluation & Study

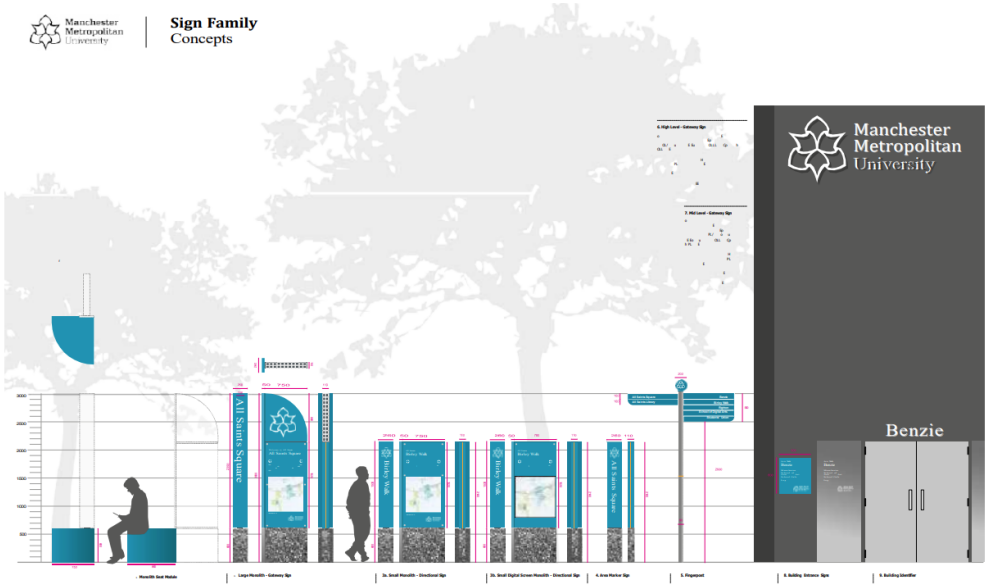
2.3 Design

In an increasingly competitive higher education sector, the need for Manchester Metropolitan University to stand out is essential; one of the ways to communicate this is through effective branding. An important aspect to the appeal of a University campus is the quality of its built environment.

Manchester Metropolitan University's Brand Guidelines set out rules for the application of graphic devices such as logo, colour and typography, and the Wayfinding Manuals further give specific guidance on how the brand should be applied to buildings and external spaces with the introduction of a consistent sign family.

The University brand can be seen as a series of interventions that are experienced by its users, each intervention being a touch point or opportunity to express the brand values and identity.

When implemented the combination of effective wayfinding and external branding will help to present University spaces as a more welcoming and legible place to visit and work in. A branded environment creates an impression of cohesion and community, especially important to new or overseas students who may be away from home for the first time. Branding is also essential to build awareness of Manchester Metropolitan's estate amongst the local Manchester community.



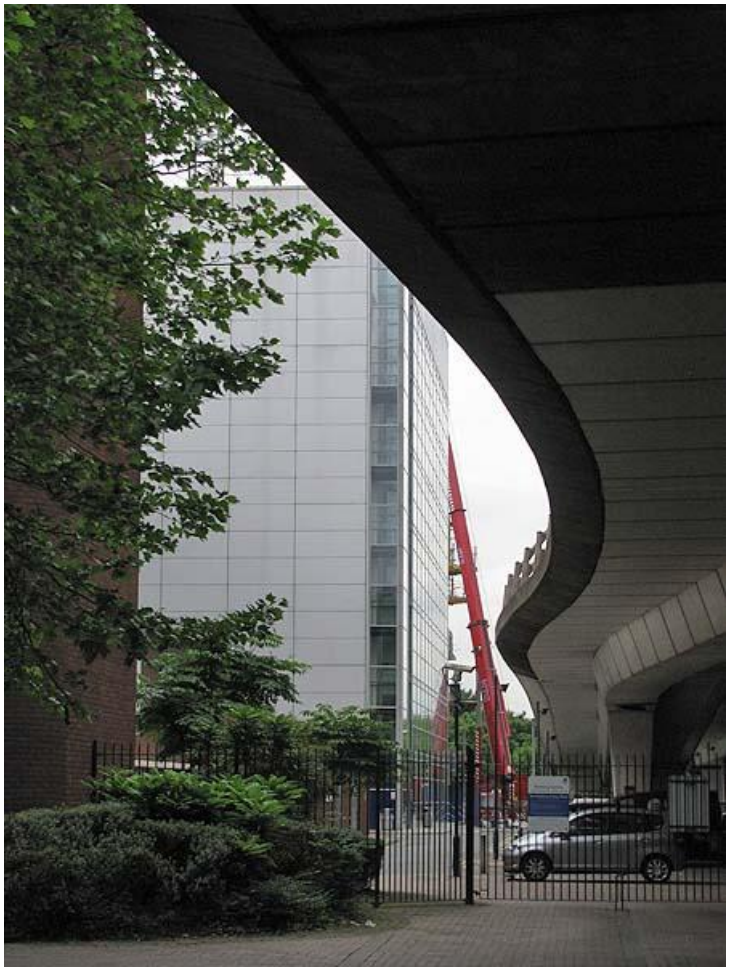
3.0 The Brief

The brief, as outlined by MMU outlines the following requirements for new signage at The Sandra Burslem Building:

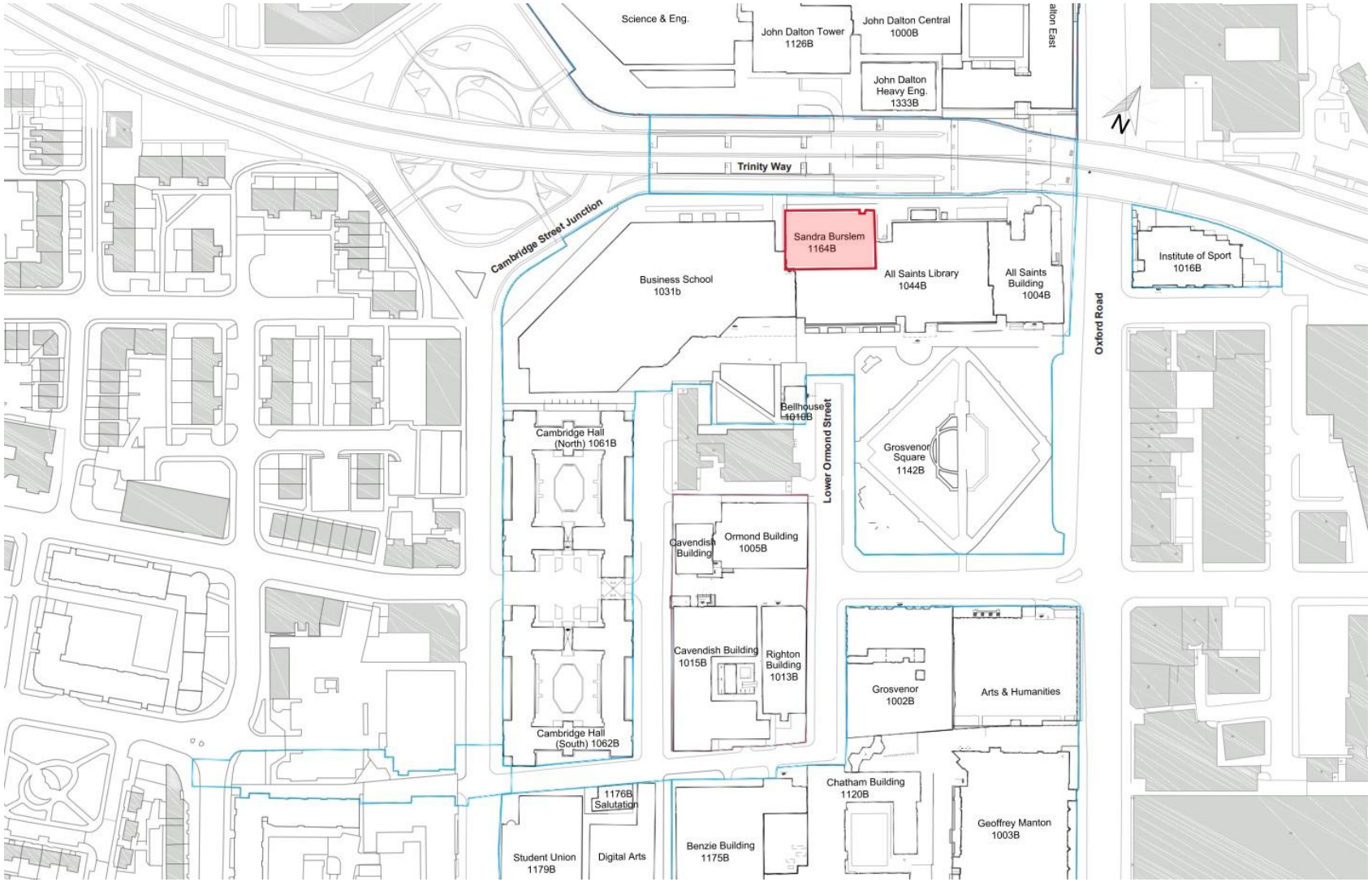
- New ‘header’ logo to plant room glazing to North Elevation
- New ‘header’ logo to plant room glazing to South Elevation

The proposals, as described in this statement, are to be read in conjunction with the Planning Drawings submitted with this application:

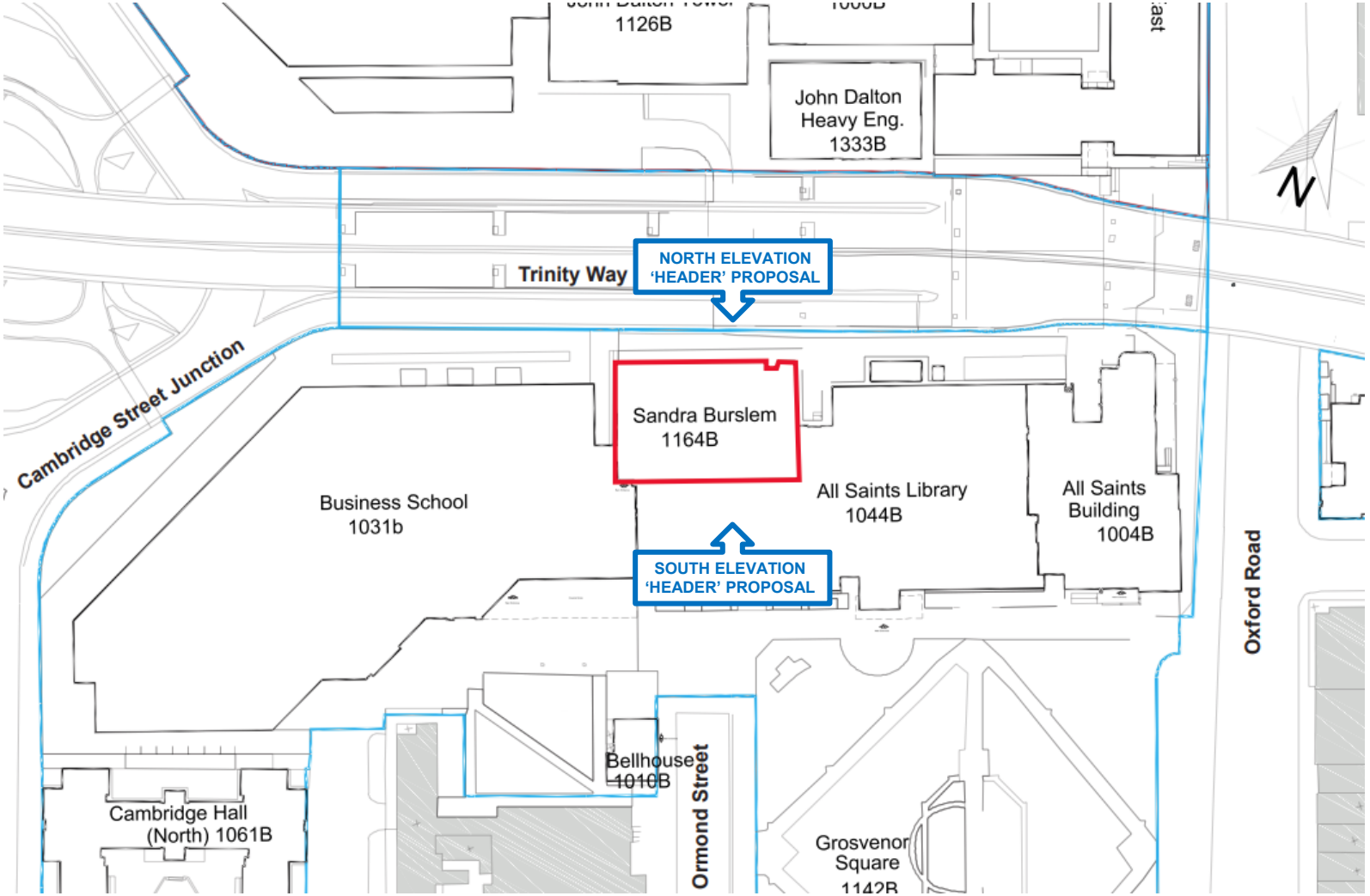
1000	**Location Plan**
1001	**Existing & Proposed Elevations (North & South)**
1002	**Existing & Proposed Elevations (East & West)**



4.0 Signage Proposals | 4.1 Context Location Plan



4.0 Signage Proposals | 4.2 Location Plan for all signs



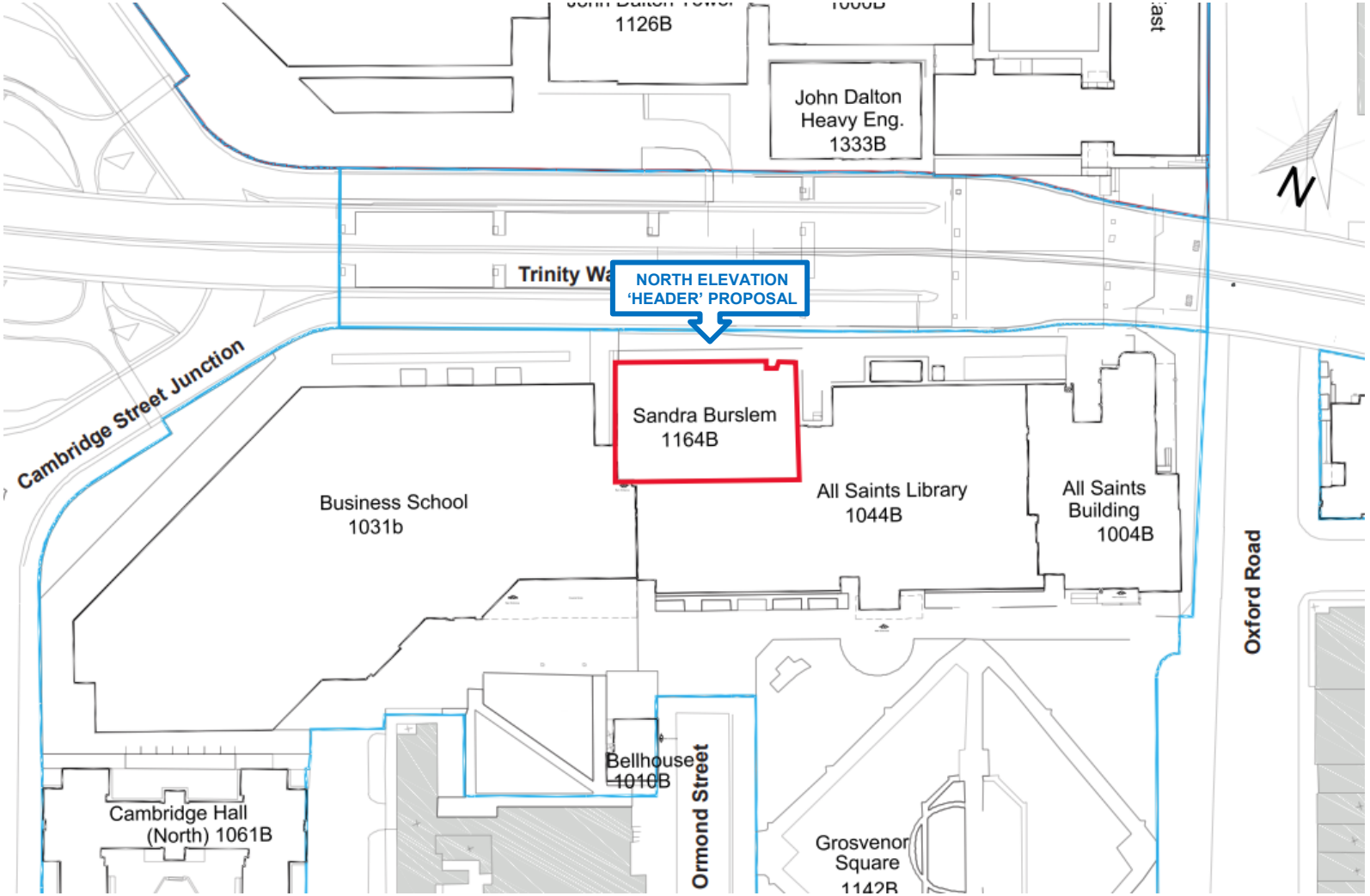
4.0 Signage Proposals | 4.3 North & South Elevations

The existing and outdated signage currently adorning the upper glazing panels comprises of non-illuminated vinyl letters in light blue (4000mm x 1100mm) applied to reverse decorated glass with non-illuminated teal vinyl.

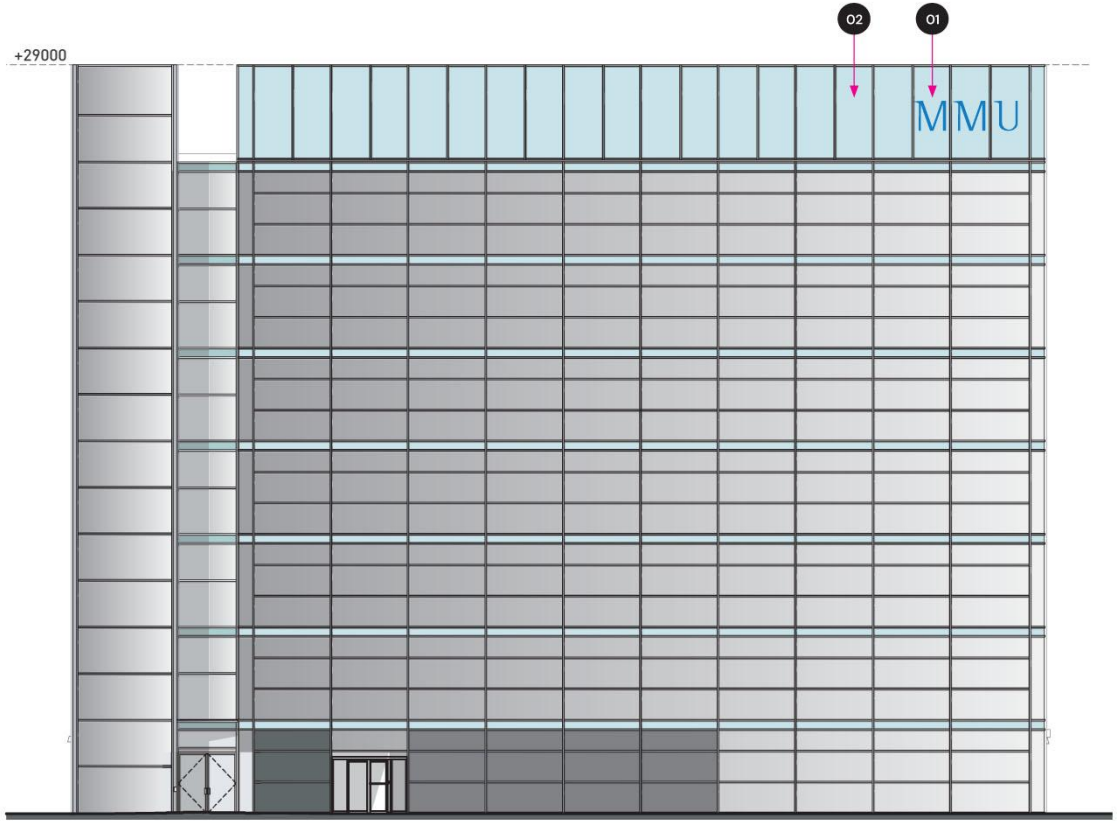
A planning application was submitted by MMU in 2025 which was subsequently withdrawn following comments from the planning authority. This proposal sought to cover the existing signage by applying vinyl to all of the upper level teal glazing panels with a silver-grey vinyl and then applying the new logo as a vinyl graphic over the top of this.

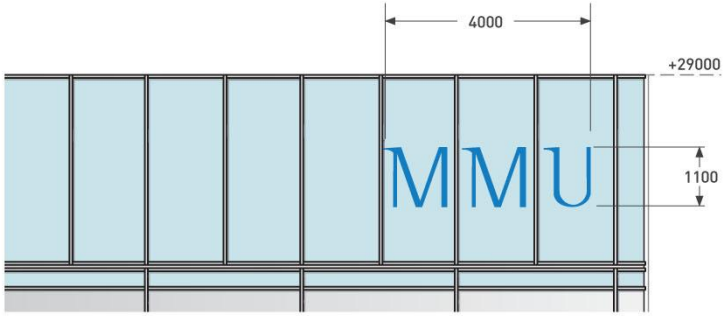
This application takes a different approach in that the existing teal coloured glass is to be left largely insitu apart from the panels where the existing MMU logo is adhered to. These panels (3 no. per side) are to be replaced with plain reverse decorated glass with non-illuminated teal vinyl to match the existing. The proposed new signage is then to comprise of non-illuminated built-up aluminium letters and logo mounted to rails (rails colour matched in teal) which are then in turn fixed back to the mullions of the curtain walling that house the glazed panels.

4.0 Signage Proposals | 4.4 North Elevation – Header Proposals



4.0 Signage Proposals | 4.4 North Elevation – Elevation as Existing

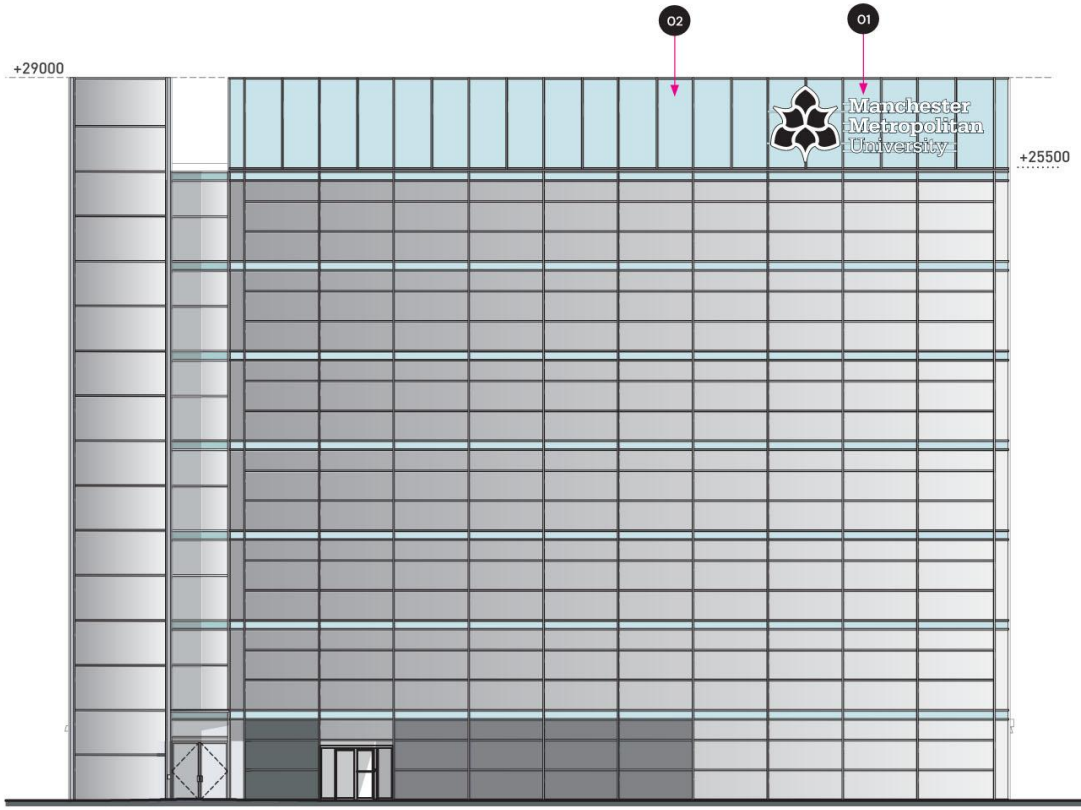


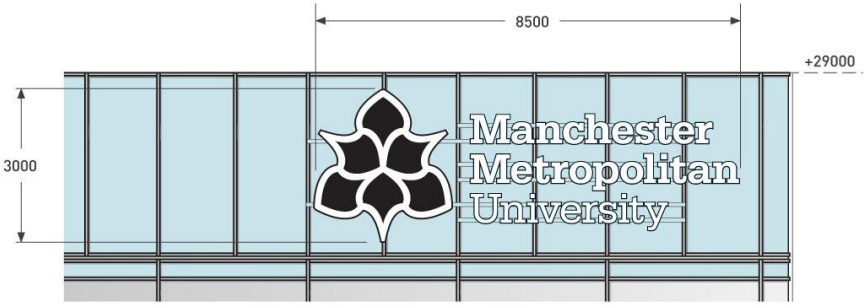


SPECIFICATION

01. Non Illuminated vinyl letters light blue. 4000mm x 1100mm
02. Reverse decorated glass with non-illuminated Teal vinyl.

4.0 Signage Proposals | 4.4 North Elevation – Elevation as Proposed





SPECIFICATION

01. Non Illuminated built-up aluminium letters and logo mounted to rails that best match the Teal background. White elements of logo are built-up 50mm proud of black backing panel.

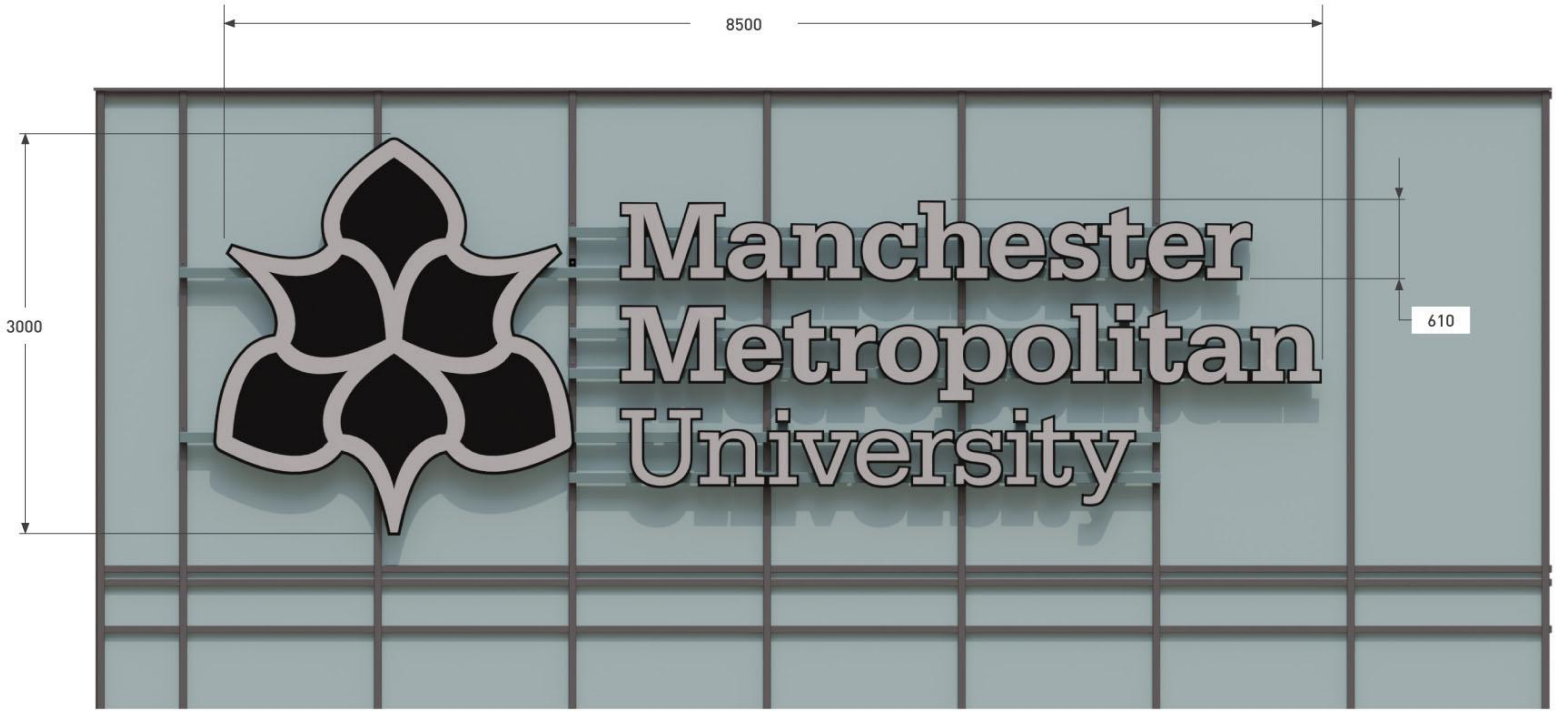
- Size: 8500mm x 3000mm x 130mm
- Projection from building: 130mm
- Illumination: Non Illuminated
- Height above FFL 25.5m
- Black RAL 9005 / White RAL 9003 / Teal to match existing

02. Reverse decorated glass with non-illuminated Teal vinyl.

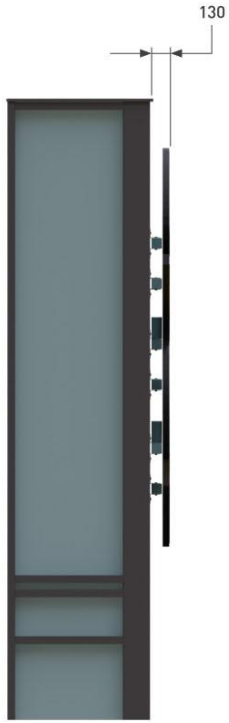
4.0 Signage Proposals | 4.4 North Elevation – Detail as Proposed



PLAN ELEVATION



FRONT ELEVATION



SIDE ELEVATION

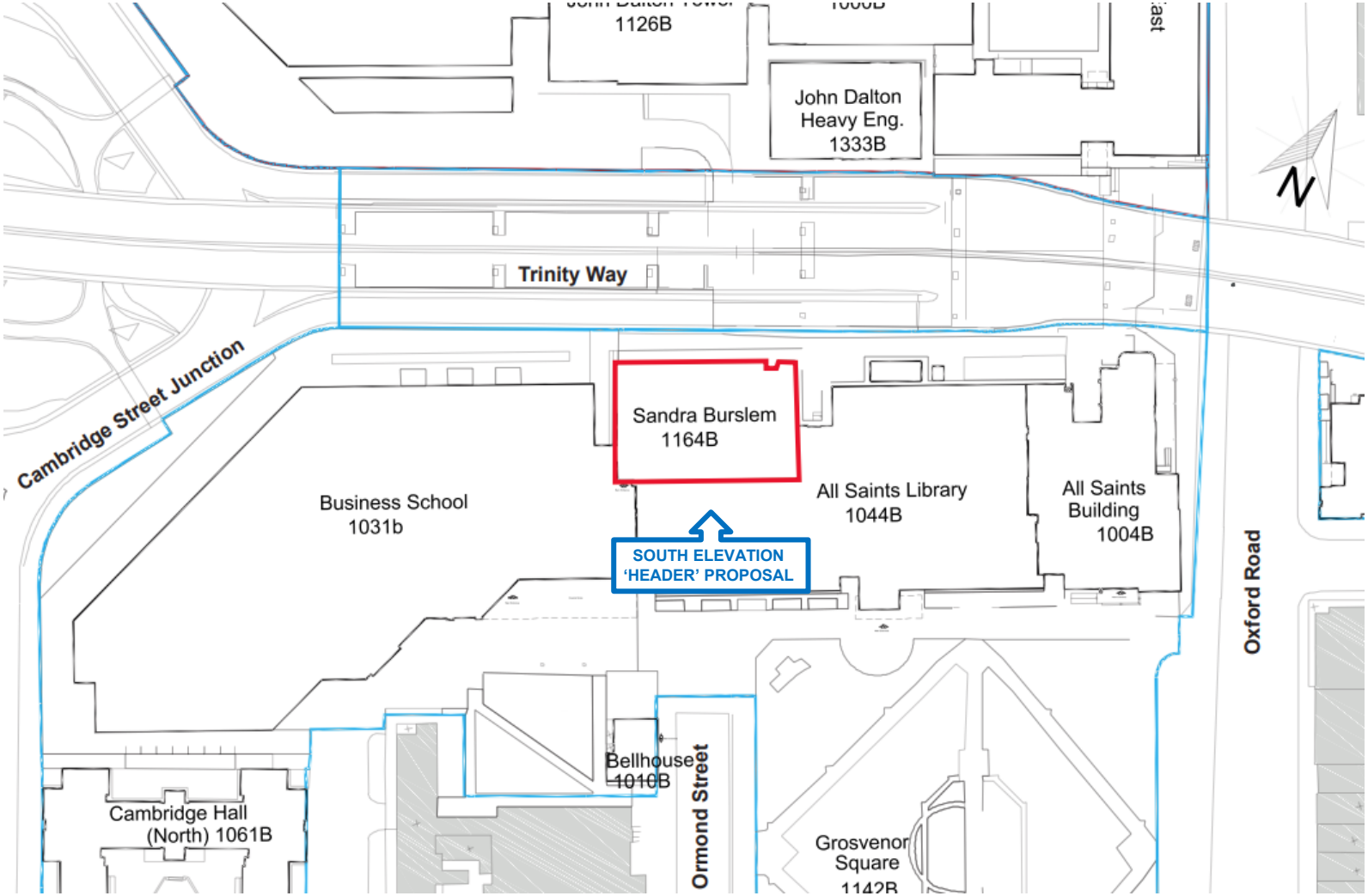
4.0 Signage Proposals | 4.4 North Elevation – View 1 as Proposed



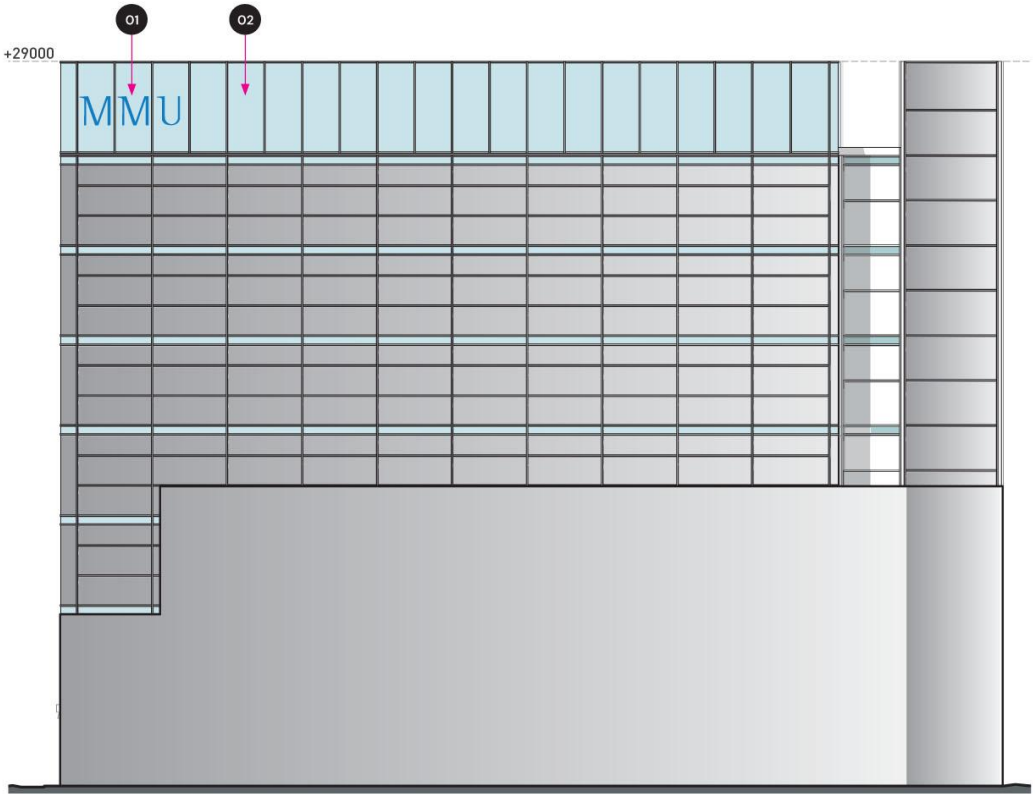
4.0 Signage Proposals | 4.4 North Elevation – View 2 as Proposed

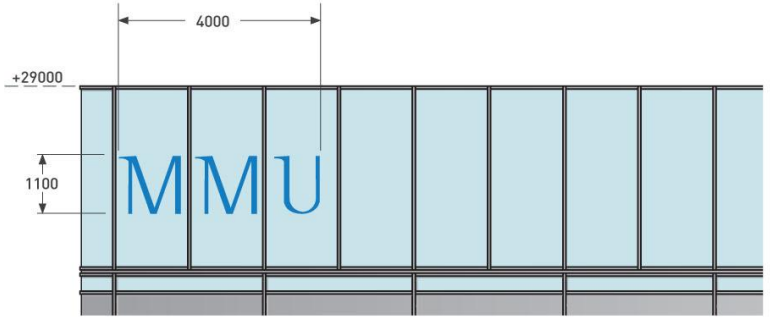


4.0 Signage Proposals | 4.5 South Elevation – Header Proposal



4.0 Signage Proposals | 4.5 South Elevation – Elevation as Existing

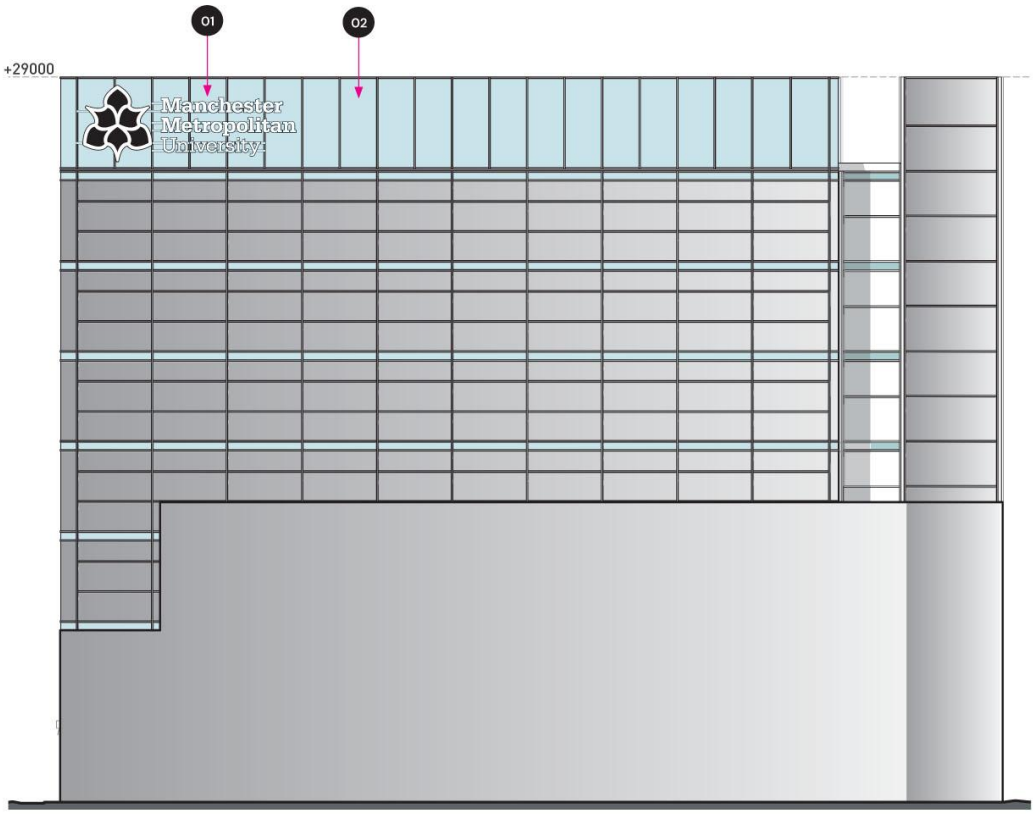


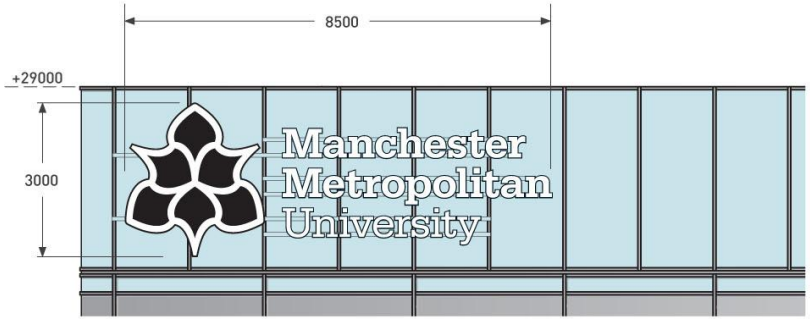


SPECIFICATION

01. Non Illuminated vinyl letters light blue. 4000mm x 1100mm
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4.0 Signage Proposals | 4.5 South Elevation – Elevation as Proposed





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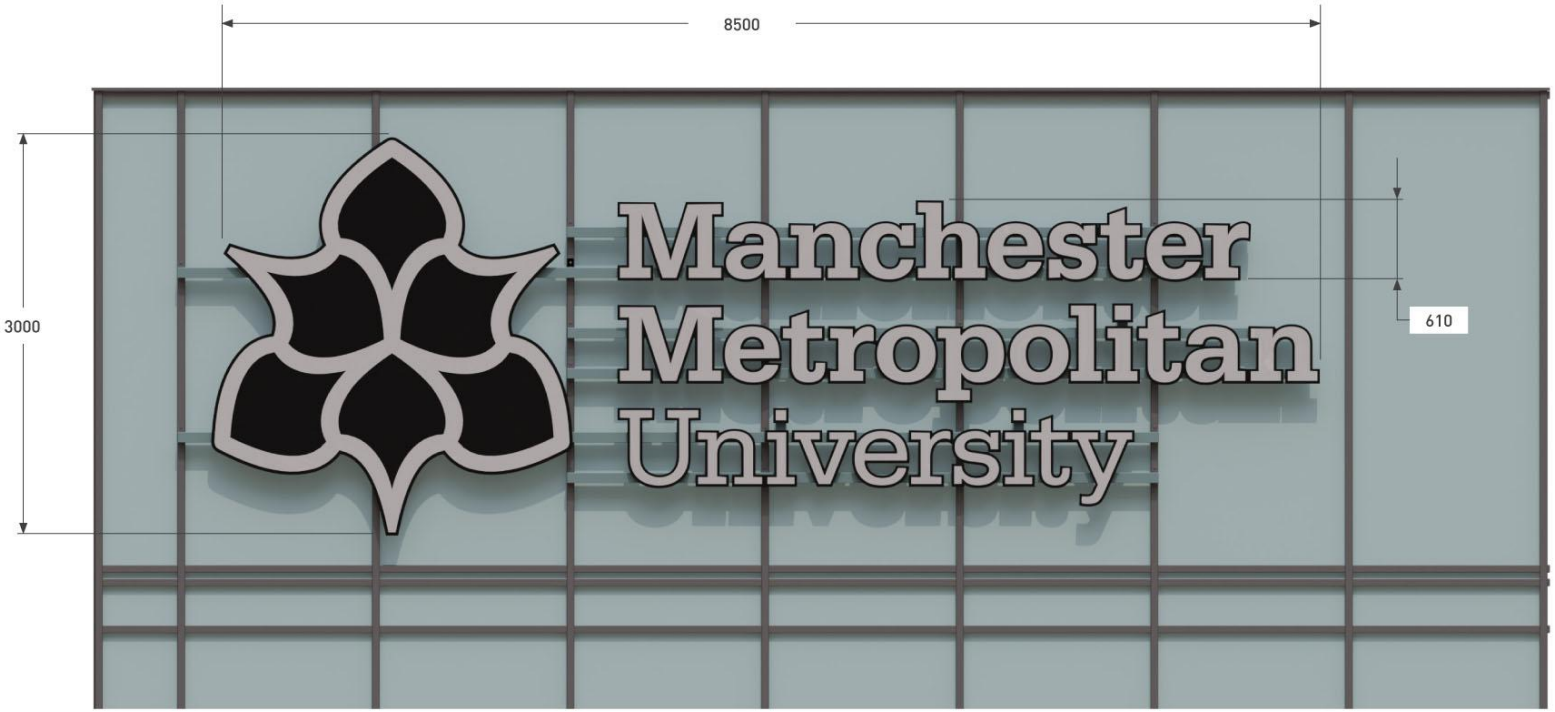
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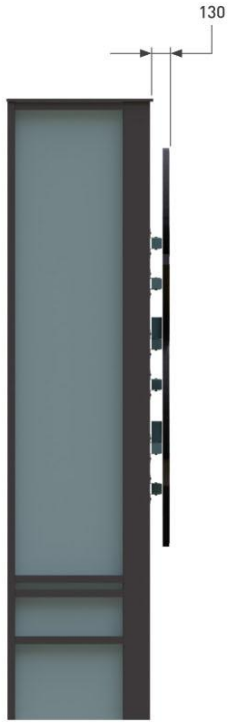
4.0 Signage Proposals | 4.5 South Elevation – Detail as Proposed



PLAN ELEVATION



FRONT ELEVATION



SIDE ELEVATION

4.0 Signage Proposals | 4.5 South Elevation – View 1 as Proposed



4.0 Signage Proposals | 4.5 South Elevation – View 2 as Proposed



5.0 Conclusions

As outlined above and within the accompanying drawings and reports, the Applicant believes that the proposals are compliant with policy.

The proposals produced under Section 4.3 and 4.4 are to illustrate the University's preferred means of updating the signage to the Sandra Burslem Building.

For the 'Header' options to the North and South elevations, consideration has been given to the replacement of glazed teal panels that house the existing logo with matching teal panels and then the application of new letters and logos fixed back to the existing mullions by way of teal-coloured carrier rails.

The Applicant respectfully encourages the Authority to approve this application in order to facilitate new branding on this key building to bring consistency to the campus as a whole.

