

ECE Planning

Planning Statement

Reading Lights

October 2022



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Project Name:

Reading Lights

Location

Reading Station Pedestrian Zone, opposite
Station Street, Reading, RG1 1LZ

Client:

Maxx Media Limited

File Reference:

P1967

Issue	Date	Author	Checked	Notes
PL1	13.09.2022	S Lower	R Hoad	Initial Draft
PL2	06.10.2022	R Hoad	H James	Final Draft

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared by ECE Planning on behalf of **Maxx Media Limited** in support of an advertisement consent application. The development description is as follows:

'Resubmission of application reference 180410 (Double sided LED digital smartscreen) to extend the time limit as secured by Condition 3' at Reading Station pedestrian zone, opposite to Station Street.

- 1.2. As noted within the development description, this application follows on from the approved advertisement application which was permitted under reference 180410 on 28 June 2018 for a *'Double sided LED digital smartscreen'*. Pursuant to the approval was Condition 3 which requires the screen to be removed no later than five years from the date of the consent, therefore by 28 June 2023. Condition 3 is printed below for reference:

'Condition 3- The advertisement hereby permitted shall be removed no later than the expiration of five year from the date of this consent.'

- 1.3. The screen was installed in 2018 following consent and has operated successfully since that time, including for the display of public information and advertising on behalf of Reading Borough Council. This application therefore seeks to resubmit the previously approved application to ensure that the screen can remain in place and continue to operate, past the originally restricted 5 year limit.
- 1.4. For the avoidance of doubt, this application does not seek to amend the originally approved plans in terms of location, scale etc and is being submitted purely in accordance with Condition 3. The screen will however be upgraded and future proofed which would involve replacement of the screen tiles, together with modifying and simplifying the base structure.
- 1.5. This application is supported by the following documents and drawings:

- **Planning Application Form**
- **CIL Form**
- **Planning Statement**
- **Heritage Statement**
- **Location and Block Plans**
- **Proposed Plans**

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2. The Site

- 2.1. The site is located within Reading's Central Area (as identified by Reading Central Area Action Plan), to the west of Reading Station. Specifically, the site is located within the pedestrian zone opposite Station Hill as identified in Figure 1. The site is within the busy, well used pedestrian area outside of the recently redeveloped Reading Station.
- 2.2. As set out briefly within Section 1 of this Statement, the existing double sided LED digital smartscreen was erected in 2018 following advertisement consent under reference 180410. The approximate site location can be seen in Figure 1.
- 2.3. The Supplementary Planning Document, Reading Station Area Framework (adopted in 2010) identifies the site as within the 'Reading Station Area' which is a major redevelopment area around Reading Station. The SPD specifically identifies the site as 'Station Square South' – a significant commercial area, public space and pedestrian movement area.
- 2.4. The Grade II listed building, the 'Main Building of Reading General Station' is now a Public House called 'The Three Guineas' and lies nearby; additionally, the listed Statue of King Edward VII is located to the south-east of the site. These are referred to in more detail within the Heritage Statement prepared by Orion Heritage, which has been submitted along with this application.

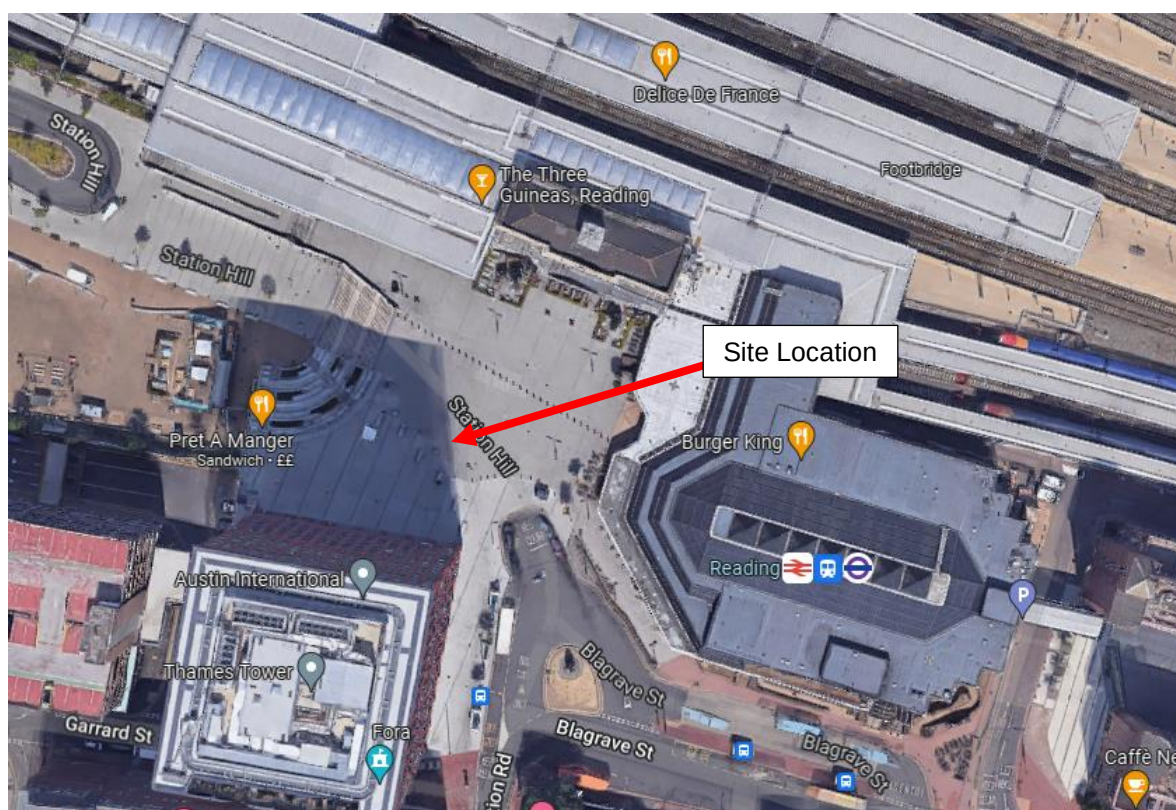


Figure 1- The Site (Source: Google Maps, 2022)

3. Planning History

- 3.1. As briefly mentioned within Section 1 (Introduction) of this Statement, this proposed application follows application reference 180410 which was permitted advertisement consent on 28 June 2018 as set out below:

Reference 180410: Double sided LED digital smartscreen at Pedestrian Zone Approach Reading, RG1 1LY. Approved 28 June 2018.

- 3.2. Pursuant to the approval was Condition 3 which requires the screen to be removed no later than five years from the date of the consent, therefore by 28 June 2023. Condition 3 is printed below for reference:

'Condition 3- The advertisement hereby permitted shall be removed no later than the expiration of five year from the date of this consent.'

- 3.3. The screen was installed in 2018 following consent and has operated successfully since that time, including for the display of public information and advertising on behalf of Reading Borough Council. This application therefore seeks to resubmit the previously approved application to ensure that the screen can remain in place and continue to operate, past the originally restricted 5 year limit.
- 3.4. Please refer to Appendix A for the Decision Notice for application reference 180410 and the Committee Report at Appendix B.

4. The Proposal

- 4.1. As previously set out, this application does not seek to amend the originally approved plans in terms of location, scale etc and is being submitted purely in accordance with Condition 3. The screen will however be upgraded and future proofed which would involve replacement of the screen tiles, together with modifying and simplifying the base structure.
- 4.2. The screens will be considerably more energy efficient, utilising current improvements in technology and energy use. The structure would be simplified to remove the current stepped features with a more streamlined look.
- 4.3. The enhancements proposed would provide Reading with state of the art/cutting edge technology, with enhanced clarity of the screen which has proven to be a valuable media asset for the Council and their partners, local businesses, charities and community groups and forms an important part of this key gateway to Reading Town Centre. It provides an important role through provision of free screen time to Reading Borough Council for promotion of its messages, continued support for display of town centre emergency messaging, including Reading Station incidents.
- 4.4. In terms of the scale, location, luminance and operation, all aspects remain as previously approved.

5. Policy Overview

5.1. Introduction

- 5.1.1. A key role of the planning system is to regulate the development and use of land in the public interest. At the heart of the planning framework are Statutory Development plans, which seek to guide the decision making process. Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires, that where the Development Plan contains relevant policies, an application for planning permission shall be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.1.2. In this case the Development Plan comprises the Reading Local Plan (2019). The National Planning Policy Framework, the Planning Policy Guidance, Supplementary Planning Guidance are material considerations.
- 5.1.3. This section considered how the proposed advertisement application complies with both National and Local Planning Policy.

5.2. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 5.2.1. Updated in July 2021, the following are considered the most relevant sections of the Framework applicable to the proposed development:
- **Chapter 2- Achieving sustainable development**
 - **Chapter 6- Building a strong and competitive economy**
 - **Chapter 7- Ensuring the vitality in towns**
 - **Chapter 10- Supporting high quality communications**
 - **Chapter 11- Making an effective use of land**
 - **Chapter 12- Achieving well-designed places**
 - **Chapter 16- Conserving and enhancing the historic environment**

5.3. Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

- 5.3.1. The PPG elaborates on the policies of the NPPF, and reaffirms the requirement for good design, and the presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 5.3.2. Within the PPG, the guidance addresses advertisements at Paragraph 068 Reference 1D: 18b-068-20140306 mainly focusing on the consideration affecting public safety. Other relevant sections of the PPG have been fully considered and reviewed as part of this proposal.

5.4. Strategic Planning Policy – Reading Local Plan (2019)

- 5.4.1. The Reading Local Plan was adopted 4 November 2019 and sets out the planning policies for development in Reading up to 2036. This document replaces all existing development plans in Reading including the Core Strategy (2008 amended in 2015), the Reading Central Area Action Plan (2009) and the Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012, amended in 2015).
- 5.4.2. The following policies from the adopted Local Plan are considered to be the most relevant but are not explored in detail within this Statement:
- **OU4: Advertisements**
 - **CC7: Design and Public Realm**
 - **CC8: Safeguarding and Amenity**

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- **EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment**
- **CR1: Definition of Central Reading**
- **CR2: Design in Central Reading**
- **CR3: Public Realm in Central Reading**

5.5. Supplementary Guidance - Reading Station Area Framework- Adopted December 2010

5.5.1. The site is located within Reading Station Area which has been identified in the Reading Station Area Framework as *‘one of the most significant comprehensive redevelopment opportunities in the country’*.

5.5.2. The site is identified within this document as Station Square South’ with the following supporting text:

“5.7 The two station entrances will lead out into high quality multi-functional public spaces - new ‘town squares’ - one to the north and one to the south of the Station.

5.8 Although there will be great competition for space outside the station entrances (buses, taxis, cars etc.), public space and pedestrian movement should be prioritised.”

5.5.3. It is contended that this upgraded digital Smartscreen will respond positively to this as it will further enhance the area by providing a high quality, modern and contemporary feature. As demonstrated in the previous approval, the additional feature will contribute towards the improvement of the public realm and will be enjoyed by many pedestrians daily who move from the railway station to the town Centre.

5.6. Supplementary Guidance - Station Hill South Planning and Urban Design Brief (2007)

5.6.1. The document has been prepared to *‘provide specific urban design and planning principles for Station Hill South area of Reading City Centre’*.

5.6.2. The Design Brief has been reviewed in full and considered as part of this proposal.

5.7. Reading Borough Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule (2015)

5.7.1. The Reading Borough Council’s Charging Schedule has been fully reviewed in preparation of this application. The ‘CIL Schedule of Rates’ has been reviewed and it is noted that the proposed advertisement screen would fall under *‘all other chargeable developments, boroughwide’* which are charged at £0 per sqm. This application is therefore not applicable to CIL.

6. Planning Appraisal

6.1. Introduction

6.1.1. This section of the Statement details how the proposed screen complies with the policies set out within the Development Plan. The following matters are the main considerations with regards to the proposal:

- **Principle of Development**
- **Visual Amenity**
- **Heritage**
- **Public Safety**

6.2. Principle of Development

6.2.1. The proposals relate to the upgrade of the existing digital screen located on the Pedestrian Zone, Station Approach, Reading which was granted advertisement consent on 28 June 2018 and installed later in 2018. It has operated successfully since that time, including for the display of public information and advertising on behalf of Reading Borough Council.

6.2.2. The upgrading and future proofing of the existing Reading Lights screen would involve replacement of the screen tiles, together with modifying and simplifying the base structure. As above the proposals require a further advertisement consent application due to Condition 3 of the original permission ref: 180410.

6.2.3. The principle of replacement of the screen is considered to be clearly acceptable in planning terms. National planning policy within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires overall consideration of public/highway safety and visual amenity issues with any advertisement consent proposal. Current Local Plan policies (adopted in 2019) closely reflect the policies under which the original consent was granted, such as Policy OU4 'Advertisements'.

6.2.4. The current advertisement was given full scrutiny in terms of the requirements of current policy with particular reference to its location near heritage assets, its positioning within the commercial area outside Reading Station, visual amenity and public safety and it is considered that the screen upgrade is similarly compliant with current planning policy within the development plan.

6.2.5. The screen is an upgrade to the existing but will not present any noticeable change in appearance or design that would be considered to be material in planning terms. There is no significant change in policy or material change in context that should lead the Council to find any change to the original advertisement consent approval. It is considered that a further 5 year advertisement consent should be granted under the current development plan.

6.3. Visual Amenity

6.3.1. Reading Local Plan Policy OU4 'Advertisements' follows suit in relation to public safety and visual amenity and also additional considerations including the need for advertisements to *respect '...their surroundings and setting in terms of size, location, design, materials, colour, noise, lettering, amount and type of text, illumination and luminance..'* This policy is similar in content to policy DM22 under which the 2018 application was considered and determined to be acceptable by the council.

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- 6.3.2. Policies CR1 to CR3 relate to the definition of, urban design and public realm requirements of reading Town Centre. Whilst these policies relate to major developments within the town centre it is noteworthy that the screen makes a significant contribution to public realm and the busy commercial environment around Reading Station and will continue to do so.
- 6.3.3. The current screen is considered to respect the character and appearance of the immediacy and is highly compatible with the surrounding area. The screen is also considered to add visual interest and vitality to this important area of public realm. The proposed display would be viewed within a modern architectural and commercial context. The wider area within which the proposed screen would sit has been comprehensively modernised with significant improvements to the pedestrian zone and most pertinently the significant redevelopment of the train station. Whilst it is acknowledged that the sign introduced a change to the area, it is considered that the digital screen compliments the more modern context that has undergone further change through the Station Hill redevelopment.
- 6.3.4. This was supported at the time of the original advertisement consent application in 2018, with Officers noting that, *'...the screen would represent a modern addition to the public realm area to the south of the station, an area where the contrast between old and new buildings is already present. As a freestanding structure located centrally within the large pedestrian area it is considered that the proposal would contribute to the visual interest of the public realm and would not be detrimental to the permeability, adaptability or legibility of this area.'*
- 6.3.5. The proposed screen will not present any noticeable change in appearance or design that would be considered to be material in planning terms. Therefore, it is strongly considered that the upgraded screen will continue to contribute significantly to the quality of public realm the busy commercial context and respect nearby heritage assets, complying with development plan policy.
- 6.3.6. In relation to luminance, the current screen is controlled by a sophisticated sensor system to ensure that it can be seen comfortably during the day but that luminance levels would drop to low levels in the evenings, to minimise light spillage and glare. The existing advertisement consent (reference 180410) controls luminance to below 500 cdm2 but the actual screen operates successfully at only around 250 cdm2, a level which would be maintained by the proposed upgraded screen.
- 6.3.7. The public realm and Station Hill redevelopment has taken place in recent years and the surrounding built context is overwhelmingly commercial with advertisements and lighting featuring particularly in lower or ground floors of the surrounding buildings. At the time of the previous advertisement consent application, scrutiny was given to luminance in relation to surrounding buildings and found to be acceptable. The screen ties in with the overwhelmingly commercial nature of adjacent buildings such as Thames Tower and Station Hill, various ground floor uses and the nature of the public square. The luminance and operation of the screen was assessed at the time of the original approval and found to be satisfactory by the Council in relation to the impact on nearby buildings particularly as it operates under strict controls and does not cause light spillage or glare.

6.4. Heritage

- 6.4.1. Local Plan Policy EN1 'Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment' requires that Historic features, areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings will be protected and where possible enhanced.

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- 6.4.2. The original proposals were considered and addressed in detail regarding heritage impacts and included a supporting Heritage Statement prepared by Orion Heritage. It is considered that within the heritage environment, the upgraded digital screen would not be considered to be harmful to the nearby listed former station building or King Edward VII statue, or to the settings of the heritage assets. As a result, an updated Heritage Statement has been prepared by Orion Heritage in support of this application.
- 6.4.3. The current screens were given considerable scrutiny at the time of the previous advertisement consent, with Officers reporting that, *'...it is noted that the siting of the screen is to the south west of centre of this area (station public realm area). This assists in the screen being viewed, when looking north towards the station, against the back drop of the modern station building rather than directly or primarily against the backdrop of the listed public house. There is also significant separation between the screen and the public house (28m). In the context of the spaciousness of the square and the scale of the surrounding large buildings, officers consider that the proposal will not adversely impact upon the setting of the listed building.'*
- 6.4.4. Officers similarly found that there was no adverse impact upon the setting of the King Edward VII statue. The advertisement consent was granted on 28 June 2018 and has been in situ for around 4 years. As described above, the visual appearance of the upgraded screen would not be materially different to the existing structure and therefore in terms of the heritage assets, the proposals are considered to be compliant with the requirements of the relevant Acts and the Development plan.
- 6.4.5. Further to the above, the accompanying Heritage Statement concludes that:

'On the basis that the proposals consist of a minimal amount of alteration to the structure of the existing screen and combined with the fact that the location of the screen will not change, it is considered that the proposals will not generate any adverse harm to the settings and significance of those heritage assets identified, nor will it be contrary to national or local policies designed to protect these assets.'

6.5. Public Safety

- 6.5.1. The existing screen is not considered to adversely affect public safety and currently operates in compliance with relevant National and local Planning Policy and also standards within the field of digital advertising. At the time of the grant of advertisement consent in 2018, the screen was not considered to present any additional impacts that would compromise public safety in terms of either pedestrians or road users, particularly due to the careful control and management of illumination and timing and merging of static images.
- 6.5.2. At the time of the previous consent, there were no objections made by the Council's Transport Officers subject to conditions, and it is considered that there would be no further grounds for concern with this resubmission. The screen has operated successfully and safely since that time.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1. It is considered that the upgraded screen will not present a material difference to the existing screen and will contribute towards the improvement of the public realm and will be enjoyed by many pedestrians daily who move between the railway station, the surrounding commercial areas and the town Centre.
- 7.2. At the time of approval in 2018, the current advertisement approval was given full scrutiny in terms of the requirements of current policy with particular reference to its location near heritage assets, its positioning within the commercial area outside Reading Station, visual amenity and public safety. There is no significant change in policy or circumstances that would lead the Council to find any material change from the time of the original decision. It is considered that a further 5 year consent should be granted by the Council.
- 7.3. The upgraded screen would be viewed within a modern architectural and commercial context and will enhance this area of public realm by adding visual interest. In terms of the heritage environment, the upgraded digital screen would not be harmful to the nearby listed former station building or King Edward VII statue, or to the settings of the heritage assets.
- 7.4. We therefore consider that the proposal represents sustainable development compliant with Development Plan Policy and the provisions of National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Policy Guidance.

Appendix A - Decision Notice for Application Reference 180410

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990
TOWN & COUNTY PLANNING (CONTROL OF ADVERTISEMENTS)
(ENGLAND) REGULATIONS 2007**

APPLICATION FOR CONSENT FOR DISPLAY OF AN ADVERTISEMENT

ECE Planning Limited
Brooklyn Chambers
11 Goring Road
Worthing
BN12 4AP

Application No: 180410
Application type: Advertisement Consent

Applicant: Maxx Media Limited

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL as Local Planning Authority **give consent** for the display of the following advertisements:

Proposal: Double sided LED digital smartscreen

At: Pedestrian Zone Station Approach Reading RG1 1LY

Subject to such conditions and for such reasons as may be attached

**OTHER STATUTORY CONSENTS MAY BE REQUIRED
PLEASE READ THE NOTES ISSUED WITH THIS DECISION NOTICE**

Date: 28 June 2018



Head of Planning, Development
& Regulatory Services

LEB

Application At: Pedestrian Zone Station Approach Reading RG1 1LY

Application No: 180410

Application type: Advertisement Consent

CONDITIONS & REASONS

1. The Standard Conditions:

i. No advertisement is to be displayed without the permission of the owner of the site or any other person with an interest in the site entitled to grant permission.

ii. No advertisement shall be sited or displayed so as to:

- a) endanger persons using any highway, railway, waterway, dock, harbour or aerodrome (civil or military);
- b) obscure, or hinder the ready interpretation of, any traffic sign, railway signal or aid to navigation by water or air; or
- c) hinder the operation of any device used for the purpose of security or surveillance or for measuring the speed of any vehicle.

iii. Any advertisement displayed, and any site used for the display of advertisements, shall be maintained in a condition that does not impair the visual amenity of the site.

iv. Any structure or hoarding erected or used principally for the purpose of displaying advertisements shall be maintained in a condition that does not endanger the public.

v. Where an advertisement is required under these Regulations to be removed, the site shall be left in a condition that does not endanger the public or impair visual amenity.

Reason: In accordance with Schedule 2, Regulation 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007.

2. This advertisement hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans only:

Drawing no. L01.B - Location Plan, Block Plan and Elevations dated March 18

Received by the Local Planning Authority on 25th April 2018

Reason: because consent is granted in respect of the development as detailed in the approved plans only

3. The advertisement hereby permitted shall be removed no later than the expiration of five years from the date of this consent.

Reason: To accord with Regulation 14 (7) of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 (as amended)



Date: 28 June 2018

Head of Planning, Development
& Regulatory Services

LEB

4. No development shall take place, including any works of demolition, until a Construction Method Statement has been submitted to and been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority to provide for:

- space on site where vehicles of site operatives and visitors can be parked with details of how site operatives and visitors will be required to make use of the parking area provided
- location on site for storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development
- the erection and maintenance (including removal of any graffiti or fly posters) of security hoarding around the site
- any footpath closures or road closures needed during construction -wheel washing facilities on site
- a scheme for recycling waste resulting from the construction works -details demonstrating how emergency vehicle access to the station would be maintained during construction works

The measures within the approved Construction Method Statement shall be maintained and adhered to throughout the course of the development unless changes are agreed in advance and in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: in the interests of protecting the amenity of local land uses or neighbouring residents, the character of the area and highway safety. In accordance with Policy DM12.

5. The double sided LED digital smart screen hereby permitted shall not operate outside of 0600 to 2400 hours each day.

Reason: To preserve the visual amenity of the surrounding area in accordance with Policy CS7

6. The double side LED digital smart screen hereby permitted shall operate at an illumination level no greater than 500 cd/m² between 1700 and 2400 hours each day. The display shall not change more than once every 10 seconds.

Reason: To avoid glare and distraction which could lead to danger to highway users. And/or in the interests of amenity in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CS20 and Sites and Detailed Policies document Policy DM12.

INFORMATIVES

1. Your attention is drawn to the terms and conditions of this consent. Any development which is carried out but which differs materially from the approved plans and details, or does not comply with any condition(s) or planning obligation(s) attached to the consent may result in the Council taking action to remedy the



Date: 28 June 2018

Head of Planning, Development
& Regulatory Services

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breach of planning control. If you are in any doubt please contact the Council.

2. The Local Planning Authority has worked positively and proactively with the applicant to resolve relevant matters to allow consent to be granted within the prescribed target or agreed extended timescale for the decision to be issued.

3. i) The attention of the applicant is drawn to Section 59 of the Highways Act 1980, which enables the Highway Authority to recover expenses due to damage caused by extraordinary traffic.

ii) Any works affecting the Highway shall be in accordance with Reading Borough's Council's document "Guidance Notes for Activities on the Public Highway within the Borough of Reading". The applicant should note that compliance with this document is mandatory and licences to work on the Highway will only be issued if the requirements contained within it are met. A copy can be obtained from the Council's website.

Before any structure is erected on the public highway, a licence must be obtained from the Council's Highways section at 2-4 Darwin Close, Reading, RG2 0RB, telephone 0118 937 2138



Date: 28 June 2018

Head of Planning, Development
& Regulatory Services

LEB

NOTES

APPEALS TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

If you are aggrieved by the decision of the Council to refuse consent for the proposed display of advertisements or to grant it subject to conditions, then you can appeal to the Secretary of State under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 within 8 weeks of the date of this notice.

Appeals must be made using a form which you can obtain from the Planning Inspectorate at Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Temple Quay, Bristol BS1 6PN, 0303 444 5000 or online at www.planningportal.gov.uk/pes.

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Appendix B – Committee Report for Application Reference 180410

COMMITTEE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT CULTURE & SPORT
READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 27th June 2018

ITEM NO. 7

Ward: Abbey

App No: 180410/ADV

Address: Reading Train Station

Proposals: Double sided LED digital smart screen

Target decision date: 17th May 2018 Extension of time date: 29th June 2018

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT Advertisement Consent subject to conditions

Conditions to include:

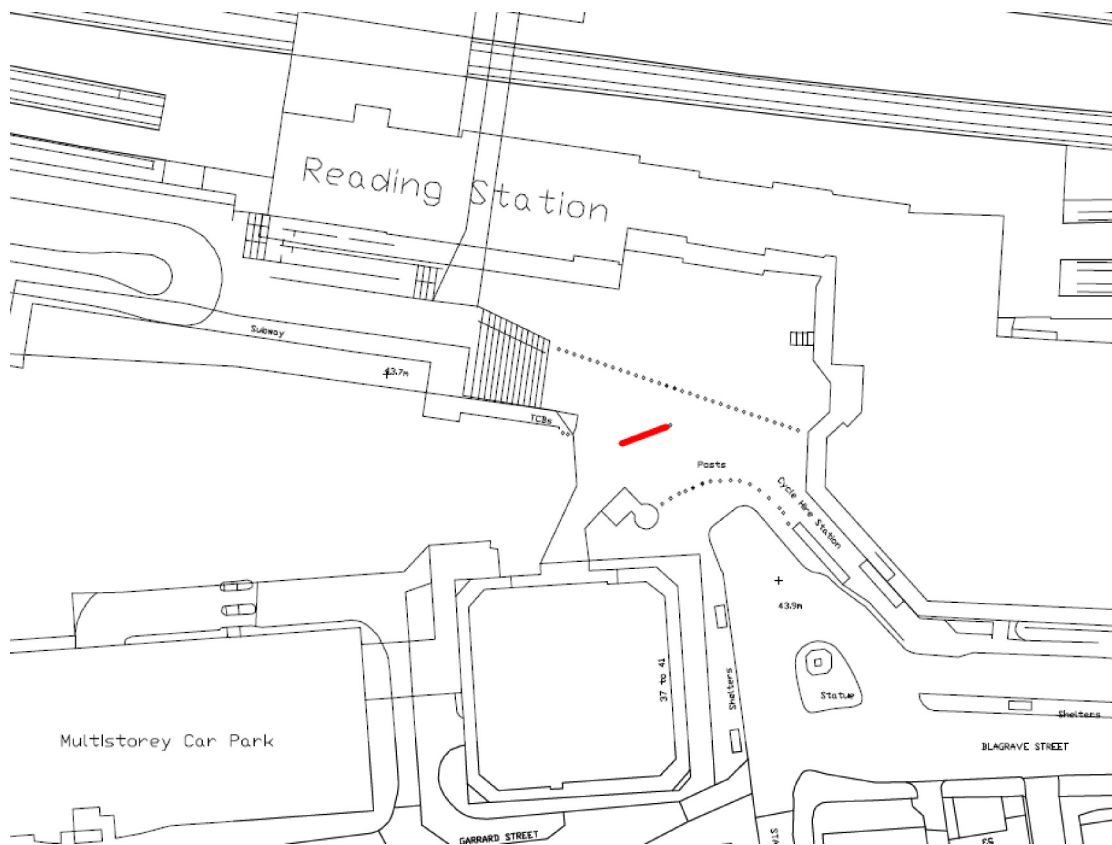
1. In accordance with approved plans
2. Time Limit - grant of 5 years advertisement consent only
3. Standard Advertisement Conditions
4. Construction Method Statement
5. Hours of operation - 0600 to 2400 hours only
6. Luminance not to exceed 500 cdm² during the evening (1700 to 2400 hours)

Informatives to include:

1. Terms and Conditions
2. Positive and Proactive

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This application for advertisement consent relates to land to the south of Reading Train Station adjacent to the main entrance to the station building. The train station building continues to the east, to the west there are a series of steps leading down to Station Hill whilst to the south there is Thames Tower, a recently refurbished 15 storey commercial building. To the north-east of the site and to the east of the modern main station entrance is the Three Guineas Public House which is a grade II listed building.
- 1.2 The site is located within the Reading Central Area and Central Core as defined by the Reading Central Area Action Plan (2009).
- 1.3 Reading Borough Council is the landowner of the application site but is not the applicant.



Location Plan

2. PROPOSAL & BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The application seeks advertisement consent for a double sided LED smart screen to be located in the pedestrian zone to the south of the southern station entrance.
- 2.2 The proposed screen would 8m in width and 4m in height and would be set upon a 2.4m high supporting stand with a 0.3m frame. Altogether the structure would have a total height of 7m, width of 8.6m and would be 0.4m in depth.
- 2.3 It is proposed that the LED screen would display static and motion image advertisements which would be in place for 10 seconds at a time before merging into a new image at a speed of around 1.8 seconds. The screen is proposed to operate between 0600 and 2400 hours daily.
- 2.4. The luminance of the screen would adapt depending on the time of day and light conditions to make the display visible. The screen would operate at low luminance (approximately 500 cdm2) during evenings and night times and approximately 5000 cdm2 during bright sunny days.

3. PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 None relevant to this advertisement application.

4. CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 RBC Transport - No objection, subject to a condition to control the screen's luminance during evening/night time.
- 4.2 RBC Environmental Protection - No objection.
- 4.3 RBC Emergency Planning - No objection following submission of additional information concerning impact on views from CCTV cameras.
- 4.4 RBC Abbey Quarter Team - Concern that the screen would block directional and interpretational signage in the station pedestrian zone regarding the Abbey Quarter and its impact on the setting of the Grade II listed Three Guineas PH.
- 4.5 National Rail - No objection following submission of additional information concerning emergency vehicle access and impact on CCTV cameras.
- 4.6 British Transport Police - No objection subject that concerns regarding impact on RBC CCTV and impact of the construction compound upon emergency vehicle access can be addressed.
- 4.7 RBC Conservation Consultant - Object, the proposal would harm the significance of the Grade II listed Three Guineas PH and fail to preserve its setting.
- 4.8 Conservation Area Advisory Committee - Object, the proposal will detract from the setting of the Grade II listed heritage assets around the station. The public benefit of the screen would not outweigh the harm to the heritage assets.
- 4.6 Public consultation:

Two site notices were displayed at the application site. Six letters of objection have been received raising the following issues:

- Harm to the visual amenity of the street-scene and public realm by reason of screens scale, height, clutter and location
- Block views to and from the station
- Block views of the ground floor signage of Thames Tower
- Harm to the setting of the grade II listed Three Guineas PH building and statue of King Edward VII
- Detract from the function and legibility of the public realm area to the south of the station

5. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

- 5.1 The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 apply.
- 5.2 Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special interest which it possesses.
- 5.3 National Planning Policy Framework
Part 7: Requiring Good Design
Part 12: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment
- 5.4 National Planning Practice Guidance
Advertisements
- 5.5 Reading Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2008)
(altered 2015)
CS7: Design and the Public Realm
CS33: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment
- 5.6 Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012) (Altered 2015)
DM12: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
DM22: Advertisements
- 5.7 Reading Central Area Action Plan (adopted 2009)
RC5: Design in the Centre
RC14: Public Realm
- 5.8 Reading Station Area Framework (2010)
- 5.9 Station Hill South Planning and Urban Design Brief (2007)

6. APPRAISAL - Application for Advertisement Consent

- (i) Legal context
- 6.1 Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 requires the Local Planning Authority to exercise its powers under these regulations in the interests of amenity and public safety taking into account the provisions of the development plan, so far as they are material; and any other relevant factors. Regulation 3 states that factors relevant to amenity include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural, or similar interest.
- 6.2 Factors relevant to public safety include highway safety and whether the advert would hinder security or surveillance devices, including speed cameras.

(ii) Main Issues

6.3 Therefore the main issues are:

- a) The effect upon visual amenity, the public realm and heritage assets
- b) The effect upon public safety

a) The effect upon visual amenity, the public realm and heritage assets

6.4 Policy DM22 (Advertisements) states that advertisements will respect the building or structure on which they are located and/or their surroundings and setting in terms of size, location, design, materials, colour, noise, lettering, amount and type of text, illumination and luminance. It also specifies that the cumulative impact of adverts will be taken into account, and a proliferation of advertisements that detrimentally affects visual or aural amenity will not be acceptable.

6.5 Policy CS7 (Design) seeks that all development must be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading within which it is located. Proposals should also make a positive contribution to urban design objectives including, character, quality of public realm, ease of movement and permeability, legibility, adaptability and diversity. In addition the policy states that developments will be assessed to ensure that they respond positively to their local context and create or reinforce local character and distinctiveness, including protecting and enhancing the historic environment of the Borough and providing value to the public realm; create safe and accessible environments and are visually attractive as a result of good high quality built forms and spaces.

6.6 Policy CS33 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment) seeks that all development proposals should preserve or enhance the historic character of heritage assets.

6.7 Policy RC5 (Design in the Centre) seeks that development should provide appropriate relationships between buildings and spaces and movement within the central area, appropriate public spaces and public realm including squares and open spaces, and utilise high quality architectural details and materials. It also indicates that any development associated within public realm should contribute to the diversity of the central area, be capable of adaptation over time and be designed to enhance community safety.

6.8 Policy RC14 (Public Realm) states that new development will need to make a positive contribution towards the quality of the public realm including imaginative uses of open space and public realm.

6.9 In terms of adopted policies directly related to development of the station area Policy RC1d (Station & Interchange) states that the listed station building should be retained and its setting enhanced and areas of open

space will be provided at the northern and southern entrances to the station. The Reading Station Area Framework and the Station Hill South Planning and Urban Design Brief seek that the area adjacent to the station entrance should be a high quality multi-functional public space - 'new town squares'.

- 6.10 The proposed screen structure would be located centrally within the public realm area to the south of the train station entrance. The proposed plan shows the screen with a slight north-west orientation addressing people exiting the main station building to the north, people arriving at the top of the stairs which connect to Station Hill to the west and people approaching the station from the south from Station Road and Blagrove Street.
- 6.11 The area of public realm to the south of the station where the structure would be located contains some street furniture, which aside from a number of lamp posts, is low level including a row of safety bollards and some benches.
- 6.12 The screen and its stand by its nature is contemporary in its design and appearance and would be in keeping with the modern station building to the north. The updated façade of Thames Tower also now appears as a more contemporary elevation bordering the station public realm area.
- 6.13 Whilst the screen is larger in scale than the existing street-furniture the pedestrian area itself is not insignificant in size. Located relatively centrally within this area, surrounding by two storey buildings together with Thames Tower at fifteen storeys to the south, and set against the modern Station building, it is considered the screen would not unduly detract from the spaciousness of this area, quality of the public realm or frontages of surrounding buildings.
- 6.14 The screen would represent a modern addition to the public realm area to the south of the station, an area where the contrast between old and new buildings is already present. As a freestanding structure located centrally within the large pedestrian area it is considered that the proposal would contribute to the visual interest of the public realm and would not be detrimental to the permeability, accessibility, adaptability or legibility of this area.
- 6.15 Concern has been raised regarding the impact of the screen upon the setting of the Grade II listed Three Guineas Public House to the north of the station pedestrian area and also the statue of King Edward VII on the small roundabout on Station Approach to the south. Officers acknowledge that the screen would be a sizeable structure within the station public realm area. However, it is noted that the siting of the screen is to the south west of centre of this area. This assists in the screen being viewed, when looking north towards the station, against the back drop of the modern station building rather than directly or primarily against the backdrop of the listed public house. There is also a significant separation between the screen and

the public house (28m). In the context of the spaciousness of the square and the scale of the surrounding large buildings, officers consider that the proposal will not adversely impact upon the setting of the listed building. Moving the structure westwards, away from the listed building, has been explored. However, the area under the west of the square comprises voids and it would be impractical to anchor the structure within this area.

- 6.16 The details submitted as part of the application also indicate that the luminance of the screen would be controlled via sensors which automatically adjust depending upon prevailing natural light conditions whilst ensuring the luminance levels reduce during evenings which would assist in minimising light spillage that might have an impact on the heritage assets, particularly during the evenings. The screen is proposed to operate between 0600 and 2400 only. This could be controlled by way of a suitably worded condition to ensure the screen is turned off outside of these hours.
- 6.17 Sited over 40m from the Grade II listed statue of King Edward VII it is not considered that the screen would adversely impact upon the setting of the statue. Again due to the screens siting, key views of the statue from the station would be retained, with the screen predominantly viewed against the backdrop of the north east corner of Thames Tower.
- 6.18 A condition is recommended to grant advertisement consent for a 5 year period. This is in accordance with Regulation 14 (7) of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 and would allow the Local Planning Authority to review the impact of the advertisement scheme after this period.

b) The effect upon public safety

- 6.19 The relevant considerations for this application with regard to public safety are highway safety and crime prevention, including whether granting consent could block the view of CCTV cameras, or whether illumination from an advertisement would cause glare on such cameras.
- 6.20 Policy DM22 (Advertisements) states that advertisements will not have detrimental impact on public safety. It also specifies that the cumulative impact of adverts will be taken into account.
- 6.21 Policy CS7 (Design) seeks that all development should create safe and accessible environments.
- 6.22 Policy DM12 (Highway Matters) states that development will only be permitted where it is not detrimental to highway safety.
- 6.23 Policy CS20 (Reading Transport Strategy) seeks to promote transport safety.
- 6.24 The proposal has been reviewed by RBC Transport Officers who have advised that as the screen would be located within a pedestrian area and is not

located on a major transport corridor, it is considered that the proposed advertisement would not unduly distract highways users and give rise to safety issues. This is subject to a condition to ensure that the screen does not exceed 500 cd/m² during the evening (from 1700 to 2400 hours) when the screen illumination is likely to be more prominent from longer distance views.

- 6.25 The base of the screen would also be elevated 2.4m from ground level which would not impede pedestrian and cycle movements within the station public realm area.
- 6.26 RBC Emergency Planning, National Rail and British Transport Police originally objected to the application based upon concerns regarding impact upon CCTV (blocking sightlines and glare) and emergency vehicle access to the station.
- 6.27 Further to these objections, and following a meeting with the applicant, additional material was submitted which includes more detailed information on the specification of the screen and how this can be managed remotely to reduce luminance and avoid glare. Details of vehicular access were also provided indicating that the screen would not obstruct the existing route via the dropped kerb from Station Approach and the two pairs of lowering bollards.
- 6.28 Following the submission of the additional information the concerns raised by RBC Emergency Planning, National Rail and British Transport Police are considered to have been largely overcome.
- 6.29 With regard to CCTV impact further review of existing cameras has been undertaken by RBC Emergency Planning. They have advised the screen would have only a minimal impact upon the view from one existing CCTV camera which is not classed as essential. The information regarding ability to remotely control the brightness of the screen is considered to address concerns regarding glare to the existing CCTV.
- 6.30 Although RBC Emergency Planning now raises no objection it has been requested that the developer undertakes to provide a new or replacement camera should the glare from the screen prove to be a problem for existing cameras. The developer has agreed to this if needed in the future. As this is a matter that would be more appropriately addressed by the Council, as landowner of the site, by making it a requirement of the lease. Officers advise that it is not necessary to use a planning condition to secure this commitment.
- 6.31 In terms of emergency vehicle access, it has been demonstrated that the existing route would not be affected by the proposed screen. British Transport Police remain concerned that the Construction Compound for when the screen is installed should not impinge on emergency vehicle routes. Details of Construction Methodology have been provided as part of

the application information but it is reasonable to require a more detailed construction method statement to be submitted and agreed with the Local Planning Authority by way of a suitably worded condition, prior to the commencement of any works. This would include a requirement to provide an assessment of the impact of the construction compound upon emergency vehicle routes.

- 6.32 Whilst land ownership is not usually a planning consideration, it is relevant to note that the land to which this application relates is controlled by the Council and as such there is an additional level of control of the signage and the applicant would also be required to sign up to the Council's advertising and sponsorship policy.

7 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 When assessed for impact on amenity, the setting of listed buildings and public safety officers are satisfied that, subject to recommended conditions, the proposal complies with national and local policy.

Recommendation

GRANT advertisement consent for the reasons given above

Case Officer: Matt Burns

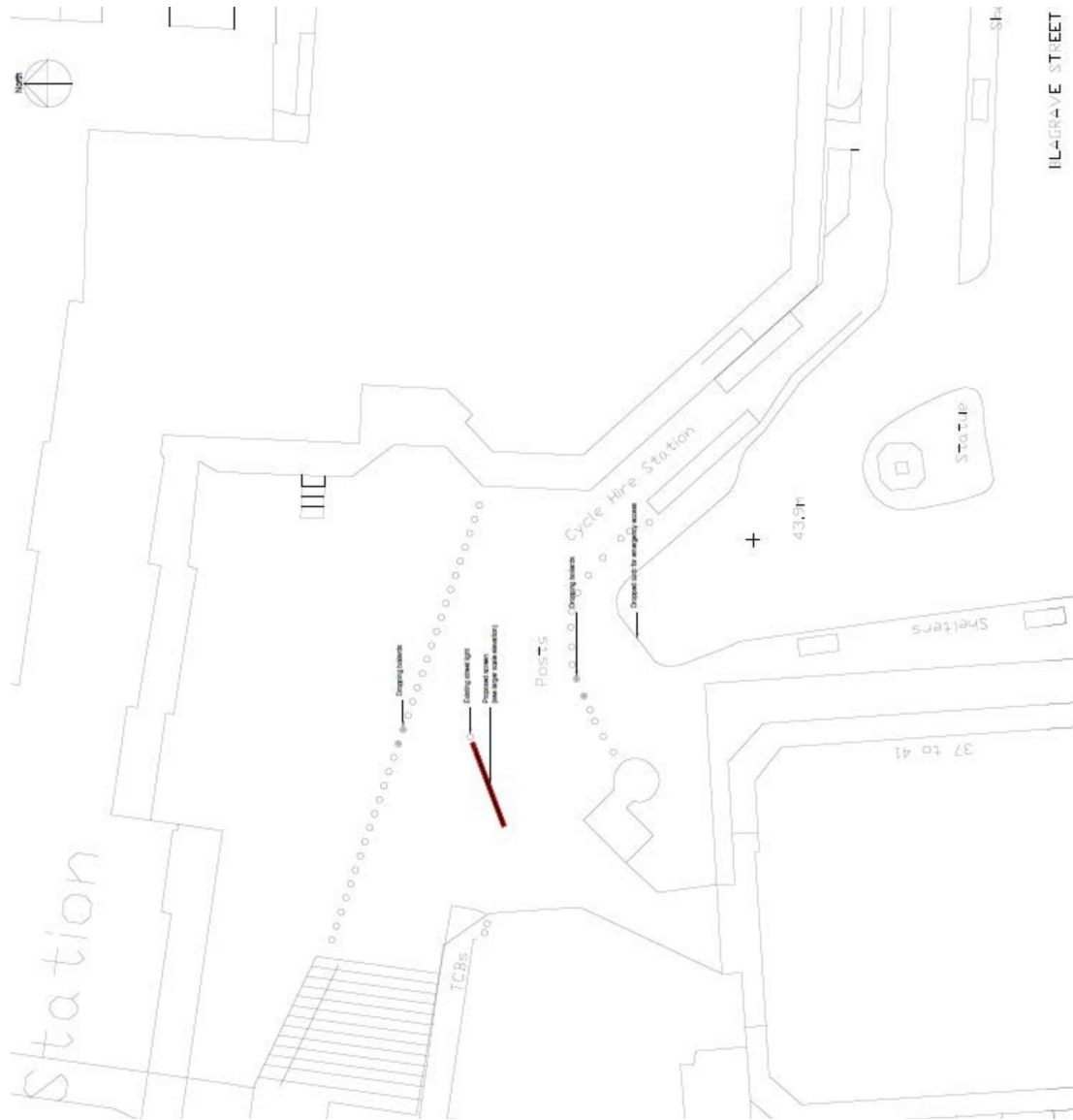
Plans and Documents Considered:

Drawing no. L01.B - Location Plan, Block Plan and Elevations dated March 18
Received by the Local Planning Authority on 25th April 2018

Orion Heritage Statement dated March 2018
Received by the Local Planning Authority on 22nd March 2018

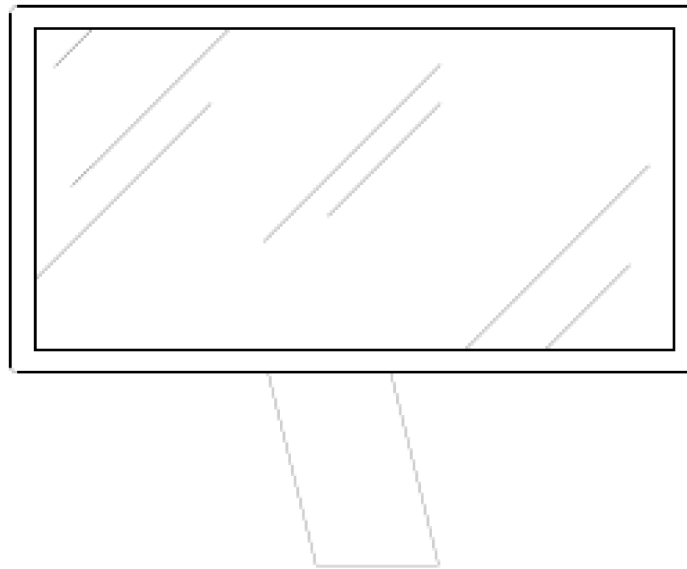
'ECE Planning' Planning Statement dated March 2018
SIS Digital Reading Lights Maxx Media Ltd Structural Information
Maxx Media Ltd Visuals
Received by the Local Planning Authority on 7th March 2018

UNILED - Brightness Settings and Management Letter
SIS Digital Method of Construction Proposal
'ECE Planning' letter ref. RH/Let/P1489 dated 25th April 2018
Received by the Local Planning Authority on 25th April 2018



Proposed Site Plan

Location Plan 1:1250



8000mm x 4000mm digital screen
Front elevation 1:50



8000mm x 4000mm digital screen
Side elevation 1:50

Proposed Elevations



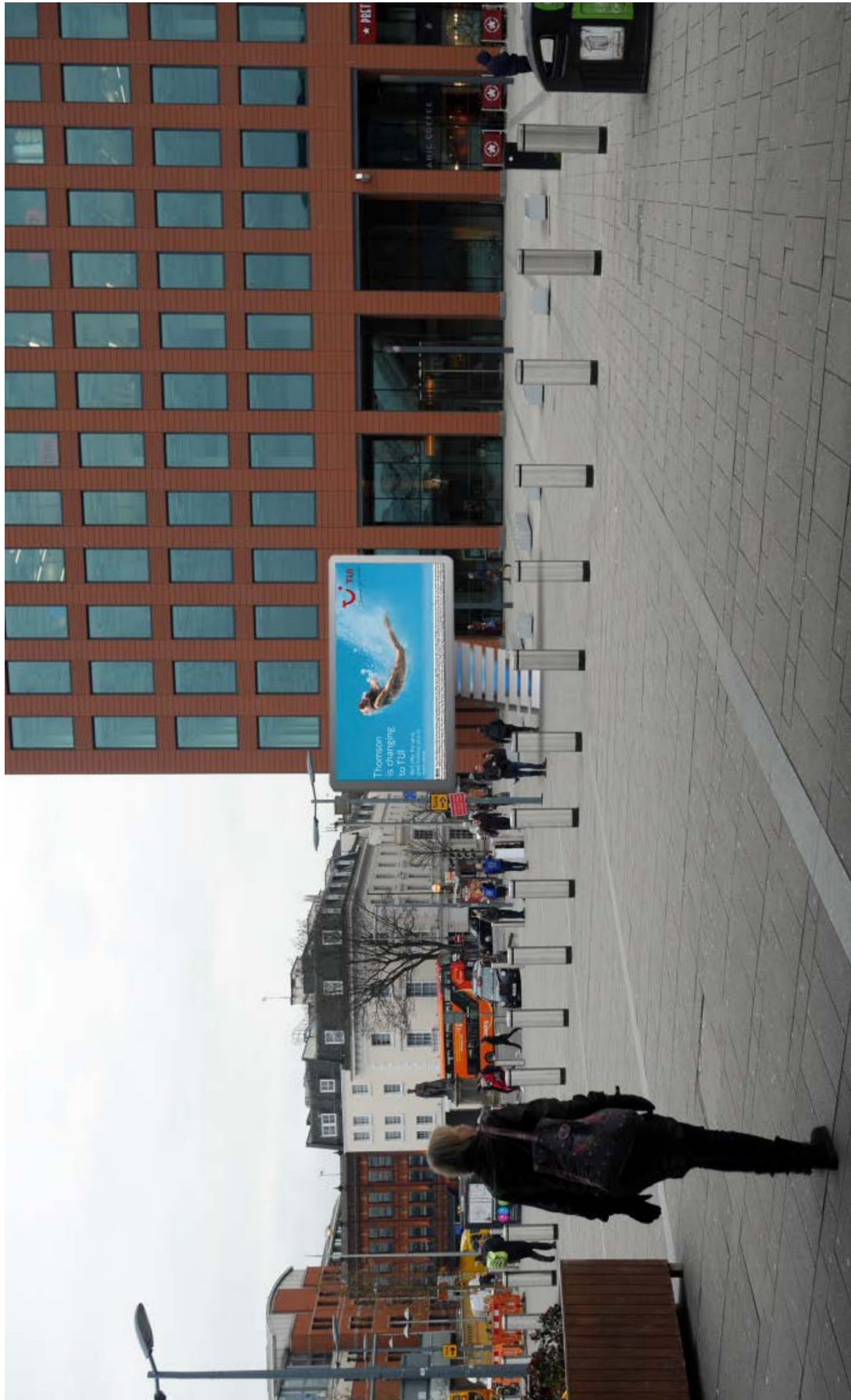
Proposed visual - view north from Station Approach 1



Proposed visual - View north from Station Approach 2



Proposed Visual - View West from Old Station Building



Proposed Visual - View South from Modern Station Building