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**Report of the Chief Planning Officer**

**CITY PLANS PANEL**

**Date: 17<sup>th</sup> December 2015**

**APPLICANT: Premier View**

**Subject: PRE-APPLICATION PRESENTATION OF PROPOSALS FOR THE  
INSTALLATION OF A DIGITAL ADVERTISEMENT SCREEN TO CENTRAL ARCADE,  
BRIGGATE, LEEDS LS1 6DX (PREAPP/15/00757)**

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**Electoral Wards Affected:**

**City and Hunslet**

No

Ward Members consulted  
(referred to in report)

**Specific Implications For:**

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

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**This report is brought to Plans Panel for information. The Developer will present the details of the scheme to allow Members to consider and comment on the proposals at this stage.**

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This presentation is intended to inform Members of the emerging proposals for the installation of a permanent digital media advertisement screen to the western elevation of Central Arcade, fronting Briggate in Leeds City Centre.
- 1.2 The proposal is brought to City Plans Panel since it represents a new format of large scale digital advertising of which there are only limited examples in the City Centre and the application site is located within the City's busiest shopping street, close to the City Centre Conservation Area and a number of Listed Buildings (see attached plan)

## **2.0 SITE AND SURROUNDINGS**

Central Arcade is a pedestrian route from Central Road to Briggate. The arcade features a number of retail units over two floors. Either side of the Briggate entrance are Unit 1 and to the opposite side, Greggs, both of which feature predominantly glazed facades. The Briggate façade is 4 storeys in height, faced in Portland Stone and features 5 window bays at second and third storey level, which are offset to the right of the elevation, leaving a 3 storey height expanse of blank stonework above the entrance portal into the arcade.

The arcade is located directly opposite the eastern exit of the Trinity Shopping Complex and the blank area therefore forms a backdrop to a piece of public art in the form of the Minerva Statue located on Briggate (as one exits Trinity onto Briggate itself). The application site is located 17 metres north of the City Centre Conservation Area boundary where the Conservation Area at this point includes the southern portion of Briggate, the northern portion of Lower Briggate, Duncan Street and Boar Lane.

The application site sits within the setting of 149 - 150 Briggate which is a Grade II listed building located on a corner site of Briggate and Duncan Street / Boar Lane, constructed in a Baroque revival style. More remotely, but still of significance is 135 Briggate, located 37 metres due north of the application site, also Grade II listed and a building 5 storeys in height and originally constructed as a post office exchange in 1903. 135 Briggate is designed in a Renaissance style.

Generally, the local street scene comprises a wide variety of architectural styles and ages of buildings, but is a highly commercialised context comprising a number of shop and restaurant uses within a high quality area of pedestrianized public realm within Briggate and, to the south of the application site a highly trafficked highway junction at the heads of Briggate, Duncan Street and Boar Lane.

## **3.0 PROPOSALS**

- 3.1 It is proposed to introduce a digital media screen onto the western elevation of the Central Arcade between the second and third storey levels.
- 3.2 In terms of dimensions, the applicant has proposed two options for members to consider, the first being a 3600mm x 5600mm screen with 231mm depth, surrounded by an architectural 102mm deep Portland Stone frame to its perimeter. The screen and its associated frame would be located equidistantly between the northern most window bay on the elevation and the northern boundary of the building within what is presently a blank area of façade. Above the screen would be a Portland Stone slab, intended to mirror and continue the pattern of existing slit windows that run across the elevation at third storey level.
- 3.3 The second proposed option is a slightly larger screen, again surrounded by a Portland Stone frame with slab above, again located between the second and third storey levels, but at the slightly larger dimensions of 4000mm x 5600mm.
- 3.4 The proposed screen would involve the use of moving images and dynamic digital content but would operate without sound.

## 4.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

There is no planning history directly relevant to the application site, however recent proposals for similar digital advertisement screens within the pedestrianized retail quarter may be considered to be of relevance and are listed as follows:

### 4.1 PREAPP/13/00789, 14/01863/ADV, 14/01862/FU – Digital Advertising Screen, Pinnacle, Bond St / Upper Basinghall Street, (Application approved 8<sup>th</sup> August 2014)

Officers and the applicant undertook negotiations on the proposed screen between July 2013 and February 2014. As part of the negotiations, it was agreed that the developer would make a contribution to the cost of public realm uplift works to Bond Street / Upper Basinghall St in order to improve the setting of the site and to help mitigate the potential impact of the screen on the adjacent street.

The proposal was taken to plans panel on 27th February 2014 and a site visit was attended by members the same day. Members were minded to support the proposal in principle and were content that the subsequent application be addressed under delegated powers, subject to the application details matching the development put forward at pre application stage.

It was considered that the screen was appropriate to the commercial context of the area, was well designed and will be suitably integrated into the fabric of the host building and would be understood as part of an improved and appropriate, pedestrianised and commercial shopping environment. The proposal for Advertisement Consent in regard to the digital advertisement screen was therefore considered acceptable with regard to the visual amenities of the host building and wider street scene and approved in August 2014 and erected in 2015.

### 4.2 12/03408/ADV - Digital media screen to shopping centre, Trinity West Shopping Centre, Albion Street, Leeds, LS1 5ER (Application approved 7<sup>th</sup> November 2012)

An advertisement application for the introduction of a digital advertising screen 6.1m x 3.6m in to the splay corner at first and second floor levels of the Trinity Shopping Complex was presented to City Centre Plans Panel in September 2012.

The application was recommended to members for approval due to the proposed location within a commercial centre of regional and even national significance, where advertising is clearly an accepted part of the urban fabric in the prime shopping area and where it would be set against a back drop of a newly created modern retail development in which there is a very large glazed area to a lively and active food offer.

The screen proposal was viewed as being well integrated in to the design of the corner of Trinity rather than simply being placed upon it as an after-thought and was therefore considered acceptable in terms of its impact on visual amenities. The screen has been erected as approved.

### 4.3 12/03419/FU & 12/03420/ADV - Alterations to form digital media advertising display, West Riding House, 59 - 61 Albion Street, Leeds, LS1 5AA (Application refused 28<sup>th</sup> September 2012)

This application was presented to City Centre Plans Panel in September 2012. It was a proposal for a screen to the eastern side of the Pinnacle site (formerly known as West Riding House). Officers considered that West Riding house provided a backdrop to the long views along Albion Place, and is clearly visible from Kirkgate Market and that the proposed screen would have terminated this important view and would draw the eye to West Riding House and down to the level of the car park in particular, which would become the focus of views (and therefore take over the prominence afforded to the listed buildings and conservation area in general). It was considered this would be retrograde and harmful to the Conservation Area and the setting of listed buildings and members were minded to refuse the application on that basis.

## **5.0 HISTORY OF NEGOTIATIONS**

- 5.1 An initial enquiry was made by the applicant in February 2015 following dialogue between the applicant and the City Centre Management Team / Cllr Richard Lewis. Originally, a larger screen was suggested, with no associated architectural framework. Following this initial approach and consultations with both the Conservation and Design Team, it was considered that in order to receive officer support in principle, the proposed screen size should be reduced and some form of architectural treatment be applied to the perimeter of the screen such that the screen would appear better integrated into the building façade and would respond better to the architectural language of the application building whilst simultaneously tidying up the appearance of the screen's perimeter and reducing the visual presence of the screen in south/north views along Briggate (from within the Conservation Area setting of both Briggate and Boar Lane/Duncan Street).
- 5.2 An offer of a Section 106 agreement was made by the applicant to assist with public realm improvements however it is considered by officers that within an already improved area of public realm, such contributions could not be fully justified in order to enable the development. However it is intended to assess whether there are opportunities for refurbishment or further enhancements to the building façade which would be more directly related to the visual impact of the proposal in this case.
- 5.3 A further offer of screen time has been made to Leeds City Council for the purposes of advertising council events however the administrative implications of this for the Local Authority have to be fully considered in dialogue with relevant council colleagues. It should be noted that whilst the offer is welcome, it could not be a determining factor in any decision which is required by law to limit consideration of any advertisement proposal to its potential impact on amenity and public safety.
- 5.4 In October 2015 initial draft plans which more closely followed the initial planning advice were submitted to officers. Following a meeting with officers in October 2015, a finalized proposal involving two options on screen sizes was provided to officers for consideration and are the subject of this presentation to Plans Panel.

## **6.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE**

### **6.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

- 6.2 Paragraph 67 of the NPPF states that poorly placed advertisements can have a negative impact on the appearance of the built and natural environment. Control over outdoor advertisements should be efficient, effective and simple in concept and operation. Only those advertisements which will clearly have an appreciable impact

on a building or on their surroundings should be subject to the local planning authority's detailed assessment. Advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts.

### 6.3 **Local Development Framework Core Strategy**

The Core Strategy sets out strategic level policies and vision to guide the delivery of development investment decisions and the overall future of the district.

6.3.1 Policy P10 requires new development to be based on a thorough contextual analysis to provide good design appropriate to its scale and function, delivering high quality innovative design. Development should protect and enhance locally important buildings, skylines and views.

6.3.2 Policy P11: The historic environment, consisting of archaeological remains, historic buildings, townscapes and landscapes, including locally significant undesignated assets and their settings, will be conserved and enhanced, particularly those elements which help to give Leeds its distinct identity:

### 6.4 **Saved Leeds Unitary Development Plan (Review) Policies :**

The application site lies within the designated City Centre. Relevant policies include:

6.4.1 BD8: All signs must be well designed and sensitively located within the street scene. They should be carefully related to the character, scale and architectural features of the building on which they are placed.

6.4.2 BD9: All signs within or adjoining Conservation Areas should preserve/enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

6.4.3 GP5: Proposals should resolve detailed planning considerations including design and safety.

### 6.5 **Leeds City Council Advertisement Design Guide**

The Leeds City Council Advertisement design guide provides supplementary planning guidance on where advertising would and would not generally be acceptable, encourages design excellence, innovative ways of advertising and high standards of maintenance.

It recognizes digital screens as an emerging form of advertising and advises that the City Centre is a generally suitable location for advertising. The guidance also requires special attention to be given to protecting the character and setting of conservation areas and listed buildings.

### 6.6 **CABE and English Heritage 'Large Digital Screens in Public Spaces' (2009)**

This is not adopted planning policy but offers useful guidance to Local Planning Authorities on the issues to consider when assessing the suitability of sites for both public event display screens and digital media/advertising screens.

The 3 overriding principles set out are that a screen should:

1. Be in an appropriate location
2. Be of excellent design quality in its own right and ensure that the building

façade is suitable

3. Enhance the qualities of its immediate location and wider setting.

And that if it fails on one of these then it should be considered unacceptable.

## **7.0 ISSUES**

7.1 Digital media is clearly an emerging advertising form largely due to the advancements in digital technology and the improvement in screen resolution.

It is considered that, when used in the correct locations such as the existing Trinity and Pinnacle screens, they can add to a commercial environment. However it is clear from the policy guidance set out above that some locations may not be suitable due to their impact on more sensitive environments.

7.2 Members are asked to comment on the scheme and to consider the following matters:

### Visual Amenity

7.3 The screen has been designed and proposed so that it would appear to be integrated into the design of the building, proposed within an architectural Portland Stone frame which reflects the architectural language of both the application building and also the upper-floor window framework to 140-142 Briggate (adjacent to the application site) and has been designed and scaled in order that it respects the existing pattern of fenestration along the façade.

7.4 In addition it is considered that the screen would only be seen in profile and offer limited oblique north/south views from the nearby conservation area and from the listed buildings at 135 Briggate and 149-150 Briggate.

7.5 The screen would directly face the eastern exit/entrance of the Trinity Shopping Complex. This and the immediate context of Briggate provides a very busy commercial environment which is characterised by a significant number of existing business advertisements. It is considered that the commercial nature of the proposed digital screen would be compatible with this existing commercial character whilst its detailed design would ensure that it complements the building elevation and preserves the character and setting of the nearby listed buildings and conservation area.

**Do Members agree that the visual impact from the proposal is acceptable and appropriate for this location?**

**Do Members have a preference for one option in terms of the proposed screen dimensions?**

### Public Safety

7.8 The siting of the screen would be read as part of a predominantly pedestrianized area with no head-on views of the screen from the road network, specifically from Boar Lane.

7.9 The existing width of the pedestrianized space on Briggate (some 20m wide) would help to avoid the potential for obstruction for pedestrians, if people are encouraged

to stop to view the screen, by allowing sufficient space to pause without impacting upon or impeding pedestrian flows.

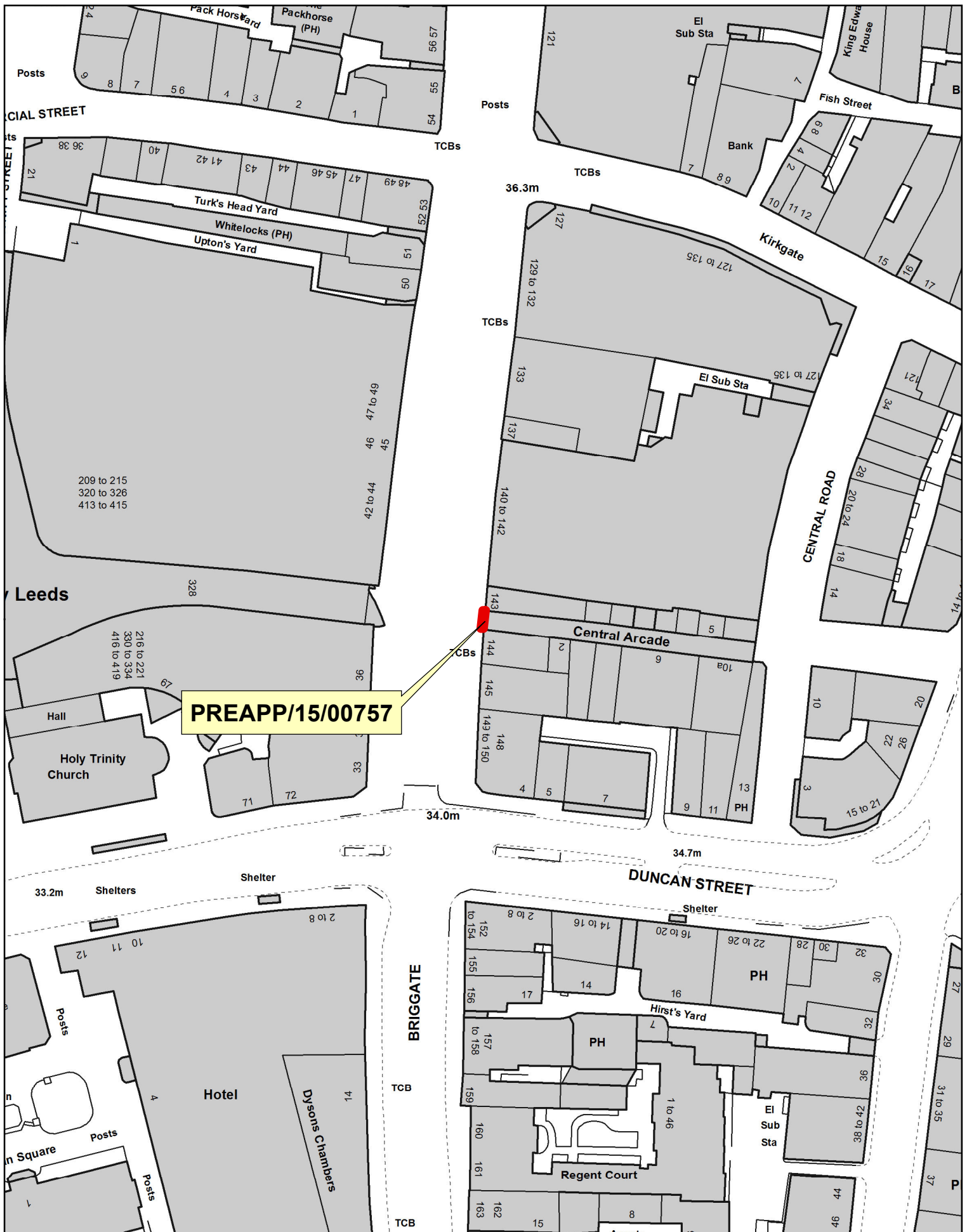
**Do Members agree that there are unlikely to be any adverse highway safety implications arising from the proposed screen?**

**If Members are supportive of the proposals is it agreed that a formal application can be delegated to officers for determination?**

**Background Papers:**

PREAPP/15/00757

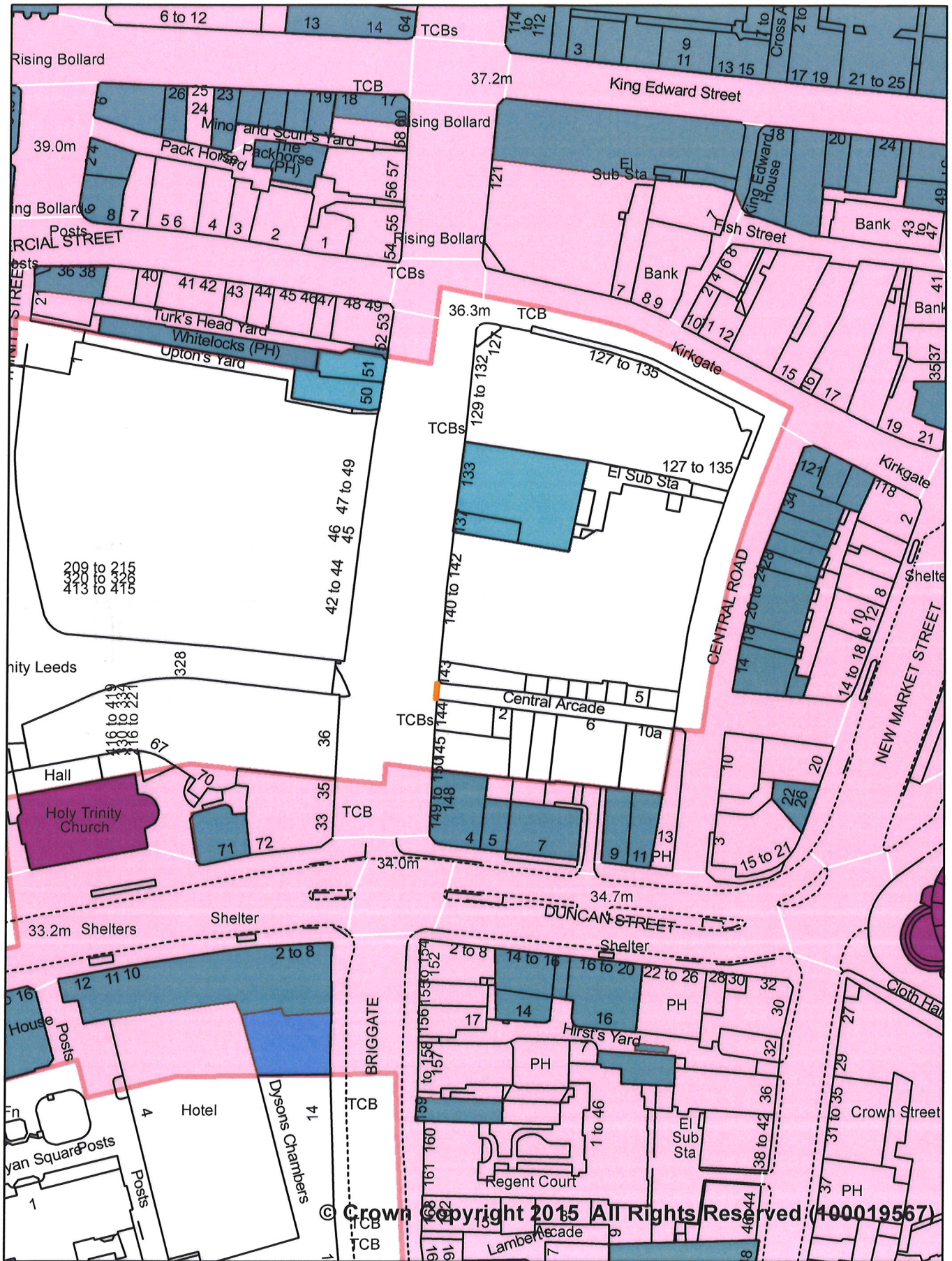
CABE/English Heritage guidance 'Large Digital Screen in Public Spaces' (2009)



# CITY PLANS PANEL







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Scale: 1:1250

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