



**Report of the Chief Planning Officer**

**CITY PLANS PANEL**

**Date: 27<sup>th</sup> September 2012**

**Subject: APPLICATIONS:**

**12/03408/ADV, DIGITAL MEDIA SCREEN TO SHOPPING CENTRE**

**&**

**12/03409/FU, VARIATION OF CONDITION 45 OF APPLICATION REF NO 11/03290/FU (CHANGE OF USE FROM RETAIL (A1) TO FOOD AND DRINK, HEALTH CLINIC AND LEISURE USES (A3, A4, D1/D2) AND ANCILLARY MALL SPACE; ASSOCIATED PUBLIC REALM WORK, EXTERNAL ALTERATIONS INCLUDING IMPROVED ENTRANCE TO EXISTING SHOPPING CENTRE AND ASSOCIATED WORKS AS A REVISION TO PLANNING REF NO. P/09/1742/FU) FOR A MINOR MATERIAL AMENDMENT TO MODIFY THE ALIGNMENT OF THE BOND ST/ALBION ST CORNER AT FIRST AND SECOND FLOOR LEVELS TO ACCOMMODATE A DIGITAL MEDIA SCREEN**

**APPLICANT**

Land Securities Trinity  
Limited

**DATE VALID**

7/8/12

**TARGET DATE**

2/10/12 & 6/11/12

**12/03419/FU, ALTERATIONS TO FORM DIGITAL MEDIA ADVERTISING DISPLAY**

**&**

**12/03420/ADV, ONE ILLUMINATED DIGITAL MEDIA ADVERTISING DISPLAY AT WEST RIDING HOUSE, 59-61 ALBION STREET, LEEDS, LS1 5AA**

**APPLICANT**

MREF II WRH Limited

**DATE VALID**

7/8/12

**TARGET DATE**

2/10/12

**Electoral Wards Affected:**

**City & Hunslet**

Yes

Ward Members consulted

**Specific Implications For:**

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

**RECOMMENDATION:** Members are invited to note the contents of this report and to have regard to the information contained within the report in their consideration of the officers' reports on each application.

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION:**

- 1.1 Two applications for digital advertising screens are to be presented to Panel, one at the Trinity development, on the corner of Bond St and Albion St, and one on West Riding House, attached to the first and second floor car park facing straight down Albion Place. Both locations are just outside the City Centre Conservation Area boundary, offer distant views primarily to the east where there are a number of listed buildings and are only 70m apart. Due to the prominence of the screens, their relationship with historic buildings, their proximity to each other and the fact that Members requested that the Trinity screen be brought to Panel for determination after a pre-application presentation in April of this year, the applications are presented to Panel for determination. There are additional Panel reports for each proposal that provide full details on the proposals and consider the merits of each scheme. This report provides Panel with a relevant planning history, policy background and identifies the issues to be considered.

## **2.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY:**

### **2.1 Millennium Sq:**

- 2.2 The media screen on The Carriageworks facing Millennium Square was recently upgraded to a high definition screen of the dimensions 6.1m x 3.6m, the same size as proposed for the Trinity site, albeit landscape rather than portrait in orientation. It is smaller than that proposed for West Riding House which is 6m x 5m. The screen facing Millennium Square is used to show public events and public information and is not used for commercial advertising. This screen faces on to a large public space sufficient to accommodate the associated crowds.

### **2.2 Appeals:**

- 2.3 A recent appeal decision came as a result of the refusal of an application for a 12m x 6m digital advertising panel on the blank southern elevation of the 11 storey Bond Court office building facing out over City Sq (application ref. no. 10/02426/ADV). It would have been seen as a backdrop to several listed buildings including the former post office building and would be seen in the context of the City Centre Conservation Area. The inspector upheld the decision on the grounds of the adverse impact of the proposal on the character of the Conservation Area and the setting of the nearby listed buildings.

## **3.0 PLANNING POLICIES:**

### **3.1 NPPF:**

- 3.2 This advocates good design in all aspects of the built environment. Para 67 states that poorly placed advertisements can have a negative impact on the appearance of the built...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 (LPA) detailed assessment. Advertisements

should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts.

- 3.3 Leeds UDPR policies: Both sites are located within the Prime Shopping Quarter and have Primary Shopping Frontage designations. Albion Street forms the boundary of the City Centre Conservation Area with both application sites located just outside but clearly visible from within the conservation area and a number of listed buildings.  
BD6: Extensions and alterations should respect the scale, form and detailing of the original building.  
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.  
BD12: Advertisement hoardings may be acceptable around building sites or where they screen unsightly areas. Elsewhere they will generally be discouraged, with any application assessed on the basis of its visual impact on the surrounding area.  
GP5: Proposals should resolve detailed planning considerations including design and safety.  
N19: Development within or adjoining Conservation Areas should preserve/enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

- 3.4 Leeds City Council's supplementary planning document on advertising design guidance recognises digital screens as an emerging form of advertising and advises that they should not be located adjacent to highways for safety reasons. This guidance requires special attention be given to protecting the character and setting of conservation areas and listed buildings.

- 3.5 CABE and English Heritage 'Large Digital Screens In Public Spaces' (2009):

- 3.6 This offers guidance to LPA's 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. It then expands on the above general principles by offering the following advice:

- 3.8 Location: An appraisal of the immediate surroundings of the site should be considered, including: topography; urban grain; scale and height; streetscape and open spaces; listed buildings; conservation areas; landmark buildings including backdrops and important local views and vistas; large trees whose growth may in future obstruct views of the screen and therefore require pruning which would impact on the amenity of the area; the potential impact on local movement patterns. There should be a comprehensive assessment of the screen's impact on an area.
- 3.9 Context: Large screens are likely to be inappropriate in architecturally or historically important places particularly if they harm the character, appearance or setting of listed buildings or conservation areas. This is the case even if it is some distance away as it has moving elements and a high visual impact. It is important to consider: the impact on the heritage of a place; the relationship to landscaping, open space and street furniture; topography; strategic and local views; light pollution; conflict with existing users in the area.

- 3.10 Areas to be avoided: Those which have: listed buildings; conservation areas; places that are particularly environmentally and visually sensitive such as smaller spaces and those used for quiet repose; the centres of streets or where the screen back is exposed; where they would add to street clutter or be sited close to existing townscape features including trees. Careful consideration will be needed to ensure the building façade is suitable and that it is not adversely affected when the screen is switched off or removed in the future.
- 3.11 It also advocates that local authorities should develop a plan-led approach to ensure that screens are permitted only in locations identified as being appropriate as part of an overall strategy for place-making or area regeneration and where existing uses are not displaced or compromised. Also that they should develop a strategy that ensures a consistent approach to assessing their merits and contextual considerations. Any policies should consider their impact on the amenity of the place for which they are proposed rather than marketing or commercial matters. Local Authorities should consider carefully how to resolve the issue of precedent, and in particular competing applications from other broadcasters or commercial operators.

#### **4.0 MAIN ISSUES**

- 4.1 Digital media is clearly an emerging advertising form largely due to the advancements in digital technology and the improvement in screen resolution. When used in the correct locations they can add to a commercial environment although it is clear from the guidance set out above that some locations are not suitable due to their impact on more sensitive environments.
- 4.2 Given Leeds' prominent role as a commercial centre it is therefore no surprise that such proposals are now starting to come forward particularly in the retail core. It is also clear that other cities have started to embrace this new technology although of course each site is assessed on its merits and the location of screens in other cities is by no means a justification for their insertion in to the fabric of Leeds.
- 4.3 The above has provided a description of both local and national, policy and guidance which is clearly useful when assessing the applications currently being presented for determination, as well as those which are likely to come forward in the future. Clearly two applications have come forward at the same time and each has to be assessed on its individual merits in terms of amenity and public safety. The relative considerations for each are set out in the separate reports for each application.

#### **5.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 5.1 Application files 12/03408/ADV, 12/03409/FU, 12/03419/FU, 12/03420/ADV.
- 5.2 Bond Court application ref. no. 10/02426/ADV
- 5.3 CABE/English Heritage guidance ' Large Digital Screen in Public Spaces' (2009)