

Our Ref: 22049/CJ/am
Your Ref: PP-11820330
Email: cjones@firstplan.co.uk
Date: 09 January 2023

Planning Department
Reading Borough Council Civic Offices
Bridge Street
Reading
RG1 2LU

Dear Sir/Madam

**APPLICATION FOR CONSENT TO DISPLAY ADVERTISEMENTS
3-5 CRAVEN ROAD, READING, BERKSHIRE RG1 5LE**

We write on behalf of our client, N Family Holdings Ltd (trading as N Family Club), to submit the enclosed application for consent to display 4no. freestanding display signs and 1no. projecting sign in conjunction with their occupation of 3-5 Craven Road, Reading, Berkshire RG1 5LE.

Recent applications at the site (ref: 220332 granted 13th July 2022 and ref: 221114 granted 30th November 2022) have confirmed the use of the buildings and land within Class E and will facilitate the refurbishment of these buildings to become a children's nursery, to be occupied by N Family Club. The proposed signage will allow N Family Club to appropriately market their presence when the nursery opens as a new business in the area, including its frontage onto Craven Road.

Accordingly, the application has been submitted via the Planning Portal (Ref: PP-11820330) with the following documents:

- Completed Application Forms;
- Site Location Plan (drawing no. 5021_KW_P2_DR_01-01);
- Existing Plans and Elevations prepared by KWA (drawing ref. 5021_KW_PL_DR_06-01);
- Proposed Plans and Elevations prepared by KWA (drawing ref. 5021_KW_PL_DR_06-02); and
- Proposed External Signage Detail prepared by KWA (drawing ref. 5021_KW_PL_DR_06-03).

The requisite fee of £132.00 has been paid online, together with the £32.20 admin fee.

Application Site Description

The application site includes two buildings situated on the eastern side of Craven Road. The site occupies the corner of Craven Road and Erleigh Road and extends to 0.33ha. The site is situated southeast of Reading town centre and is immediately east of the Royal Berkshire Hospital.

The two buildings (no. 3 and no. 5) are located on the western side of the plot and front onto Craven Road. They are joined by a modern single storey link building. The remainder of the site includes open air car

parking, with vehicular access to the site taken from Craven Road. An aerial view of the application site is provided at Figure 1.



Figure 1. Aerial View of Site

The site is located within Flood Zone 1 and is not within a Conservation Area nor does it include any statutorily listed buildings. No. 3 is the more northerly of the buildings and comprises a two storey Victorian house (originally) in the Gothic style. The building was added to Reading Borough Council's local list in 2015 (ref: LL5) and is further protected by an Article 4 Direction. It is described as follows:

"The building makes use of brickwork which although Victorian is distinctively from the Berkshire area due to use of clays found in the area, possibly at local kilns from areas such as Tilehurst. The Gothic building retains exuberant polychromatic brickwork and stone dressings and an ogee turret roof at the rear angle. The building retains virtuoso yellow stock brickwork forming the plinth, dentillated string course, quoins and levelling courses and forming the chimney stack. The decorative fretted timberwork at the gables is particularly impressive. Dressed stone around the windows heads and cills with keystones shows particular quality. The building is associated with a number of large villas along Craven Road, and the historic Berkshire Hospital building."

Both buildings were most recently in use by Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and its predecessor NHS bodies and have been subject to various extensions over time. The existing advertisements in place relate to the site's former NHS use, including a freestanding metal display board to the front of no.3 and a panel sign fixed to the vehicle access gate. There is a variety of ad hoc smaller signage across the site. Figures 2 and 3 below show the current building frontages to Craven Road.



Figure 2. No. 3 Craven Road Streetview



Figure 3. No. 5 Craven Road Streetview

Planning History Summary

The site and surrounding sites have a number of historical planning applications available on the Council's online database. However, these are largely not relevant to the consideration of this advertisements application. It is noted that applications do not appear to have been submitted for the former NHS signage at the site.

Those most recent and relevant are summarised below:

Reference number	Description of Development	Decision
0000007844	No. 5 – “Extensions”	Granted
04/01401/FUL	Temporary Relocation of Existing Portable Building From Battle Hospital And Extension To House Dingley Childrens Development Centre	Granted
220332	Certificate of Lawfulness for Existing use as Class E(e) facility for the provision of medical or health services	Granted 13 July 2022
221114	Removal of timber extension to rear of no.3 Craven Road and replacement with brick extension. Removal of lean-to extension to rear of no.3 Craven Road and construction of external storage area. Removal of escape stair to rear of no.5 Craven Road. Revised fenestration to link building. (Amended Description)	Granted 30 November 2022

Table 1. Summary of Planning History

Attention is drawn to the recent grant of permission ref. 220332 (granted July 2022) which confirmed the use of the application site buildings and land within Class E. N Family Club seek to occupy the building under Class E(f) of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020. Specifically, Class E(f) allows:

“(f) for a creche, day nursery or day centre, not including a residential use, principally to visiting members of the public”

Accordingly, planning permission is not required for this use. The signage proposed within this application will enable the nursery to appropriately market their presence when they open as a new business in the area.

Application Proposals

This application relates to the installation of 5no. external signs (Signs A – E) across the buildings’ frontages to Craven Road.

Details of the proposals are included below:



Figure 4. Extract of Proposed Craven Road Elevation

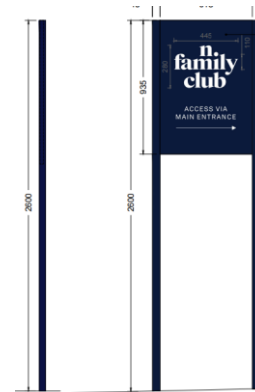
Sign A

- 1no. free standing metal panel sign to vehicle access point;
- 1590mm (w) x 2785mm (h) x 90mm (d);
- Blue powder-coated sign (RAL 5011) with white lettering (RAL 9003);
- Externally illuminated via slim profile trough down light mounted above the proposed signage with discreet cable to be routed through new post;
- Illuminated during operational hours of nursery;
- Located behind existing boundary.



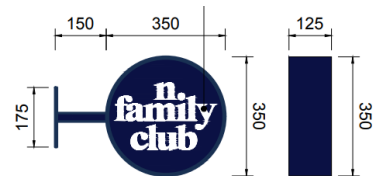
Sign B

- 1no. free standing metal panel sign to pedestrian gate of no.3;
- 750mm (w) x 2600mm (h) x 90mm (d);
- Blue powder-coated sign (RAL 5011) with white lettering (RAL 9003);
- Non-illuminated;
- Located behind existing boundary.



Sign C

- 1no. projecting metal sign to modern link building;
- 350mm diameter;
- Projecting 500mm from building frontage;
- Blue powder-coated frame (RAL 5011) with white lettering (RAL 9003)
- Internally illuminated lettering; and
- Fixed to facade via metal bracket.



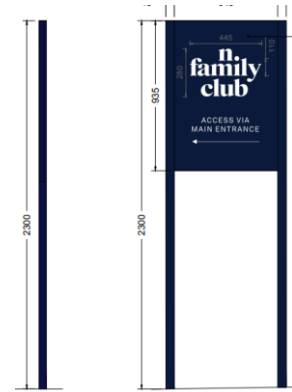
Sign D

- 1no. free standing metal panel sign to main entrance;
- 1590mm (w) x 2200mm (h) x 90mm (d);
- Blue powder-coated sign (RAL 5011) with white lettering (RAL 9003);
- Externally illuminated via slim profile trough down light mounted above the proposed signage with discreet cable to be routed through new post;
- Illuminated during operational hours of nursery;
- Located behind existing boundary.



Sign E

- 1no. free standing metal panel sign to no.5;
- 750mm (w) x 2300mm (h) x 90mm (d);
- Blue powder-coated sign (RAL 5011) with white lettering (RAL 9003);
- Non-illuminated;
- Located behind existing boundary.



Planning Policy Summary

For Reading Borough Council, the Development Plan consists of the:

- Reading Borough Local Plan (adopted 2019)
- Proposals Map (adopted 2019)

Consideration must also be given to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2021) which is a material consideration. Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 requires that planning applications be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless there are material considerations that indicate otherwise.

NPPF

The NPPF provides the overarching planning policy guidance for development across England. **Paragraph 47** requires that applications be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Paragraph 126 outlines that good design is one of the fundamental elements in ensuring sustainable development and contributes to creating better places to live and work, helping make development acceptable to communities.

In respect of non-designated heritage assets, **Paragraph 203** sets out that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

In terms of advertisements, **Paragraph 136** sets out that advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts.

Reading Borough Local Plan (adopted 2019)

Policy CC1 Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development sets out that the council will take a positive approach to considering development proposals that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Policy CC7 Design and the Public Realm requires development to be of high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area of Reading in which it is located, including scale, materials and layout. Proposals should respond positively to local context and character and distinctiveness,

including protecting and enhancing the historic environment. Proposals should create safe and accessible environments and be accessible, usable and easy to understand. Furthermore, development should be visually attractive including through use of appropriate materials.

Policy CC8 Safeguarding Amenity seeks development which does not cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties, including in terms of visual dominance, harm to outlook or artificial lighting.

Policy EN1 Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment sets out that proposals will be expected to protect and where possible enhance the significance of heritage assets and their settings, the historic character and local distinctiveness of the area in which they are located.

Policy EN4 Locally Important Heritage Assets requires that proposals affecting locally important heritage assets demonstrate that development conserves architectural, archaeological or historical significance which may include the appearance, character and setting of the asset. Supporting text paragraph 4.2.20 supports re-use of buildings on the local list.

Policy EN6: New Development in a Historic Context requires that development will make a contribution to the historic character of the area by respecting and enhancing its architectural and visual qualities and considering how heritage considerations can influence the design of new development.

Policy EN16 Pollution and Water Resources sets out that development will only be permitted where it would not be damaging to the environment and sensitive receptors including through light pollution.

Policy TR3 Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters states that proposals should not have a material detrimental impact on the functioning of the transport network or the safety of its users.

Policy OU1 New and Existing Community Facilities supports provision of new community facilities (including education facilities at all levels).

Policy OU4 Advertisements sets out that proposals should 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, and will not have a detrimental effect on public safety. The cumulative impact of adverts will be taken into account, and a proliferation of advertisements that detrimentally affects visual or aural amenity or public safety will not be acceptable. Proposals should (inter alia):

- Not obstruct windows, any other sign already located on the building, or cut across significant architectural features such as historic fascias, windows, pilasters, cornices or scrolls;
- Respect or enhance the building or area, and will respect the key features of the special historic interest;
- Not reduce visibility for users of the highway or accesses onto the highway;
- Illumination should not detract from the amenity of the area or pose a safety hazard to users of the highway.

Design Guide for Shopfronts SPD (July 2022)

Paragraph 2.4 sets out that this document is to be used where advertisements are directly related to a specific shopfront, and is therefore not applicable in this case.

Planning Assessment

The planning considerations arising from the proposals are the impact on the identified non-designated heritage asset, including design, and the impact on surrounding amenities and public safety. These considerations are addressed in turn below.

Adopted national and local planning policy requires that development proposals preserve or enhance the character of heritage assets. The non-designated heritage asset relevant to this proposal is no. 3 Craven Road which is locally listed. As identified within the Planning Policy Summary above, it is required that development proposals affecting Locally Important heritage assets conserve those aspects that make a positive contribution to their significance.

The buildings are currently vacant and undergoing a programme of works providing significant investment following the departure of the previous occupiers (the NHS) in mid-2021. The proposals comprise the installation of external signage which is needed to allow N Family Club to appropriately market their presence when the nursery opens as a new business in the area. The reuse of the locally listed building and provision of a community facility are supported across the development plan, including Policies OU1, CC1 and EN4.

The proposal is for the installation of 2no. non-illuminated metal display board signs, 2no. externally illuminated metal display board signs, and 1no. internally illuminated projecting sign. As outlined above, the Class E use of the buildings and land was established via a Certificate of Lawfulness in July 2022 (ref. 220332) and therefore the use of the site as a nursery does not require planning permission.

Consideration has been given to the impact on the character of the application site and surrounding area. The proposed materials of powder-coated metal are used across existing N Family Club sites and have proven to be robust and durable. They form a high-quality design and use a traditional colour palette of a muted powdered-coated navy blue with white lettering, which is considered to be in keeping with the locally listed building and wholly appropriate for the area. The projecting sign will be fixed to the modern link-building between nos. 3 and 5, and will therefore have no impact on the fabric, character or appearance of the locally listed building. All signs will be fully removable should the nursery vacate the site in future, with no short-term or long-term damage to the locally listed building. This is in accordance with Reading Policies OU4, CC7, EN1, EN4 and EN6.

The quantity of signage is considered appropriate to the location and in proportion to the size of the application site. The proposals provide a sleek and uniform design for the street scene, safely directing nursery users to the pedestrian and vehicle access points, whilst not being overly prominent or obscuring features of the locally listed building. The sign to the vehicle access gate will replace the previous occupier's similarly scaled, located, and proportioned sign. In addition, a number of small signs across the site will be removed, which will further enhance the appearance of the site.

The proposals will therefore enhance the external appearance of these currently vacant buildings and improve the visual coherence across the site as a whole. They will not result in any visual clutter or cause any detrimental impact to the character or outlook. They will therefore cause any undue impact on visual amenity, and are considered to be in full accordance with Reading Policies OU4, CC7 and CC8.

The 2no. illuminated panel signs will comprise a compact strip light above the panel, directing light downwards, with cabling discreetly routed through the signs' posts. The projecting sign will similarly comprise subtle internal illumination of the lettering only. All lighting will only be switched on during the operational, daytime hours of the nursery. The proposed signs are therefore not considered to result in any impact to residential amenity in terms of light pollution, or to cause any light spill or potential glare to road users.

Furthermore, all of the proposed signage would be located within the site boundary and will not project over the highway. It will therefore not impede any pedestrian or vehicle movements or cause any impact on the safety of the public highway. The proposals are therefore in accordance with Reading Policies OU4, TR3, EN16, CC7 and CC8.

In accordance with the NPPF, the proposed signage will contribute positively to the character and setting of the locally listed building. The high-quality design, scale, location, materials and size of the proposed sign respects the existing buildings - particularly the locally listed building. The proposals are compatible with the surrounding area and will result in no harm to public or private amenity or the safety of the highway, in accordance with Paragraph 136 of the NPPF and Reading Policies CC1, CC7, CC8, EN1, EN4, EN6, EN16, TR3 and OU4. The proposal should be considered acceptable in this regard.

Conclusions

This application seeks advertisement consent for the installation of 2no. non-illuminated metal display board signs, 2no. externally illuminated metal display board signs, and 1no. internally illuminated projecting sign at nos. 3 – 5 Craven Road, Reading. The signage is proposed by N Family Club who will operate their nursery from the premises, with the proposals relating to a larger package of approved works that are soon to be underway.

Overall, this scheme provides an appropriate signage solution which is of high quality design and materials, and effectively markets the presence of the nursery, whilst preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of the locally listed building and the surrounding area, in line with paragraph 203 of the NPPF and Reading Policies CC1, CC7, CC8, EN1, EN4, EN6, and OU4.

In addition, the proposed signage will result in no harm to public or private amenity or highway safety, in that they will protect public amenity and highway safety and incorporate high-quality design and materials within the public realm. This is in full accordance with Paragraph 136 of the NPPF and Reading Policies OU4, EN16, TR3.

I therefore trust that the attached information is sufficient to facilitate the granting of permission for the proposed signage. However, should you have any further queries concerning the application please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully



CHRIS JONES
Director

Enc.