

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Target Date: 21/03/22

Application No: 220099/ADV

Address: 82-84 Whitley Street

Proposal: Display of illuminated and non-illuminated fascia and hoarding signs to front and side of building, in association with single storey front extension of shop (retrospective)

Case Officer: Tom Hughes

Site Description and Surrounding Area

82-84 Whitley Street comprises a two storey end-of-terraced building, at the junction with Essex Street. The site is within Whitley Street Major Local Centre, but does not form part of its Key Frontage. The ground floor of the building is occupied by Exotic Food Market, a grocery shop. Residential accommodation is located at the first floor. A single storey extension, subject of this application, has been erected to the shop frontage forming a covered, outdoor display area for fresh fruit and vegetables. The surrounding area has a mixed commercial and residential character.

Proposal

The application seeks retrospective consent for the display of illuminated and non-illuminated fascia and hoarding signs to the front and side of the building. Most of the signage is located on the unauthorised single storey front extension, subject to application 220098/FUL.

Plans Considered

The agent supplied the following, received on 25/01/22:

Planning Statement

Site Location

Drawing No: 220101-2 - Block Plan

Drawing No: 220101-3 - Site Plan

Drawing No: 220101-4 - Ground Floor Plan

Drawing No: 220101-5 - Elevations

Relevant Planning History

220098/FUL - Single storey front extension to shop (retrospective) - to be determined

Consultation Responses

Neighbouring owners and occupiers at 80-90 (evens) Whitley Street and 2 Essex Street were consulted by letter. A site notice was sent to the agent for display. One representation was received, with regard to the following:

- The lighting of the signage is a nuisance, shining directly through windows of neighbouring properties
- Objecting to the boarding of the signage

Reading Borough Transport Development Control

Raised no objection to proposal, subject to a condition restricting luminance.

Equality Act 2010

In determining this application, the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. However, there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application. Therefore in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

Relevant Planning Policy and Guidance

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. However the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making (NPPF paragraph 12).

In this regard, the NPPF states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Development Framework (LDF) (Core Strategy, Sites and Detailed Policies Document and Reading Central Area Action Plan) according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (the closer the policies in the plan to the policies in the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

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.

Factors relevant to public safety include highway safety and whether the advert would hinder security or surveillance devices, including speed cameras.

Accordingly, the National Planning Policy Framework and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant:

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

Policy CC7 - Design and the Public Realm

Policy CC8 - Safeguarding Amenity

Policy TR3 - Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters

Policy OU4 - Advertisements

Design Guide for Shopfronts SPD (2022)

The main issues to be considered are:

- a. Amenity
- b. Public safety

Amenity

Policy OU4 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. The proposed signage comprises three fascia's, to the front and sides of the extension, hoarding signs covering the entirety of each of the extensions side elevations, and a further hoarding sign at first floor level to the side elevation of the original building.

The ground floor of 82-84 Whitley Street has an established use as a grocery shop. Accordingly, some related signage is to be expected. The signage subject of this application is mostly located on an unauthorised single storey front extension. The extension is subject to application 220098/FUL. As set out in the Shopfronts SPD, it is important signage is employed that enhances the street scene and does not detract from it. A consequence of a consistent building line along the remainder of the terraced row, the signage is clearly discernible when approaching from the north and south, which exacerbates its visual impact.

The fascia signs have a modern appearance, extending the full length of each external elevation. At 1m in height, they are very tall and sit just below the sills of the first floor windows. The hoarding signs are of acrylic composition and comprise images of produce. Considered cumulatively, the signage is excessive in its proliferation and scale, covering the entirety of the shop front. The hoarding signs are particularly garish in design and draw the eye, with their appearance being jarring and uncharacteristic on an otherwise domestic terraced row.

Accordingly, the signage does not respect the building on which it is located or the character of the surrounding area, causing significant harm in terms of visual amenity. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies CC7 and OU4 and the Shopfronts SPD.

Public Safety

The signage is located in a position that does not cause a physical obstruction to members of the public using the highway. The signage has only low levels of illumination and as such is unlikely to cause a distraction to users of the highway. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable in public safety terms in accordance with Policy TR3.

RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE CONSENT