

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Address: 1-3 Queen Victoria Street, Reading

Application No: 212010 / ADV

Proposal: 3no. fascia signs. 1no. to Queen Victoria Street, 1no. to Friar Street and 1no. above corner entrance. 2no. projecting signs. 1no. to Queen Victoria Street and 1no. to Friar Street. New graphics to 4no. existing awnings.

Case Officer: Beatrice Malama

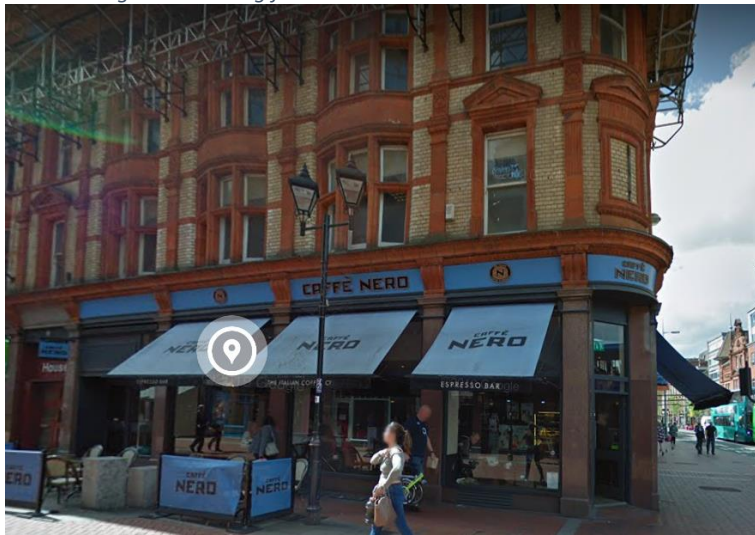
Date Received: 20/12/2021

Agreed Target Date: 08/07/2022

Site Description

The application site is a four story Listed building located at the corner of Queen Victoria and Friar Streets within Reading's Central Business area. This application relates only to the ground floor of 1-3 Queen Victoria Street. The shop was previously used as a coffee shop by Café Nero. The building does not fall within a Conservation Area.

Figure 1: Existing front elevation



Proposal

The proposal is for the installation of 3no. fascia signs; 1no. to Queen Victoria Street, 1no. to Friar Street and 1no. above corner entrance, 2no. projecting signs; 1no. to Queen Victoria Street and 1no. to Friar Street and new graphics to 4no. existing awnings.

Plans Submitted

The following plans were received on 7th January 2022:

Drawing No: 9556-P-01 A - Site Location Plan

Drawing No: 9556-P-03 B - Existing Shopfront

The following revised plans and supporting documents were received by the Local Planning Authority on 17th June 2022 and 8th July 2022.

Drawing No: 9556-P-06 Rev PE - Proposed sign details

Sign light details - Product Code: 7672GP

As received by the Local Planning Authority on 17th June 2022.

Drawing No: 9556-P-04 Rev PH - Proposed shop front

Drawing No: 9556-P-05 Rev PE - Proposed section through shopfront

As received by the Local Planning Authority on 8th July 2022

Relevant Planning History

The application site which is 1-3 Queen Victoria Street is part of a row of shops at 1-15 Queen Victoria Street. The wider building has a long planning history including the recently permitted planning applications 210223 and 210224 for the proposed part demolition of rear of site. Repair and refurbishment of listed building. Change of use of upper floors from office (Use Class E(g)) to apart hotel (Use Class C1). Erection of a three - storey rear extension with mansard. Erection of a part-single, part-two storey rear addition (Use Class E(a) or (b)). Alterations to ground floor principle façade. Creation of Public Square, and associated works.

Consultations

Internal Consultation

Conservation and Urban Design Officer - the first heritage comments were received on 25th March 2022 as follows:

The proposed materials, projecting signs and proposed internally illuminated signage, are all incompatible with what would be acceptable and are considered to Harm to the character and setting of the listed building. In accordance with the guidelines of the NPPF, Council should Refuse the Listed Building Consent.

In order to make the proposal more in keeping with the character and setting of the listed building, the following changes to the proposal were recommend by the conservation officer:

- amending the materials chosen to compliment the heritage character of the host building,
- change the signage so that it is similar to other schemes in Queen Victoria Street,
- hanging signs to be done in a traditional arrangement with spot downlights
- painted signage and appropriate down lighting.

A number of changes to the proposal have since been made and these include the following:

- Projecting signs have been raised to fascia level and traditional materials incorporated.
- Fascia signage is now shown painted directly to the fascia panel.
- Lighting has been added to the two main fascia signs - specification of the proposed lights attached.
- Logo print to the awnings has been reduced 50% as requested.

Revised plans highlighting the above listed changes were received by the Local Planning Authority on 17th June 2022. No further objections have been received from the conservation officer. Final heritage comments were received on 17th June 2022.

Ward Councilors - Expressed concerns on the impact of the initial proposal on the listed building and the wider area. These have been addressed through various changes made to the proposed plans.

Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee - Comments were received on 28th May 2022 and the following concerns were raised:

- This proposal for a landmark building on the corner, will have a detrimental impact on the listed buildings in the street and this key pedestrian route to and from the station.

- The shopfront, fascia and awnings clearly depart from the principles set out in the Shopfronts SPD.

Case officer comment: Revised plans addressing various issues raised have been received by the Local Planning Authority. The proposal therefore is considered to comply with the policies identified.

Public Consultation

A site notice was displayed on 12th January 2022 and owners and occupiers of surrounding neighbouring properties were consulted by letter.

No response has been received.

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 and Legal Context

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. The Development Plan for Reading relevant to the application site comprises the *Reading Local Plan (2019)*

The ‘National Planning Policy framework’ (‘NPPF’) 2021 states clearly that its content is to be a material consideration in the determination of applications. The ‘NPPF’ states that due weight should be given to the adopted policies of the Local Development Framework (LDF) 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). Accordingly, the ‘NPPF’ and the following development plan policies and supplementary planning guidance are relevant.

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.

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019):

CC7: Design and the Public Realm
 EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment
 OU4: Advertisements
 OU5: Shopfronts and Cash Machines
 CR2: Design and Central Reading
 CR7: Primary Frontages in Central Reading
 SPD - Design Guide for Shopfronts (2022)

Appraisal

The main issues to be considered are:

- i) Amenity
- ii) Public safety

i) 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, 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. All adverts shall comply with the following criteria:

- a) Advertisements will 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; **Complies***
- b) Where a shop or business occupies more than one adjacent unit, the advertisement will not run between the shopfronts; **Complies***
- c) Advertisements on listed buildings or in Conservation Areas will respect or enhance the building or area, and will respect the key features of the special historic interest; **Complies***
- d) Advertisements will not reduce visibility for users of the highway or accesses onto the highway; **Complies***
- e) Illumination should not detract from the amenity of the area or pose a safety hazard to users of the highway; **Complies, non-illuminating signs have been proposed.***
- f) Advertisements should not obscure the sight lines of cameras installed for public safety. **Complies, non-illuminating signs have been proposed. Down lighting has been proposed instead and this is considered unlikely to obscure sight lines of cameras.***

ii) Public Safety

The NPPG (in particular in this instance Paragraph: 068 Reference ID: 18b-068-20140306 & Paragraph: 078 Reference ID: 18b-078-20140306) provides guidance as to the considerations affecting public safety. These are detailed below (in *italics*), together with officer responses in relation to the proposal (in **bold**):

The main types of advertisement which may cause danger to road users are:

- (a) those which obstruct or impair sight-lines at corners, bends or at a junction, or at any point of access to a highway; **No***
- (b) those which, because of their size or siting, would obstruct or confuse a road-user's view, or reduce the clarity or effectiveness of a traffic sign or signal, or would be likely to distract road-users because of their unusual nature; **No***

(c) those which effectively leave insufficient clearance above any part of a highway, or insufficient lateral clearance for vehicles on the carriageway (due allowance being made for the camber of the road-surface); **No**

(d) those externally or internally illuminated signs (incorporating either flashing or static lights) including those utilising light emitting diode technology:

i. where the means of illumination is directly visible from any part of the road; **No.**

ii. which, because of their colour, could be mistaken for, or confused with, traffic lights or any other authorised signals; **No**

iii. which, because of their size or brightness, could result in glare and dazzle, or distract road-users, particularly in misty or wet weather; **No**

iv. which are subject to frequent changes of the display; **No**

(e) those which incorporate moving or apparently moving elements in their display, or successive individual advertisements which do not display the whole message; **No**

(f) those requiring close study (such as Public Information Panels), which are situated so that people looking at them would be insufficiently protected from passing vehicles; or those advertisements sited on narrow footpaths where they may interfere with safe passage by causing pedestrians to step into the road; **No**

(g) those which resemble traffic signs, as defined in section 64 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, and may therefore be subject to removal by the traffic authority under section 69 of that Act, for example:

i. those embodying red circles, crosses or triangles, or any traffic sign symbol; or those in combinations of colours which might otherwise be mistaken for traffic signs; **No** or

ii. those incorporating large arrows or chevrons with only the arrow or chevron made of retroflective material or illuminated, causing confusion with similar signs in use at, or approaching roundabouts. **No**

(h) those which embody directional or other traffic elements and which need special scrutiny because of possible resemblance to, or confusion with, traffic signs, for example, advertisements which:

i. contain a large arrow or chevron (or have a pointed end and have only a few words of message); **No**

ii. invite drivers to turn right on a main road, or where there is fast moving traffic; **No**

iii. invite drivers to turn, but are sited so close to the turning that there is not enough time to signal and turn safely; **No** or

iv. are so close to similar advertisements, or official traffic signs, that road-users might be confused in the vicinity of a road junction or other traffic hazard. **No**

The prevention of crime is a public safety consideration and local planning authorities should consider whether granting express consent could block the view of CCTV cameras, or whether illumination from an advertisement would cause glare on such cameras. **No.**

Conclusion

The proposal has been assessed and the works are considered to be in line with the above policies and therefore Advertisement Consent can be granted subject to conditions.

Recommendation

Grant

Conditions

1. A1: Standard Advert Requirements
2. AD2: Approved Plans (Adverts)

Informative

1. F1: Positive and Proactive Working

2. Terms

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