

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Target Date: 03/01/20

Application No: 191744/ADV

Address: St Mary's Church House, Chain Street

Proposal: Display of various illuminated and non-illuminated signage

Case Officer: Tom Hughes

Site Description and Surrounding Area

The application site comprises St Mary's Church House, an early-mid C18 Grade II Listed Building in Reading town centre. The building is located within St Mary's Butts/Castle Street Conservation Area, opposite the Grade I listed Church of St Mary; a Reading landmark which is mentioned in the Domesday Book. The building is in use as a restaurant.

Proposal

The proposal is for the display of various illuminated and non-illuminated signage, to replace existing restaurant signage.

Plans Considered

The agent supplied the following, received on 01/11/19:

Design, Access and Heritage Statement

Drawing No: BL002.18.BLO Rev. A - Site Location

Drawing No: BL002.18.450 Rev. D - Existing External Floor Plan and Front Elevation

Drawing No: BL002.18.450 Rev. A - Existing External Floor Plan and Side Elevation

Drawing No: BL002.18.451 Rev. F - Proposed External Floor Plan and Front Elevation

Drawing No: BL002.18.451 Rev. A - Proposed External Floor Plan and Side Elevation

Drawing No: BR1 Rev. D - Proposed Front Elevation

Drawing No: BR3 Rev. D - Indicative Image

Drawing No: BR4 Rev. D - Indicative Image

Drawing No: BR5 Rev. D - Proposed Signage

Drawing No: BR6 Rev. D - Proposed Signage

Drawing No: BR7 Rev. D - Proposed Signage

Drawing No: BR8 Rev. D - Proposed Signage

Drawing No: BR9 Rev. D - Proposed Signage

Consultation Responses

Neighbouring owners and occupiers were consulted by letter. A site notice was displayed. No letters of representation were received.

Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee

Raised objections to the proposal.

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 EN1 - Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

Policy EN3 - Enhancement of Conservation Areas

Policy EN6 - New Development in a Historic Context

Policy TR3 - Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters

Policy OU4 - Advertisements

The main issues to be considered are:

- a. Amenity
- b. Public safety

Amenity

By virtue of the excessive number of signs together with their scale, illumination and garish design, the advertisements do not respect the character or architectural integrity of the Listed Building. The signs appear obtrusive and overbearing and result in a

proliferation of inappropriate signage which detracts from the character and visual amenity of the wider Conservation Area. As such, the proposal is harmful to visual amenity and conflicts with Policies CC7, EN1, EN3, EN6 and OU4 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019).

Public Safety

The proposed signage would be located in a position that would not cause a physical obstruction to members of the public using the highway. The signage would not be illuminated 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