

Address: Forbury Apartments, Abbey Square

Application No: 181921/ADV

Proposal: 1 x internally illuminated fascia sign, 2 x internally illuminated wall mounted signs and 1 non-illuminated wall mounted sign

Case Officer: Connie Davis

Site Description and Surrounding Area:

The application site comprises of the Forbury hotel and apartment complex. The current lawful use of the building is Class C1 hotel. The Forbury Hotel is a Grade II listed building located in The Forbury (facing Forbury Gardens) situated to the east of the town centre shopping area/railway station within the defined Reading Central Core as well as within an air quality management area. The site is also located in close proximity to the Market Place/ London Street Conservation Area.

Proposals:

The proposal consists of the installation of four advertisement signs;

Sign 1: 'HOUSE'

The sign measured approximately 6.5m in height and 1m in width. Individual letters will be bonded to the north-west elevation. The sign will have halo illumination at a level of 250cd/m.

Sign 2: 'The Roseate Reading'

The sign will be located on the eastern elevation of the building. It will have a maximum height of 2m and a maximum width of approximately 1.75m. It will have halo illumination at a level of 250cd/m.

Sign 3: 'Roasted'

The sign will be located on the front (southern) elevation. It will measure approximately 2m in width and 0.5m in height. It will be internally illuminated at a level of 250cd/m.

Sign 4: 'The Roseate Reading'

The sign will be located on the front (southern) elevation and will set next to the entrance doors of the building. It is a replacement of the sign already in place. It will measure approximately 0.7m x 0.7m. It will be non-illuminated.

Plans Submitted:

1120-P-010 Rev A - Site & Location Plan

1120-P-011 Rev B - Existing

1120-P-012 Rev B - Existing

1120-P-013 Rev B - Proposed

1120-P-014 Rev B - Proposed

Received 2nd February 2019

Other documentation submitted as part of the application

Confirmation of Manufacture
Applelec 'HOUSE' specification
Artwork Proof

Received 21st December 2018.

Relevant Planning History:

181021 - The change of use of part of the ground floor from hotel (Class C1) to cafe (Class A3), erection of a linen store, relocation of bin store and installation of fencing, retaining wall and gates - Application Permitted

Consultation Responses:

No adjoining neighbours were formally consulted via letter as part of the consultation process due to the application site itself being a hotel, and nearby buildings serving a commercial use. Instead, two site notices were displayed within good proximity to the site. The consultation period ended on 24th January 2019.

Internal Consultees

CCTV:

No objections.

Transport:

There are no Transport objections to the proposed advertisement consent subject to the conditions below:

Advertisements: restriction on illumination

As identified in submitted plans:

- "House" Sign (Plan RB 180258 Rev1) - The maximum luminance from the sign should not exceed 600 cd/m².
- "Roast" Sign - (Plan MR262825) The maximum luminance from the sign should not exceed 600 cd/m².
- "The Roseate Reading" (Side Fascia Branding) - (The maximum luminance from the Sign should not exceed 600 cd/m².

Reason: To avoid glare, which could lead to danger to highway users and/or in the interests of amenity in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CS20 and Sites and Detailed Policies document Policy DM12.

CAAC

No comments received.

Summary of discussions with applicant/agent:

None.

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 Development Framework 'Core Strategy' 2008 (Altered 2015)*, the *Reading Central Area Action Plan (2009)* and *'Sites and Detailed Policies Document' 2012 (Altered 2015)*.

The '*National Planning Policy framework*' ('NPPF') 2018 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) (Core Strategy and Sites and Detailed Policies Document) 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.

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

Relevant Policies

Reading Borough Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2008) (Altered 2015):

CS7 (Design and the Public Realm)

CS33 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment)

Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012) (Altered 2015)

DM12: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters

DM19: Air Quality

DM22: Advertisements

DM23: Shopfronts and Cash Machines

Reading Central Area Action Plan (RCAAP) (2009)

RC6 (Primary Shopping Area)

RC6 (Central Core)

RC10 (Existing Active Frontage)

Appraisal

The main issues are considered to be:

- i) Amenity
- ii) Public safety

i) Amenity

The NPPG (Paragraph: 079 Reference ID: 18b-079-20140306) provides clarification as to the exact context amenity should be considered (in short, it includes aural and visual amenity and factors relevant to amenity include the general characteristics of the locality, including the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural or similar interest). Furthermore, at the local level, policies CS7, DM22 and RC5 require that development be compatible with the character and appearance of the surrounding environment in order to maintain the visual amenities of the area. In particular, policy DM22 states:

“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”.

Furthermore, Policy DM23 details that fascia boards should be lower than any first floor windows, and reflect the predominant height of existing fascia boards on surrounding buildings.

In this instance, the surrounding buildings which include The Blade, St Lawrence House Apartments (opposite) and Davidson House (adjacent) have little visible signage from Abbey Square, and that which is installed is at low level.

The proposed ‘HOUSE’ sign is located above the level of first floor windows (and therefore contrary to Policy DM23). However, due to the overall scale of the building (which 9 storeys high), the sign, which will stretch approximately 6.5m in height from the first to fourth floors is not considered out excessive in relation to the overall scale of the building. Additionally, the sign is to be located within the parking area of the Forbury Apartments and therefore will not be visible from the street.

It is acknowledged that this sign will face on to the rear of the Forbury Hotel, a Grade II listed building. However, as the proposed luminance of the sign is to be a low level (250 cd/m²) which will also be controlled through a condition, along with the distance between rear elevations of the two buildings being over 20m, it is not considered that the proposed sign will cause significant harm to the listed building. The other three proposed signs are not visible from the listed building as they are to be installed on the front elevation of the building facing on to Abbey Square. As

such, the proposal is not considered to cause substantial harm to the setting of the listed building and therefore is not contrary to policy CS33 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment).

The 'roasted' and 2 x 'The Roseate Reading' signs are located below, or at, first floor level. One of 'The Roseate Reading' signs is a replacement of the existing, whereas the other two are new additions to the building. On balance, these additions are not considered to cause a detrimental impact on amenity due to their relatively modest scales in relation to the overall size of the building. In addition, the location of the building on Abbey Square (which does not receive high volumes of traffic due to the road configuration), and the square itself is likely to be utilised most by those specifically wanting to enter the building/ nearby buildings means that it is not an area where the proposed signs will be viewed excessively by members of the public. Nevertheless, this proposal is not considered to adversely impact the public realm for the reasons discussed and therefore complies with policy CS7 (Design and the Public Realm).

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: **No***
 - 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 retroreflective 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, as confirmed by Reading CCTV.***

In light of the above it is confirmed that the proposals are considered to be satisfactory on public safety grounds.

Conclusion

GRANT /ADV in accordance with Regulation 14 (1) (a and b) of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended).

Subject to the following conditions:

Conditions

1. This consent relates to the following drawings only:

1120-P-010 Rev A - Site & Location Plan

1120-P-013 Rev B - Proposed

1120-P-014 Rev B - Proposed

Received 2nd February 2019

Reason: Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and to clarify which drawings are approved.

2. The maximum luminance from the signs hereby permitted shall not exceed 250cd/m².

Reason: To avoid glare, which could lead to danger to highway users and/or in the interests of amenity in accordance with Core Strategy Policy CS20 and Sites and Detailed Policies document Policies DM4, DM12 and DM22.

3. The Standard Conditions:

i. No advertisement is to be displayed without the permission of the owner of the site or any other person with an interest in the site entitled to grant permission.

Reason: In accordance with Schedule 2, Regulation 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007.

ii. No advertisement shall be sited or displayed so as to:

a) endanger persons using any highway, railway, waterway, dock, harbour or aerodrome (civil or military);

b) obscure, or hinder the ready interpretation of, any traffic sign, railway signal or aid to navigation by water or air; or

c) hinder the operation of any device used for the purpose of security or surveillance or for measuring the speed of any vehicle.

Reason: in accordance with Schedule 2, Regulation 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007.

iii. Any advertisement displayed, and any site used for the display of advertisements, shall be maintained in a condition that does not impair the visual amenity of the site.

Reason: In accordance with Schedule 2, Regulation 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007.

iv. Any structure or hoarding erected or used principally for the purpose of displaying advertisements shall be maintained in a condition that does not endanger the public.

Reason: In accordance with Schedule 2, Regulation 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007.

v. Where an advertisement is required under these Regulations to be removed, the site shall be left in a condition that does not endanger the public or impair visual amenity.

Reason: In accordance with Schedule 2, Regulation 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007.

Informatives

1. Your attention is drawn to the terms and conditions of this permission. 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 permission may result in the Council taking action to remedy the breach of planning control. If you are in any doubt please contact the Council.

2. The decision to grant permission follows the positive and proactive consideration of the issues raised by this application and issuing the decision within the statutory time period.