

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Address: The Oracle Shopping Centre, Bridge St, Reading, RG1 2AG

Application No: 170800/ADV

Proposal: Display of 12 fascia signs and 10 wayfinding totem signs (all internally illuminated) to The Oracle Shopping Centre, following removal of existing signage (amended description).

Applicant: The Oracle Shopping Centre

Date received (valid from): 26/06/17

Target Decision date: 21/08/17

Case officer: Jonathan Markwell

1. Site Description and Surrounding Area

- i. The application site is the demise of The Oracle Shopping Centre and car park, bounded by Broad St / Minster Street / Gun St to the north, Yield Hall Place to the east, the IDR to the south and Bridge Street to the west. The River Kennet runs through the site, either side of which is the public realm space associated with the Oracle, with a variety of largely restaurants, retail shops, a cinema and entrances (some to the Oracle, others to the associated multi-storey car parks) beyond this.
- ii. The site is subject to the following site constraints / designations, including:
 - The site is designated as an important area of open space (Policy RC14j)
 - Inside the primary shopping area (RC6)
 - Active frontages (RC10)
 - Inside the central core (RC6)
 - Within an area with archaeological potential (DM19)
 - Within an Air Quality Management Area (DM19)
 - Within a green network (DM17)
 - Within a British waterways consultation area (CS8)
 - Eastern tip of the application site is within the Market Place / London Street Conservation Area (CS33) the Yield Hall Place bridge is identified as having an important view to the south-west (towards the site) and the Duke Street High Bridge (just outside the red-line boundary) is identified as having important views in both eastern and western direction, as well as itself being Grade II listed.
 - Parts of the northern area of the application site are within St. Mary Butts / Castle St Conservation Area and adjacent to Grade II listed buildings fronting onto Gun Street, beyond which is the Grade I listed Church of St Mary / Grade II listed Queen Victoria Jubilee Fountain.
 - Flood Zone 2&3a/b (CS35)
 - Potential contaminated land (CS34)
 - South side of the River Kennet through the Oracle is part of the designated National Cycle Route 4
- iii. To the south-east of the site, the land is designated under policy RC4i as 'the Oracle Extension, Bridge St & Letcombe St' for 'development of the area between the River Kennet and Mill Lane for retail, with use of site at Letcombe Street for public car park'.

2. The Proposal

- i. Advertisement consent is sought for the display of 12 fascia signs and 10 wayfinding totem signs (all internally illuminated) to The Oracle Shopping Centre, following removal of existing signage, as follows:

Fascia signs x12

- EXT05 - Bridge Street Facade
- EXT06 - Riverside Car Park entrance
- EXT08 - Riverside Car Park entrance
- EXT09 - South east corner Vue Cinema on A329
- EXT13 - Riverside Car Park secondary entrance
- EXT15 - Riverside Car Park primary entrance
- EXT16 - Riverside Car Park façade
- EXT18 - Riverside Rotunda entrance
- EXT24 - Broad Street entrance
- EXT26 - Broad Street entrances
- EXT31 - Holy Brook Car Park entrance
- EXT50 - Shopmobility entrance on Yield Hall Place

Totem signs x10

- EXT01 - Bridge Street
- EXT02 - Bridge Street
- EXT10 - Yield Hall Place
- EXT11 - Riverside Cinema Entrance
- EXT17 - Riverside Walkway Bridge
- EXT20 - Riverside Rotunda Entrance
- EXT21 - Riverside Debenhams Entrance
- EXT22 - Yield Hall Place
- EXT27 - Broad Street Entrance
- EXT28 - Gun Street Walkway

- ii. All the signs will be internally illuminated (various cd/m² - fascia signs range from 140-450cs/m² and all totems are to be 220 cd/m²) and static in nature. The exact size, materials and height of individual letters will vary. The proposed fascia signs will (barring the shopmobility entrance fascia EXT50) comprise a fabricated bronze background and anodised aluminium face panel with graphic letters cut through. Illumination will occur between background and anodised aluminium panel. EXT06 / 08 / 13 / 16 / 31 / 50 (entrance signs) will include sign boxes with 90 degree corners. Opal acrylic graphics will be pushed through aluminium face to finish flush. The graphics will have crisp edges and sharp corners. Fascia EXT08 / 31 (car park entrance signs) will be combined with a fabricated aluminium sign panel of appropriate thickness with internal support (as required), to ensure no warping or flexing across the face of the fascia.
- iii. In terms of the totems, each of the 10 external sign structures proposed will be internally illuminated and double sided, comprising a fabricated anodised aluminium

shell with internal structural components. The panels are to be 3mm and with appropriate support (as required), to ensure no bowing or sagging across face. In addition, the panels are to be folded, to ensure crisp 90 degree corners. There will be a frame welded stainless steel baseplate. The foundation details are to be concrete pad or direct to slab with chem-fixed anchor or similar to allow for paving to be reinstated up to the sign edge.

- iv. During the course of the application three originally proposed fascia signs were omitted from the scheme following officer feedback (EXT 29 - Gun Street entrance; EXT48 - Bridge Street façade; and EXT 52 - Minster Street entrance). A number of clarifications were also sought and made in relation to specific details associated with individual signs. A revised proposal document / schedule was submitted for consideration on 15/08/17.

3. Consultations

RBC Transport Development Control

There are no transport objections to the 15 fascia signs subject to the conditions below:

Advertisements: restriction on illumination

Facias as identified in the plans submitted:

- EXT05 - The maximum luminance from the sign should not exceed 600 cd/m².
- EXT06 - The maximum luminance from the sign should not exceed 1000 cd/m².
- EXT08 - The maximum luminance from the sign should not exceed 1000 cd/m².
- EXT09 - The maximum luminance from the sign should not exceed 1000 cd/m².
- EXT13 - The maximum luminance from the sign should not exceed 1000 cd/m².
- EXT15 - The maximum luminance from the sign should not exceed 1000 cd/m².
- EXT16 - The maximum luminance from the sign should not exceed 1000 cd/m².
- EXT18 - The maximum luminance from the sign should not exceed 600 cd/m².
- EXT24 - The maximum luminance from the sign should not exceed 1000 cd/m².
- EXT26 - The maximum luminance from the sign should not exceed 1000 cd/m².
- EXT29 - The maximum luminance from the sign should not exceed 1000 cd/m².
- EXT31 - The maximum luminance from the sign should not exceed 1000 cd/m².
- EXT48 - The maximum luminance from the sign should not exceed 1000 cd/m².
- EXT50 - The maximum luminance from the sign should not exceed 1000 cd/m².
- EXT52 - 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.

Totem as identified in the plan submitted:

- EXT01 - The maximum luminance from the sign should not exceed 1000 cd/m².
- EXT02 - The maximum luminance from the sign should not exceed 1000 cd/m².
- EXT10 - This Totem appears to be sited within the cycle stands. Is this correct as it will result in the loss of the stands? Clarification required on this signage.
- EXT11 - The maximum luminance from the sign should not exceed 1000 cd/m².

EXT17 - The maximum luminance from the sign should not exceed 1000 cd/m2.
EXT20 - The maximum luminance from the sign should not exceed 1000 cd/m2.
EXT21 - The maximum luminance from the sign should not exceed 1000 cd/m2.
EXT22 - The maximum luminance from the sign should not exceed 1000 cd/m2.
EXT27 - The maximum luminance from the sign should not exceed 1000 cd/m2.
EXT28 - The maximum luminance from the sign should not exceed 1000 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.

Transport Development Control does not have any objections to the Totems, apart from Totem EXT10 where clarification is required with regards to its positioning*.

* Officer comment - A plan was received on 15/08/17 outlining that the cycle stands in question would be re-positioned (to a position adjacent to the Cinema, where existing cycle stands are already present). Strictly speaking, ensuring this cycle space is relocated is outside of the scope of this advertisement consent application, but the applicant has demonstrated sufficiently that this has been considered and hence planning officers are therefore satisfied with this relatively minor matter.

4. Plans / Documents Considered

- i. The Council, in reaching its recommendation, has taken into consideration the following plans and documents:

External Signs Planning Submission (70 pages) by Holmes Wood dated 11/08/17, as received 15/08/17

Sign Schedule by Simply Planning, as received 15/08/17

B151712-D01-01 - Cycle Stand Relocation Location Plan, as received 15/08/17

Letter from Simply Planning, dated and received 19/05/17

Letter from Simply Planning, dated and received 19/06/17

Letter from Simply Planning, dated and received 15/08/17

5. Relevant Planning History

- i. There are numerous applications associated with the Oracle in the past two decades, but the following are considered to be of some relevance in this specific instance:
- ii. 162266 - Digital LED Single Sided Totem Screen located on the north side of the river adjacent to the Oracle entrance. Approved 02/02/17.
- iii. 162267 - Digital LED double sided totem screen located to the north side of the river. Approved 02/02/17.
- iv. 162270 - Digital LED double sided totem screen located on the south side of the river between Pizza Hut and Nando's. Approved 27/03/17.

6. 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.

7. Relevant Planning 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. The Development Plan for Reading relevant to the application site comprises the Reading Local Development Framework 'Core Strategy' 2008 (Altered 2015), 'Reading Central Area Action Plan' 2009 and 'Sites and Detailed Policies Document' 2012 (Altered 2015).

Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special interest which it possesses.

Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority in the exercise of its functions to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

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.

The 'National Planning Policy framework' ('NPPF') 2012 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, RCAAP 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).

8. Relevant Policies

The application has been assessed against the following policies:

National

National Planning Policy Framework 2012;
National Planning Policy Guidance 2014 onwards;

RBC Local Development Framework

Core Strategy 2008 (Altered 2015)

CS7	Design and the Public Realm
CS20	Implementation of the Reading Transport Strategy
CS33	Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012 (Altered 2015)

DM4	Safeguarding amenity
DM12	Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters
DM22	Advertisements

Reading Centre Area Action Plan 2009

RC5	Design in the Centre
RC6	Definition of the Centre

9. Appraisal

- i. The main issues are considered to be:
 - Amenity
 - Public Safety
- ii. 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”.

In these regards no substantial concerns are raised in respect of the proposed fascia and totem signs, subject to the standard conditions.

More specifically, in the majority of instances the proposals represent replacement fascia signs at similar locations across the Oracle site. With this in mind, the principle of providing appropriate signage in these locations has already been established. Moreover, the proposed signs in themselves are considered appropriate, being of a size and nature which is in keeping the scale and character of the constructed buildings / surrounding area (including the heritage assets and other site specific characteristics outlined in section 1 above). Within the context of the existing signage at the site, it is considered that the fascia signs would have a negligible effect upon the visual amenity of the surrounding area.

Although advertisements above ground floor level are generally discouraged, given that existing high level signs exist (which will be removed as part of the proposals) at EXT05 (Bridge Street façade), EX09 (South east corner of the cinema), EXT18 (Riverside rotunda entrance) and EX16 (Riverside car park façade), this forms a basis for these proposed fascia signs. It is fully acknowledged that the proposed signs will be viewable from various short, medium and long distances; however, taking into account the character of the site (as existing) and surrounding area, this is not considered to raise any significantly harmful amenity impacts.

The proposed totem signs are located at various convenient positions across the site and are considered suitable in amenity terms. It is noted that three separate totem signs were approved earlier this year in nearby riverside locations. Based on the clarifications provided by the applicant on 15th August, it is concluded that cumulatively this will not lead to a unacceptable proliferation of advertisements.

With regard to the luminance levels of the proposed signs, the applicant has stated the following maximum levels:

- EXT05 - Bridge Street Façade - 450 cd/m²
- EXT06 - Riverside Car Park entrance - 346 cd/m²
- EXT08 - Riverside Car Park entrance - 334 cd/m²
- EXT09 - South east corner Vue Cinema on A329 - 369 cd/m²
- EXT13 - Riverside Car Park secondary entrance - 242 cd/m²
- EXT15 - Riverside Car Park primary entrance - 186 cd/m²
- EXT16 - Riverside Car Park façade - 374 cd/m²
- EXT18 - Riverside Rotunda entrance - 399 cd/m²
- EXT24 - Broad Street entrance - 346 cd/m²
- EXT26 - Broad Street entrances - 287 cd/m²
- EXT31 - Holy Brook Car Park entrance - 279 cd/m²
- EXT50 - Shopmobility entrance on Yield Hall Place - 140 cd/m²

Totem signs x10

- EXT01 - Bridge Street - 220 cd/m²
- EXT02 - Bridge Street - 220 cd/m²
- EXT10 - Yield Hall Place - 220 cd/m²
- EXT11 - Riverside Cinema Entrance - 220 cd/m²
- EXT17 - Riverside Walkway Bridge - 220 cd/m²
- EXT20 - Riverside Rotunda Entrance - 220 cd/m²

- EXT21 - Riverside Debenhams Entrance - 220 cd/m2
- EXT22 - Yield Hall Place - 220 cd/m2
- EXT27 - Broad Street Entrance - 220 cd/m2
- EXT28 - Gun Street Walkway - 220 cd/m2

The levels stated are within those considered appropriate by Transport officers (see above). Accordingly, the levels stated by the applicant will be secured via condition. This is to avoid glare, which could lead to danger to highway users and in the interests of visual amenity, in accordance with Policy CS20 of the Reading Borough LDF Core Strategy 2008 (Altered 2015) and Policies DM12 and DM22 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012 (Altered 2015).

iii. 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 - standard illumination is proposed***
 - 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, subject to the luminance level condition recommended (as referenced in the amenity section above).***
 - 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, the totem signs are located within pedestrianised areas.***
- (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**

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

10. Conclusion

- i. Having regard to the material considerations and all matters raised, the Local Planning Authority considers that the balance of considerations therefore weigh in favour of granting advertisement consent subject to conditions.

Recommendation

Grant Advertisement Consent, subject to conditions;

11. Conditions:

1. 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

2. The advertisements hereby approved shall be displayed in accordance with the following approved drawings and details only:

External Signs Planning Submission (70 pages) by Holmes Wood dated 11/08/17, as received 15/08/17

Sign Schedule by Simply Planning, as received 15/08/17

B151712-D01-01 - Cycle Stand Relocation Location Plan, as received 15/08/17

Letter from Simply Planning, dated and received 19/06/17

Letter from Simply Planning, dated and received 15/08/17

Reason: To clarify which drawings are approved.

3. The maximum luminance from each fascia sign hereby approved shall not exceed the level hereby stated:

- EXT05 - Bridge Street Façade - 450 cd/m²
- EXT06 - Riverside Car Park entrance - 346 cd/m²
- EXT08 - Riverside Car Park entrance - 334 cd/m²
- EXT09 - South east corner Vue Cinema on A329 - 369 cd/m²
- EXT13 - Riverside Car Park secondary entrance - 242 cd/m²
- EXT15 - Riverside Car Park primary entrance - 186 cd/m²
- EXT16 - Riverside Car Park façade - 374 cd/m²
- EXT18 - Riverside Rotunda entrance - 399 cd/m²
- EXT24 - Broad Street entrance - 346 cd/m²
- EXT26 - Broad Street entrances - 287 cd/m²
- EXT31 - Holy Brook Car Park entrance - 279 cd/m²
- EXT50 - Shopmobility entrance on Yield Hall Place - 140 cd/m²

(Location references as per drawing 090705-SP-001 - Site Location Plan Level 1)

Reason: To avoid glare, which could lead to danger to highway users and in the interests of visual amenity in accordance with Policy CS20 of the Reading Borough LDF Core Strategy 2008 (Altered 2015) and Policies DM12 and DM22 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012 (Altered 2015).

4. The maximum luminance from any totem sign hereby approved shall not exceed 220 cd/m².

Reason: To avoid glare and in the interests of visual amenity in accordance with Policy CS20 of the Reading Borough LDF Core Strategy 2008 (Altered 2015) and Policies DM12 and DM22 of the Sites and Detailed Policies Document 2012 (Altered 2015).

Informatives:

1. Your attention is drawn to the terms and conditions of this consent. Any advertisement displayed which differs materially from the approved plans and details, or does not comply with any condition(s) attached to the consent may result in the Council taking action to remedy the breach of advertisement control. If you are in any doubt please contact the Council.
2. The decision to grant consent follows the positive and proactive consideration of the application, including issuing the decision within the recommended eight week time period.