

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Abbey

App Ref: PL/24/0952 & PL/24/0954

Address: THE SUN PH, 16 CASTLE STREET, READING, RG1 7RD

Proposal: Retrospective application for erection of illuminated sign A - one X retrospective sign written house name. Sign B - two X retrospective cowl lights to illuminate sign A

Applicant: HEARTWOOD INNS LTD

Received date: 2024-07-26

Target Decision date: 2024-09-27

Case Officer: Marcelina Rejwerska

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site comprises the Grade II listed pub on the north side of Castle Street within the Reading Central Core and the St Mary's Butts/Castle Street Conservation Area. The site is also within a primary shopping area and a major opportunity area. The listing for the property reads as follows,

"CASTLE STREET 1. 5128 (North Side) Nos 14 and 16 (Sun Inn) SU 7173 SW 2/71 22.3.57. II GV 2. C17 and older foundations and cellars, altered and modernized. 2 storeys and attic. Stucco over timber-framing. Tiled roof. A picturesque inn with half hipped gable to right of centre. 5 glazing bar sashes on 1st floor (2 in gable which has one small attic window). Ground floor has modern square bay bar window to left with balustraded balcony over; architrave surround and flat hood to plank door with wreath knocker, one 3-light window in gable and small door and 1 window to right (No 14). Two 2 storey extensions to rear. Interior: a considerable amount of exposed timber-framing. A small stone arch in yard called "Norman Arch" and cellars reputed to be remains of Reading Old Gaol."



Image taken by case officer on site visit in July 2023.

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Retrospective advertisement consent and listed building consent are sought to regularise a painted advert on the first floor front façade of the property, together with two cowl lights above. All other advertisements have recently granted consent.



2.1. Information Submitted:

227772-Planning Retro 2 DD, received 2nd August 2024
Heritage Statement, Forum Heritage Services, received 26th July 2024
Location Plan, dated 26th July 2024, received 26th July 2024
Design and Access Statement, received 26th July 2024

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

930358 – Signage – Application permitted

930585 - Internal and external decoration. New external signage. – Application permitted

120827 - 1 fascia sign, 1 hanging sign, painted signs to flank elevations and external display boards. – Application permitted

230709/FUL & 230710/LBC – Single storey rear extension and outdoor seating area improvements including a timber pergola and seating booths and associated works – Applications permitted

240025/VAR & 240026/LBC - Single storey rear extension and outdoor seating area improvements including a timber pergola and seating booths and associated works. (230709) Replace approved Drawing 22.123.BB.G 202/A with Drawing 22.123.BB.G 202/B and approved Drawing 22.123.BB.G 106/G with Drawing 22.123.BB.G 106/J – Applications not yet determined

231734/ADV & 231735/LBC - Erection of illuminated and non-illuminated signs to the exterior of the building – Applications permitted

4. CONSULTATIONS

The following were consulted:

- RBC Conservation Officer – Objection.
- Conservation Area Advisory Committee Consultations – No comments received.

The following addresses were consulted by letter:

- 12 Castle Street, READING RG1 7RD
- 12a Castle Street, READING RG1 7RD

- St Marys Church, 14 Castle Street, READING RG1 7RD
- 21 Castle Street, READING RG1 7SB
- 17 Castle Street, READING RG1 7SB
- 19 Castle Street, READING RG1 7SB
- Blue Collar Corner, 15 Hosier Street, READING RG1 7QL

No letters of representation have been received.

5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY 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).

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.

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) 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.

National Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework
National Planning Practice Guidance

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC7: DESIGN AND THE PUBLIC REALM

CC8: SAFEGUARDING AMENITY

EN1: PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

EN3: ENHANCEMENT OF CONSERVATION AREAS

TR3: ACCESS, TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY-RELATED MATTERS

OU4: ADVERTISEMENTS

Other Local Documents

Design Guide to Shopfronts SPD 2022
St Mary's Butts/Castle Street Conservation Area Appraisal 2008

6. APPRAISAL

The main issues are considered to be:

- i) Heritage implications
- ii) Amenity
- iii) Public safety

i) Heritage implications

Policy EN1 states "Applications which affect Listed Buildings will not have an adverse impact on those elements which contribute to their special architectural or historic interest including, where appropriate, their settings."

Policy EN3 states "The special interest, character and architecture of Conservation Areas will be conserved and enhanced. Development proposals within Conservation Areas must make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness."

The proposed signage, due to its location between the first-floor windows, would not relate to the historic and architectural interest of the listed building and, as such, would be another addition of unnatural and incompatible elements. Because it would fill the last remaining original section of the façade of high significance, it would create a negative cumulative impact of signage on the architectural integrity and composition of the listed building, and the appearance of the conservation area. This is considered to cause harm to the front façade of the listed building without clear and convincing justification or sufficient public benefit, given the sign would most likely be the largest.

Overall, the proposal is considered not in accordance with Policies EN1 and EN3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and the Design Guide to Shopfronts SPD 2022.

ii) Amenity

Policy OU4 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019) states,

All adverts shall comply with the following criteria:

- *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; NO*
- *Where a shop or business occupies more than one adjacent unit, the advertisement will not run between the shopfronts; N/A The property is detached.*
- *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; DOES NOT COMPLY*
- *Advertisements will not reduce visibility for users of the highway or accesses onto the highway; NO*
- *Illumination should not detract from the amenity of the area or pose a safety hazard to users of the highway; and NO*
- *Advertisements should not obscure the sight lines of cameras installed for public safety. NO*

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:

i. where the means of illumination is directly visible from any part of the road;

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, triangles or any traffic sign symbol; or those in combinations of colours which might otherwise be mistaken for traffic signs; or **NO**

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: **NO**

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; or **NO**

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 proposal does not raise any public safety issues.

7. CONCLUSION

The proposal has been assessed and the works are considered harmful to the heritage asset and the conservation area more widely due to the cumulative effect of the number of advertisements already approved on the site.

8. RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE ADVERTISEMENT CONSENT AND LISTED BUILDING CONSENT

Due to the following reason:

ADV

1. The additional signage and lighting on the first floor of the front elevation due to its prominent siting, excessive size, and contribution to a proliferation of signage on the building, would be harmful to the architectural integrity, composition and legibility of the facade of the host building and is therefore harmful to the historic and architectural interest of the listed building and would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the St. Mary's Butts/Castle Street Conservation Area. The signage is therefore contrary to Policies EN1, EN3 and OU4 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and the Design Guide to Shopfronts SPD 2022.

LBC

1. The additional signage and lighting on the first floor of the front elevation due to its prominent siting, excessive size, and contribution to a proliferation of signage on the building, would be harmful to the architectural integrity, composition, and legibility of the facade of the host building and is therefore harmful to the historic and architectural interest of the listed building. The signage is therefore contrary to Policy EN1 and OU4 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and the Design Guide to Shopfronts SPD 2022.