

DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Target Date: 4/11/2024

Application No: PL/24/1141/ADV

Address: River Academy, Richfield Avenue RG1 8EQ

Proposal: 1 Fascia sign and 1 projecting sign.

Case Officer: Julie Williams

Applicant: Bowmer & Kirkland Ltd

Site Description and Surrounding Area

River Academy, a three storey secondary school and sixth form for 1500 pupils which was granted planning permission in July 2022, ref. 212061. The site has been occupied since September 2024.

The site is located on the north side of Richfield Avenue. The recently redeveloped Rivermead Leisure Centre is to the east of the site (also a small garden centre) and to the north and northeast of the site are open fields, (used for camping during the Reading Festival). The River Thames and Thames Path is 120 metres to the north of the site. To the west is a Network Rail depot and the main rail line on an elevated track. The nearest heritage assets are a good distance away on the north side of the Thames.

Proposal

The agent's covering letter explains:

This application seeks advert consent for 2 x fascia adverts on the school building and multiple way-finding signs within the approved landscaping scheme.

The two fascia adverts will be circular logos positioned on the southern elevations of the teaching block and the sports hall facing onto Richfield Avenue. The signs will have fabricated letters with 50mm side returns and be powder coated with secret back tray fixings. Both signs designed around three colours: dark grey, sage green and silver.

The entrance signs proposed are white powder coated and are mounted on white powder coated posts. One sign will feature the school's name and logo, and the other will be a compass, directing visitors to the staff/visitor parking and delivery drop off point. Three other signs, also white powder coated, are proposed on the fences of the school. These are all wayfinding signs, reading 'visitor/student entrance', 'deliveries/fire tender' and 'fire tender access'. All wayfinding/entrance signs are to follow the same colour scheme of dark grey, sage green and silver.

A small 'Assembly Point' sign is also proposed. The sign will have a printed, standard, dark green colour face and will be mounted by secret rails and fence clamps.

None of the proposed signs are to be illuminated.



On the building

Free standing

Plans Considered

The agent supplied the following:

S0949-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0016 Site Location Plan -S2-P01

FS0949-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-1022-External Signage Elevations 1 of 2-S3-P02

FS0949-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-1024-External Signage Elevations 2 of 2-S3-P01

FS0949-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0002-Landscape General Arrangement Plan-A4-C16

FS0949-JWA-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-3020-P03 - Advertisement Elevations

FS0949-JWA-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-3001 rev. P06 - Proposed Elevations & Sections Sheet 1

Relevant Planning History

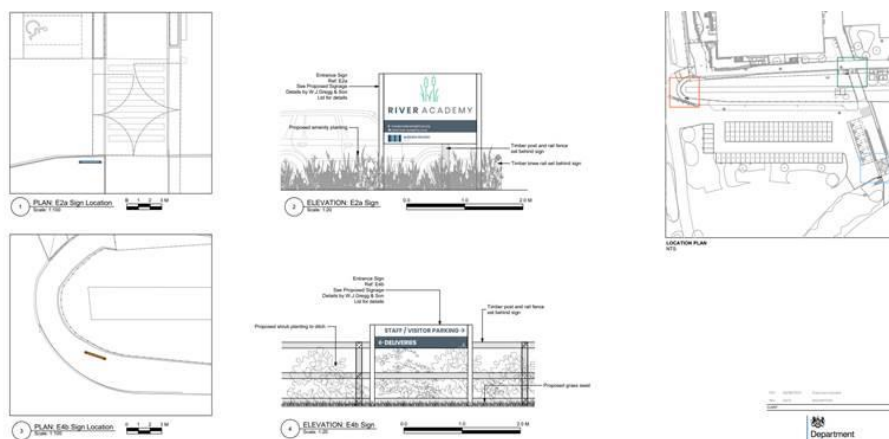
212061 - The demolition of existing driving range structures and the development of a new three-storey 8 form entry school for years 11 -16, including a SEND unit and 300 place 6th form (total school capacity of 1500 pupils) including the creation of a new access from Richfield Avenue, new parking area, cycle parking landscaped areas, external play areas, Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) and sporting pitches.' Granted

240806 - Non-Material Amendment to planning permission ref. 212061 to update the approved plans as set out under condition 2, to make changes to window and door layouts and configuration, removal of structural columns, provide additional plant equipment, amend the design of the external stair and proposed cladding.' Agreed

Consultation Responses

Reading Borough Council Transport – Response received on 15/10/2024 it appears that none of the proposed signage is to be illuminated and will be located within the curtilage of the site off the highway. Therefore, there are no Transport objections to this application.

Natural Environment - There are only two free standing signs (the rest being fence or building mounted), those being E2a & E4b:



These do not raise any concerns. No objections

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) 2023.

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:

NPPG: Advertisements

Reading Borough Local Plan (Adopted November 2019)

- OU4: Advertisements
- CC7: Design and the Public Realm
- EN15: Air Quality
- TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters

The main issues to be considered are:

- A. Character and Appearance, Security and Public safety (Reading Borough Local Plan Policy OU4)
- B. NPPG: Advertisements - [Considerations affecting public safety](#)

Appraisal

Paragraph 141 of the NPPF (2023) states that the quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed.

Policy OU4 of the Reading Local Plan 2019 requires advertisements to 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 not to have a detrimental effect on public safety. The policy states that cumulative impact of adverts will be considered, and a proliferation of advertisements that detrimentally affects visual or aural amenity or public safety will not be acceptable. Policy CC7 encourages good design with attention to how development affects the public realm.

The proposed free standing signs are designed to fit in with the design of the school buildings and reflect the approved colour scheme of the façade of the building. The proposed wall mounted signs are positioned on the sides of the buildings, and in this context their size (measuring 4m in diameter) will look appropriate. There are also wayfinding signs (1.6 x 1.2 metres and 1.6 x 0.4 metres respectively) and three fence signs (1.12 metres in height and 1.5 metres wide). None of the signs are shown to be illuminated.

Overall, it is considered that the design of the adverts in this location is acceptable and comply with the relevant local plan policies OU4 & CC7.

As no sign proposed will be illuminated, transport consultees have confirmed no objections as there will be no risk to highway users. There will also be no harm to public and neighbouring amenity. The relevance of there be no illumination proposed has been a positive factor in this assessment and therefore it is appropriate to make it a condition that no illumination is used.

Conclusion

The proposed signs have been assessed and are considered to be in accordance with the above relevant policies and advertisement consent can be granted.

Recommendation

CONSENT with **CONDITIONS**

A1: STANDARD ADVERT REQUIREMENTS

- 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.

AD1: ADVERT LUMINANCE

The signs hereby consented shall not be illuminated at any time.

REASON: To protect the visual amenity and avoid glare that could lead to a danger to highway users in accordance with Policy CC7 and OU4 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

AD2: APPROVED PLANS (ADVERTS)

The advertisements hereby consented shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

S0949-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0016 Site Location Plan -S2-P01

FS0949-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-1022-External Signage Elevations 1 of 2-S3-P02

FS0949-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-1024-External Signage Elevations 2 of 2-S3-P01

FS0949-ALA-XX-ZZ-DR-L-0002-Landscape General Arrangement Plan-A4-C16

FS0949-JWA-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-3020-P03

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the advertisement is carried out in accordance the details hereby approved in accordance with Policy OU4 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

INFORMATIVES

IF1: Positive and Proactive Working - approval

IF5: Terms