

Reading Borough Council
Civic Offices
Bridge Street
Reading
RG1 2LU

Our ref: KRM/24-02964
Date: 20 January 2024

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Application for advertisement consent for illuminated and nonilluminated fascia signage at the consented self-storage unit at 251, A33 Relief Road, Reading, RG2 0RR

We act on behalf of Shurgard UK LNS Trading LTD, and have been instructed to submit an application for advertisement consent for signage at the above site, approved under planning permission LPA Ref. 131505. This application is submitted further to the acquisition of Lok'nStore Limited by Shurgard UK, and forms part of the rebranding of the self-storage facility to reflect Shurgard's corporate identity.

The application is submitted via the Planning Portal (PP-13708336) and in addition to this supporting covering letter and application forms, the following drawings are provided to illustrate the scheme proposals:

- Application form;
- Supporting Statement (this document); and
- The following drawings:
 - Location Plan (No. E1781-READ-S-LOC Rev 3)
 - Block Plan & Sign Identity Key (No. E1781- READ-S- BLK Rev 3)
 - South Elevation - Existing & Proposed (No. E1781-READ-S-STH Rev 3)
 - North Elevation – Existing & Proposed (No. E1781-READ-S-NTH Rev 3)
 - East Elevation – Existing & Proposed (No. E1781-READ-S-EST Rev 3)
 - West Elevation – Existing & Proposed (No. E1781-READ-S-WST Rev 3)

In addition, the necessary forms have been filled in on the Planning Portal (PP-13708336) and the application fee of £235 has been paid.

Site and Surroundings

The application site relates to an existing self-storage facility located on the east side of the A33. Bounding the site to the north, west and south is a dense strip of vegetation and trees that follows Holy Brook.

In terms of the site's surroundings:

- To east on the opposite side of the A33 is a multistorey residential development that backs onto the A33 – the primary frontage being the River Kennet.
- To the west and southwest, separated by the dense vegetation and Holy Brook is a lower density residential development.
- To the north is Berkeley Avenue and Holy Brook Nook Park and Garden.

The site is not located within a Conservation Area or within close proximity to any statutorily or locally listed buildings.

Flood Risk is not of relevance to this proposal.

Planning History

The sites governing consent is LPA Ref. 131505 for *"Erection of class B8 self storage depot as permitted by planning permission 08/01446/FUL (and as extended by 11/01036/EXT and amended by 131092/NMC) but without complying with Condition 2 (Amended Elevation Drawings)"* granted 29 October 2013.

Since the initial consent was approved, a number of conditions have been discharged.

Proposal

This advertisement consent application seeks consent for:

"1 x non-illuminated fascia signs and 3 x externally illuminated wall mounted signs"

Further details of the proposals can be found on the accompanying drawings, which annotate the individual elements of the proposal.

In this context the elements of the application can be summarised as follows, with reference to the annotation on the application drawings:

- **Item A** – An externally illuminated signs, comprising 3mm thick aluminium composite letters finished in White matt (Ral 9003) annotating "SHURGARD SELF-STORAGE" on the north elevation of the building. The lettering is to be illuminated via inward facing linear LED bar lights from above, to 400 Lumens, and 30 Lux minimum at ground level, colour index 4000K.

Size: 11000mm X 2460mm– Letter Height: 1350mm "SHURGARD" - 550mm "SELF STORAGE"

- **Item B** – Two externally illuminated signs, comprising 3mm thick aluminium composite letters finished in White matt (Ral 9003) annotating "SHURGARD SELF-STORAGE" on the east and south elevations of the building. The lettering is to be illuminated via inward facing linear LED bar lights from above, to 400 Lumens, and 30 Lux minimum at ground level, colour index 4000K.

Size: 15970mm X 3580mm– Letter Height: 1950mm "SHURGARD" - 800mm "SELF STORAGE"

- **Item C** - A non-illuminated illuminated fascia sign in powdercoated Red (RAL 3020) with 200mm White lettering annotating "SHOP" on the south elevation of the building.

Size: 2000mm X 380mm –

The illuminated signage would be a combination of photo-cell and timeswitch so the signs are on when dark and off during daylight, but always off between 00.00 – 05.00.

Planning Policy Guidance

National Planning Policy

Relevant Central Government Policy is contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (the "NPPF", last updated 12 December 2024) and its accompanying National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), adopted/launched online in 2014.

The NPPF is underpinned by a presumption in favour of sustainable development. In terms of decision-taking, paragraph 11 and the NPPG advises that Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) should seek to approve development proposals which accord with the Development Plan without delay, or grant planning permission for proposals where the Development Plan policies are out-of-date – unless any adverse impact of doing so would demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF as a whole. Further, paragraph 141 advises that advertisements should only be subject to control in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking into account of cumulative impacts.

Local Planning Policy

The development plan relevant to the application site comprises the Reading Local Plan, adopted November 2019. The site is not designated within the Development Plan.

Policy OU4 (Advertisements) requires advertisements to respect the surrounding and building on which they are located with regard to size, location, design, materials, colour, noise, lettering, amount and type of text, illumination and luminance. Advertisements shall not have a detrimental effect on public safety. Specifically, advertisements shall 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.
- reduce visibility for users of the highway or accesses onto the highway.
- illumination should not detract from the amenity of the area or pose a safety hazard to users of the highway.

Planning Considerations

The NPPF is clear that advertisement consent applications should only be considered against matters of amenity and highway safety.

Amenity

The four proposed advertisements would replace the eight existing signs on the north, east and south elevations of the building. There are no existing or proposed signs located on the west elevation.

The proposed signs would be located along the upper sections of the building, with the exception of the small non-illuminated fascia sign which would be located above the entrance on the south elevation.

The proposed signage has a relatively uniform appearance on each façade, clearly identifying the building whilst ensuring the elevations are uncluttered, legible and of a high quality appearance. The proposal is considered to represent a well-designed, high-quality advertisement solution that would fit in well within the surrounding context and is commensurate to the scale of the building upon which the advertisements will be sited.

In terms of amenity impact on sensitive neighbouring receptors, due to the dense vegetation to the north, south and west, the only premises with a direct line of sight that could be impacted by the proposal is the multistorey residential development to the east, which is separated by the A33. As identified above, and due to the residential development's close proximity to the A33, its primary façade fronts the River Kennet to the east. The west façade contains few windows, which, owing to the A33, would be secondary only and presumably proximity daylight to communal corridors only. Furthermore, the proposed signage is of a high quality designed that forms part of building design rationale. All proposed illuminated signage comprises inward facing linear led bar lights providing illumination to 400 lumens and 30 lux minimum at ground level to be switched off between 00.00 – 05.00. to ensure not harm would be caused to the neighbouring residential amenity.

The proposal will not have any impact on heritage assets or other sensitive policy designations. Furthermore, the proposed signs contribute positively to the overall design and appearance of the building, and therefore positively impact on the amenity of the site and surrounding area.

In summary:

- The design of the proposed advertisement is commensurate to the scale, mass and design of the building. The advertisements have been integrated into the overall design approach for the building, and provide emphasis, detail and interest to the elevational treatment. Furthermore, the advertisements themselves are standardised to a degree across the Shurgard sites, and have been designed specific to the brand identity and style, form and function of the premises themselves.
- The illuminated signs would utilise inward facing linear led bar lights providing illumination to 400 lumens and 30 lux minimum at ground level. Furthermore, as identified above, the illuminated signage would be a combination of photo-cell and timeswitch so the signs are on when dark and off during daylight, but always off between 00.00 – 05.00.
- The signs would be fixed to the building and would not notably project beyond the established building line.

The proposed advertisements are sympathetic in size with the existing building, and would result in a reduced number of advertisements on the buildings facades compared to the existing. The overall design, layout, size and siting would result in a simplified façade treatment would contribute positively to the buildings overall character and appearance and the amenity of the wider area. Furthermore, the illuminated signs would be kept to the minimum necessary to illuminate the signs, and would not harm the amenity of the surrounding area.

The development is therefore in accordance National Planning Policy.

Highways Safety

As previously confirmed, the proposed advertisements are commensurate in scale to the building upon which they are proposed. A material motivation behind the design of the advertisements is creating a welcoming and easily legible set of directions for site users, and in this context, the proposal will benefit highway safety.

Further, the advertisements will not obscure sightlines, nor will the illumination proposed confuse, distract or dazzle visitors, given their location and the relatively low levels of static lighting

proposed. In this context, there should be no concern regarding highway safety – rather the benefits of the advertisements in these terms should be recognised.

Conclusion

Taking into account all of the above, the advertisements are designed to provide clear and legible direction to the Shurgard self-storage facility, and is necessary to facilitate the change in ownership of the site from Lok'nStore to Shurgard. The signs are in keeping with the largely commercial character of the surrounding area in terms of amenity, and by providing a visible and legible basis for wayfinding to and around the site, can only be helpful in terms of ensuring highway safety.

It is therefore requested that advertisement consent is granted pursuant to this application at the earliest possible juncture. If you any further information or have any queries in respect of the submitted documentation, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kathryn McCain', with a stylized flourish at the end.

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