

DELEGATED PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Abbey

App Ref: 24/0836

Address: House of Fraser, The Oracle, Bridge Street, Reading, RG1 2AS

Proposals: To replace the existing House of Fraser signage with new Hollywood Bowl branding graphics.

Case Officer: Nathalie Weekes

Date received (valid from): 7 August 2024

Extended Target Decision date: 3 March 2025

1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The proposal relates to the former House of Fraser unit within the Oracle shopping centre, which at the time of the original permission was referenced as a 'department store' within the development. It is located at the western end of the Oracle, to the north of the River Kennet, at Riverside, Lower Mall and Upper Mall levels. The Oracle opened in September 1999 and covers either side of the River Kennet riverside. The former House of Fraser unit has been split up into different units. The proposed site occupies one of the sub-divided units in the former 'larger' House of Fraser unit.

It is not a listed building and is not located within a Conservation Area although can be seen from St Marys Butts and London Street conservation areas. Seven Bridges House is located immediately to the north on Bridge Street is Grade II Listed.

Site visit date: 11/12/2024

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The proposal is for the installation of 6 signs to advertise the Hollywood Bowl on The Oracle, replacing areas previously used for House of Fraser signage. The signs include:

Sign A1 consisting aluminium built up letters and star, sprayed white with 3 pink bowling pins, face fitted with 5mm acrylic to illuminate, illuminated to 600 cdm². To be placed on a box section fixing.

Sign A2 a welcome sign, consisting aluminium panel overlaid with digital printed vinyl graphics, with white letters on a pink and purple background above the entrance door to the unit, illuminated to 600 cdm², 2.05m x 0.585m in size.

- Located facing the River Kennet and the Riverside car park

Sign B consists of a fascia sign made of an aluminium back panel with built up aluminium white letters on a pink and purple background with a bowling pin logo, the back panel is to be non illuminated, size 6.56 x 1m, letters and logo illuminated to 600 cdm² (*Case officer comment, this is to include one additional sign to provide signs for 2 of the units within the former larger House of Fraser unit*)

- Located facing the River Kennet and the Riverside car park.

Sign C consists of a non -illuminated fascia made of an aluminium back panel with vinyl graphic white letters on a pink and purple background with a bowing pin logo, size 9.5 x1m, non illuminated (*Case officer comment, this is to include one additional sign to provide signs for 2 of the units within the former larger House of Fraser unit*)

- located on the north elevation adjacent to grade II listed Seven Bridges House on the Gun Street elevation

Signs D and E Sign consist of a non -illuminated fascia made of an aluminium back panel with vinyl graphic white letters on a pink and purple background with a bowing pin logo, size 7.5 x1m.

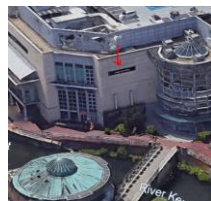
- Located on the southern corner by Bridge Street and the River Kennet

Sign locations

Sign A1, A2



Sign B



Sign C



Sign D



Sign E



Plans considered

Location plan

~~Hudson sign solutions, Hollywood Bowl, Rev A Advert pack, p1-5~~

Received 01/07/2024

~~Hudson sign solutions, Hollywood Bowl, Rev B Advert pack. p1-5~~

~~HWB Advertisement heritage statement~~

Received 07/08/2024

~~Hudson sign solutions, Hollywood Bowl, Rev G Advert pack p1-5~~

Received 29/11/2024

~~Hudson sign solutions, Hollywood Bowl, Rev H Advert pack p1-5 including:~~

~~04903 Rev H Sign A1 and A2~~

~~04903 Rev H Sign B~~

~~04903 Rev H Sign C~~

~~04903 Rev H Sign D and E~~

Received 23/12/2024

Hudson sign solutions, Hollywood Bowl, Rev I Advert pack p1-5 including:

04903 Rev I Sign A1 and A2

04903 Rev I Sign B

04903 Rev I Sign C

04903 Rev I Sign D and E

04903 Hollywood Bowl sign location plan

Received 12/02/2025

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

98/0614/ADV	Individual letters/logo applied to external face of building. - Granted
99/1636/ ADV	Erection of various signage for the House of Fraser as part of the Oracle Shopping Centre. – Granted
07/0398/ ADV	Installation of various signs for advertisement purposes. – Granted
08/0344/ADV	External YO! Sushi Restaurant signage - Granted
191841/FUL	Former House of Fraser unit only: - Subdivision of three-storey retail unit (Class A1) and change of use to form: 1x flexible retail/restaurant/bar unit (Class A1/A3/A4), 1x flexible retail/restaurant unit (Class A1/A3) and 1x assembly and leisure unit (Class D2) at Riverside level; 1x retail unit (Class A1) and 1x assembly and leisure unit (Class D2) at lower ground level; 1x retail unit (Class A1) at upper ground level, together with alterations to the Riverside frontage and associated plant, car parking and external alterations at car park levels. Granted following completion of s106 legal agreement on 31/07/2020. Not implemented and the 3 year period for works to commence expired on 31/07/2023.
230682	Application under Section 73 of Town and Country Planning Act (1990) to remove condition no. 62 of planning permission ref. 970419 (Demolition of existing buildings, redevelopment and change of use to provide: shopping centre (Class A1, A2 & A3), 41 residential units, leisure facilities including multi-screen cinema (Class D2), car parking (2390 spaces) and community uses together with associated landscaping etc) to allow the sub-division of 'department store' floorspace. Imposition of new planning condition(s) to restrict use of 'department store' floorspace within Use Class E(a)(b)(d)(e), with a minimum unit size of 1,000 sqm (GIA).
241388	Consent to display replacement signage at 5 locations on the former House of Fraser unit with TKMAXX branding.– Under consideration

4. CONSULTATIONS

A site notice was displayed at the site for the required period.

No letters of representation have been received.

RBC transport – no objections subject to a luminance condition.

CCTV – Concern regarding glare to elevations outside of the Oracle facing the public realm and request to turn off illumination at night.

Communications with the agent were discussed regarding illumination to be restricted to the hours of opening.

RBC Conservation officer – Concern was raised at the impact of the proposed illuminated signage on the Gun Street and Bridge Street elevations on St Marys Butts Conservation Area, particularly sign C in close proximity to the Grade II listed Seven Bridges House.

The listing for Seven Bridges House is' BRIDGE STREET 1. 5128 (East Side) No 19 (Seven Bridges House) (Formerly listed as Lynden House) SU 7173 SW 2/30 22.3.57. 2. Early C19. Attributed by

Pevsner to Soane but this is probably an error. 2 storey villa. Brick with stucco string between ground and 1st floors, stucco cornice, parapet and hipped slate roof. 5 windows on 1st floor, glazing bar sashes with moulded architraves (spoiled by poor double glazing). 4 windows and central door on ground floor with double panelled doors and radiating fanlight over. Greek Doric portico with fluted columns and pilasters supporting and plain cornice; panelled soffit. Interior altered but enriched ceiling cornice kept on ground floor.’ Listing NGR: SU7147473198

The additional signs on the would have a less than substantial level of harm at the lowest level due the additional signage and use of bright colours however they are not considered be too harmful due to the location in which they are situated at the top of The Oracle building. Following the submission of revised plans, in addition the signs will not now be illuminated. Due to the high level of the signage, it will not be perceived and viewed in relation to the listed building from every angle. The proposed signage is considered acceptable in this instance and the harm would be negligible. No additional signage or illuminations would be considered acceptable in this location adjacent to the listed building.

Communications with the agent

Conversations with the agent were undertaken to overcome concerns relating to the impact of glare from the adverts facing Bridge Street and Gun Street and also to ensure a consistent approach following the division of the former House of Fraser to avoid an unacceptable increase in signage with multiple signs proposed to replace single signs. Revised signs were submitted, with a signage overview proposed for units that will be occupying the sub-divided House of Fraser unit.

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.

5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

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

The application has been assessed against the following policies:

National
National Planning Policy Framework 2024;

Reading Borough Local Plan (November 2019)

- CC7: Design and the Public Realm
- CC8: Safeguarding Amenity
- OU4: Advertisements
- OU5: Shopfronts and Cash Machines
- CR7: Primary frontages in Central Reading
- EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment
- EN3: Enhancement of Conservation Areas
- EN6: New development in a Historic Context

SPD

Design Guide for Shopfronts Adopted January 2022

APPRAISAL

Policies OU4 and OU5 state advertisements and shopfronts 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 signs replace the previous House of Fraser signs. The advertisements are similar in size to the existing signs, however, will be a brighter colour advertising the brand Hollywood Bowl. The signs are sited on the external elevations of The Oracle, both facing into the site onto the River Kennet and externally to Bridge Street and Gun Street. An additional sign is proposed on the Gun street elevation and on the elevation next to the Oracle riverside entrance. The proposed signage will be more prominent than the existing colour scheme but is considered to be in keeping with the location in which they are proposed. The Oracle has a wide variety of shopfront signage, both illuminated and not.

Transport have no objections subject to a conditions to control the luminance of the proposed advertisements and impact of the digital screen on the public highway (Policy OU4).

Concerns have been raised in relation to potential glare from illuminated signs facing onto public areas surrounding The Oracle, with a request that the signs are preferably non illuminated fronting Bridge Street and Gun Street. The Conservation officer has also raised a concern that the signs will be visible from the St Mary's Butts and London Street Conservation areas and on the elevation adjacent to grade II listed Seven Bridges House. However due to the location of the signs any potential impact could be reduced by removing illumination and the revised plans are considered acceptable. The proposed signs are considered to have a less than substantial level of harm at the lowest level, due to the high level of the signs and the reduction in the amount of colours proposed, although the signs will still be bright, sign C will not be seen from every view of the Grade II listed Seven Bridges House it will have a negligible impact.

A condition is recommended to restrict the illuminated signs A1 A2 and B for a maximum of 600cdm² to reduce the impact of glare from the screen on CCTV in Reading town centre and to require that the remaining signs C,D and E are to remain non illuminated to reduce the harmful impact of glare on CCTV coverage in the vicinity and also to reduce the impact on St Marys Butts Conservation area, the Grade II listed Seven Bridges House and to protect the amenity of local residents in Fobney Street.

Conclusion

The development has been assessed and the works are considered to be in accordance with the above relevant policies and Advertisement Consent can be granted. The signage is not considered to have a detrimental impact on amenity, public safety or the historic environment.

GRANT advertisement consent

Standard conditions

Approved plans

Luminance control